

Ethnic albums on display at homestead

Women of all ethnic backgrounds have played a strong role in the development of this province, and indeed, our entire country.

Until recently, however, some of the most interesting personal stories of the contributions of women to Canada's ethnic mosaic had not been recorded.

That situation was remedied last summer when provincial WI convenors rose to the challenge of compiling ethnic albums that involved in-depth studies of the role played by women in Canada's multi-ethnic society. The albums — depicting the family traditions, celebrations, festive dances, languages, foods, arts and crafts brought to Canada by women of other nations — were displayed at the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada Convention held in London, Ontario last June.

Unfortunately, there was little time for convention-goers to really *look* at the albums, much less to *read* them. As a result, it was decided to place all of the albums (which are now the property of FWIC) in the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead in St. George, near Brantford.

Visitors to the homestead are invited to browse through the albums, which include well-written stories describing personal experiences of the author — or in some cases, of the author's mother or grandmother. Much can be learned from the albums about the ethnic communities in the various provinces.

In fact, Ontario was originally planning to compile only one album — but due to the tremendous response from our members, we produced **two** albums of 100 pages each!

Almost everything that was contributed (there were 81 separate entries) was used in the Ontario albums, except where there was duplication. We are grateful to all those who shared their stories with us! You'll find Ontario's albums at the Homestead identified as FWIO's Ethnic Mosaic, Books I and II.

The articles cover a wide range. There are nostalgic reports of former homelands, such as a beautiful report on Estonia, complete with photos, written by a member of the Spanish River WI. There's an article entitled "A True Canadian" which suggests that our grand children or great-

Nancy Murray



grandchildren will be the true Canadians because they will have so many different ethnic roots. That essay was submitted by a member of the West Fort William WI.

There's also a collection of ethnic recipes contributed by Winterbourne WI; a complete booklet entitled "Ojibway Indian Tribes of Cape Croker" compiled by Adamsville WI; plays courtesy of Williamsburg WI; humorous skits from Hillsburgh Auxiliary WI; and a family history of the Wirtas, a Finnish family who settled in East Pearson in North-western Ontario in the 1900s, based on an account in the East Pearson-Pardee Tweedsmuir History Book.

The personal stories of three Dutch members of Grand Valley and Hereward WI are documented in an entry entitled "Three Women, Unlimited Potential" — a clever play on the theme of the FWIC Convention, which was "Women — Unlimited Potential".

Other entries in the FWIO albums include the story and pictures of unusual hats and costumes worn by folk called Sylvester Klausens, who travel around the neighborhood in Appenzell, Switzerland on December 31 and January 13.

Those are some of the highlights — I wish I could mention all of the entries, but since space won't permit me to do so, you'll have to see the albums for yourselves at the Homestead.

Nancy Murray is the Provincial Convenor of Education and Cultural Activities for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.

Editor's Note: Nancy Dodsworth, curator of the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead, says the albums will be returned to the provinces in the Spring, and she urges WI members to visit soon to avoid missing the fascinating display.

"I have two albums here from Ontario, one from Nova Scotia, one from Quebec, one from PEI, one from Manitoba, one from Labrador/Newfoundland — even one on the Acadians. They're all beautifully done and very interesting to read," says Mrs. Dodsworth.

Tweedsmuir workshops are worth attending

By LULU HEALES

The provincial workshop provided an impetus which we should not allow to recede.

I strongly suggest a gathering be held once a year for the district curators with their branch curators to get acquainted and talk over problems. All district and branch curators should take part every second year in an area workshop.

I would urge every group to have its books copied in some way, by having them xeroxed or microfilmed (how this is done is entirely up to the individual group) and to have a copy for safe keeping stored separately from the original book. Our efforts to produce the history books have

never included the intention to make a profit for the branches and, in most cases, any financial reward is extremely unlikely.

Several branches have published their Tweedsmuir histories which certainly insures access to their information.

The FWIO Tweedsmuir History Committee would be pleased to receive any revisions you wish to submit for the proposed new manual. The proposals should be forwarded to me by the end of February 1986.

In closing, I wish you all another eventful year in your Tweedsmuir History work, and please feel free to get in touch with me at any time.

Lulu Heales is the FWIO Tweedsmuir History Curator.