

Seventh generation Innis to share family story at historical society event

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

On January 29, The Caledon East & District Historical Society is presenting The History of the Innis Family Farm, put together by Mattison Innis.

20-year-old Mattison is the seventh generation to carry on the Innis family history in Caledon. She currently attends a 36-month program at the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture in Niagara Falls and lives on the family farm in Caledon East.

Mattison Innis has always been interested in her family's background. Living on the original farm, and being surrounded by her family's history, has given her the opportunity to ask questions and learn about their past. She has grown up hearing the family stories, but it all began in elementary school, when a family history project really sparked her interest.

She started her own research and investigation by asking her great-grandmother, Hilda Innis, to tell Mattison some of her stories relating to the background of the Innis family.

"It's something that always interested me. I knew my great-grandma Hilda was very big on the family history so it was nice to talk to her and hear some of her stories," explains Innis. "When we had to do a project on our family tree, that's when I started asking questions about stuff and I just kept wanting to know more."

Mattison loves history and always has. She is attracted by everything that has a history. She says she gets that from her great-grandma Hilda. Hilda would always tell the family tidbits of history. They are sorry they did not record everything she said, as those stories went away when she passed. Mattison believes it is important that we know our roots. This is her way of carrying on Hilda's stories, and honoring her memory and passion for family heritage. She feels that if we don't speak their names and tell their stories, who will know who they were and what they did.

"My great-grandma actually compiled a book with a lot of family stories and some of them I'm going to share. I will talk about the process of moving from Adjala to Caledon East, and the stories that surround that time. We're going to get to know about all the ancestors, as well as the extended Innis family," says Mattison.

James Innis born 1806 migrated from Scotland to New York. After working in the United States for sometime, he made his way to Adjala, Ontario. He is listed as a pioneer settler prior to 1837. In the early 1900s James' son Robert moved to the farm on Mono Road, where the Innis family still reside. There are currently three generations living on the farm, and pretty much always have been at least three generations over the years. Innis Lake was originally part of the farm.

Mattison added, "I am so happy to do this presentation as it is an important part of the history of the Caledon. Innis' have been a part of this community for a very long time, and I think it's important that their stories are shared so that they are still here for the new generations."

Amongst much of the youth of today, the past is not recognized as super important, Mattison indicated. Being in her early 20s Mattison is something of a bright light, as one of her generation who recognizes the importance of history and sharing it with others.

"I feel like a lot of young people don't focus on history. But, in my family, where we live together on this farm, surrounded by stories and objects that have been passed down through seven generations, we realize that it's important that people remember the history because it explains why and how we are here today," expresses Innis.

The Executive of the Historical Society is particularly pleased to be able to present the story of the Innis Family, but even more excited about having someone of Mattison's generation be such an integral cog in telling this story. After all, Mattison was born in

2000, the year *Settling the Hills* came out, the first published history of Caledon East and district. As a side note, Mattison's great-grandmother Hilda was a member of the Society at that time.

The presentation will take place on January 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the St. James Anglican Church on Old Church Road in Caledon East. All are welcome.