

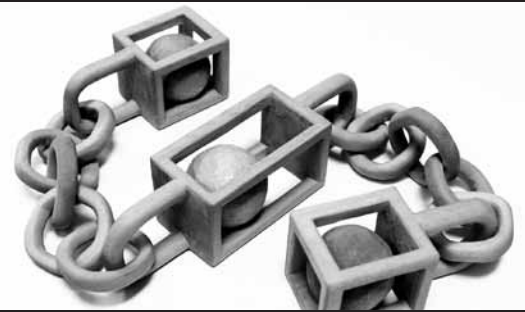
# YESTERDAY

News from the Tavistock and District Historical Society

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and the late Jacob Roth.  
Decoys by Ed Pellow  
and Ted Gladding.  
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*Ken Fink with some of  
his folk art carvings*

**Tavistock & District  
Historical Society Inc.**

**Executive:**

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Vice-Chair: Sherrill Calder  
Secretary: Mary Nicklas  
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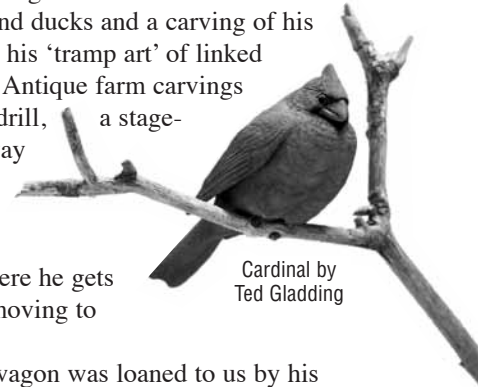
**Directors:**

Paul Bartlett  
Roy Erb  
Bill Gladding  
Bruce Halliday  
Joyce Hill  
Barb Matthies  
Blain McCutchen  
Ron Saunders

# Wood Carvings and Old Farm Toys

by Barbara Matthies

In July and August, the Museum featured local artist's woodcarvings and also a collection of old farm toys. Wood carvings done by Ted Gladding were of birds and ducks and a carving of his brother, Bryn, as a youngster in his goalie attire. Roy Erb brought in his 'tramp art' of linked chain which had been skillfully carved from a single piece of wood. Antique farm carvings included teams of horses pulling a sleigh loaded with logs, a seed drill, a stage-coach, a Conestoga wagon, and also a man pulling a Tavistock railway baggage wagon, to name a few. A lot of the carving was done only with a jack knife by the talented hands of Ken Fink. Ken grew up on a farm in North Easthope Township and looked after horses as a hired hand in his younger days. That's probably where he gets the great inspiration for his carvings which he began creating after moving to Tavistock in 1987.



Cardinal by Ted Gladding

Jacob Roth's horse and buggy and a team pulling a buckboard wagon was loaned to us by his nephew, Sherman Kropf. Jacob's many farm carvings have also been displayed at the Joseph Schneider Haus in Kitchener. He was still carving at the age of 84 years. Audrey Riedel also brought in an antique stage-coach and covered wagon for display.

Ed Pellow loaned us some of his beautifully-carved artistic decoys as well as some vintage smoothie decoys. George Stock loaned us a magnificent display of old farm toys and games (see story below). Jack Wettlaufer brought in an old toy riding tractor which we're sure he spent many hours riding when he was young.

The Museum very much appreciates the community interest in our themes and especially the loan of your items for our displays. Please continue to take part in *your* Museum and Archives as this is a community endeavour. We need your continued support to keep Tavistock and Area's history alive for future generations to appreciate for years to come. If you would like to become a member or volunteer, you would be most welcome.



Cloverdale Farm Set owned by George Stock

## Tavistock & District Historical Society Inc.

37 Maria Street,  
Box 280,  
Tavistock, Ontario,  
Canada NOB 2R0

**MUSEUM  
HOURS:**  
Saturdays  
10am-12 noon

Other times  
by appointment

## Just like Dad's: A display of farm toys

In the eyes of young farmers-in-the-making, lawns, sidewalks and kitchen floors become miniature fields and farmyards. Cows need to be milked, livestock fed and watered, crops planted and harvested and the manure hauled, just like on Dad's farm.

To facilitate this training of the next farming generation, Dads and Grandpas have always crafted home-built barns and hand-made farm animals. Manufactured wooden barn sets appeared by the end of the 19th century. These were followed over a half century by sets of various combinations of wood, paper, composition board, tin, rubber and plastic. Some children were lucky to supplement these with cast lead, hand-painted models of animals, people and horse-drawn equipment produced by F. W. Britain's of England after the 1880's.

Many local baby-boomers will recall the special Christmas as children when they unwrapped and assembled a tin litho barn with plastic animals, people and machinery. This could have been a Lazy Day Farm or Pedigree Farm by Marx, a Sunnyfield Farm by Ohio Art or a Friendly Acres Farm by Suzy Goose.

Mechanization on the farm necessitated the same in Junior's miniature farming operation. To ensure that Junior grew up farming with the right make of tractor, dealers sometimes provided a 1/16th scale toy when



Collectable toy owned by George Stock

*continued on next page*

**MUSEUM CALENDAR:**

March 11 - April 28  
Lemp Studio Collection

May 6 - June 24  
Royalty Collections

June 3 - June 24  
All About Weddings

July 1 - August 26  
Wood Carving/Farm Toys

Sept. 2 - October 21  
Grandmother's Kitchen

September 20 -  
Speaker Series:  
Dr. Susan Tamblyn  
on the Spanish Influenza  
Epidemic of 1918

Oct. 28 - November 25  
Honouring Our Veterans

December 2 - 30  
Christmas at General Store

Jan. 6 - Feb. 24, 2007  
Golden School Days

delivering a new tractor for Dad. Most of these were built by Ertl in Iowa. Local farm children in the 1950's often played with Massey Harris, Oliver, Cockshutt and John Deere tractors and equipment made by Lincoln Toys at Tilbury, Ontario. Realistic, but unbranded toy tractors and machinery, many with moving parts, were made by the Carter Company under the label "Tru-Scale" during the 50's and 60's.

Today fewer farm toys are made for play. Instead, most are models, representing the history of farm mechanization and a nostalgic link to the past for a variety of collectors.

The diversity of current farm toy production is demonstrated by a selection of tractors made by Teeswater Custom Tractor, Teeswater, Ontario. Included are a Sawyer-Massey steam engine originally manufactured in Hamilton and a Champion threshing machine made in Waterloo.



Folk Art wood carvings by Jacob Roth

## Carving Decoys is not what it used to be

by Ed Pellow

In the first half of the 20th century, decoys were carved primarily by hunters for use in the pursuit of birds for sport and meat. They were usually carved from pine or cedar and were a very basic profile of a duck, although other birds, such as shore birds, were also carved and used as decoys. Tools were basic, often a hatchet, a draw knife, a jack knife and a rasp were all the decoy-maker needed. They were painted with oil paints (whatever was available) and only basic colours, often black and white. They were carved to take rough use and painted only to attract the

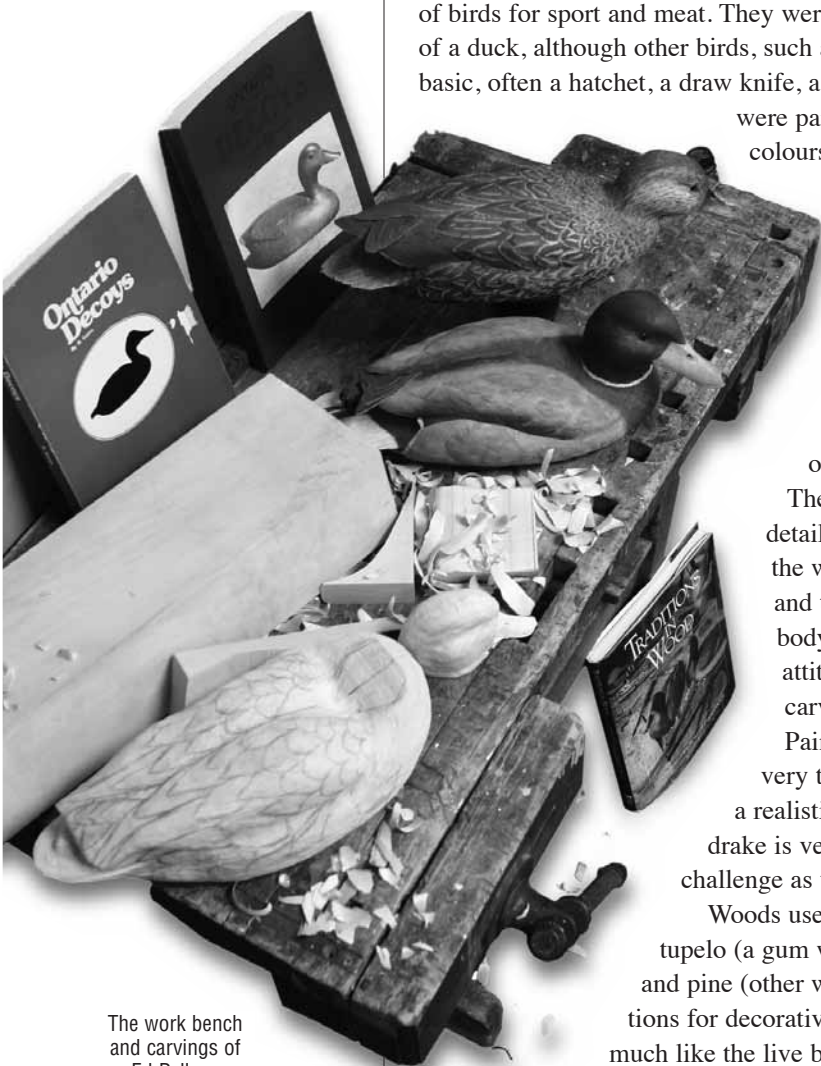
attention of the bird to be decoyed, however, many were very well carved and painted with great skill. Today, many of these vintage decoys are very collectable and valuable.

Today, two types of decoys are carved. The Smoothie is a basic design, somewhat more detailed than the vintage decoy, but still basic enough to withstand rough use and being floated in the water. The feather detail may be painted using oil or acrylic paints by using basic colours to please the human eye.

The Decorative Decoy is carved and painted with a great deal of detail and care which makes them somewhat fragile. These never go in the water except for judging in competition. Each feather is contoured and textured and primary feathers may be carved and inserted into the body. The decoy carver will pay attention to head position and body attitude. Each bird has its own posture and feather pattern. If the carver can capture these in the decoy, it will be much more lifelike.

Painting of a Decorative Decoy is also very detailed. Many coats of very thin paint may be used to bring up the shades of colour needed for a realistic bird. Female birds often have many shades of brown, while the drake is very colourful. The painting of a Decorative Decoy is as much a challenge as the carving. Decoy painters use oil or acrylic paints.

Woods used for carving a Smoothie or Decorative Decoy are basswood, tupelo (a gum wood from the swamps of the southern states), walnut, butternut and pine (other woods are used when available locally). There are many competitions for decorative decoy carving and the carver produces a decoy that is very much like the live bird, sometimes taking over a hundred hours to create one decoy.



The work bench and carvings of Ed Pellow.



## Welcome visitors!

August has been a record-setting month at the Museum. On August 1, we welcomed visitors from the farthest away to date. Joyce Jones and Cheryl Thomson visited from British Columbia. Just 4 days later the record was broken when we welcomed two girls from Nunavut. Mag Bolt hails from Kugluktuk (north of the Arctic Circle) and Melody Peryouar from Baker Lake. The girls are part of a Northern Youth Abroad Program and were researching the history of their host location - Tavistock. Also of interest on August 5 was a visit from Scott Leslie. Scott's great grandfather was the editor of the Tavistock Gazette from 1900-1904 and again from 1910-1914.

**DRESS PHOTOS:** 1. Suzanne Brocklebank/Ruth Rosenberg  
2. Mae Neeb • 3. Mary Nicklas • 4. Nelda Hoffman  
**Below:** Lloyd and Dorothy Wilker

## June was all about weddings

by Sherrill Calder and Mary Nicklas

Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. June at the Museum was all about weddings. Thanks to the kind nature of our supporters, we had twenty wedding dresses on display along with suits and hats and wedding pictures galore.

Our oldest wedding outfit, dated from 1894, had been worn by John Schultz's grandparents, Henry and Elizabeth (Wilker) Schultz. The newest dress was from 1957. In between, we had flapper styles, dresses in white and most of the colours of the rainbow, short ones and long ones, dresses of satin and velvet and, of course, lots and lots of lace. Some of the dresses had done "double duty" - first for mom and then for daughter. Each dress told a special story of a special day. Memories were told and retold as the many attendees at the display recalled wedding-day stories.

It was a grand time for reminiscing as punch and cookies were served in the Library Hall and the gramophone played songs of years gone by. This display would not have been possible without the brides who loaned us their wedding clothes, relatives who loaned us wedding pictures and certificates, and friends of the museum who provided items used in the display. Thank you so much to one and all.

## Family Histories

Did you know that one of the original Stein family members started the journey to "America" standing on his head? It's true. Magnus and Anna Margaretha Stein left Breitenbach, Germany in 1847 with their 3 children ... Werner, 12; Elizabeth, 8 and Valentine, 6. The trip took 3 months. The first hurdle was getting safely to a port and out of the country, as young Werner was escaping recruitment into the German military. To avoid detection he was hidden in a box which was accidentally turned upside down. It was 12 long hours before he could be safely turned right side up. The stowaway survived the ordeal and the family thrived in the new world.

If you have a family history story, please let us know.

