



FINISHED, THE CENTENNIAL PROJECT of the industrial arts classes at Acton district high school is checked by Bob Royce, left, and Randy Ridley, kneeling, Vince Dunne and Ed Lynch standing behind while Theresa Marzo spins the yarn on the spinning wheel. The unique project was done entirely by students with industrial arts teacher Clarence Rognvaldson acting only as an advisor. (Staff Photo)

Spinning yarn at fairs

High school students demonstrate spinning on wheel they made

Demonstrations of the art of spinning with a spinning wheel they made themselves as a centennial project will be done by students of Acton district high school at fairs and exhibitions this fall including Acton Fair. Students in the industrial arts class at the school finished the project before the final examinations started. They produced the three wheels right from the drawings to finished product.

Industrial arts teacher Clarence (Sonny) Rognvaldson did none of the work. Student craftsmen planned and built the wheels on their own with Mr. Rognvaldson acting only in an advisory capacity.

A schedule was set up and rigidly adhered to and the project would have done credit to professionals. Drawings were made to scale and actual shop conditions simulated. The finished product was on display when The Free Press visited the school and students put it through a dry run for the reporter's benefit.

It's a unique centennial project, duplicated nowhere else in Canada possibly because there are few people left who can actually make a spinning wheel.

How did industrial arts teacher Rognvaldson learn the technique? His father passed it on to him after a lifetime of making his own wheels. Mr. Rognvaldson explains it this way:

When the Scottish immigrants came into Manitoba as the Selkirk Settlers they brought with them a number of cultural changes. Included was the raising of sheep and the spinning and weaving of wool into the warm garments which were essential in the rigorous Manitoba winters. The spinning wheels they brought with them were of the upright type, that is, the spinner and bobbin were placed directly above the wheel as distinctive from the Quebec wheel where the flyer was at one end of a larger horizontal base.

The upright wheel has advantages, especially in the amount of space occupied. The crofter's home in Scotland and the Manitoba log cabin could not afford room for a bulky piece of furniture however useful it might be. On addition, the smaller wheel was lighter and

easily carried when the ladies made visits. They did take their wheels with them. Time was valuable and the women of the west did not just go out for "afternoon tea", an ordinary social call for them might easily include three days — more if a typical prairie blizzard should develop.

The whirr of the bobbin and the clack of the needles as background to the chatter and gossip was the usual atmosphere in the settlers' homes and Mr. Rognvaldson can recall women, whose tongues and needles were fast.

The wheels remained in the homes almost entirely unchanged from 1850 until 1930. There were no craftsmen interested in producing them. Those available on the market were of the Quebec type.

In 1930 John Rognvaldson of Winnipegosis, Manitoba, redesigned the general pattern of the wheel and submitted his design in a competition arranged by the Manitoba Industrial Development Commission.

He won first prize and T. Eaton Co. of Winnipeg contracted with him to supply their market.

This business came at an opportune time and the "dirty thirties" saw the Rognvaldson family at work producing these wheels in order to keep meat on the table.

The present increased activity in the hobby of spinning and weaving is not related to

the real need for garments but is rather a convenient means of producing a relaxing period in the housewives day to day program.

It is increasingly evident that the lady of the house requires some form of activity to maintain a happy and healthy household. To that spinning lends itself in an admirable fashion because the end results are practical — the activity pro-

vides for creative expression and the conversations which the produce excites allows for pride so necessary for our vanity.

If you happen to be at district exhibitions and fairs, keep your eyes open for the high school students and their wheel.

It is proof that the traditions of yesterday are not forgotten by the rising generation.

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OFFICE CLOSED ALL DAY SATURDAY DURING JULY - AUGUST

Esqueuing Council briefs

At their regular meeting Monday night Esqueuing council:

- Received a request from Henry Kelly, to close a road allowance at the rear of his property at Speyside. The clerk was to notify Mr. Kelly of the procedure and cost involved.

- Received a letter from Milton Rotary club signifying the club's intention to build homes for senior citizens and asking for names of anyone in the Milton district interested in obtaining such quarters.

- Passed a motion to grant the Stewarttown cemetery \$200 to finish work on the old cemetery.

- Received a request from Mr. Giles to close a lane beside his property in Glen Williams which hasn't been used for 17 years. Mr. Giles was advised the road allowance would be divided equally between the two adjoining properties and the recipients must pay all legal advertising fees.

- Took no action on a by-law circulated by the City of Owen Sound regarding Dutch Elm disease. Rigid measures were introduced in Owen Sound to combat the disease but councillors felt they would be too costly for the township.

- Received a letter from the minister of energy and resources management regarding a joint meeting to discuss measures to control floods on the Credit River. Council is seeking a less costly method than that proposed by the conservation authority.

- Were requested to do something about weeds in the township by Councillor Tom Hill. Mr. Hill was told the weed inspector is laid up at present but would be advised complaints had been received.

- Calico an inexpensive cotton fabric, was once a luxury item for royalty and well-to-do nobility. Originally printed, then hand painted, this staple from India was imported into Europe by foreign merchants who held a monopoly and reaped high prices. After the British East India Company was formed in 1599, calico became available to the masses.

- One of the members of Acton Citizens' Band of 60 years ago, H. LeRoy Brown, has identified almost all of the bandmen in the top group picture of the band, in last week's "Centennial Picture Gallery" on the editorial page.

- He says the picture was taken in 1909 — the first year the band had new white hats. In the front row are Billy Coleman, Mr. Brown and Harry Bell. Lined behind them are John Hill, Herbert Brown, Charles Mason, Jimmy Bowie, George Agnew, a man called Bob, Dr. W. G. C. Kenney, Harry Jeans an unknown man of Guelph who boarded here, Anson Thurston, Bert Smith, Jimmy Webster and Nelson Moore.

- Mr. Brown was also able to identify himself in another of the three band pictures last week. But he was a child watching, not one of the players! He thinks that picture was taken about 1900.

- No one had any suggestion of a time or occasion for the picture of the long parade down Bovey Ave.' wooden sidewalk years ago.

- The laboratory standards of the Canadian Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service are amongst the highest in the world.

District governor H. L. Wright meets with Acton Rotarians

Howard L. Wright of Toronto, Governor of the Rotary District of this area, addressed the local Rotary Club Tuesday during his official visit. The local club is one of 52 Rotary Clubs in this district.

Speaking of the global growth of Rotary, he said "Rotary is the pioneer of the service clubs and today numbers more than 12,785 clubs with a combined membership of more than 613,500 business and professional men. Spread through 134 countries in all parts of the world, Rotary Clubs meet every day of the week and conduct activities to improve their communities, aid youth, elevate business standards and

further international friendship and understanding." The district governor also conferred with Ralph Davies, local Rotary Club president, and Ron Lewis, club secretary, on matters of club administration and plans for future service activities.

Referring to the program of Luther Hodges of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, president of Rotary International for 1967-68, the Rotary governor said, "President Hodges has placed emphasis on the need for Rotarians everywhere to increase their personal involvement in

Rotary. He believes that a man's membership in Rotary becomes more meaningful through his own individual efforts to better his community, maintain high standards in his business or profession and develop an understanding of the problems of other nations."

During his visit, Mr. Wright was given additional information on some of the local Rotary Club's activities.

Concerning the activities of Rotary International, he outlined the work of the Rotary Foundation in providing scholarships.

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