

Cambridge Branch RWTO, the first twenty five (or so) years

Compiled by Mary Jane Novak from the Branch Archives

While our provincial organization started 60 years ago, our local branch did not come into being until April of 1964. At that time 11 retired women teachers from Galt, Preston and Hespeler became part of the Ontario Association of Superannuated Women Teachers. They met twice a year and paid fifty cents in local fees. Their first event was a picnic in Victoria Park. By 1968 they were meeting four times a year. Twenty years later local fees had increased to \$3.00.

In the first fifteen years or so most of their meetings involved travelling to popular Ontario designations including the RBG, McMichael Gallery, autumn tours of the Forks of the Credit, Hockley Valley, theatre trips to the Shaw Festival, visits to historical sites such as Dundurn Castle, the Mohawk Chapel, Parkwood in Oshawa, a cruise on the Grand River and a trip to the Tulip Festival in Ottawa.

In 1973 the name was changed to the "Cambridge" Branch when the city amalgamated.

In 1981 they twinned with the Coldwater Branch, resulting in a bus trip there which was reciprocated in 1984.

During the first few years the women met in each other's homes and the YMCA. Later they chose a variety of luncheon locations including Leisure Lodge, Chateau Kress, Oban Inn, Bouquet Garni, Valhalla Inn, Krebs, the Highlands, Scout House, Slater Hall and many church halls.

By 1980 the organization had 50 members. In the early 1980s the meeting format changed to what it is today. Early speakers were farmer George Barrie, who spoke about his experiences with CUSO in New Guinea, historian John Clare on Cambridge Heritage and spinner and weaver Susan Douglas on angora goat production.

During all these years at least one member, and usually two or three attended the annual convention somewhere in Ontario.