

## The Canada 150 Project – Do You Have a Story To Tell?

**Background:** Canada will be celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. “Canada 150” is a history-gathering project, encouraging the recording of the lives, histories, and memories of Canadians, their communities, and businesses/organizations for future generations. The intent is to collect 1.5 million stories across Canada and present them to the Governor General on July 1, 2017 – less than 5 years from now. Check out [www.canada150.com](http://www.canada150.com) for further details.

The Women’s Institutes in Ontario were invited to be a founding partner of this initiative and we accepted. This was an opportunity we could not ignore. Canada 150 is exactly what we have been doing through our Tweedsmuir Community History Collections. This project will showcase our accomplishments and provide excellent promotion and publicity for the WI.

There are two aspects to this initiative for members, which are further described below:

1. Gathering stories – Individuals, communities and organizations are encouraged to write and submit their stories.
2. Province-wide project(s) - Members are to choose at least one project. The first project is to be decided by mid 2013.

### **Types of Stories:**

The end product does not necessarily mean a traditional published book. It could be an e-book. It does not even have to be a book. Canada 150 has made an agreement with the company, *Canadiana* ([www.canadiana.ca](http://www.canadiana.ca)), to host and maintain digital collections of stories, photos, and videos that will be received. So the story could be:

1. A photo with an explanation,
2. A video of members’ reminisces,
3. Your full life story,
4. Your village or community history,
5. Stories and histories from different faith and cultural communities, or
6. Stories and histories of associations, schools, and arts and sports groups.

The topics are endless.

### **Why is this important?**

People that lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have seen the most changes since civilization began. But yet, for the past 50+ years, fewer and fewer letters, diaries, and journals are being written. And how many thousands of photos are stored on computers without a story; not even a name? If we do not capture this information, the stories of ordinary people will be lost.

### **Stories by individuals, communities, and organizations:**

Individual members are encouraged to write their stories. Check out the website, [www.canada150.com](http://www.canada150.com). There you will find a free e-book to download or print. It gives an excellent method for a person to start writing their life memories, amongst other things.

If a full life story seems daunting, then write only a story of an event or an item. You may surprise yourself on the rich stories you have to tell.

Branches, districts, and areas can also get involved. Promote Canada 150 in your community and get organizations and other individuals writing stories. Encourage members by holding a competition. Guelph Area has already started by having a Real Life Stories competition for their 2013 Area Convention. Even if you do not win, you have written a little bit of your life for a future generation to cherish. Every entry is important.

*Canadiana* is not yet ready to receive submissions but now is the time to get started. Further information will be provided as details on submissions are completed. Options are also being looked at to have members share ideas, ask questions, and know our progress.

**Province-wide Project(s):**

As a founding member of Canada 150, we are to create a province-wide project or projects. An ideal project would be one that is applicable to all areas of the province and where many members of all ages have a chance to be involved.

The first step is to determine what the project(s) may be. On the attached sheet is an initial list of possible projects, with spots available to add more ideas. This initial list is to get ideas flowing. An electronic version will also be available on the website.

Choose your top projects and forward to the Canada 150 Coordinator, via email or mail (details below), immediately after your District Annual or May 31<sup>st</sup> at the latest.

Replies will be received from all levels of the organization - branches, districts, and areas. During the month of June, a committee will review the responses. If the choice is clear, the recommendation will be given to the Board in July for approval. If there are no clear winners, then the top choices, including top new suggestions, will be brought to the membership again before a final decision is made. Various options are being investigated to attempt a quick turn around for this second review.

Feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or suggestions. I also welcome members who are interested in helping coordinate this effort.

Let's get involved, spread the word, and capture the stories of ourselves, our family, and our community.

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## CANADA 150 – Choosing a Province-Wide Project

Branch \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Deadline:** Immediately after your District Annual or May 31<sup>st</sup>, at the latest.

### Directions:

1. Review the projects below and add any others that would be worthwhile.
2. Choose your top projects (maximum 5), by putting a number on the left hand side, with #1 being your top choice and #5 being your 5<sup>th</sup> choice.
3. Please forward via email ([tweedsmuircoordinator@fwio.on.ca](mailto:tweedsmuircoordinator@fwio.on.ca)) or mail to:  
Irene Robillard, 1075 Calabogie Road, RR 1 Renfrew ON K7V 3Z4.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Inspirational Stories (for example, getting through a tough time.) This would allow members of any age to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Real Life Stories. Again, this would allow members of any age to participate. (Thanks to Guelph Area for the suggestion.)

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Series of books (could be e-books) documenting our memories of different eras of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, such as Stories from the Great Depression (1930s), Recollections of the Post War Years (1945-1960), Memories of 1960s/1970s, and Preparing for the new Century (1980-2000). (This would be similar to our two books, *From This Place* and *Fighting for Home and Country*.)

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Similar to #2, but concentrating on only one era – provide era \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Memories of your youth. This would allow members of any age to participate, providing information on all decades in the last 80+ years.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Memories of the first years of your marriage. Again, this would allow members of any age to participate and show what life was like across many decades.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. WI Community Buildings and Structures over the years. With the many disbanded branches and districts over recent years, we are forgetting what has been accomplished in communities in past 100+ years. This project would document the buildings, plaques, and other structures that the WI has been involved with over the years. As an example, a photo of your WI Hall with a short description of its history.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. A quilt. (The blocks (or sections) would also be photographed and their meaning/background described.) Describe what you would envision for this project:

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\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Farms that have been in the same family for 150 years.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. Collaborate with another rural organization for a project. Please provide explanation of project, if you have one. For example, helping the Junior Farmers document farms that have been in the same family for 150 years. (I think they did this for Canada's centennial year.)

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. Be the coordinator for rural Ontario. Communicate Canada 150 to other rural organizations and help them to get involved with this project. Perhaps this could be through the Rural Voices Network.

\_\_\_\_\_ 12. School children interviewing and documenting members – similar to the ROSE Buddy sessions. This would allow intergenerational dialogue and capture the lives of members through the eyes of a child. This could audio, video, or written.

\_\_\_\_\_ 13. Short 2-5 minute videos. These could be also on the provincial website, as well as added to the Canada 150 collection. Describe below your vision for this.

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Please elaborate on your vision for your top project(s). \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have any other comments or suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

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