



Preserving, promoting and developing Wellington North's unique cultural resources to build a vibrant community and a prosperous economy.

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR APRIL 17TH CELEBRATES HELEN FAIR

On her shoulders is an exhibit on display at the Mount Forest Museum & Archives that showcases some of the unique women in the history of Mount Forest. Today's cultural moment celebrates Helen (Oulton) Fair ; 1909 – 1993.



Helen Fair came to Mount Forest in 1952 with a definite plan. She had spent her first ten years of marriage in New York City with her husband Harold Fair, a well-known newspaper correspondent at Reuters. Harold had been the first Canadian journalist sent overseas in September of 1939 to report on the war. Originally from Arthur Ontario, Harold created a plan to move back to his home in Wellington North and purchase and edit a local newspaper.

In 1954, Arthur Wright's daughter Grace was selling the *Mount Forest Confederate* after her father's death. Harold and Helen Fair bought the *Confederate* and, from the start, Helen shared equally in the management and editing of the paper. That same year Harold Fair died. Helen Fair was now the sole editor of her own newspaper.

Described as a very quiet and almost shy woman, Helen Fair could have called it quits. Instead, she became a hard-working, intelligent editor who oversaw a very successful and respected weekly paper until 1971. Through many printing and mechanical advances and through the tumultuous decade of the 60's, Helen ran the newspaper with humility and humour according to former employees.

Sheila MacEachern ran the linotype press at the paper in 1965 when she took a break one day to see a movie in Harriston before returning for her later shift. The sad movie had reduced Sheila to tears, and her editor noticed that she had been crying. Fearing that Sheila was very distraught over some grave personal matter, Helen called her into her office for comfort and reassurance. Sheila set her boss straight, but she realized then that working for a sensitive female boss like Helen Fair was going to be a wonderful new experience. Helen Fair is buried beside Harold in Arthur's Greenfield cemetery.

Submitted by all the volunteers at the Mount Forest Museum & Archives who mounted the exhibit "On Her Shoulders: Unique Women in the History of Mount Forest".