

12. *Kate Sotham Matthews (1878 - 1955)*



After immigrating to Canada to work as a governess, Kate Matthews had the vision to offer alternative education for London students. Beginning with 6 students in the basement of St. Paul's Cathedral, Kate's vision eventually grew into London's illustrious Matthews Hall. A passionate educator, she focused on the individuality of each child and fostering personal connections. She taught by example through attention, patience and respectfulness, and dedicated herself to cultivating students' self-confidence and preparing them to lead happy lives. She remained headmistress of Matthews Hall until 1950, received an honorary Doctorate from UWO, had a chapel committed to her at St. Paul's, and is remembered for her solid character and unflappable nature.



13. *Margaret Fullerton (1909 - 1991)*

One of London's most effective and popular municipal politicians, Margaret Fullerton began her career by being active in her community and being outspoken about women's affairs. In 1953, she became London's first female Ward Councillor, and in 1960 she successfully ran for the Board of Control. She was known as a vigorous and skilled debator with courage in her convictions, and over her career she established London's first permanent museum, was instrumental in the annexation of 1961, improved the status of married women employed in the city, and advocated for the building of Centennial Hall as a space for the arts. She was appointed by both Lester B. Pearson and Pierre Trudeau to federal positions, and is commemorated by a plaque mounted in City Hall, a building which she was instrumental in planning.



14. *Janet Barbara Groshow (1868 - 1960)*

Janet was already a widow when her son, William, was killed in WWI. After her remaining two sons, Thomas and James, decided to enlist as well, she left her position at the Victoria Home for Incurables and proceeded to France as a nursing sister, despite her age of 48. The trio is one of the only known mother/son groups to have served. The family's service was difficult, as Janet contracted tuberculosis and both of her sons were wounded. She returned to London in 1919 and dedicated the rest of her life to helping tuberculosis veterans and supporting active service members. She was the first female president of a soldier's branch of the Canadian Legion, and during WWII she assisted wounded soldiers and war brides. She was one of the first women buried in Woodland's veterans section, right between her sons.



Equality Through History



Most people know of Rosie the Riveter, a cultural icon dating back to the Second World War representing a class of women who rose to the challenge of breaking down gender barriers for the good of their nation. London has more than a few women, each a "Rosie the Riveter" in her own way, who have played important roles in shaping our city and improving conditions in many areas: politics, arts and culture, education, health care, social justice, history, literature, economics, and women's rights.

Spanning from the mid-nineteenth century to the brink of the new millenium, from the suffrage days to second-wave feminism, all of these women represent the tenets of the women's rights movement, even if some of them may not have considered themselves a part of it. From their achievements in traditionally masculine-dominated fields to their triumphs in equally important feminine ones, the Women of Woodland are icons of progress and represent the incredible abilities and drives of women throughout the eras of our city's formation.

This brochure is created in the context of the Women's History movement, and Woodland Cemetery is committed to uncovering and sharing women's history, especially that which risks being lost due to a lack of recognition and celebration. We hope you enjoy participating in this living local history, and that you find a new role model (or two) along the way.

For more information, or to book a guided group tour, contact Levi at 519-471-7450 or lhord3@uwo.ca.

The Women of Woodland

Paying Homage to Incredible Women in London's History



Historical Self-Guided Walking Tour



1. *Annie Pixley (1855 - 1893)*

The muse for Woodland's most impressive monument, Annie Pixley, was an internationally famous American actress. After growing up performing in mining camps with her sisters, Annie's career was marked by her uncanny ability for comedy, her beautiful voice, and her larger-than-life personality. She performed at London's Grand Theatre a number of times. She often spent her summers in Port Stanley at her in-laws' hotel, hence why her young son, Tommy, was buried at Woodland after he passed away suddenly at 12 years old. Annie was



devastated, and passed away soon after at 38. Her husband Robert Fulford designed a mausoleum to honour her memory and to house her ashes. A striking structure, it features handmade stained glass and sculpture work.

2. *Maria Caroline Rosé (1909 - 1999)*

Maria Rosé was born into Austria's cultural elite, and grew up surrounded by Europe's best artists, writers, thinkers and musicians. She married Alfred Rosé, a nephew of Gustav Mahler. Maria and Alfred were forced to flee Vienna from the Nazis in 1938, leaving behind their families, many of whom perished in concentration camps. After arriving in North America, Maria sewed and baked in order to support her family. Later, the pair lived in London, where Alfred was a founding member of the UWO Music department. Maria created the costumes for UWO's first operas. She was well-known for her collection of Viennese cultural artifacts, and

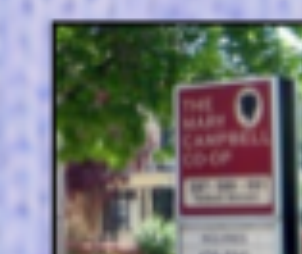


for opening her home and heart to many who considered it "a little piece of Vienna". She donated her important collection of Mahler memorabilia (including original manuscripts and letters) to UWO's music library for scholarly use.



3. *Mary Campbell (1919 - 1983)*

An outspoken activist and feminist, Mary Campbell used her voice, and her keen sense of equality, for all those who were down-and-out. Having grown up in Canada's Dust Bowl during the Great Depression, she was committed to fixing the oppression she saw, and believed that everyone should be able to live and work with dignity. She focused on women's rights, workers' rights, and peace activism, participating in the London Status of Women Action Group, Working Women's Alliance, and Ban the Bomb movement, among many others.



During her time as a UWO librarian, she spearheaded the movement to unionize UWO staff and founded the university's first sexual harassment and status of women committees. She started London's first food and housing co-ops, which exist to this day. She also raised 5 children. Upon her death, she donated her body to UWO and is buried with other donors.

4. Victoria Grace Blackburn (1865 - 1928)



Born into the Blackburn family of London Free Press fame, Victoria Blackburn used the paper as a vehicle to launch herself into literary stardom. She studied at Hellmuth Ladies' College in London, spent time in Europe and New York with her sisters studying journalism and criticism, and became one of Canada's leading literary and drama critics. In addition to writing for the newspaper, Victoria also authored several poems, a novel, and two plays. Her expansive style ranged from satire to tragedy, and she explored themes such as ill-fated love, sacrifice, war and loss. Often writing under the pen-name "FanFan", she was a leading figure in the cultural life of London and an intellectual powerhouse. She also founded the Women's Canadian Club and was president of the London Women's Press Club.



5. Jane Kay Darch (1834 - 1903)

Jane Darch began her career as a schoolteacher, but after her husband's death, was introduced to the world of business. Wanting to continue the family's saddle and harness business, she became the driving force and visionary behind its expansion and purchased a location on Talbot Street in London's market district. The enterprise flourished under her leadership, and eventually Jane commissioned an architect to build London's first "skyscraper" (a whopping 6 storey building, the highest of its time). She was also an influential voice in London's temperance movement. Her obituary stated that "She was possessed of extraordinary business ability and integrity, and by her carefulness and astuteness she built up what is probably the largest harness business in the West."



6. Bertha Sophia Smith (1862 - 1937)



Bertha Smith studied at Hellmuth Ladies' College before training to be a nurse in New York City. Her skills became vital during the First World War, during which she served overseas in Northern France. She survived four years of service and a hospital bombing near the end of the war. Through her frequent letters to her family, she became an unofficial historian for soldiers from the London area, often recounting stories of their gallantry and their last moments. After the war, she was the director of the Child Welfare Association. In 1934, Bertha was appointed by the British Empire as a Member of the Civil Division of the said Most Excellent Order due to her services in connection with child and community welfare.



7. Esther Forsyth Arscott Barnes (1842 - 1902)

Known as "London's most famous Madam" and the woman who "bested them all", Esther Barnes was a powerful but controversial figure in her time. Esther operated a brothel out of her home on Rectory Street in East London, using the business to support herself. When local authorities decided to make an example out of her, they did not consider her money, class, and backing, nor her sheer determination to fight back. Though she was convicted of "running a house of ill repute" and sentenced to 6 months of imprisonment and hard labour, she hired the famous Merediths as her lawyers and commenced a 2 year legal battle, which ended with her a free woman, suing the men who had arrested her in the first place. During the case, the papers portrayed her as a vile and notorious character, but to some, she was a resourceful widow who was fighting an important battle in the midst of a moral crackdown on sexuality. The case was very high-profile, and is still considered to be one of the first landmarks in the legal fight for prostitutes' rights. When Esther died, she left behind an impressive estate and an equally impressive reputation.



Kate Matthews with students of Matthews Hall celebrating Founder's Day in 1950

Eldon House, Amelia Harris' Regency-Era home and a popular London tourist attraction, in the springtime



8. Amelia Ryerse Harris (1798 - 1882)

The daughter of United Empire Loyalist Samuel Ryerse, Amelia Harris grew up in unsettled Upper Canada. Her early life was plagued by trouble, culminating with the Americans burning her family farm to the ground during the War of 1812. She married Naval Commander and 1812 veteran John Harris when she was 17 years old, immediately leaving home to assist him with a hydrographic survey of the Great Lakes. John was eventually appointed Treasurer of London District, and the family moved to London's Eldon House, which John built. Amelia quickly became a popular hostess, seeing the likes of John A. Macdonald and Londoners such as the Bechers, Merediths, Cronyns, Carlings, and Col. Talbot walk through her doors. Amelia raised 10 children, her most precious mission in life. Her 3 sons became lawyers and her 7 daughters married well. She is known for her witty 300 page diary, which is one of the best accounts of 19th century life from the perspective of a Canadian woman.



Margaret Fullerton posed in front of Centennial Hall, the fruit of many years of hard work and planning

Marion Errington and her dance troupe



9. Harriet Ann Boomer (1835 - 1921)



In her lifetime, Harriet Boomer was called both "London's most philanthropic and patriotic worker" and an "old busybody". Always outspoken, she was the President of the London Council of Women and also of the National Council; she established a branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses; she was instrumental in funding the Children's Hospital; she established London's first Red Cross branch and Canada's first Mother's Union. She was also a firm believer in women's education, continually pushing for business and home economics classes for girls. She was successful in introducing domestic science into London's curriculum, and in proposing the creation of H.B. Beal Technical School. She was also the first female Trustee on London's school board.



10. Harriet Priddis (1847 - 1922)

Harriet Priddis was one of London's early historians. With her pioneering spirit and inquiring mind, she became a valuable contributor to the London & Middlesex Historical Society. She edited the Proudfoot Papers (memoirs of one of London's founding families) for publication, and she wrote and delivered an in-depth paper on the naming of London streets which is still consulted by students of local history. She was also an accomplished artist in the mediums of painting, wood carving, and brass work. She understood the importance of recording her own history - she published travel records, reminiscences, and her diary of the Chicago World Fair in 1893, all of which are archived in London. She was also active in charitable and social organizations.



11. Marion Errington (1904 - 1978)



Known for her red dresses, risqué cigarettes, and flair for the dramatic, Marion Errington was the catalyst for the growth of London's dance scene. She worked as a dancer, teacher, choreographer and artistic director, and opened a dance school in London in the early 1920s (now Canada's longest operating dance school, run by her daughter-in-law). During WWII she used her talents to entertain troops at local bases. She also wrote the first Canadian university dance syllabus for UWO, started the London Ballet Company, and founded the Western Ontario Branch of the Canadian Dance Teacher's Association.