

Oratorical Contests between the three schools, (Mapleton, Kingsmill and Crossley-Hunter) were held with prizes for the contestants and victrolas, pictures and first aid kits given to the schools.

In 1916 the first Grandmother's program was held, this has continued to be a highlight of the yearly program down through the years. In 1927 a Cook Book was published and an autograph quilt made, both of which realized splendid sums of money. In 1930 an Open Air Sunday Service was held and this inspirational feature was continued until 1951.

In 1936 a First Aid and Home Nursing Course was sponsored by the branch and a class of eight received their certificates from the St. Johns Ambulance Corps of St. Thomas.

Local Leadership training schools for adult education in home-making have been taken advantage of, and 4H Home-making clubs sponsored down through the years. Many of our club girls receiving their Provincial Honors.

In the early years Membership Cards were used, then later the printed yearly program was adopted on the 1923-24 program directly under the motto "For HOME AND COUNTRY" was printed "IN LOVE OF HOME THE LOVE OF COUNTRY HAS ITS RISE". This proved very true when in October 1939 Canada entered the war against Germany and again an all out war program was undertaken. This time the jams and marmalades were made in home kitchens using vacuum topped cans supplied by the Department.

In October 1940 we undertook a booth at the International Plowing Match held on the Mental Hospital Farm, south of St. Thomas, the proceeds to go for Red Cross work - net proceeds \$230.00. Especially in these war years did the groups serve in a creditable way - not only for the splendid volume of Red Cross work done, but also in remembering the boys who left the security of home and family to serve in the armed forces. Farewell parties were held for each boy leaving for overseas and a farewell gift presented. Boxes of food etc., were sent. Then at the close of the war as the boys returned home to our community a welcome reception was given and suitable gifts presented, made possible by a special canvas of the communities represented.

On April 1, 1946 when the war work was considered finished, Kingsmill Mapleton had to their credit in the war effort 331 large quilts, 64 crib quilts, 1314 articles of sewing, 1237 articles of knitting, 320 lbs of jam and marmalade and jelly, and 1000 lbs of honey.

On February 14, 1951 in a special ceremony, the Kingsmill group presented a modern wheel chair to the Memorial Hospital, St. Thomas honoring the memory of five young men from this district, who had made the supreme sacrifice. A bronze plate affixed to the chair bearing the names of the five was heroes. Donald D. Finch, and J. Barry Cleaver who served in the R.C.A.F and Glenn D. Durdle, Archie T. Fisher and Leon S. Williams who served in the Canadian Army. "Their work is done, They gave their all in service". It is the sincere wish that this chair may too be of service in the great work being done by the hospital. The gift to be transferred to the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital when that institution is finished.

The group system of working was adopted in 1929 with fifty percent of earnings from each group to be spent in the Community - dishes, folding chairs and tables were purchased for community use making it possible for many social gatherings to be provided for. In 1961 the group system was discontinued and a ways and means committee named for the Institute as a whole.

In 1962 a chicken barbecue and in 1963 a Rose Tea and food sale in Lyons hall with other branches as guests. These were special events to increase the funds.

Roll Call prizes given twice a year to the ones answering the most roll calls has proven an interesting feature at our meetings for many years.

Faithful service of a number of members has been honoured by Life Membership Certificates as follows:

1940.	Mrs. Roy McGregor
1948	Mrs. Arthur Moore
1959	Mrs. Claude Hoover
1959	Mrs. Salem Herbert
1959	Mrs. Lloyd Laidlaw
1960	Mrs. Sam Legg
1960	Mrs. Hiram Peer
1961	Mrs. Roy Legg
1961	Mrs. James C. Jenkins.

In 1948 the Blackdown Women's Institute- Dorset England was adopted by the Kingsmill Mapleton Branch and boxes of food sent one each month to this English society, food being rationed in England so severely at that time. Each year since letters and gifts have been exchanged. In June 1962 we were happy to have as a guest, Mrs. Hibbard from the Blackdown Institute, England. She spoke at our meeting bringing greetings from their society.

In 1962, under "The Save the Children Plan", the sponsoring of a child was undertaken. Shui-Chun-Ny a 6½ year old girl, born August 12, 1957 at Castel Teak New Territories, Hong Kong- a bright and healthy looking little girl is our adopted child.

We give assistance to the health clinic at Aylmer. We contribute gifts to the Ontario hospital, St. Thomas, jams and jellies for the Memorial Hospital, St. Thomas, pennies for Friendship, also cash donations have gone to the Friendship School for the Retarded Children and the Elgin County Museum, St. Thomas, Memorial Sick Children's Hospital, London to name a few recent projects (1963) Present membership 43.

The complete history in detail of the Kingsmill-Mapleton Branch is recorded in our Tweedsmuir History Books.

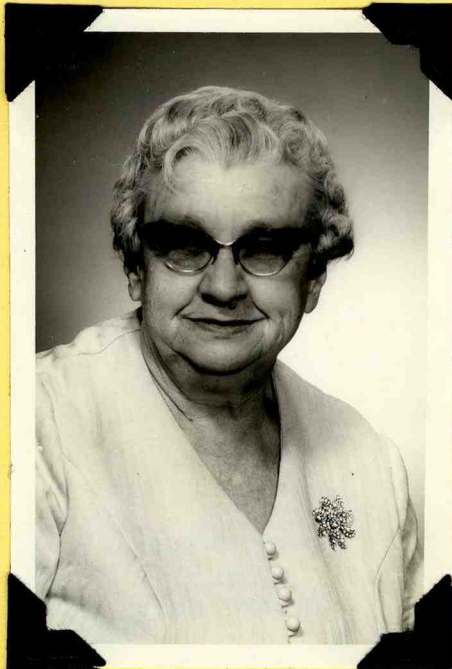
Compiled by Mrs. Roy (Florence) McGregor
Curator. Belmont R R # 3.

1971 - 1973

Mrs. William E. (Minnie Gertrude Evert) Holmes was born on a farm on Lot 21, Concession 9, South Dorchester Township, Elgin County. Her parents were John A. Evert and Laura Gertrude Simpson. Receiving her early education at Crossley-Hunter Public School and Belmont Continuation School, she then attended London Normal School, working then for five years. She married William Edward Holmes whose home was on Lot 17, Concession 9, South Dorchester. They lived on this farm for $2\frac{1}{2}$ years, then moved to Harrietsville for six months before moving to Aylmer. She has a family of six children, four boys and two girls.

Mrs. Holmes was initiated into Institute work at an early age as her mother, Mrs. John Evert, was a very enthusiastic worker and often mother and daughter attended meetings together. Mrs. Holmes joined the Kingsmill-Mapleton Branch about 1929 or 1930. She was secretary-treasurer for this Branch for 2 years and president for six months when she moved to Aylmer. After living in Aylmer a few years getting acquainted, she joined the Aylmer W.I. where she has been a faithful member. She was secretary for six years, president for 4 years, convenor of the different standing committees, active setting up the Elgin County Pioneer Museum, the scholarship fund, a 4-H Leader for 10 years. She has served as secretary-treasurer for the East Elgin District W.I. for six years, president for two years and was president of the Elgin County Rally Committee for 2 years.

Mrs. Holmes has been active in Sunday School and Young People's work at Crossley-Hunter and was secretary of the Elgin County Young People's Union for several years. Since moving to Aylmer she has worked in Mission Band and the United Church Women at St. John's United Church.





MRS. JOE BECHARD

1973 - 1975

Shirley A. Bechard was born in Walkerville, Ontario, the only daughter of S. Alec Green and Elizabeth Watson Green. Her parents had emigrated from England and Scotland respectively in the early 1920's. Marrying Joe Bechard on January 28, 1956, they moved to Lot 10, Concession 11, Yarmouth Township, Elgin County on April 1, 1956.

Her education consisted of 12 years of elementary and secondary schooling, plus 1 year of business college and then worked for 4 years as secretary for the Union Gas Co. in Chatham. Shirley also assisted her mother who owned a business in Chatham. Coming to St. Thomas to settle, she worked for the Ontario Hydro until her first child came along on February 7, 1957 and has been a homemaker ever since.

On March 9, 1959, Shirley joined the newly formed Yarmouth Glen Women's Institute as a charter member and held every office in that Branch.

At District level, Shirley has been a Federated Representative, 3rd and 1st vice-presidents, president, and then secretary-treasurer. She has been alternate F.W.I.O. Board member for 3 years for the London Area W.I. She has also been on the executive of the Elgin County Rally, the Elgin County Pioneer Museum and enjoyed several years as a 4-H Homemaking leader.

For many years Mrs. Bechard has been affiliated with the Catholic Women's League and attends St. Anne's Parish Church in St. Thomas. She has been on the executive of the County Federation of Agriculture and the County Farm Safety Council and also a member of the Fanshawe College (St. Thomas). She is the North Yarmouth captain of the Cancer Campaign and served as president of the St. Thomas Opti-Mrs. Club for 1 year plus convening many events for the Club.

Shirley is the mother of 4 children, Paul, David, Brenda and Michael. Her husband farms 300 acres of cash crops, raises and dresses 1200 roosters in the fall and is one of the top corn salesman for Pioneer Hi-Bred Seed Corn Co. They live in a 12-room, 100-year old plus farm house and Shirley cares for her family and does all the non-physical farm business and bookkeeping.

Shirley Bechard really enjoys her lot in life and hopes she can carry on for many more years.

Miss Catharine M. McDowell

1975 - 1977

Miss Catharine McDowell was born in Courtland, Norfolk County, to Mr. and Mrs. Levi Walter McDowell, at the home of her grandparents, Rev. and Mrs. Ezra Adams. Her first five years were spent in Tillsonburg and her public school years on a farm west of Eden in the Township of Bayham, Elgin County.

During her first year while attending Tillsonburg High School, her parents moved to Eden. Catharine attended London Normal School for two years and then for twenty-one years taught school. In 1953, she returned to Eden to be with her father as her mother had passed away eleven years before.

Catharine joined the Eden Women's Institute at this time and has held many offices such as secretary-treasurer, public relations officer and standing committee convener.

Not only active in the Eden Branch, but Catharine was at the Elgin East District level, an alternate Federation Representative, alternate District Delegate, District Delegate, District President, District Secretary-treasurer, Historical Research Convener and for ten years was on the committee to assist the Tweedsmuir History curator and now is the Resolutions convener.

Catharine attended the F.W.I.C. convention in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, as a voting delegate and as a visitor went to the F.W.I.C. convention in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

While serving on the executive board of the Elgin County Pioneer Museum, Miss McDowell became a member of the Ontario Historical Society and Museum Section, the latter's workshop she attended for nine years--several as a delegate.

Miss McDowell resides in Eden on a site known as "The Farm" where she had moved to in October 1972.



Acknowledgement: Information and picture from Miss Catharine M. McDowell (1974)

Typed in January 1979.



MRS. R. J. FERGUSON
1977 to 1979

Information from Mrs Ferguson,
in 1979.

Jessie was born in the Township of Westminster, County of Middlesex, Ontario on Nov. 5, 1910. She attended S.S.# 15, Westminster Public School (which was near the cloverleaf at Highway 4 and 401 - called Tempo. In June 1924, it was required to go to London to try departmental examinations before entering high school. She was surprised when the certificate came- "Honours" in red ink was on it.

Jessie remained at home for the next year, her mother being ill and her sister training as maternity nurse. In September of 1925 she enrolled in the three-year Commercial Course at H.B. Beal school, graduating in 1928 with diploma plus one for writing, shorthand, and Gold Medal for typing 65 words a minute for 10 minutes without error. (1 of 5 in London). On Friday Dec. 13, 1928 she commenced work in the Head Office of London Life Insurance Company in London at a salary of \$25.00 every fourteen days. When she left in 1933 to be married her wages were \$25.00 a week.

While attending school she rode a bicycle three miles to Glanworth and travelled on the London and Port Stanley Railway. In winter and rainy days her father drove her in horse and buggy (or cutter).

In 1930 she purchased a 1928 Ford convertible and from home back and forth to work. In 1932 she traded it in on a 1930 Ford coupe with rumble seat (cost price was \$385.00). As her mother had passed away Easter Sunday, 1932, she kept house for her brother and father. Her sister was away nursing.

In August 1933 Jessie married. They have four sons and two daughters - all married and with eighteen grandchildren.

Jessie joined the Women's Institute, North Yarmouth Branch in 1953, and held an office in 1954 as assistant secretary. She was secretary six years, president three years (1960-1963), treasurer two years, secretary again and was president again from 1972 to 1975. She is now a convenor.

At District level, Jessie was Public Relations Officer for Elgin East for five years, President for two years, Secretary-Treasurer for two years, and is now serving as Resolution Convenor. She was also a Secretary two years of the Elgin County Rally Women's Institute and a President for two years.

Jessie's hobbies are needlecraft, knitting and crocheting (six afghans), needle-point for six dining room chairs, sewing for herself, children and grandchildren, and gardening -especially flowers.