



Newcastle Village & District Historical Society

*Keeper of local treasures both
archival and human, gathering place*

Sierd De Jong

Most of the Dutch people who came here were farmers. My Dad, he was a carpenter. He worked for a big lumber mill. When the war ended, my dad said “I’m not going through another war.” So, he had the choice to go to either Australia or Canada. So, he knew people who were already here, friends of his, and they said “come to Canada... that’s a great place.” So he did... 7 kids and 2 adults, and here we come to Grafton.



Erla Jose

We have to give credit to the early directors, starting with the Massey family. They demanded that there be women on the board here. Can you imagine in 1920 that they would ask that? I think that says something about Newcastle itself though. It always had a community feeling. Everyone was so intertwined.

Peter Martin

I’ve been here for close to 3 years. I have a lifelong interest in history in the broadest sense. I sought out this place almost immediately. In a sense, a place like Newcastle is a treasure trove for a historian.





Marilyn Kent

I wish I could go into my mother's grocery store one more time. It was where the Home Hardware is now. She was there from 1954 to 1963. My father had passed away, and my grandmother had inherited that whole corner. The Tom's family had started a grocery store on the end and they kept growing and expanding and buying more property from my grandmother. All that was left was this one space and she wouldn't let it go, because she always had this idea that my family would take it over. My father's health wasn't good, and he was going to have to give up the farm. We would have to move to Newcastle and they would run the grocery store. But by 1964, Thompson's had got the IGA franchise and she couldn't compete anymore. She called it Helen's Groceteria.

She was a resilient woman. I was twelve when my dad died and my brother was seven.

You know I often think right now, of my Grandmother Baskerville that owned this property, she died in 1966. I wish so much that I had more interest in history then. I think of questions today that I wish I had asked her, but I was just too busy.

(Bill Lake: "Well, when you're young you don't think about history")



Sher Leetooze on the Newcastle Community Hall

I think we should have the local kids come in and we can talk to them about the history. We can tell them there used to be hall dinners and things... different groups and organizations, and the hall was fully stocked with dishes and everything to use. But at the end of the night, if someone says "oh, I can't eat all this," well, you couldn't put it in a takeaway container, there was no such thing! So they would wrap up your plate and say "bring the plate back tomorrow will you?" And some people brought the plates back and some people didn't. So, what a fun treasure hunt! We send the kids off to grandma's or great grandma's place to look in the cupboards. "Do you see anything like that?" (Pointing to a plate from the early days of the Hall) Bring it back!"

(Erla Jose: "In all the years I've been here, I have never heard that story. Isn't that a great story?")