

Verna is Mississauga's

By JIM ROBINSON
Staff

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Verna Mae Weeks is the Miss Marple of local history. There's no lead too insignificant for her to pursue.

Weeks has just released her sixth book chronicling the people and places who laid the foundation for today's City of Mississauga.

Cooksville: Village of the Past features more than 300 pages and includes rare photos. The book is available at most book and gift stores in Mississauga.

"I'm like a detective," Weeks said. "Sometimes it will take months, even years, to track down something, but we never, ever give up."

The author is aided by her husband of 58 years, Roy, who has spent literally hundreds of hours researching registry offices, libraries, universities and tax records to help piece history back together.

The current book took no less than six pain-staking years to

complete. "We couldn't find anything on one guy," Weeks said.

"The founder of the Schiller Winery was said to be a German mercenary soldier who walked here from Toronto along Dundas St. and settled here after being granted land.

"I couldn't see how a German man named Johannes Schiller could come here after the war and be given land.

"After two years of research a man in Ottawa at the British War registry told us his name was John, not Johannes. He was an English soldier with a German-sounding name. He was a corporal and the Crown gave him two lots of land so he had 400 acres instead of the usual 200."

It was John Schiller who found grapes growing in the wild along the Credit River and transplanted them to Cooksville, thus

founding a profitable winery that survived into the 1930s.

While you might now expect Verna Mae and Roy to rest for a while, Roy has already moved to the library to start researching the next book.

Weeks said recently she derives the most satisfaction from seeing her works used by children.

Recently, a Grade 5 class at Sawmill Valley Public School put on a play about the history of the Credit River based solely on her books.

"It was fantastic to watch," she said. "The students were calling all the time, asking me about this and that. They were making their play as authentic as possible."

"The school invited Roy and I to watch. We were very impressed."

Staff photo by Fred Loek

Verna Mae Weeks has concluded six years of work to produce her sixth book on the history of Mississauga hamlets, this time focusing on Cooksville.

answer to Miss Marple

