

Wellington County Museum and Archives

Instructional Video Series

The Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories

Welcome to the Wellington County Museum and Archives instructional video series. In this video, I'll show you how to search the Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories database.

What are Tweedsmuir History books?

The Tweedsmuir Histories are scrapbooks that were compiled by local Women's Institute branch members beginning in the 1920s. The purpose of these books was to record the history of the people, places, and events in their local communities. The Wellington County Tweedsmuir History books are informative resources that uniquely capture and preserve community history from a local perspective.

Finding the database

Let's start with how to find the database on our website.

- In your web browser, navigate to the Wellington County website, at www.wellington.ca.
- Next, hover over "Discover" at the top of the page, then click "Museum & Archives" in the menu that appears, to get to the Museum and Archives home page.
- From here, click the "Collections & Research" link.
- Scroll down to see a list of our online databases.
- The second one is "Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories". Click the plus sign to expand this option, and then click the red 'Search' button at the bottom of the tab.
- This will take you to the Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories search page.

The navigation bar lists the different search options: "search by subject", "search by name", and "browse volumes". We'll go over these one by one.

Search by name

When the database loads, "search by name" is selected by default. This tab gives you two fields to narrow down your search:

- On the left is **Choose a geographic location**, with a pull down menu that says "All Townships." The menu lets you:
 - select one of the original 30 Women's Institute names, listed under "Old Townships," or

- select one of the 7 municipalities we know today, listed under “New Townships”, or
- keep the default “All Townships” to search across the whole County.
- On the right is the option to **Enter Name(s)**. Here you can enter a last name, a first name, or both.

Let’s try an example. I will choose the geographic location “Farewell/Arthur Twp.” Under the Old Townships list. Let’s search for the last name “McEachern” and the first name “John”. Then click “Search.”

A results table will pop up with the following headings:

- Last Name
- First Name
- New Township Name
- Old Township Name
- Women’s Institute
- Vol, for volume number
- Pg, for page number, which is also where you click to view a scan of the page
- Photo, which shows the letter “x” when there is a photograph on the page

Our search for John McEachern returned 399 results. The database will not only search for “John McEachern.” It will search every person with the first name John or the last name McEachern.

- I can click any of the column headings to sort the information. By default the table sorts by last name alphabetically. If I click First Name it will resort by First Name and then Last Name alphabetically. This is helpful if you get a lot of results.
- John McEachern is still not on our first page of results, so if you scroll to the bottom of the results page you can page through the results by clicking **Next** or choosing a page number.
- If we go to page 6 of the search results, we will find all the references to John McEachern.
- To see a scan of the original page that references John McEachern, click the page number in the second column from the right. I’m going to click page 177 because the “x” in the last column tells me there is a photograph there. When I click the number, a new window opens with a scan of the page. It has a school photograph from Farewell School, and John McEachern’s name is in the list of students below the photograph.
- Note that the Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories are **not** keyword searchable. You will have to read through the page to find the name you searched for.
- Close the window to return to the main search page.

Browse volumes

Next let's look at the search tab on the right, "browse volumes." Here we have four fields to narrow our search

- The first is **Choose a geographic location**. Here we have the same pull down menu with the 30 "Old Townships" and the 7 "New Townships." This time there's no option to choose All Townships – we must choose a Township name. For our example, I will choose "Guelph Township."
- You'll see that the next menu, called **Choose an institute**, automatically populates with the names of the Women's Institutes in Guelph Township. They are: "Riverside Junior WI," "Riverside WI," and "West End WI," which is the one I'll choose.
- Again, the next menu, **Choose a volume**, will automatically populate with the volume numbers from the Women's Institute you just selected, in this case 1 through 7. I will choose volume 5.
- The final search field, **Enter a page number**, is optional. I'll leave it blank and click the "Search" button.

The search results allow you to choose a range of 15 pages from the volume you selected. If you click 1-15, two new windows will pop up:

- The first window is a remote control to search through the pages.
- The other shows you a scan of Volume 5, Page 1.
- You can page through the entire book using the forward and back buttons in the remote control window, or jump to a specific page by entering the number in the text field and clicking the "Go to page" button.

Note that the page ranges are only used to break up the search results. The page range you choose will determine where in the book you start browsing, but you can then scroll back and forth through the entire book or go to any page number using the remote control.

Close both these windows to return to the main search page.

Search by subject

The search tab on the left is "search by subject." Let's take a closer look at this option. This tab gives you two fields to narrow down your search.

- Once again, we see **Choose a geographic location** with a pull down menu that lists the 30 "Old Townships" and the 7 "New Townships." On this search tab, you can choose one location, or leave "All Townships" selected for a broader search.
- On the right is text field with the heading **Enter Subject or Keywords**. Here you can enter any keyword, such as a place, building, event, etc.

Let's try an example. I will choose the geographic location "Hillsburgh," and enter the keyword "church." Clicking the "Search" button will give me one page of results.

- The results table has the following headings:
 - Subject
 - Sub Topic
 - New Township Name
 - Old Township Name
 - Women's Institute
 - Vol, for volume number
 - Pg, for page number, which is where you click to view a scan of the page
 - Photo, which shows the letter "x" when there is a photograph on the page
- I can click any of the headings and it will sort the information for me. By default the table is sorted alphabetically by subject.
- I will choose the first result with the Subject "Burn's Presbyterian Church." Click the number 5 in the page column to view the page in a new window.
- Remember, the Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories are **not** keyword searchable. You must read through the page to find the reference to your subject.

We'd love to hear from you if you have questions or need further assistance. Good luck with your research! We hope to see you soon at the Wellington County Museum and Archives.

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