

TWEEDSMUIR HISTORY



BAYHAM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE



The Aylmer Women's Institute is disbanding after 85 years of service. President Iva Hayman said the group just couldn't get new members. Current members include, front row: Ellen Clifford, life member Ethel Wheatley, president Iva Hayman, life member Iva Ashford, Doris Summers, Norma Dance, back

row: treasurer Mildred Owen, Grace Cox, Mary Hogan, Leona Clarke, Gladys Magee, Nellie Putnam, Hilda Blakley, secretary-treasurer and life member Gertrude Holmes, and Barbara Cross.



Aylmer Women's Institute president Iva Hayman helps life member Ethel Wheatley cut the group's birthday cake as it celebrated its 85th anniversary on Wednesday, April 1. It

is also the WI's last anniversary, as the group is disbanding due to a lack of new members. Mrs. Wheatley is the Aylmer WI's oldest member. 1987

Aylmer Women's Institute disbanding after 85 years

The Aylmer Women's Institute recently celebrated its 85th and last anniversary.

After 85 years the Aylmer WI was disbanding because it couldn't get new members said president Iva Hayman.

The members held their anniversary luncheon at the Aylmer Baptist Church on Wednesday, April 1. "We all feel sad about this," said many of the members. But they were all talking and laughing happily at the meeting.

The Aylmer Women's Institute was founded on January 3, 1902, and is the oldest one in Elgin County. Nineteen members enrolled that day.

The Aylmer WI then founded branches in Springfield, Port Burwell, Sparta, Mapleton, Bayham, Luton and Lyons. Several of these are still going strong today.

Meetings used to be held in Aylmer council chambers. A report written by Jean Boyes for the 50th anniversary celebration in 1952 said, "Some of the old chairs had rough heads on the screw nails. This resulted often in torn dresses. Consequently the ladies asked permission to provide new chairs for the room." The group did purchase new chairs for council chambers.

In the early days, the Aylmer

WI undertook many community projects such as: installing a water trough on John Street South and; installing a fountain, picnic tables and benches for what is now Bandshell Park. Members also sent a box of warm clothing, layettes and quilts to Northern Ontario each year.

During the Second Great War, the Aylmer WI contributed to the war effort. Between 1940 and 1945, it sent 8,000 pounds of jam to Britain. "Boxes were regularly sent to the boys on active service overseas."

Following the war, "there were thousands of destitute, starving children in Europe. To help them the Save the Children Fund was started in Toronto. Aylmer WI sent substantial sums of money more than once. Many bales of good serviceable clothing, books and toys were also sent."

Aylmer WI also used to hold an annual tag day with pro-

ceeds going to the blind. It donated money to Memorial Hospital, the recreation centre on St. Andrew Street, and to a student nurse for a graduation outfit.

The group also frequently provided assistance to destitute families and families whose homes had been destroyed by fire.

East Elgin was organized as a district in 1907.

Mrs. Hayman said in recent years, the WI had assisted at Elgin Manor, Terrace Lodge, the Aylmer and District Museum, and the museum in St. Thomas.

It also contributed a scholarship to a graduating student at East Elgin Secondary School. Norma Dance said the scholarship used to go to the top home economics student, but they weren't allowed to specify that anymore.

Mrs. Hayman said the Aylmer WI also used to be in charge of 4H clubs.

Presidents of Aylmer WI

Past presidents of the Aylmer Women's Institute, formed in 1902 are: Mrs. T. Hammond, 1902-1908; Mrs. J. Trim, 1909; Mrs. J. Haggan, 1910; Mrs. S. Adams, 1911; Mrs. L. Mitchell, 1912; Mr. D. McClennan, 1913;

Mrs. M. Griffin, 1914-1915; Mrs. A. Almas, 1916; Mrs. R. Rogers, 1917-1918; Mrs. M. Griffin, 1919; Mrs. Charles King, 1920-1921; Mrs. F. Canning, 1922; Mrs. F. Garner, 1923;

Mrs. H. Ball, 1924; Mrs. A.R. Christie, 1925; Mrs. Blanchard, 1926-1929; Mrs. J. Adams, 1930-1934; Mrs. G. Mitchell, 1935; Mrs. Ed. Lloyd, 1936-1942; Mrs. F. Bennett,

1943-1944; Mrs. A. Richardson, 1945-1948; Mrs. Pressey, 1949-1950;

Mrs. F. Bennett, 1951; Mrs. Wolfe, 1952-1953; Mrs. Shain, 1954-1956; Mrs. A. McTaggart, 1957-1959; Mrs. Wm. Holmes, 1960-1962; Mrs. Wheatley, 1963-1968; Mrs. G. Van Patter, 1968-1971; Mrs. I. Warren, 1973-1978; Mrs. J.C. Dance, 1979-1983; Mrs. Arthur Hayman, 1983-1987.

Aylmer W.I. The first meeting was held Frid. night Jan. 3rd. 1902

Disbanded Tues. March 31st. 1987



Iva Hayman, left, president of the Aylmer Women's Institute, presents past president Norma Dance with a certificate of merit for work done in the institute. The presentations were made at a meeting September 5.



Gertrude Holmes, left, secretary of the Aylmer Women's Institute, presents a life membership pin to Iva Ashford, who has been an institute member for 30 years.

Bayham W.I. organized in Richmond the summer of 1907

Disbanded March 31st. 1981 Ten Life Members in picture taken at the last meeting



Back Row - Mrs Leon Carter L.M. Miss Mildred Owen L.M. Elsie Acre. Mrs Fennel Herbank L.M. Mrs Harry Stewart L.M. Mrs Lenard Simpson L.M. Mrs Allan Cross. Mrs Teena Empey. Mrs Ethel Wheatley L.M.
Middle Row - Mrs Elton Jackson L.M. Mrs Jess Van Patter L.M. Mrs Ethel Marr. Mrs Iva Gibson L.M. Sect. Treas
Front Row - Mrs Donna Lossing. Mrs Lynn Acre. President. Mrs Isadore Volkaert L.M.

March 31st. 1981