



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

Our Cultural Moment for November celebrates the Arthur Cenotaph

One hundred years ago, November 1919, the Great War had been over for a year. In that time, there were many suggestions for a way to memorialize those who had sacrificed in the conflict. In Arthur, a group of women formed a Memorial Association and suggested a cenotaph and park. They chose the land at the corner of George and Frederick Streets, despite those who thought the former site of livery stables was inappropriate. However, council agreed with the Association, purchased it for \$500.00. Donations came from many sources, from bazaars to groups of former citizens living in Toronto.

A local skilled stonemason was hired as builder. The stones came from local farms, making this memorial unique in Ontario as the first built from fieldstone. The federal government donated the marble slab in the centre of the cenotaph with the cross embedded in it. Mrs. David Brocklebank, whose son Stanley had died of wounds in France in 1918, unveiled the memorial on August 1st, 1923. In January 1930 the park and memorial monument were turned over to the town by the Association along with a bond of \$11,000 for perpetual care.

Since their dedication, the cenotaph and the park have become a focal point for honouring local people who volunteered for both World Wars and other conflicts around the world. In 1970 Dutch citizens donated benches and lights to the park in thanks for the Canadian liberation of Holland in World War II. In 1995 a Homecoming committee unveiled a plaque recognizing Arthur's history as "Canada's Most Patriotic Village." Arthur Legion added plaques with World War II volunteers' names. In 2016 700 red and white tulips were planted in beds at the front of the park, in honour of the gifts of tulips from Holland. The Historical Society and the Revitalization Committee added a plaque to honour the women who initiated the memorial.

Every year on Remembrance Day local citizens and youth from all schools participate in the wreath-laying ceremony at the cenotaph. This homage to the men and women who dedicated themselves to their country is woven into the fabric of the village.

Submitted by Gail Donald; Wellington North Cultural Roundtable

