

Eugenia Hydro Power Station

Lower Valley Road

Sun  
Times

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■ **GREY HIGHLANDS:** Construction was a massive undertaking

## Eugenia, OPG marking power plant's 100th year

**DON CROSBY**

Sun Times correspondent

The Eugenia power station is in its 100th year of operation.

The first two units came online in November 1915, while a third was introduced in March 1920.

The Eugenia plant was the second generating station built and operated by the newly formed Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario.

Present at the launch in November 1915 was Sir Adam Beck, the first chairman of newly formed commission, renamed Ontario Hydro in 1974.

The Eugenia plant's three gen-

erators produce 5.4 megawatts of power — enough to supply electricity to 3,200 homes.

Creating the plant was a massive endeavour that involved damming the Beaver River above Eugenia falls to create a reservoir which became Lake Eugenia. This effectively reduced the falls to a trickle.

A wooden pipeline was built to carry the water from the lake almost two kilometres to the top of the Niagara Escarpment where it is stored in a surge tank. From there it drops to the generation station on the floor of the Beaver Valley. Water is then returned to the Beaver River by way of an

underground tailrace.

Details about the creation of Lake Eugenia, the dam and the power plant will be contained in a book being edited by Eugenia author Barbara Pearn, who has also written a brief history of the village of Eugenia.

The hard cover, coffee-table style book uses mostly photographs to tell the story. It is to be ready for the anniversary celebrations in November.

Pearn said her research has revealed that construction of the dam involved hundreds of workers working mainly by hand and some horses. Only one piece of mechanized equipment was

involved.

She's been working sporadically on the book for the eight months between other projects that she has on the go.

"It's a bit overwhelming but once I start working on it again I get excited about it because it's so interesting. I just find it fascinating, just the amount of work it took to do it," she said.

She has received hundreds of photographs from OPG, but is interested in hearing from residents who might have personal accounts from family or friends and photos of the construction.

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■ **POWER**

## Open house at the power plant on July 4

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Pearn can be reached at 519-924-0777.

The first turbines and generators were ordered from Switzerland but the ship carrying them was sunk by a German U-boat as it entered the St. Lawrence River. This delayed the opening of the station. Replacements were ordered from Wisconsin and arrived safely by rail.

In February 1996 the pipe-

line that brings water from Lake Eugenia to the top of the Beaver Valley above the power plant burst. Water gushed from the pipe, pushing mud and gravel down the hill to the power station and across the valley road.

Up to two metres of mud pushed up against the power station's east wall, bursting a door and flowing in through the windows.

OPG spokesperson Neal Kelly

said OPG is partnering with the Eugenia Gold Rush Days organizing committee and the South Grey Museum to celebrate the centenary of the Eugenia power plant during the gold rush festivities to be held this year on July 4.

"We are supporting the festival with an open house of the plant on July 4," he said.

A larger event with more community involvement is being planned by OPG for November.

It will include the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the anniversary. The date has yet to be determined.

The Eugenia Gold Rush organizing committee has arranged for a commemorative coin. It sells for \$25 and will be on sale at the Eugenia Gold Rush event and at the South Grey Museum in Flesherton, which has organized a display on the history of the power plant during the gold rush.

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DON CROSBY/FOR THE SUN TIMES

Barbara Pearn with a mock-up of book she is editing to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Eugenia power house and dam.

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