

DONALDA JAMES DICKIE

Author/Educator



Inducted: 2004
Years at GCI & VS:
1897 - 1900

Donalda James Dickie was born in Hespeler in 1883. She attended Galt Collegiate at the turn of the century, finishing in 1900.

Donalda's post-GCI education was remarkably wide-ranging and extensive for any Canadian of any era but especially so for a woman of her time. She received a Master of Arts degree from Queen's University in 1910 and then attended three of the most prestigious universities in the world – Columbia, Oxford and the University of Toronto – receiving a PhD in 1929.

Miss Dickie began a long career as history teacher with the Alberta Normal School system in 1910, teaching in Calgary, Camrose and Edmonton, retiring from teaching in 1945. She also worked as an instructor at various Alberta teachers colleges over the same period. Miss Dickie is remembered by one of her students "as a great story teller who was able to bring to life the events and people of our [Canadian] past". Another student said "She made the business of learning an adventure."

While teaching, the tireless Miss Dickie began a second career as an author. A prodigious writer, Donalda authored more than sixty history readers; one of the early books was titled *When Canada Was Young*. Testifying to the quality of her writing, many of her books, such as *In Pioneer Days* and *My First History of Canada*, remain in publication and in use in Canadian schools eight decades after their first editions.

Perhaps her finest achievement and most ambitious project was *The Great Adventure*, her history of Canada for youths in junior high schools. She received the Governor-General's Award for Juvenile Literature for 1950, to the best of our knowledge the only person to be so honoured. In 1952 the University of Toronto awarded Miss Dickie a honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD). In 1961 she was the third woman to be made an honorary member of the Alberta Teacher's Association. Her long career in the educational spotlight concluded when she passed away in 1972.

James R. Barrie

THE
STAIRWAY OF
EXCELLENCE