

# A Century of Service: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in Grey County

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the store became a landmark institution in the local business community, widely recognized as a leader in retail sales, labour relations and customer service. Robert Marshall Anderson was one of the first businessmen in Ontario to implement a forty-hour work-week and, beginning in 1921, he also offered his employees sick benefits. By 1946, D.H. Anderson had established an extremely generous employee pension plan. The Anderson Department Store was the first commercial establishment in St. Thomas to install restrooms and drinking fountains for its customers, an elevator, free delivery of purchases, ladies'

tailoring, and customer parking facilities.

In 1967 a third generation of the Anderson family joined the business when Robert Morley Anderson became a member of the board of directors. The Anderson Department Store continued as a full-service retail operation selling housewares, fine china, clothing and furs until the doors were closed for the last time on 8 October 1988, ending 92 years of service to the citizens of St. Thomas and the surrounding area.



*Fortieth anniversary window display, 1936. Anderson Department Store fonds, C5 Sb6 B1 F16 Item 8*

## *A Century of Service: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in Grey County*

By Lisa Wodhams

### *Grey County Archives*

Grey Roots: Your Heritage and Visitor Centre  
102599 Grey Road 18, R. R. #4,  
Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5N6  
(519) 376-3960 ext 111 or  
Toll Free (866) 473-9766  
<[www.greyroots.com](http://www.greyroots.com)>

The archival holdings at Grey Roots are an extensive assemblage of municipal and private collections covering the history of Grey County.

The outbreak of the Boer War triggered the concept of an "organization of women, under the British flag, who would promote patriotism through service." A Canadian

institution, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (I.O.D.E.) was founded as an organization dedicated to education, patriotism, and charity. The I.O.D.E. Collections at the Grey County Archives house the stories of three local Chapters of the organization: The Earl Grey, The Captain Wm. F. Owen, and The Annie Jaffray Eaton.

The Earl Grey I.O.D.E. chose their name in honour of the then Governor General of Canada, Sir Albert Henry George Grey. The collection boasts a thoroughly documented history of the Chapter,

including minute books dating back to the night of the it's inauguration on 18 May 1905. The minute books allow a researcher to navigate the group's actions through nearly a century of historical events, including both World Wars. One entry, dated just after WWI was declared, states: "A long depression from business was indulged in, when the war with its attendant horrors was talked over." (2 October 1914). The succeeding entries demonstrate the organization's dismay, but also their resolve to move forward and assist the war effort.

An extensive scrapbook

collection compliments the minute books with newspaper articles, letters, and annual reports. For the genealogist whose research includes an I.O.D.E. member, there are Records of Officers and Members spanning the years of the organization's existence. Among the collection of correspondences are letters to and from Pauline McGibbon, Canada's first woman Lieutenant Governor, and numerous articles surrounding her professional career. The activities of the Royal Family are followed closely by the Earl Grey, particularly Princess Anne's visit to Grey County.

Numerous articles showcase the Chapter's philanthropic work. One of Earl Grey's larger charitable endeavours was the adoption of The Cape Croker School and Mattagami Indian Day School during which Earl Grey donated building materials and supplies. The Chapter was also a participant of a project headed by the Provincial I.O.D.E. to work with the blind and prepare textbooks in Braille for students across Ontario.

The Captain William F. Owen I.O.D.E. was founded in 1936 by seventeen high school students. According to a history of the Chapter written in 1950, the minutes and annual reports for the years before 1945 have been lost.

The Captain Owen Chapter was greatly concerned



*Members of the Owen Sound I.O.D.E. Chapters and of the 147<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association attending Lady Jaffray Eaton's funeral at St. George's Anglican Church. Wreaths are to be laid at the memorial cairn (seen in background) dedicated to Mrs. Eaton by the 147<sup>th</sup> Battalion. (Grey Roots Archival Collection PF35).*

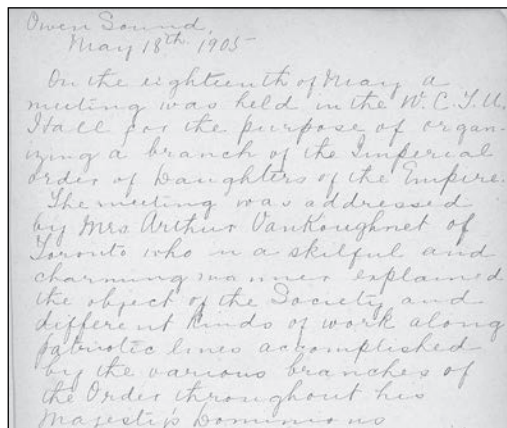
with the war effort. Donations and work surrounding WWII are described in their Annual War Work and Post War Work Report Forms. An excerpt from 1945 reads:

Members donated blood and gave assistance at clinics... One member worked as assistant to the local Lieutenant Officer between Prisoners of War and their next of kin, through Red Cross. This included visiting British War Brides and seeing to the needs of wounded veterans.

Reports, minutes, and articles show the efforts of the Captain Owen members to serve veterans who had returned home, as well as those remaining in battle. One reappearing case is the Chapter's adopted paraplegic veteran in Sunnybrook Hospital. Another story tells of when the Chapter joined forces with the Earl

Grey members to adopt a ship. The vessel was tragically lost in action shortly after its adoption, but the group was re-assigned to the H.M.C.S. Atholl. In the years after WWII ended, the Captain Owen I.O.D.E. hosted guest speakers who had experienced the war first hand: "Early in the year we had Mr. Peter Turk speak to us about his years in Buchenwald concentration camp" (from 1951-1952 annual report by Evelyn Cole).

Researchers can witness the changing cultural landscape in post-World War Canada by browsing through the annual reports: "The Captain Wm. F.





*Arrival of H.M. Queen Mary's Carpet at Malton Airport from New York. Present are members of the National Chapter I.O.D.E. and the Hon. Ray Lawson, Lieutenant Governor. The Queen's Carpet was a worked by the Queen herself as a personal contribution to Canada during the dollar crisis of the 1960s. (Grey Roots Archival Collection PF35)*

Owen Chapter, I.O.D.E. has had a very successful year in Canadianization work. With the arrival of new Canadians to Canada every day, there has been an increased interest in the Chapter to welcome these new citizens and to assist them in every way possible." Further reports outline the classes, greeting cards, and social events that the Captain Owen I.O.D.E. used to welcome new citizens.

In keeping with the educational interests of the I.O.D.E., the Captain Owen Chapter sponsored bursaries and scholarships for local children and laboured to inspire an interest in parliament in the younger generations. There is a written note stating "of this we are proud" by an entry in the Secretary's Annual Report, 1953: "Again this year, the Chapter sponsored the sending of students to Ottawa to at-

with an assemblage of charmingly written letters from one Adelaide Rattray Gremmel to her friend, Annie Jaffray. The letters are a diary of Adelaide's life through adolescence into young adulthood and marriage. They are accompanied by a synopsis written by Jean E. Hart.

When Annie Jaffray Eaton's only son was enlisted in WWI, she traveled to England to be near him. Along with Mrs. Howey, a woman whose husband was in the medical corps, Lady Eaton opened the "Grey Rooms" in London, England. Here, "soldiers from Grey County met to write letters, meet friends or just relax in friendly and familiar company." These efforts earned Lady Jaffray the respect and attention of the 147th and 248th Battalion, who erected a memorial cairn on the lawn of St. George's Church in Owen

tend sessions of the federal government."

Charrtered on 21 May 1987, the **Annie Jaffray Eaton I.O.D.E.** is Owen Sound's youngest I.O.D.E. chapter. The collection begins

Sound in her honour. The inscription reads:

*She mitigated to a marked degree the loneliness and suffering of the men and of myself. This memorial is erected as a humble tribute to a great soul by all ranks of the Greys.*

When Lady Jaffray died she was given full military honours at burial; a firing squad "fired a volley across the open grave and a bugler sounded the last Post and Reveille."

The Chapter's history states that members "have strived to improve the quality of life for children, youth and those in need, through educational, social service and citizenship programs." The group made donations to the Women's Centre in Owen Sound, the Second Avenue Lodge, and Grey Bruce Regional Health Centre, and the Salvation Army. At Christmas, the Chapter donated food to Bill Cherry's dinner for the needy and made appearances to needy children as Mr. and Mrs. Santa.

The I.O.D.E. fonds are a kaleidoscope of events spanning a century in the history of Grey County. Each collection not only speaks the stories of the Chapters themselves, but is a vehicle to delve into some of the most pertinent moments in Canadian history.