

Local Artist Recreates Old Aldershot In Oils

Historical sites in Aldershot, many of which have been demolished now, are the subjects of many oil paintings done by Mrs. Edna Wickens, a local woman who spends her spare time painting.

Because of her fondness for Old Aldershot, Mrs. Wickens has spent the last eight years doing some serious painting. She has painted old landmarks and buildings as she remembered them, and the result is an authentic record of buildings and scenes which can never be reproduced.

Mrs. Wickens has lived in Aldershot since 1913, when she came to Canada from Buckinghamshire, England. Thus, 50 years of Aldershot's history have been recorded on her canvasses. Her subjects have included St. Matthew's Church as it appeared in 1913 when it was a very small building with a wood burning stove, a tiny organ and oil lamps. What is now the Queen Elizabeth Way was merely a dirt road at that time. Another oil painting which Mrs. Wickens produced is one of ice cutting on the Bay. In this picture she has captured the lost art of cutting the ice and storing it.

The old General Store, located on Plains Road and LaSalle Park (formerly Wabasso Park) is another subject of one of Mrs. Wickens' paintings. In this picture she has included the store which used to sell everything from coal oil to fig bars, and which once was a post office, as well as the village pump and an old democrat. This building was torn down to make way for a gas station.

In her collection Mrs. Wickens has also included a little red school house, the one she attended when she was a child. The building was located at what is now Howard's Road and the QEW. A restaurant has now replaced the building on that site.

Another place which Mrs. Wickens has preserved on canvas is the house she and her family first lived in when they arrived in Canada. The house was part of the Townsend Estate near Oakland's Park. Now Tower's Department Store is located on the same site.

Mrs. Wickens' original paintings can be found in many homes in Burlington. Much of her art work is concentrated in the Aldershot area. People who have a deep interest in the early days of Aldershot have bought her paintings.

But not all of her work deals with the Aldershot area. She enjoys painting the scenery around Orillia, especially the old Indian houses there. She has also done seascapes. She painted her first seascape when she visited the state of Maine not too long ago. This type of art work is rather difficult, but Mrs. Wickens still plans to do more of it.

Mrs. Wickens' artistic ability seems to be innate. She has had very few lessons in



MRS. EDNA WICKENS

art. As a child her abilities were recognized and she won prizes at school for her work. She regrets that she did not start painting earlier, or that she never had the opportunity to work at developing her talent. However, since she has started painting, she has had lessons with Miss Marjorie Seavey, Mrs. Jerry Puley, and has attended two sets of art lessons at the Arena sponsored by the Recreation and Parks Committee.

Her style is realistic rather than impressionistic. She has worked with water colors, but prefers oils even though water colors are a faster method. "I have a wider scope with oils," she said.

Mrs. Wickens complements her interest in the history of Aldershot by being a member of the Historical Society. She is also a member of St. Mat-

thew's Church and is assistant to the minister's wife in the church's Junior Auxiliary. She is a leader of the September Group of the St. Matthew's Church Year, and is a charter member of the Altar Guild at the church.