

Rainy River Review

By Tina Visser, Marcine James and Lillian Van Drunen

At the 1966 Rainy River West District Annual, the guest speaker was Dr. Walter Kenyon, an Archeologist from the Royal Ontario Museum. He dug at the nearby Long Sault Rapids Mounds west of Emo; he suggested we start a museum in the Rainy River District.

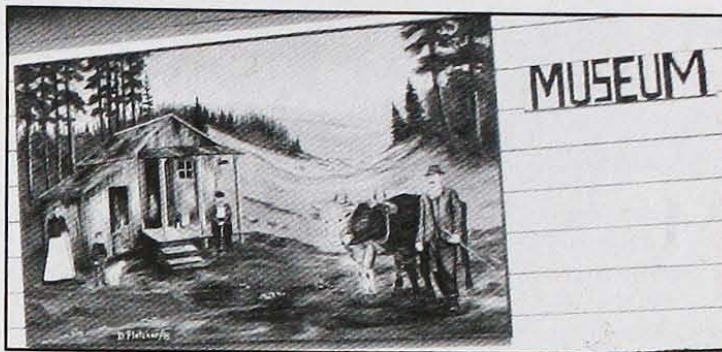
We approached Rainy River Centre and East at their District Annuals with the suggestion. In June of 1966 members from each District met to discuss the idea. But it was more than a year later, in October of 1967, before the first Tea and Bake Sale was held in the Emo Lumber building to raise money for the project. With \$500 down, we purchased the Canadiana Shop in Emo for \$5,000 the following year. The Rainy River District Women's Institute bought the Museum with money they earned running food booths at the Emo Fair.

By 1972, the leaking flat roof needed to be replaced with a peaked roof. All this was done by the Rainy River District members volunteering and raising funds. There were no government grants. Since 1973, however, we have received an annual operational grant from the Heritage Programs Section of the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation. Since then, with the help of government grants and local organizations and municipalities, we have been able to finish enlarging the building, complete the interior walls, cupboards and the exterior.

The Emo Chamber of Commerce asked if we could accommodate the Tourist Information Centre in the Museum, which we have done since 1978. Since that date, students have been hired during the summer months to work as travel counsellors and to help in the Museum.

A grant was received in 1993 to paint two murals on the outside of the Museum. A local artist, Darlene Fletcher, painted the murals: one depicts the scenic Rainy River and the other portrays the life of early settlers in the area.

The purpose of the Museum is to provide information about the life and work experiences of the first settlers in the Rainy River District. Most of the artifacts have been donated or they are on loan. Women's Institute Branch, District and Area Minute Books are stored in the Museum and are available to researchers upon request. The Museum is also used for various community workshops and events and regular WI meetings.



A mural of the life of Rainy River's first settlers, painted by local artist, Darlene Fletcher on the outside wall of the Museum.



Tina Visser (left), Treasurer of the Rainy River District Women's Institute Museum, and Marcine James (right), Secretary, are pictured above in the Museum.

Each year in February, we celebrate Heritage Week at the Museum. A lunch is organized with all the food donated by our Branches. Also, in the spring and fall we hold an Opening and Closing Tea. They are great fun!

The Museum acknowledges with gratitude support from: Sunset Country Travel Association; the Ministry of Employment and Immigration; the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation; and, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines; we are also indebted to the many Women's Institute volunteers who have contributed much time and energy to the success of the Museum.

Submitted by Marcine James - Secretary, Tina Visser - Treasurer and Lillian Van Drunen - President, Rainy River District Women's Institute Museum.

FWIC Citizenship Project, 1995-1996:

"How to Become a Good Women's Institute Citizen"



Purpose:

- to recognize grass roots member who make continuous major contributions to their own Branch
- to create a "Golden Book of Recognition" (in the form of a binder to become part of a permanent record)
- to have provincial units pick up on this idea and start their own records

Project Regulations:

- the member must not be serving or have ever served in a decision-making capacity at either the provincial or national level
- must have been a member for a sufficient length of time to have made such contributions

- the member must be alive at the time her name is submitted to the provincial level
- the written documentation must be typed, double-spaced, on a single, acid-free, 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper (note: text will be inserted in binder in its original condition)
- a 4" x 6" portrait-type photograph must accompany text (do not attach photograph to text, submit separately)

Deadline:

- the deadline at the national level is December 1, 1996

Note:

- this is not a competition, but a final selection of ten members per province will be made at each provincial level