

Chiefswood Museum opens in garden party setting

By Lynda Powless
Editor

It was 12 years in the making but Thursday the 19th century birthplace and home of one of Six Nation's most famous writers re-opened its doors in a garden party setting.

Chiefswood the birthplace and home of E. Pauline Johnson was officially opened after a 12-year renovation project and more than \$500,000 in renovations to bring the nine-room mansion estate back to its former glory.

Room after room features authentic furniture and period pieces that belonged to the Johnson family. The almost 100 people who gathered, including a busload of tourists who happened to be in the neighbourhood, band employees, politicians and Chiefswood renovation committee members and trustees, had a chance to view the home and sample strawberries and refreshments.

Chiefswood, designated a national historic site in 1992, is the only pre-Confederation "Indian" transition in existence. It was built in 1853 by Mohawk Chief George Johnson for his English bride, Emily Howells.

E. Pauline Johnson, probably best known for her poem "The Song My Paddle Sings" was born at the mansion-home in 1861.

The family left the homestead after the death of Johnson but the estate remained in the family until it was willed to the Six Nations by Pauline's sister Evelyn who died in 1937.



Six Nations elders Mona Staats and Florence Hill cut the ribbon officially opening Chiefswood Mansion Thursday.



Band Council Chief Wellington Staats and New Credit Chief Carolyn King were on hand for Thursday's opening of Pauline Johnson's homestead. Staats, one of the founding members of the Chiefswood Restoration Committee thanked all the committee members and volunteers who had worked over the years to see Chiefswood re-open.



MP Bob Speller, Haldimand-Norfolk was on hand Thursday for the opening of Chiefswood Museum and congratulated the community on a job well done



Kristina Hooskin in a new member to the Chiefswood Board of Trustees.