



At the presentation of the Tweedsmuir Histories and Minute Books – on CD – to the Prince Edward County Archives, from left, were: Dianne Cranshaw Wellington Librarian; Barb Sweet, CEO Prince Edward Public Libraries; Brenda Dunlay, president of Hillier W.I.; Pam Noxon, municipal archives committee; Pat Van Kregten Hillier WI and archives volunteer; and Larry McQuoid, archives committee volunteer. Theresa Durning photo

Hillier first to present Tweedsmuir history on CD

TERESA DURNING
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It started in April of 2002 with a simple request at the Wellington Library. Pat and Jim Van Kregten wanted to know if the library had any information about the Hillier Women's Institute.

Then, the fun, and hard work began. Wellington Librarian, Dianne Cranshaw mentioned that the Prince Edward Library system was about to purchase a scanner and a printer and suggested that the Hillier Branch of the Women's Institute partner with the library to have the Tweedsmuir books scanned and copied to a CD-ROM.

The ball was rolling and in the summer of 2002, student Jean Blanchette, working at the Picton branch of the library, wrote a special program for imaging the books; showed the volunteers how to use the program and by the end of 2002 the three oldest Tweedsmuir books had been saved on CDs. But, that was only the beginning.

In January of 2003, Colleen Nyman, Katrina Creasy and Adam Walker were hired through an Industry Canada Community Access grant and the work of scanning the remain Tweedsmuir books continued. Within three months, six more books had been scanned onto CDs.

Lucas McFaul, IT specialist at the Picton branch, brought the project up-to-date, scanning all but the most current Tweedsmuir books. Additionally, McFaul scanned the Hillier Women's Institute Minute books dating from 1917 to 2001.

"Tweedsmuir History Books (or Tweedsmuir as they are commonly known) capture and preserve local community history in a unique way. They vary in form

from a simple scrapbook to an elaborate series of volumes bound in leather, wood or the more formal blue-and-gold cover. Tweedsmuir are comprised of a variety of information. They usually include a history of the: local Women's Institute Branch, earliest settlers in an area; agricultural practices and individual farms; industries that formed the basis of the local economy; social institutions and public buildings, such as churches, schools and community centers; local personalities, such as war veterans and much more.

Beginning in 1962, under the direction of the first provincial Tweedsmuir Curator, Mrs. R.C. Walker, the first Tweedsmuir Handbook was printed. The Handbook served as a guide for local curators and outlined how to go about compiling a local history book. This set of practical guidelines provided everything from the official first pages to the table of contents, to details on the type of paper, adhesives and covers to use. Tweedsmuir History Manuals are still compiled by the FWIO Provincial Tweedsmuir Coordinator for use by Branch, District and Area Curators."

Copies of the complete Tweedsmuir on CD were presented to the Prince Edward County Archives and to the Wellington and Picton branches of the library. A copy has also been sent to the Library and Public Archives of Canada. The original documents are now stored at the Prince Edward County Archives.