

LAKE COUNTRY MUSEUM

LAKE COUNTRY HERITAGE & CULTURAL SOCIETY

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Message from the President

This last month the Museum has been dealing with our insect collection and in the process I have learned a good deal about certain members of our community, past and present.

Rehabilitating and exhibiting our entomological exhibits has been on the Museum's agenda for some time. The Board was concerned because Ward Strong, an entomologist with the provincial forestry research station in Vernon, had advised that the collection may have been destroyed over time by other bugs eating the dead insects. Dr. Strong and curator Dan Bruce examined the collection and found it to be in excellent shape and they reported that the collection is professionally presented with each insect labeled and named, and with a catalogue number attached. We thought that if we could find the catalogue, the collection would have enhanced research value. The search began.

Archivist Sonja MacCrimmon reported that Patti Wentworth had presented the collection to the Museum and a phone call to Patti confirmed this. Her entomologist father, Ed Harvey, had professionally prepared a collection for the federal government and while doing that had made a duplicate, personal collection. Patti remembers sitting on her father's shoulders shaking trees to dislodge bugs that were then collected from a tarp placed under the tree. Her uncle, Jim Harvey, also an entomologist, still lives in Vernon and she invited him to the Museum to view the exhibits and provide more information. I learned a great deal about the Harvey family from that meeting.

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Ed Harvey's collection of moths and butterflies from Canada and Australia is not as comprehensive but it is visually impressive, especially the brightly coloured specimens from Australia. Jim explained how he and Ed made the wings of the butterflies extend out exactly horizontally, by inserting cougar whiskers in the veins of the wing to stiffen them for presentation. This seemed to me a little improbable so I asked Jim how long it took a cougar to grow whiskers after they had been plucked. He ignored this question but later coyly explained that he had a game warden friend who provided him with cougar whiskers. I have this residual feeling that old Jim Har-

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-vey was playing me. How many cougar whiskers would an entomologist need to support a large collection of butterfly wings? Is there a market for cougar whiskers?

Jim Harvey also explained the numbers associated with each insect. When a specimen was collected the details were entered on a pad of paper which had numbered sheets. This identifying note, along with the specimen and a leaf or branch of a tree on which it was found were placed in a tube and mailed to Ottawa. Likely no catalogue exists.

I certainly appreciate the Harvey family's contribution to our knowledge of natural history and to our Museum.

Duane Thomson, President

All Fired Up

Historical facts may remain unchanged through decades, centuries and millennia, but modern approaches to documenting history need not remain the same as they have been in the past. This is the kind of vision that the Lake Country Museum subscribes to, and as a new exhibition reveals, this line of thinking is capable of producing a display that even larger museums would be proud to show.

Museum curator Dan Bruce says as the community grows the museum needs to grow along with it and expand its horizons. Local history will always be an important part of the Lake Country Museum, but it doesn't have to be everything. "This is our first themed show and I can promise you it won't be our last," says Bruce of the museum's new exhibition entitled *All Fired Up*. "We need to get away from this idea that if something didn't come from Lake Country it doesn't belong in the museum. The museum should be a home for the treasures of the community." As immigrants arrive in town from other parts of the world Bruce sees value in appealing to their cultures as well. "I think some of the Mexicans who come to work here would just be amazed to see some of the pieces of Mexican pot-

tery that we have on display here right now," says Bruce.

The museum describes its new show as an exhibition of ceramic masterpieces. The artifacts in the collection date back as much as 4,000 years ago and originate from cultures around the world including Iran, Mexico, China and more. It's mind boggling to view the pieces in the collection and consider the places they've been and the events they've been witness to during the course of their existence. The quality of craftsmanship of the artifacts is stunning. Perhaps the most amazing of all is the Prince of Wales Ice Pail, crafted in 1930 by Belleek Pottery Works Company Ltd. in Northern Ireland. The slightly iridescent pail with its intricately carved cherubs, mermaids, dolphins and horses looks more like an elegant trophy than a utility item. The Prince of Wales Ice Pail was one of the most expensive items every produced by Belleek Pottery.

Chris Law, The Calendar

Eliza Jane(Simpson)Swalwell

The January 15, 1992 edition of *The Calendar* reported that "Swalwell" was the favourite choice of local residents for Lake Country's newest park. Public opinion greatly favoured this name, in remembrance of Eliza J. Swalwell. It is appropriate that some details of this pioneer's life be recorded.

Eliza Jane Simpson was born in the Okanagan Valley, December 14, 1868. Her father, George W. Simpson, arrived in the Okanagan in the 1860's. In 1870, he purchased (from the Brent family) property at the south end of Duck Lake. Eliza's mother, Sarah Stepetsa, was a First Nations woman from the south end of the Valley. Eliza lived her first few years on the property at Duck Lake, and in 1872 the Simpson family moved south to property on the Old Vernon Road, now the site of a golf course.

Eliza Jane Simpson had at least four younger siblings: George William Simpson (1871-1930), Sarah Ann Simpson (1875-1956; she married Victor Borrie, and they lived on the Reserve at Duck Lake), Thomas (1881-1912), and Charles (1891-1982). The younger Simpson children attended school at Ellison, but Eliza was probably taught at home, re

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ceiving many of her lessons from the well-worn Bible which her father constantly carried with him

Eliza Simpson was called upon to assist local pioneer women in giving birth, often assisting Mrs. Brent. In 1884, Eliza, then sixteen years old, assisted in the birth of the author's maternal grandmother, Margaret Annie Whelan. Eliza and Margaret became good friends, enjoying this special relationship for the rest of their lives. On April 6, 1884, Eliza Simpson married local rancher, Thomas Jones. They had one son, Thomas William "Tommy" (1886). Several years later Thomas Jones died, leaving Eliza and their young son. On May 10, 1892, Eliza Jane married William Pelissier Swalwell, a cousin of the pioneer Postill family. William Swalwell was a widower, and he owned a butcher shop in Vernon.

The young couple settled on property in the Ellison District, south of the original Simpson Ranch at Duck Lake. Eliza's parents moved in with her, and spent the rest of their lives there. Sara (Stepetsa) Simpson died in 1901, and George W. Simpson died the following year. They were both buried on the Swalwell Ranch, later known as the Dickson Ranch.

Eliza and William Swalwell later moved to Winfield, where they had a home beside the creek, now site of the park. William Swalwell died at Kamloops on March 14, 1926. Eliza survived him by eighteen years; she died at Kelowna, February 13, 1944, and was buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery, Okanagan Mission. She was survived by her son, Tommy. In her obituary ([The Kelowna Courier](#)), it reported that, "Her death marked the end of the trail for one of the pioneers of the Okanagan." At the time of her passing, she was one of the senior pioneer residents of the Valley.

Eliza Jane Swalwell was very proud of her native ancestry, and wrote much about it. An extensive article, "Girlhood Days in Okanagan", written by this pioneer, appears in the [Eighth Report](#) of the Okanagan Historical Society. It provides much information about the earliest pioneer days in our valley. A much-loved Central Okanagan pioneer, it is appro-

priate that a park in Lake Country be named in her memory.

Robert Hayes, Director

Historical Markers

On December 7th, 2010 at the District's Council meeting, the Lake Country Museum (Lake Country Heritage and Cultural Society) unveiled the first of four Historical Markers that will be located in each of Lake Country's wards: Winfield, Okanagan Centre, Oyama and Carr's Landing.

The Lake Country Museum staff, a team of dedicated volunteers and members of the community worked with the District to complete the first four markers. Each community's history was researched from its earliest beginnings to design the markers with accurate information and photographs. The text panels are accompanied by a series of archival photographs depicting the pioneers and the community from the late 1800s to mid-1900s.

Each of the four initial markers recognizes a unique heritage site and includes a view of one of the nearby lakes as seen from that ward. Each marker respectively links the heritage sites, includes a map of the District and information about the municipalities beginnings and formation under a ward constituency system.

Please visit the markers at their heritage sites: The Okanagan Centre marker is located at the main access to the walking trails and beach at Okanagan Centre. The Carr's Landing marker is located at R.S. Marshall Park, the original site of Carr's Landing Wharf. The Winfield marker is located on the west side of the intersection of Main Street and Berry Road on community greenspace and the Oyama marker is located at the Oyama Community Club on the isthmus.