

Bruce County Museum bursting with historical facts and information

by P.N. Drost

The Bruce County Museum offers a visitor not only a glimpse of the past, but what the future holds for museums in general.

Located in Southampton, the Bruce County museum is bursting with historical information and artifacts that are sure to be of interest to all generations. Touring the galleries, you will see grandchildren pointing and asking their grandparents those magic words, "what's that?" Curiosity about the past is, perhaps, a need that all people have.

Others look through the gallery for sentimental reasons.

Sally White's family came from Southampton, but before she was born the family moved to Detroit. She has made it back-year after year to a cottage in Port Elgin, but had not visited the gallery in about 25 years, she said.

While walking through the area that is called the General Store, White looked with interest through the windows and commented that some of the porcelain dishes reminded her of the ones that belong to her grandmother.

Reminiscent of a Hollywood set, the General Store gallery is one of the highlights of a visit to the museum. There, a visitor can go window shopping down a board walk in between mock storefronts where there is a general store, post office, a woman's clothing store and clock shop.

"This is nicely done," said White.

Kincardine's favourite turn of the century photographer, John Harnag Scougall, is featured widely in the museum. Scougall took many photographs of the life of the town as it developed

during the late 1800's and early 1900's. The museum has over 2,000 of his glass negatives, which can be made into photographs for a fee upon request.

The museum has several distinct sections, with two exhibits outside. The newer section of the museum houses the offices, exhibit hall and the archives. Outside there is a log cabin home and a log school house. The other part of the museum is the old school house that was built in 1878. It is not hard to see how this part of the museum was once dark and dreary. But change has come.

The Bruce Coast Marine Gallery is the newest exhibit and is well lit with open displays. Music, with water sounds plays in the background.

There is an old dug out canoe and a birch bark canoe, which are examples of the early ways people got around Bruce County. There is also a full sized signal basket, which has a conical upper part with a separate cylindrical part underneath. All in all, the two parts measure about a dozen feet in length.

Whether the cone was right side up, or up side down, or off was a signal to sailors about weather conditions. Old photographs of Kincardine harbour show the mast where the signal basket hung.

Ship models and examples of rigging and navigational instruments surround the viewer with a plethora of historic facts, all of which show the effort that went into the new gallery.

"We stripped the old gallery right down," said Lambertus De Graff, the outreach coordinator, who helped designed the new wing.

De Graff is quick to point out that the gallery would not have been possible without the help of many volunteers and the curator, Barbara Ribey.

In the coming year, De Graff plans to do much of the same to the Military Gallery. Already, there is support from the local Le-

gion branches.

The Marine Gallery is a clear indication of the direction of museums in the future. The exhibit is based on a loose story line, De Graff said, which is a new concept in design.

But museums have always told an important story, which makes

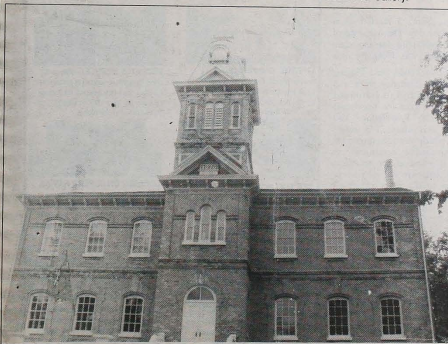
the past new and tells about the future.

After October 1 the museum will be closed on Saturdays.

Regular hours during the week are currently 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday, and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sundays.



Lambertus De Graff, the outreach coordinator for the museum, peers into a glass case at the new Bruce Coast Gallery.



Part of the Bruce County Museum in Southampton is located in this old school which was built in 1878.

*In
Appreciation*