

YESTERDAY

News from the Tavistock and District Historical Society

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TAVISTOCK FALL FAIR EDITION

Features: End of an era: The closing of the Tavistock Carnegie Library
British Home Children: Creating a Legacy in Canada • Calendars: Tracking Time in Tavistock

**Tavistock & District
Historical Society**

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**Tavistock
& District
Historical
Society**

37 Maria Street,
Box 280,
Tavistock, Ontario,
Canada N0B 2R0

**MUSEUM
HOURS:**
Saturdays
10am-12 noon

Other times
by appointment

Photos at right:
the original Mechanics'
Institute Constitutions
and By-Laws book; and
an imprint of the seal.

ON THE COVER:
Carnegie Library,
Tavistock from the Lemp
Studio Collection.
Negative #0266

Carnegie Library ends an era

When the Carnegie Library Corporation offered \$7,500 to the residents of Tavistock in 1914 to build a new library, a meeting was held and the Library Board voted to pursue the idea.

Almost one hundred years later, the Oxford County Library was faced with an aging building and needed to find a location for a new library.

Dave and Kim Piggott were in the process of renovating the former Oxford Hotel in Tavistock and Library CEO Lisa Miettinen and the library board came up with an agreement to lease the main floor of the building. The new building would give them 4,500 square feet of space, almost three times that of the old library.

The Library made its official move and opened for the first time at the new location on Thursday, August 12, 2010. The Librarian is Mrs. Deb Schurink and substitute supervisors include Kathy Eastman and Judy Johnson.

A HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY

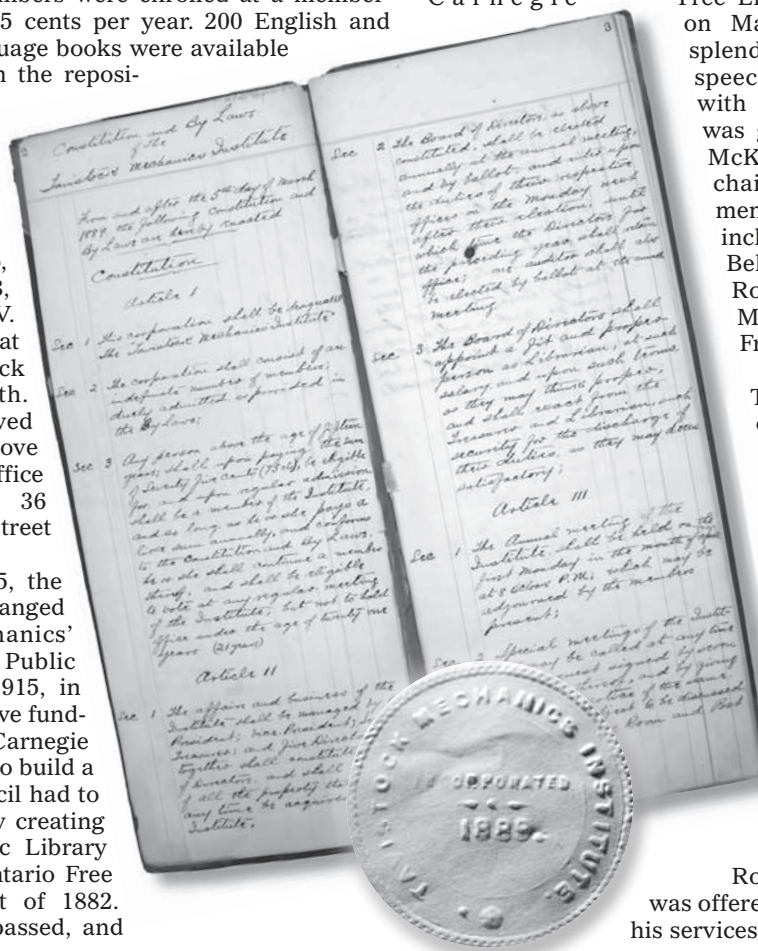
Tavistock had begun the work of a library in 1889 with the formation of a local Mechanics' Institute, the forerunner of the public library. Over 100 members were enrolled at a membership fee of 75 cents per year. 200 English and German language books were available for loan from the repository and reading room. It was first located above Barber Shop, then in 1893, moved to V. Stock's store at 5 Woodstock Street South. Later it moved to space above the old post office building at 36 Woodstock Street South.

About 1895, the name was changed from Mechanics' Institute to Public Library. In 1915, in order to receive funding from the Carnegie Corporation to build a library, Council had to pass a by-law creating a Free Public Library under the Ontario Free Libraries Act of 1882. The by-law passed, and

by June, Council had received a letter from the Carnegie Corporation stating that Tavistock was in good standing with the Library Association. By August, the Reeve and Clerk were asked to guarantee that if they received the \$7,500 grant construction would be guaranteed. A site was secured and Council pledged to maintain it. By September, contracts had been let for all but the heating, plumbing and galvanized work. The Board needed more time to get information on furnaces and boilers. H. Kalbfleisch & Son was to do the carpenter work for \$2,518; Jno. Piehl the masonry and stone work for \$2,825; Henry Schlitt the painting for \$400; and Mr. Whatmough of Stratford the wiring for \$59. M. Woelfle & Son supplied the heating and G. Eifert the plumbing and iron work. The total cost was estimated to be about \$6,800.

J.S. Russell, of Stratford was appointed architect for the project for a cost of \$75. P.E. Steinman was engaged as electrician and caretaker of the pumpinghouse and public library at a salary of \$900 per year. Almost three years from the day the proposal was offered, the new Tavistock Carnegie Free Library was opened on March 15, 1917. A splendid programme of speeches, interspersed with musical numbers was given. Mr. Duncan McKellar, acted as chairman and other members of the board included Messrs. A.T. Bell, Wm. Appel, Ed. Roth, John Lemp, Dr. Michael Steele, and Fred Krug.

Mr. Carson, of Toronto, inspector of Public Libraries for Ontario, spoke at the inaugural opening. Council later voted to hold their meetings at the Library for \$100 per year and the Water and Light Commission would be charged \$30 per year for meeting in the Council Room. The caretaker was offered \$150 per year for his services.



Did you know?

The Tavistock Public Library opened its new location on the main floor of the former Oxford Hotel, 40 Woodstock Street South on Thursday, August 12, 2010. Librarian Deb Schurink stated that 834 people visited the facility in its first week of operation.

MUSEUM CALENDAR:

Please mark your calendar, check your attics, scour your basements and plan to participate in the 2010 lineup.

Displays feature items related to the theme loaned by people in the community as well as artifacts from the Historical Society's permanent collection of Tavistock and area memorabilia.

2010 - Year of the British Home Child

August 7 – October 30
"Calendars".

Our walls are plastered with 100 calendars from Tavistock and area businesses from years past.

Sept. 10 – 12

See you at the 159th Tavistock Fall Fair

Nov. 6 – Jan. 23, 2011
"O Christmas Tree"

Did you know?

Historically, Mechanics' Institutes were educational establishments formed to provide adult education, particularly in technical subjects, to working men. The Mechanics' Institutes were used as 'libraries' for the adult working class, and provided them with an alternative pastime to gambling and drinking in pubs.

Source: Wikipedia.org

Children create a legacy

2010 - YEAR OF THE BRITISH HOME CHILD



PHOTO FROM LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

England was not a pleasant place for many during the last half of the 19th century and even early in the 20th century. No social programs existed to help those people, even children, displaced by the Industrial Revolution or famine.

Between 1869 and 1939, Canada received over 100,000 juvenile immigrants from the British Isles. Some were also sent to Zimbabwe, to South Africa and to New Zealand.

Most of these children had been brought up in poverty, and were homeless or living in the urban slums of Britain. Some were accused or even convicted of petty crimes. Many were orphans, while others were simply the victims of poverty, illness and misfortune. These children were typically placed in orphanages or workhouses by parents or kin who could not afford to take care of them.

The intent of the juvenile immigration program was to place these children with good Canadian families and thus increase their chances of leading happy and prosperous lives; but not all of the stories were happy ones. Some were hired to work on farms but often were not old enough or strong enough to do the work. Many ran away from the farm and went to live on the streets in the city.

A home for boys was set up in Toronto and a girl's village was established in Peterborough. Closer to home, many were brought to Stratford to Macpherson's Children's Home, 51 Avon Street which was established in 1883. The last Home Children to live there arrived in 1916. In 1919 the home closed and operations moved to Belleville. Historians estimate that 8,100 British children who were sent to Canada may have spent time in the Stratford home.

The photograph (above) is of British immigrant children arriving in Saint John, New Brunswick. Dr. Barnardo was responsible for bringing ap-

proximately one third of home children to Canada. His agency was the most important one involved in juvenile immigration to Canada. His homes were located in Peterborough and Toronto, in Ontario, as well as in Russell, Manitoba. Although the juvenile emigration program had negative aspects, it did provide the opportunity for a better life to many British children, who grew up into healthy, content adults. Some served in WWI and WWII, paying the ultimate sacrifice, while others became prominent in their communities.

The Tavistock and District Historical Society is attempting to make a registry of all the British Home Children who were placed in our community between 1869 to the mid 1940's. This will create an ongoing legacy that will help preserve their identities. If you know of a British Home Child that was placed here, the Historical Society would like to hear from you. A copy of the information collected will be placed in the Archives room.

The following is the current list of local Home Children that have been indentified to date.

- Alfred Cavey
- John James Edward Dewberry
- Percy William Dewberry
- Arthur William George
- Louisa (Green) Mansz
- George Medhurst
- Stanley Oliver Melbourne
- James William Powley
- Frederick Charles Edward Stevens*
- Walter Raybould
- Arthur Ernest Warwick
- James Watt
- Frederick Sydney Weston*
- Herbert Spencer Weston
- Thomas Wharf
- Arthur George Wiffen*
- Ralph Herbert Wiffen*

On February 24, 2010, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown extended an official apology to British Home Children and their descendants for the injustices that occurred as a result of child migration schemes. In recognition of their contribution to Canadian society, 2010 was declared as "The Year of The Home Child".

Our speaker series features Lynn Matthison of Stratford who will be speaking on Home Children at the Tavistock Men's Club Hall on Wednesday evening, September 22, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.



Fred Stevens



Fred Weston



Arthur Wiffen



Ralph Wiffen

Tracking time in Tavistock

CALENDARS ~ August 7 to October 30

by Barbara Matthies, Museum Displays Chairperson

The current display at the Tavistock and District Historical Society Museum and Archives features Tavistock and area business calendars. As you walk through uptown Tavistock and see the empty stores, it reminds us of days when Tavistock was a flourishing little town.

In those days, late Friday night and Saturday night, the farmers would come to town to get their supplies. This was a very busy night. The women got their groceries and the men caught up with the news at the hotels. People always had time to visit with their neighbours and other town folk and you knew everyone in town.

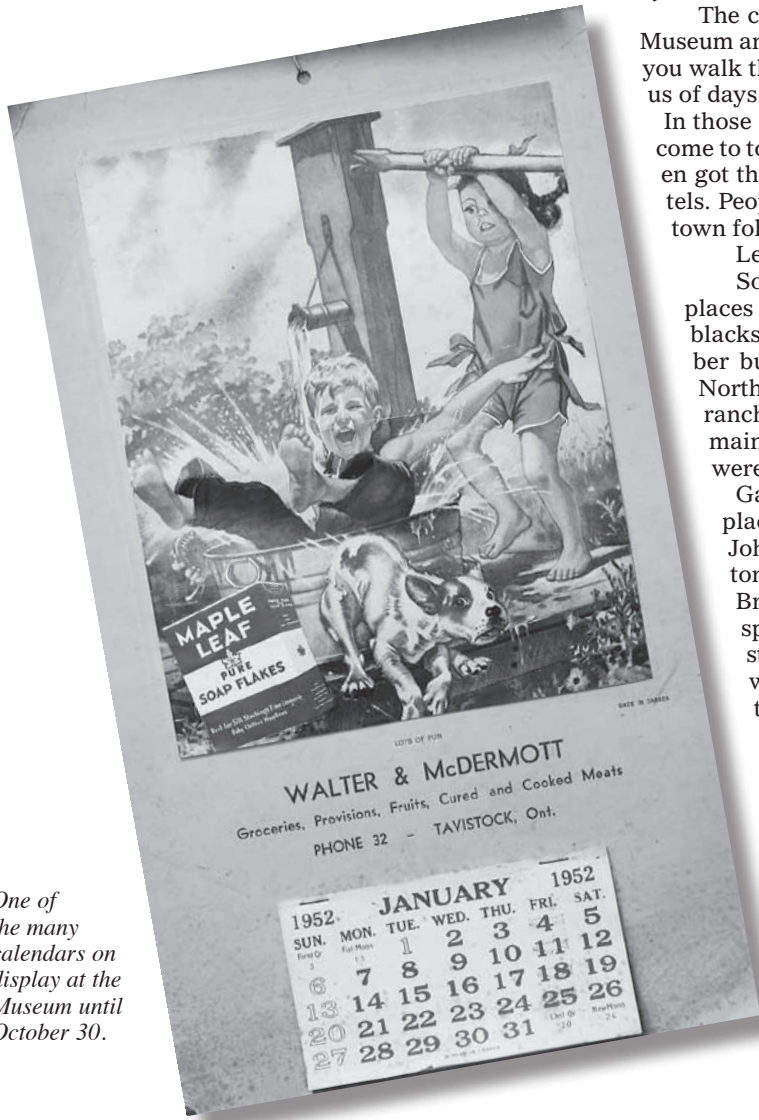
Let's journey back to the early 1950's and reminisce.

Some of the businesses that have since been forgotten include places like Ernie Piehl's bicycle and repair shop and Reuben Zehr's blacksmith shop. The Tavistock Produce and Rudy's Coal and Lumber business were once thriving businesses on Woodstock Street North along with Zimmerman Bros. box factory, fox and mink ranch. Calendars they handed out to customers each year still remain as a reminder of days gone by, when business and commerce were at an all time high.

Garages especially had annual calendars available including places like Steinman's Supertest, Dyck's Garage, Horman's, Johnny Gascho, Gus Strahm, Bourne's, Sippel's, McDermott Motors and Houghton's Auto Body. Eifert's Tinsmith Shop, Klein Bros. Hardware, and Rudolph Otto's machine shop were busy spots in those days. And Tavistock had no shortage of grocery stores including Boyd's, Walter's, McDermott's, Pfeiffer's, as well as old fashioned general stores such as Peppler's, Tavistock 5¢ to \$1.00 store, and the butcher shops of Schoeck's and Weicker's.

Calendars now on display that advertised other types of businesses were the Tavistock Dairy, the Milling Company, Wettlaufer's Egg Grading Station, Harold Schlitt the painter, Lorne Yausie Concrete and A.B. Roth Septic Tank Cleaning. Tavistock had almost everything you could want and it is reflected in the interesting array of calendars now on display until October 30th.

If you have an old calendar from a Tavistock business or a story you would like to share, jot it down and bring it into the Museum at 37 Maria Street. We're open Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. until noon or by appointment.



One of the many calendars on display at the Museum until October 30.

“Home Children” with Lynn Matthison
Wednesday, September 22
 7:00 p.m. at Tavistock Men’s Club Hall

SPEAKER SERIES



Did you know?

The original, oak circulation desk from the Carnegie Library is now part of the new Library service desk. Also, photographs on the walls have been printed from the Lemp Studio Collection and were placed as a gift from the Tavistock and District Historical Society.