



**WOODSTOCK
ART GALLERY**

August 19, 2022

Oxford County Council
21 Reeve Street
Woodstock, Ontario
N4S 7Y3

RE: Letter of Support: Digital Museums of Canada – Emily “Ella” Carlyle (nee Youmans)

With this letter, we are reaching out to potential interested parties to humbly request a letter of support for a significant project in development by the Oxford County Archives and the Woodstock Art Gallery (WAG). This exciting project stems from the recent donation of a journal to WAG. The journal was owned by Emily “Ella” Carlyle (nee Youmans) who was born in 1834, in Picton, Ontario. The journal was written during Ella’s time working as a teacher at the ladies’ college at St. Austin’s Institute in Wilson, North Carolina, where she arrived in January 1860. With the outbreak of the American Civil War, Ella returned to Canada a year later and married William Carlyle. They had seven children together, including the accomplished Canadian artist Florence Carlyle, and later moved to Woodstock, Ontario.

The content of this journal is both fascinating and educational, as it contains insight into the mind of a young woman living during a period where young women’s thoughts, ideas, and opinions were often ignored and oppressed. The journal provides a snapshot into life at the school, and the sociocultural norms that Ella had to adhere to. She was unafraid to express her opinions in the journal on matters regarding religion, women’s education and role in society, and even slavery, as tensions were mounting in the area with uprisings involving enslaved people and the beginning of the American Civil War just around the corner. Ella also made her way through various locations in America and Ontario, Canada, as she traveled to and from the school.

The journal will be interpreted in an online exhibit. The Archives and WAG will be applying for a grant through Digital Museums Canada which, if successful, will allow us to obtain funding and additional resources to create an immersive, accessible, and bilingual online exhibit experience for our target audience. As part of the application



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process, we are required to include letters of support from institutions, organizations, and individuals who feel that this project will be a meaningful venture. More information on Digital Museums Canada is available at www.digitalmuseums.ca. A biography of Ella Youmans and an optional letter template are appended.

If you are interested in providing a letter of support for this digital exhibit, please submit a letter to the Oxford County Archives by **September 16, 2022** through email at archives@oxfordcounty.ca. We greatly appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Reid, MA, MBA
Director/Curator



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Brief Biography of Emily “Ella” Carlyle (nee Youmans)

Emily (nee Youmans) Carlyle was born in 1834, in Picton, Ontario, where her ancestors had received a United Empire Loyalist land grant. Over the years her family prospered and Emily was raised in a comfortable home with servants, where she was groomed for a life of domestic responsibility and motherhood that reflected for her generation and class. However, she also studied to be a teacher at Ford Edward Collegiate Institute in New York State, receiving an education that would have been considered superior for a woman at that time.

In 1859 she accepted a position at the ladies college at St. Austin’s Institute in Wilson, North Carolina, arriving in January 1860. With the outbreak of the American Civil War she returned to Canada, a year later, and married William Carlyle, whom she met at Fort Edward Collegiate. They would go on to have seven children together, including the artist Florence Carlyle. In 1871, William accepted the position of County School Inspector for Oxford County and the family moved to Woodstock Ontario. While living in Woodstock, Emily created an art studio for local children who were interested in developing their artistic skills under the guidance of hired artists. Sensing her own daughter’s artistic talents, she arranged, for her private drawing and painting lessons with William Lees Judson. Her daughter would later produce a portrait of her mother, around 1911.

Emily Youmans Carlyle would pass away on December 20, 1912 in Woodstock, Ontario.

[LETTER HEAD]

[DATE]

Digital Museums Canada
Canadian Museum of History
100 Laurier Street
Gatineau, QC K1A 0M8

Re: Letter of Support - Emily “Ella” Carlyle (nee Youmans) Journal – Digital Exhibition

I [your name here], on behalf of [the institution you are affiliated with if applicable], am writing this letter in support of the Oxford County Archives' and Woodstock Art Gallery's online exhibition project and funding application through Digital Museums Canada.

[Please include the reason(s) for your support here which could include:

- Teaching resource
- Highlighting the untold experiences of women during the 1860s
- Sharing a Canadian's perspective of a significant turning point in American History
- Insight in sociocultural and political norms of the time
- How you could use or share this resource in your own organization.]

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support of this worthy project. Your consideration of this application for funding is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

[Name & Contact Info]