

Perth and District Historical Society

Perth and District Historical Society - News Release for January 9, 2026

The Perth and District Historical Society – January 15, 2026 Meeting:

Love & Heartache in the Lanark Highlands

We of the Perth & District Historical Society wish everyone Happy New Year with hope that 2026 will be healthy and peaceful. For our first meeting on January 15, 2026, we welcome back Susan Code McDougall with tales she will spin of love lost and won in the Lanark Highlands. The names and places may be familiar, but the events are sure to surprise.

While much has been recorded of the clearing of land and the felling of trees in the Lanark Highlands, it wasn't all work and no play. Sparks did fly and sometimes, unfortunately, they fizzled out. Caldwell, McLaren, Gemmell, Lees, McIlquham - these are surnames that dominate during the era of the Ottawa Valley lumber trade, especially in Lanark County, along with given names such as Boyd, Peter, Robert and William. But what about the women? Their stories are more difficult to find, often because they were too busy keeping house and home together to write down their own stories. With some sleuthing, however, local historian Susan Code has followed the trails of four remarkable women to as far away as Alberta and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) as they followed their hearts. One even stopped a war!

Susan Code McDougall is a well known writer of local histories. She has appeared regularly on radio and television and is a popular speaker about the history of Perth and the Rideau Corridor, an area in which she has deep roots. She has conducted guided tours of Perth and area for more years than she cares to admit. She holds an Honours B.A. in History from Queen's University at Kingston.

The Perth and District Historical Society is dedicated to learning about and popularising our history and is a forum for discussion and celebration of our area's rich culture and heritage. The meetings are held the third Thursday of the month and are open to the public, at 7:30 pm at the Royal Canadian Legion, Perth-Upon-Tay, Branch 244, home of the Hall of Remembrance, 26 Beckwith St. E. in Perth. The usual "Toonie Fee" applies for each meeting. For information, contact Ellen Dean at 613-264-8362.

Please also visit our website at www.perthhs.org for additional information about us and history of interest in the Perth and district area.

Article submitted by the Perth and District Historical Society