

Chiefswood repairs await grant

OHSWEKEN — Repairs to Chiefswood, birthplace of famed poet E. Pauline Johnson, could begin this summer, says the museum's former curator.

"We may be able to start work in June," Wilma Green said Saturday.

"If not then, certainly by the fall."

The work is expected to cost about \$350,000.

The Chiefswood Restoration Committee awaits approval of a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications.

Community groups and foundations are ready to contribute but are waiting for the province to give its money first.

Built in the 1850s by Chief George H. M. Johnson, Chiefswood served as the Johnson family home from 1853 to 1884.

The building is on Highway 54 on the Six Nations Reserve.

Pauline Johnson (1861-1913) grew up in the home. She is best known for her book of poetry entitled *Flint and Feather*.

The first step is to repair the structure's foundation and roof.

The structure was toured Saturday by members of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. The group was holding its annual meeting in Brantford.

Built for bride

In addition to the restoration work, the Chiefswood committee would like to build an interpretive centre for people who visit the home and its 200 acres.

Restoration of the building's interior began in 1959. Chiefswood opened as a museum in June 1963.

The home has been closed for the last few years.

Chiefswood is the only building of its kind on a reserve. A unique feature is the absence of a back door, Ms. Green said.

When Chief Johnson built the house as a wedding gift for his English wife, they couldn't agree on where the front door should be.

They compromised, so there are his and hers front doors. His faces the Grand River while her door faces the road.



Expositor Photo

The childhood home of poet E. Pauline Johnson remains closed awaiting repairs.