

# Gladys Golden

FOUNDER  
OF HEIRS



*Gladys Margaret (Livesey) Golden was born in Maryfield, Saskatchewan.*

*She married James John Golden in 1950, becoming a resident of Harrow from that time until her death in 1987.*

*Gladys raised her family of 5 children in the community and was active in their many activities, including being on the inaugural board of directors of the Harrow Figure Skating Club. She was also involved with the John R. Park Homestead from its outset, as both a volunteer & a donor.*

*Gladys had varied interests – a writer, a poet, a quilter, an artist, a historian, a friend to many and a beloved wife and mother. She was a quiet, gentle soul, with a marvelous sense of humour.*

*Gladys was the spark that brought HEIRS to life, one May 1971 evening in her own livingroom. From that moment, she worked tirelessly to ensure HEIRS would grow with the support of its members, long after she released its reins.*

## History is alive and well in Harrow

By MIKE McATEER

HARROW — An interest in local history, generated by Canada's centennial year, is being kept alive by the Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS)

The society is the brain-child of its president, Mrs. Jim Golden, wife of a Harrow lawyer and mother of five.

During 1967, Mrs. Golden recalls, many pieces of Canadiana were resurrected from dusty barns and attics and displayed in shop windows along Harrow's main street. But the awakened interest in the area's rich and colorful past threatened to be short-lived, so Mrs. Golden decided to do something about keeping it alive.

Some 18 interested persons responded to an advertisement she placed in a newspaper and, at a May 1971 meeting in her Colchester South home, addressed by David Botsford, former curator of the Fort Malden museum, HEIRS was formed.

There are now about 30 members who meet once a month in the Harrow district elementary senior school.

It's a society devoted to preservation and research, with objectives of researching and preserving local historical records, encouraging genealogical research, preserving artifacts, utensils and furniture used by early settlers, and restoring old buildings . . . in general to foster an interest, especially among children, in the area's history and antiques.

Ultimate aim is a local museum to house and display the records and artifacts, and provide a badly-needed centre for this historic area.

One of the society's unique features, Mrs. Golden says, is the

number of members who bring their own special interests into the group.

Vice-president Mrs. Edwin Woodbridge, for instance, brings an extensive knowledge and important collection of records of old area families. Another member has a rare collection of dolls, while Mrs. Robert McCormick recently completed research into the area's Baptist church to mark the opening of the new Baptist church in Harrow.

Mrs. Golden's interest is early Canadian furniture. It's one of the reasons she decided a historical society was needed in the area.

"So many antiques are being sold to Americans and crossing the border that we are in danger of losing our heritage," she says.

"It's particularly bad in Quebec, where dealers buy up antiques and ship them back to as far away as California by the truck load, where they are sold as 'early American'! We just cannot compete with their pocket books."

She feels there are still enough antiques and historical records left in southwestern Ontario to preserve for future Canadians. Over the years, she has been building up quite a collection of Canadiana.

Walnut tables, a crude wood rocking horse, old crocks, spinning wheels and an old school desk are among the items competing for space in her modern home.

"But they really belong in a museum," she says.

The society has its eye on the old Fox home near Oxley, re-

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cently purchased by the provincial department of lands and forests. The house, more than 120-years-old, is a veritable museum as it is and would, Mrs. Golden says, make an ideal headquarters to display and store the records and artifacts acquired by the society. Future of the house is still uncertain, and will depend on studies now being made by the department.

"But the main thing," Mrs. Golden says, "is to create the awareness among district residents of the historic value of their old belongings and family records. Many people are just burning old records and documents because they really don't appreciate their historical importance. They're burning part of their history."

One project that Mrs. Golden would like to see local children undertake is the tidying up of old family cemeteries. She says that some local families can trace their ancestors back eight generations in the area and the gravestones would provide a wealth of historical data.

Yours sincerely,

*Gladys Golden*

(Mrs. James J. Golden)  
President, HEIRS

