

From the March 2013 Beacon Port Lambton-born Dr. Maud Menten: physician, scientist, researcher

At the time of Maud Menten's birth in Port Lambton on March 20, 1879, women were scarce in the ranks of practicing physicians and scientists. But Maud, who was described as an energetic, highly-motivated and committed person, achieved remarkable success as a physician, scientist and researcher. Remarkably, she was an accomplished musician, linguist and fine artist as well.

Dr. Menten's family moved from Port Lambton to British Columbia when she was very young, but she returned to Ontario to attend the University of Toronto, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1904 and her Masters Degree in Physiology in 1907. She was appointed a fellow (member of a learned society) at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York and a year later, she was an intern at the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. She eventually returned to the University of Toronto and became one of the first Canadian women to receive a medical degree. However, her desire to do pursue a career in medical research meant she had to leave Canada again, since women were not allowed to do research here at that time.

In 1912, Dr. Menten moved to Berlin, where she and Dr. Leonor Michaelis of the University of Berlin coauthored a paper on Chemical Kinetics. The paper described the *Michaelis-Menten Equation*, which changed the study of biochemistry. Over the course of her career, Dr. Menten would author or coauthor over 70 research papers on important subjects from salmonella toxins to the chemical composition of cells and tissues in the body. In the coming years, Dr. Menten worked in the United States as a researcher at the Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and as a cancer researcher at the Bernard Skin and Cancer Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1916, she received her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Chicago. Her superior credentials and knowledge eventually led to her being hired by the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine as an instructor and demonstrator of pathology. She also held a position as head of pathology at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. She became a full professor in 1948 and retired from the University of Pittsburgh in 1950.

For the rest of her career, she returned to cancer research at the University of British Columbia's Medical Research Institute. When ill health ended her career, Miss Maud, as she was known to her friends, returned to Ontario where she died in Leamington in 1960 at the age of 81.

During the decades when Maud Menten worked to make a difference in her chosen field, a woman's lot was often difficult and competing in a man's world no doubt presented many obstacles for her to overcome. But she not only overcame them, she excelled and contributed substantially to research that continues to contribute to the health and recovery of people all over the world. She leaves behind a legacy that is acknowledged wherever she has applied her healing knowledge. A plaque dedicated in her honour graces the grounds of the University of Toronto Medical Science Building. The Maud Menten Investigator Prize gives grant money from \$1,000 to \$30,000 to successful applicants to further their research endeavours. The University of Western Ontario Department of Biochemistry holds the Dr. Maud Menten Lecture Series annually. The ultimate proof of her determined spirit came in 1998, when she was inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

Volunteering at local museums is rewarding and fun

The two museums of St. Clair Township preserve the heritage of this community for everyone to access when seeking information ranging from family history to the township's colourful early days. They also provide an enjoyable and educational outing for those who seek to know more about the genesis of their community.

The continued existence and growth of the Moore Museum and the Sombra Museum does not occur spontaneously. It takes place through the dedication of many volunteers who share their talents and interests to help keep the museums running. Their efforts make it possible to keep the museum exhibits and sites expanding and repaired, and to offer heritage- and education-based programs and special activities.

Moore Museum curator Laurie Mason said, "We'd like to thank our volunteers for their contributions over the past year to the important work of preserving our community's history and engaging local residents and tourists in exploring this heritage through lifelong learning opportunities." During 2012, 62 volunteers contributed an impressive 2,100 hours to the museum. These man-hours were spent on projects such as the completion of

construction and the outfitting of the interior of the general store building, the maintenance of the museum's 12 buildings, public programming activities such as events and tours, and assistance with maintaining collections records.

Sombra Museum curator Shelley Lucier agrees that volunteers are the heart of the museum. "Sombra Museum would not be able to offer as many programming and fundraising events as it does without the help of our volunteers," she said. "The museum's accomplishments of the past year, with the building of the new facility and plans for the coming year, specifically detail how volunteer support made it all possible."

New volunteers are always being sought and welcomed at both museums. To find out how you can enjoy the satisfying experience of volunteering at your local museum, call the Moore Museum at 519-867-2020 or Sombra Museum at 519-827-2622.