

History Woodville Open Air Rinks Recorded For The Past Sixty Years

The convenor of historical research, of Woodville W. I., recently delved into the history of the rink at Woodville and presented an informative sketch to the other members of the W. I.

History of open-air rinks in Woodville goes back 60 years. At that time, a rink was operated by the Bottom Brothers on a creek on Dan McLean's farm on the fourth concession. A shed was provided for the use of patrons as a dressing room. One of the Bottom brothers lived, at one time where John McPherson now lives.

Following this, a rink appeared on the Presbyterian Church grounds. A short time later, another rink was built behind the old town hall and jail, on the north side of Napdale Street. These three rinks were all open-air rinks and some of Woodville's older skaters remember them yet. It is stated that in those days, one of the features of the winter would be an ice carnival which attracted a great deal of attention.

The first closed-in rink appeared in the Agricultural Hall at the fair grounds. At the Woodville fall fair, the building was used for the exhibition of vegetables, etc. and in the winter, it was flooded and people of the village used to skate around the covered rink with the four posts in the centre of the ice. The music for the skating was supplied by the Woodville Citizen's Band in those days. The band had a stand that was built in the centre of the rink between two of the posts. Oldtimers recall that one of the favourite skating tunes was the waltz "Over the Waves." Each winter, the hall was rented to some local individual who operated the rink on his own initiative. One of the first men in Woodville to undertake the operation of the rink was John Kirkland.

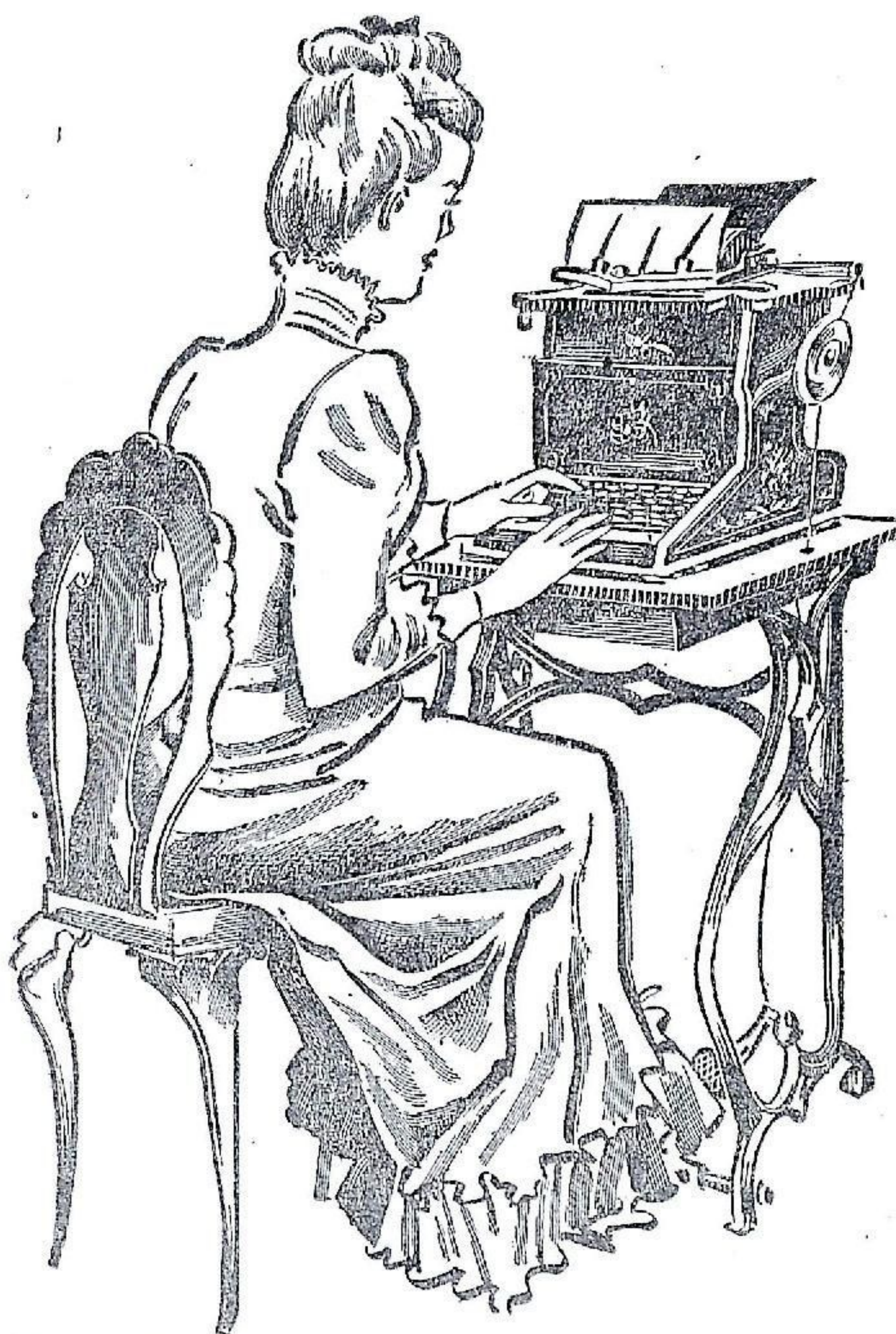
The rink in the fair grounds was enlarged in 1901, when the Woodville Citizen's Band took over its management and continued for a number of years. In 1911, on June 11th a bad windstorm levelled the old building and shortly thereafter another rink was built. This new rink was considerably larger than the former one and dressing rooms and a band room were added. A passageway was built on the one side of the ice for the convenience of hockey fans. Citizens of the village considered they had built a real rink for a community of its size.



In 1947, the Memorial Committee decided to build a new arena as a memorial to the men who had lost their lives overseas in World War II. Work was begun and men and boys numbering 274, soon tore the old rink down and set to work building the new arena. From May 12th, 1948, to February 18th, 1949, there were 9,454 hours of labour donated free by the townsfolk to the project. The rink was opened on February 19th, 1949. The dedication of the War Memorial Plaque took place on June 25th, of this year.

Since the decision to erect a rink, money has been raised in several ways to finance the project. The total cost of the rink was \$26,764.99. A general canvas of the community; music recitals, superfluity sales, box socials and parties were some of the means used to raise the money.

At present the executive of the War Memorial Committee includes: president, C. S. Stoddart; vice-president, E. Thorpe; Secretary, A. H. Bell; treasurer, F. C. T. Smith. Other committee members are T. G. Morrow, Dr. J. B. Cramer, R. J. McAlpine, H. R. Sonley, James Nichols, B. Clayton, Mrs. C. S. Stoddart, Mrs. A. L. Hoocy.



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