



LAURA GREEN / CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Visiting with Laura Garner (left), a volunteer at the Spriet Family Visitor Centre in London, who spends her time archiving donated items are two Oxford District members Mary MacKay and Mary Walton. *Fox. Gaz. File Aug. 9, 2017*

## Preserving our Women's Institute 120-year history workshop held

By Laura Green

The annual Southern Area W.I. Tweedsmuir History workshop was held at the Spriet Family Visitor Centre/Fanshawe

Pioneer Village, London on August 1st, with over 70 members representing seven districts in attendance.

Laura Garner, a volunteer with Spriet Family Visitor Centre introduced the group to the centre which opened in 2013. It provides state-of-the-art storage space

for the 25,000 historic artifacts at the village which includes Southern Area Tweedsmuir Community History books and a few branches books from Middlesex County.

Using a power point presentation she told the group the steps involved in preserving donated history collections – from cataloguing to wrapping in acid free paper to boxing.

Laura Garner has traced both sides of her family history so she knows how valuable the Tweedsmuir books are for research. She is quoted "archiving of the Women's Institute

donations to Fanshawe Pioneer Village was a labour of love". Garner is employed with the Middlesex County Library – Thorndale Branch.

Each district coordinator commented on one W.I. artefact of the past and each branch from Middlesex District had a display of items from 120 years ago.

Anne Innes from Oxford District discussed the digitizing progress of all the Tweedsmuir books across the province. Branches and districts from Southern area should be ready for the process by April 2018.

FWIO has an agreement with the Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS) to digitize the Tweedsmuir Collections and make them available to the public through the OGS e-library. For more information on Tweedsmuir Community History Books visit their website at [www.fwio.on.ca](http://www.fwio.on.ca)