



The Bruce County Historical Society's Isobelle Underwood displays two new publications from the organization - the 25th issue of its Yearbook and a book on Alexander McNeill, a Bruce County pioneer.

1992

Historical Society brings local past to life in books

by Isobelle Underwood

The recently published 1991 edition of the Bruce County Historical Society Yearbook marks an important milestone. It is the 25th such book published by the society. What began as a centennial project in 1967 met with such an excellent reception that the editorial board was encouraged to continue with the project. The Bruce County Historical Society was very fortunate to have the late Margaret Ferris of Glamis, as editor from 1967-1978; and Marlon McGillivray, of Arran Township, as her successor from 1978-1988. The present editor is Isobelle Underwood of Southampton.

Material for the yearbook is submitted by people who have a historical recollection to share. As one leafs through the twenty-five yearbooks, there are literally hundreds of stories that tell the history of Bruce County. They are timeless. People and places from every corner of the county are mentioned. One is struck by their diversity. These books, besides providing interesting reading for adults, are a valuable resource for our schools

to use in teaching local history.

As Margaret Ferris said in that initial issue of the yearbook in 1967, "We trust that in general this book justifies the aim of writing - to inform, to create interest and to give enjoyment."

Copies of past issues of the yearbook are still for sale.

The Bruce County Historical Society, under the able leadership of Christine Welsh, of Port Elgin, is flourishing. Many county residents enjoy the benefits of belonging to the society as well as members from across the rest of Canada and many American states. Members of the society receive the yearbook and four newsletters per year. They also receive a substantial discount on other books sold by the society.

A principal focus of the Bruce County Historical Society over the years has been to promote books that tell of our county's history. In addition to the yearbooks, there are a dozen other titles for sale. In 1989, the society published a PICTORIAL HISTORY OF BRUCE COUNTY - Pictures of Bruce County Prior to 1918. This proved so

popular that the first printing sold out within weeks. It has subsequently been reprinted and is once again available.

This year the society published ALEXANDER McNEILL: A POLITICAL LIFE, by Allan Bartley, formerly of Bruce County.

Alexander McNeill represented the riding of Bruce North in the Federal Parliament from 1882 to 1901. He was a friend of Sir John A. MacDonald and the poet Wilfred Campbell. He is probably best known locally for his beautiful home, The Corran, built near Warton overlooking the shores of Colpo's Bay. Bartley quotes from personal correspondence, newspapers of the day and archival material to show the complex character of Alexander McNeill. The book contains excellent photographs.

These and other books about Bruce County and its people are available from your local bookstore or by contacting Don and Irma McSparran, R.R. 1, Paisley, Ontario N0G 2N0. Tel. 363-6844.