

The Broad Road

Newsletter of

Manvers Township Historical Society

1480 Hwy 7A, Bethany, ON L0A 1A0

January 2025



Alice Maude Mary Gibson was born October 19 1879 in Pontypool. She married Thomas Hobbs on December 24 in 1902 in Oshawa. The couple had four children. Her son Maurice Hobbs was a doctor in Millbrook. He is buried in Springville.

MTHS Events and News

Help Wanted

The Executive met on January 15 and reviewed the goals of each committee for the year , have a look and reach out to help or with ideas to the lead.

Media Committee– Teresa Jordan

- Review structure and each page of website
- Research new content for website
- Add a feature to social media and website to feature artifacts and archives available
- Look at a fresh format for the Broad Road
- Get more members to contribute and some added administrators on Facebook

Elevator Committee– Kathy Morton

- Get approval for Capstone and use money to complete interior restoration
- Get virtual tour and information investigated and in place
- Begin developing curriculum for possible use in school and MTHS use.

Banner Veteran Committee– Teresa Jordan

- Recruit more help
- Commission new banners this year and create a booklet featuring all veterans honoured

Library and Artifacts Committee– Mary Hughes

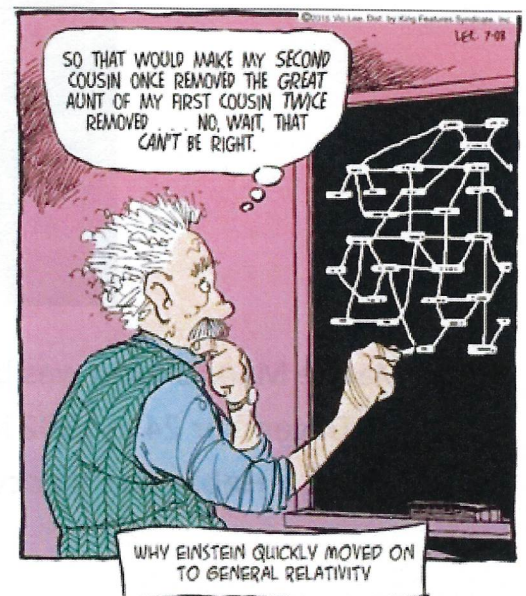
- Update information of current items in inventory
- Add new items and do a campaign to solicit donations
- Create plan for rotation and exhibits
- Get office up and running to begin digital work– looking for volunteers

Research Centre– Dianne Carnaghan

- Maximize the greenspace with added events
- Produce a self guided tour of one room school houses in Manvers
- Expand family tree section of Research Centre– campaign to solicit donations
- Expand use of the research centre and add events like a book sale

Maintenance Committee– Teresa Jordan

- Clarify roles and communication
- Get some added help and ensure all offers are enlisted for helping
- Create an annual plan in addition to ongoing repairs and solutions.



Charcoal on Canvas and the Gibson Family

Submitted by: Teresa Jordan

Like many of our readers I have seen wonderful old charcoal drawings of ancestors and community members in my research and exploration of local history. I never thought too much about it, but was convinced that these predated photography or were in place of more modern photography. And while that is the case, considering charcoal drawings are after all what cave drawings were done with, this was a trade. Between 1860 and well into the 20th century charcoal drawings could be commissioned. These were done to commemorate birthdays or anniversaries or just to add to the artistic ambiance of the family room. Patrons would give the company photos from which to work, gone are my imaginings that the prints represented portrait sittings and easels.

I was alerted to this robust history by MTHS follower Christopher Ashby who contacted the society through Facebook to share portraits and photos of the Gibson family of Pontypool. Uniquely, he donated both the charcoal portrait and the photo from which it was crafted. Margaret Gibson is featured below. I love the whimsical pose in the photo and then the way the artist did the sketch in a more conservative pose.



The Gibson family lived in Pontypool from the 1860's to about 1940. Margaret Sophia Gibson was born to parents William Henry Gibson and Mary Elizabeth Bullied on July 18, 1875. Born in Pontypool, Margaret died in Toronto in 1913. She married George James Parnell in Toronto.

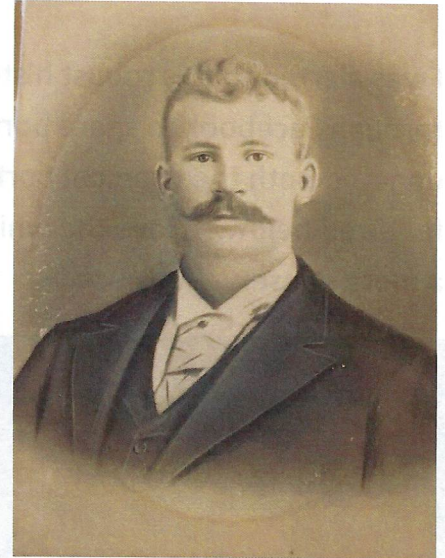


Charcoal on Canvas and the Gibson Family

Submitted by: Teresa Jordan

Christopher Ashby offers careful research into the Gibson family. He records that in 1857 William Gibson becomes a land owner in Manvers Township, on the 5th concession. In the 1861 census William and his wife Mary are living in Pontypool with three children. It would seem that their oldest daughter had already married and was not living there. William Gibson and Mary Peart had four children: Ashmall born 1837, in England, she married John Maynard and moved to Michigan but seem to return to the Pontypool area for a time. William Henry Gibson born 1841 in England, he married Mary Elizabeth Bullied and lived in Pontypool. George Gibson was born 1842 in England and died 1902 in Pontypool, he was married to Christina Elizabeth Gilbank. And the youngest Margaret Gibson, born 1846 in England, she married Charles Ashby (hence Christopher's connection) in Manvers. Charles died 1918 and Margaret married Simon Jennings moving to Simcoe county. Pictured are : Charles Henry Gibson and Martha Anne Cuncannon.

Charles was the son or William Henry



Gibson and Mary Bullied. Charles was born in Pontypool in 1873 and died in 1958 in Peterborough.

George Gibson, mentioned above, died December 1912 in Pontypool and the cause of death is listed as "struck by a train". He is also listed as a baker with a notation from an Orono paper cited by Christopher that " Mr. Gibson's bakery is running night and day. George and Christina go on to have ten children. Two of the children died before adulthood. Many members of this family rest in Pontypool cemetery.

As happens in founding families there are many interconnections the daughter of Ashmall—Anne Elizabeth Maynard, married Thomas Bullied in Manvers Township in 1875. This pair goes on to have seven children. One of the seven, a daughter Margaret Suzanna, married into my own family tree.

Special thanks to Christopher Ashby for donating these wonderful photos, portraits and the Gibson family history. For more information please connect with our research centre where the family history and photos are now housed.

Charcoal on Canvas and the Gibson Family

Submitted by: Teresa Jordan

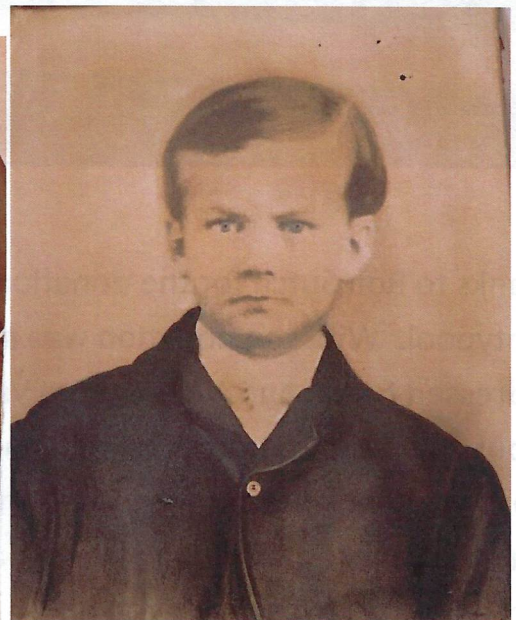
A CLEVER CAPTURE.

John Connors, a transient visitor, was locked up at police headquarters yesterday, charged with forgery and swindling. A few days ago Connors called at the photographing establishment of Messrs. Bentley and Wark, 195 Yonge street, and represented that he was in the portrait business, and that he was employing forty or fifty agents to canvass for him. He wanted the firm to turn out the pictures for him. He said he wanted to do business in their studio until he could rent an office, and this permission was given. He then advertised for agents, demanding \$25 security. He received a number of replies. Yesterday Inspector Stark placed a detective to watch Connors, who was followed to Neil's photograph gallery, next to Bentley and Wark's, on Yonge street. The detective arrested Connors as he was in the act of signing Bentley and Wark's name to a receipt for a deposit. The prisoner says that he came from Fort Wayne, Ind. Beyond this he would not give any information. The police are desirous of obtaining

In the research Christopher Ashby was doing he came across this interesting article from The Daily Mail and Empire— Friday, October 4, 1895. It would seem that not unlike email scams of today, fraudsters were at work and in this case were taking money for charcoal portraits and not delivering. The Toronto based newspaper reports the crime of forgery and swindling. At least one of the charcoal portraits donated was done at the Bentley and Wark studio.

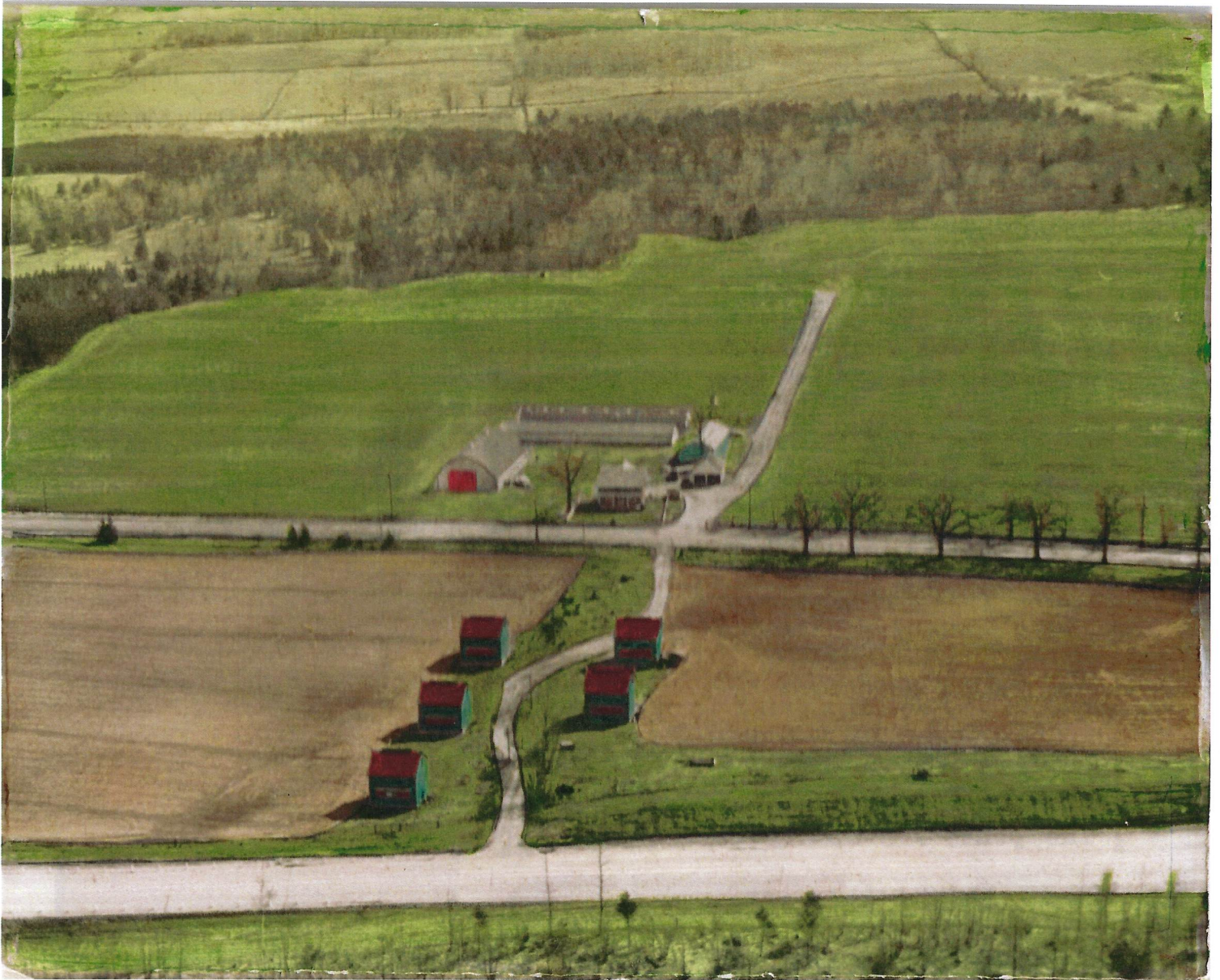
Final line in story is: obtaining the address of anyone who gave Connors money.

William Arthur Gibson in photo and charcoal. Pictured with his brother Charles Henry William was born January 19, 1871 and died December 6, 1877 of Scarlett Fever He rests in Pontypool Cemetery.



VanDam Tobacco Farm memories

Submitted By Teresa Jordan



Thanks to Ron Sutch for the donation of this aerial portrait of the VanDam tobacco Farm in Pontypool. With the donation was a copy of a letter dated January 26, 1963. The letter is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. George Van Dam and family. The letter goes on to express regret about a recent fire that destroyed the tobacco storage barn and its contents of prize winning tobacco. "the latter representing a full year's hard labour, heavy financial investment and countless hours of anxiety, planning and supervision". Ron recalls that the barn and garage burned to the ground and the entire year's harvest was lost for his aunt and uncle. He laments, a year of hard work and nothing to sell.

VanDam Tobacco Farm

From Grant Curtis's book—Laugh and the World Laughs with you, there are photos and remembrances of the Van Dam farm. "The workday would not end until the entire kiln was filled, or a total of 1200 sticks"

Below is a copy of a letter shared by Ron Sutch, the neighbours came together and helped. What a tremendous testament to the strength of a small community.

January 26th, 1963.
Pontypool, Ontario.
Mr. and Mrs. George Vandam, and family.

Dear Friends:

We have gathered here, this evening, in your honour, to show our interest in your welfare, as represented by the recent loss of your tobacco storage barn, and its contents of prize-winning tobacco; the latter representing a full year's hard labour, heavy financial investment, and countless hours of anxiety, planning, and supervision.

Your wide popularity in this community is due to your industry, integrity, and friendliness; plus the desire to help anyone, or any worthwhile cause.

You're our kind of folks!

In this area, we rejoice with each other on happy occasions, and sympathize with each other when disaster strikes.

To merely say "we are sorry," is not enough. We wish to express our feelings in a tangible form, so ask you to please accept this small token of our esteem, in the hope that, it may assist you to re-build, and thus continue in business, in this community, where you are held in such high regard.

Thank you! Signed, on behalf of your many well-wishers.

Violet Mildred Ryley– “The Dean of Dieticians”

Submitted by: Dianne Carnaghan

In July I travelled to Victoria, British Columbia. It's a beautiful city and there were many opportunities to enjoy the attractions. One attraction was Castle Craigdorrach, more a stately home rather than a castle. Imagine my surprise to discover a plaque honouring Violet Ryley in one of the rooms. Castle Craigdorrach was completed in 1890 for coal baron Robert Dunsmuir and his family. Although Robert died before he could move into his house, his family remained there until the death of his wife, Joan in 1908. During WW1 the castle was used as a Military Hospital for convalescing soldiers.

Violet Mildred Ryley was born on February 1, 1884 in Bethany, the daughter of Thomas George Ryley, a druggist and Caroline Lee and the granddaughter of Alfred Ryley, the Tax Collector and Township Clerk for Manvers for 45 years. Dr. T. G. Brereton was the attending physician. Violet received her early schooling in Bethany and then she enrolled in the Lillian Massey Treble School of Domestic Services in Toronto from where she graduated in 1907. Post graduate work included studying at a New York City hospital and being a student dietician at the Albany General Hospital in New York state. In 1910, Violet returned to Canada and found employment organizing meal plans for the University of Toronto's dining hall. The government requested Violet's expertise in 1917 and she became the chief dietician for the Military Hospital Commission, responsible for the diets of convalescing soldiers. Soon after she became a full time staff member at the Commission and was responsible for 35,000 meals every day. Violet contributed articles to many medical, scientific and dietary journals and magazines. During the war the Doukobor community from Manitoba wished to contribute to the war effort in their own way. They made 24,000 pounds of jam to be distributed among the soldiers. Violet wrote " Jam is the most universal popular delicacy in a soldier's menu, whether sick or well. No gift is more welcome."



Violet Mildred Ryley– “The Dean of Dieticians”

Submitted by: Dianne Carnaghan

After the war Violet worked at the Bigwin Inn in Muskoka and in 1923 at the age of 39, she started working for the T. E. Eaton Co. in Toronto as supervisor of restaurants. She was instrumental in the planning of the Georgian Room at the store. The Georgian Room was a vision that Lady Eaton had of opening a luxurious restaurant and on March 10, 1924 it opened on the ninth floor of Eaton's. It was considered by many Toronto's first fine restaurant. Violet retired at the age of 64 after having worked at Eaton's for 25 years.

Violet was a perfectionist and a meticulous worker who charted a new direction in the dietary field. On April 14, 1949, at the age of 65, Violet Mildred Ryley died in Toronto. She is buried in the family plot at St. Mary's Cemetery, Lifford.

Early advancement of the dietetic profession was due to the careers of Violet Ryley and Kathleen Jeffs. To this day, the Ryley-Jeffs Memorial Award is given to the person who exemplifies the ideals of two Canadian pioneers in their field.



One of the biggest jobs in Canada to-day is held by a woman, Miss Violet M. Ryley, general organising dietitian for the Military Hospitals Commissions, upon whose belt swing the keys to every kitchen in the military convalescent hospitals of Canada.

Miss Ryley is responsible for 35,000 meals every day.

In what ratio the recovery of the 11,000 men now in the various hospitals depends upon her genius only the medical officers in charge will ever know, but the men from coast to coast declare that the meals in the Canadian hospitals are the best ever.

Roast beef with brown gravy, after long seasons when bully beef and hard tack had to suffice, looks like the feast of the prodigal son to the men. At the discharge depot at Quebec, when they first return, they suspect that it is a feast in honour of their arrival, but it is only the usual run of meals they find.

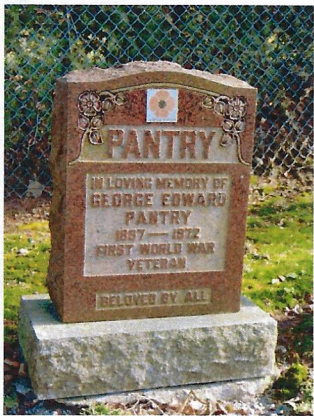
A Tale in finding two British Home Children

Submitted by: Teresa Jordan

I started to research my family and all things Manvers History in 2011 and in the those early years I was terrible at it, but over time you learn to seek hard proof, you learn how to read old documents and make connections. A couple of years ago I was surprised to find that two households of my family had British home children boarding with them. In 1911 George Pantry is listed as a labourer in my Great Grandparents home— Emma and Edward Kellett, at the time they had two small children. In the 1921 census Herbert Potter was listed as a servant in my Great great Aunt's home-- Gladys Malcolmson also, having two small children.

George Pantry

George Edward was living with Emma and Edward in 1911. George is 13 and his occupation is listed as a labourer. In 1915 he is in Goodwood signing up to fight in WW1. He lists his next of kin as the Dr. Barnardo home agent on his attestation papers. He must have maintained contact as this portrait was in the box of photos that I have of Emma and Edward's. His military file is very brief on the Canadian Registry, however, Find a grave had more information.



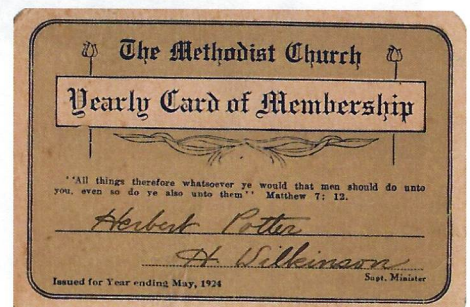
PTE. PANTRY WOUNDED.

Pte. George Edward Pantry, who, prior to enlisting, lived on a farm in the vicinity of Uxbridge, has been admitted to the 5th Field Ambulance, France, suffering from a gunshot wound in the right side. Pantry is 20 years of age. He enlisted in the fall of 1915, has been 17 months in France, and is serving with a battery.

Including this article of him being wounded
George's grave is at Fariview Cemetery in Acton. He does not appear to have married.

Herbert Potter

Herbert Arthur is a bit more mysterious, he was living with my family in 1921 and his age is listed as 21, however his enlistment papers signed by Justice Jakeman on February 18, 1916 say that he is 18. He is discharged from the army in 1918 due to cardio vascular disease. He seems to have arrived at the Malcolmson's after that. In his army enlistment papers he lists his next of kin as a sister, still in England. In my box of things that were owned by Aunt Gladys I found this church membership card and Herbert is also listed on the Honour Roll at Pontypool United Church.



Grand Opening Library Space



All members of MTHS present at the Grand opening. Dianne, Judy, Paul, Mary, Teresa, Cathy, John, Elaine, Darcy, Jan, Heather, Dale, Tracey, Helen and Sheila in front.

46 people attended including Athol Hart below, chair of the Heritage Committee

CKL



Emily Turner from CKL offered insights in designation and congratulations.



Many new connections and supporters were delighted with what we were able to showcase. Huge thanks to Judy, Sheila, Dale and Mary for a wonderful display and tons of work. Check out the museum space during Library hours and spread the word, we are looking for donations and exhibit ideas.

The Life and Legacy of Missy Spearing

Submitted By Kathy Morton neighbour and friend.



Melissa Spearing (Missy) was the oldest daughter of Ted and Sandy Spearing of Ground Covers Unlimited Bethany. At a young age Missy was curious about the world around her, especially the plant world.

She worked at the family business alongside her sister Rachel (predeceased) and Brandon.

Using her creative talents Missy put together a book of unique properties and community citizens of Manvers for the Canada Blooms project sponsored by the City of Kawartha Lakes. It was important for her to showcase the best of her community. She presented this book on behalf of Manvers Township Historical Society to the national judges who then returned the book to the community. This book is now in the Manvers Research Centre collection.

Missy, and her mom Sandy, escorted the local judges on behalf of Manvers Township Historical Society to St Mary's Church and cemetery by a horse drawn carriage driven by Keith Goble.

Missy attended Grandview Public School, Rolling Hills Public School, IE Weldon High School. Her creativity sent her to Loyalist College, Belleville where she studied advertising. Eventually she returned to the family farm and business, then to Niagara Parks School of Horticulture, graduating in 2013 as a biologist with expertise in Forest Genes.

She completed an extensive course in seed conservation at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, London England. She participated in the collection, germination potential, cataloging and storing seeds of plants and trees from all over the world. These seeds are now stored in underground vaults for future use in the world. Missy was known world wide for her expertise in seed conservation and propagation.

The Life and legacy of Missy Spearing

She utilized the local flora and fauna to help preserve some of the trees and plants from Manvers such as heritage Duchess apples, wild ginger and she collected seeds from healthy ash trees which are now stored in the Canadian national seed repository in New Brunswick.

She produced three books of Canadian seed identification, conservation and propagation. One title is "Seeds of Ontario and Eastern Canada". These books are being produced as a memorial to Missy. Copies will be donated by Trees Canada to Manvers Research Centre.

Harold Moxon of Janetville was a mentor to the Spearing Family in their early days of horticulture. This local talent was one driving force for her to pursue a Master's Degree of Forestry at the University of New Brunswick.

Missy had a unique talent for trying to set the environmental work as a priority for human existence. She produced a survival kit that if the world were to end as we know it, there would be seeds in the kit that would begin the environmental world again and the survival of humanity. She presented this project at a meeting to Manvers Historical Society.

She accomplished many milestones in her short forty years. Manvers and the International Seed and Tree Organizations have been blessed to have shared her journey which has left the environment better understood and better equipped for its future.

Keith Goble, Sandy Spearing, Melissa Spearing and two judges for Community Blooms



Find us on the Web

Manvers Township Historical Society has an active presence on Facebook with thousands of hits each week looking at old photos or newspaper clips. Over 1500 people follow the site and add to its information with comments and shares.

If you wish to add something to the site, send it by message directly on Facebook or email Teresa Jordan at teresaanddon651@gmail.com.



www.manvershistory.ca

Become a member of Manvers Township Historical Society

If you would like to join the Manvers Township Historical Society or if you wish to renew your membership, please complete the following form and mail to:

Manvers Township Historical Society

Box 173 Bethany, ON L0A1A0

The membership year ends December 31. The membership fee for a year is \$20.00.

\$5.00 per year to have newsletter mailed regularly.

Corporate Membership fee is \$25.00.

Name: _____

Street or postal box: _____

Town/City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____