

Golden Anniversary at Stoney Creek 1947

ON FEBRUARY 19th, 1897, the first Women's Institute was organized at Stoney Creek, in Wentworth county, Ontario. On February 19th of this year the Stoney Creek institute held a banquet to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. And with all the changed conditions fifty years would inevitably bring, as we heard the Stoney Creek women review the past and plan for the future, it was very evident that the objectives, the initiative, and the spirit of the founders of the institute movement are alive in Stoney Creek today.

At this anniversary banquet—a very gracious occasion with flowers and candles in the blue and gold institute colors, with good music and friendliness and the members' husbands as special guests, it was not difficult to go back in imagination to the meeting in Squire's Hall fifty years ago when one-hundred-and-one women, with Erland Lee acting as chairman, organized the world's first women's institute. It was not difficult to picture that first meeting because ten of the charter members were present as special guests: Mrs. H. P. VanWagner, Mrs. McKinley Morden, Mrs. J. B. Smith, Mrs. John Budge, Mrs. George Millen, Mrs. Selby Cornan, Mrs. J. B. Davis, Mrs. Walter Ptolemy, Mrs. E. B. Thompson and Mrs. Murray Neil. And because the women actively in charge of affairs were, most of them, daughters or granddaughters of those who pioneered the movement. When the roll of past presidents was called, a number of women active in the work today, responded for their mothers who had passed on. Miss Muriel Bostwick of Hamilton was a guest in honor of her grandmother, Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless,

the woman who conceived the idea of women banding themselves together to study and work for better homes and a better country, and who had been brought to Stoney Creek by the Farmers' Institute to present her cause to the women of Saltfleet township. The guest speaker of the evening was Mrs. Gordon Conant, daughter of

the first president, Mrs. E. D. Smith. Another member present who has been a link between Stoney Creek and institutes in a wider field was Mrs. A. E. Walker. Mrs. Walker has been an active member, and sometimes officer, of the mother institute since its early days; she has also been provincial president, national president, and Canadian representative at conventions of the Associated Country Women of the world; she is now collaborating with Miss Edith Collins in compiling an anniversary brochure, "The History of the Institutes for Fifty Years."

THE present president, and chairman of the banquet, Mrs. Angus Jackson, commented on the progres-

siveness of the women's institute fifty years ago. Such topics from their programs as "How to find Time for Reading", and "How to Get Along with as Little Help as Possible", she felt would be very timely today. "And" she said, "we talk about adult education as something new. The institutes have had it for fifty years."

Mrs. Summers, provincial President of the Ontario institutes and Miss Anna Lewis, Superintendent, spoke of the inspiration the founders of the first institute had been to institute women ever since, and of the soundness of the objectives they set for the organization. These objectives, as written in the constitution "shall be the dissemination of knowledge relating to domestic economy . . . household architecture . . . home sanitation . . . foods . . . clothing . . . and the more scientific care and training of children, with a view to raising the general standard of health and morals of our people; and the consideration of any problem, or the carrying on of any line of work which has as its object the uplift of the home or the betterment of conditions surrounding community life." What Stoney Creek and other institutes have done through the years since, and what leaders like Mrs. Summers and Miss Lewis are working to develop in institute work today, shows that the aims of the first institute are fundamental enough and vital enough—they just have to be adapted to present conditions, as they are being adapted by progressive institutes everywhere.

THIS was borne out, too, in the message from Mrs. Conant.

"I do not remember the first meeting," said Mrs. Conant, "—after all, I was quite young—but I do remember in later years my mother" (Mrs. E. D. Smith) "telling me that she worried about neglecting her family. But Mrs. Hoodless persuaded her to be the first president."

Mrs. Conant recalled coming to some of the meetings as a small girl, and that when some subject of special interest to women was being discussed, the doors were tightly closed in case some man should pass and hear what was said.

"The institute motto 'For Home and Country' has a depth and warmth that stirs the heart", Mrs. Conant declared. "A sound family of nations begins with a nation of sound families." Then she proceeded to explain from her observations in Europe the gulf between the meaning of home to Canadians and to the hosts of homeless people in Europe.

"The 'displaced persons' plight is serious", the speaker said. "They may live in camps, always herded together. Or a family may live in one room. Family life is a travesty. Food comes in cans. Clothing comes from UNRRA. A man cannot work to support his family. Children grow up in idleness and the older ones tend to become bandits or thieves. Each nationality has its own school where children are taught about their own country, so out of school they have fights over national superiorities, and an intolerance is being bred to pave the way for future wars. Holland and Sweden are taking many of these children. Is Canada to remain heartless?"

"Other, older children have lived in the woods, fighting as partisans with the Russians. They have carried weapons, and killed, and are proud of it. The youth of Germany are in the same position as the youth of Germany were after the first war. They have no hope, no ideals, low moral standards. If we don't give them something someone else will. The children of Europe today will be the friends or enemies of our children tomorrow."

Another aftermath of the war is the number of "surplus" women and girls left in Europe. Mrs. Conant suggested that the women of Canada would befriend these—and at the same time

and Mrs. Conant suggested that the institutes consider supporting this action.

The secretary of Stoney Creek institute, Mrs. W. Lyle Nash, reported 2179 messages of congratulation on the institute's fiftieth anniversary. They came from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Holland, and every province in Canada; from Lady Tweedsmuir, the Lieut.-Governor of Ontario, Elizabeth Christmas and forty three institutes in England, from Andover, the first institute in New Brunswick, the Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs, Col. Kennedy, Mrs. Alfred Watt, Laura Rose Stephen, Senator E. D. Smith and the Men's Club of Stoney Creek. Mrs. Goodswan of England, an institute lecturer in Handicrafts replied to the toast to the Associated Women of the World and thanked the Ontario institutes for their gifts of seeds and clothing during the war.

The birthday cake made by Mrs. Chester Nash was cut in pieces, wrapped in cellophane and sealed with a gold seal bearing the institute crest and the inscription "From the Mother of Institutes, Stoney Creek." The candles were lighted by the oldest living past president, Mrs. Hamilton Lee.

March 19th 1947.

THE TALBOTVILLE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

"The following sketch of the history of Talbotville Women's Institute was given at the regular meeting on February 19, 1947, at the home of Mrs. Roy Wallis, by Mrs. Anne McKellar."

The Talbotville and Paynes Mills Women's Institute was founded on April 29th, 1927, twenty years ago. The regular monthly meetings have been successfully carried on in the homes of the respective members on the third Thursday of each month, with family night in March, and a picnic in July.

Up to this time, there has been seven Presidents, two of which have served in that capacity twice, namely Mrs. E. C. Gilbert and Mrs. H. Appleford, and eight secretaries. The membership has always been good, growing each year, (there being around thirty-five members to start).

The women have taken up most of the projects given by the Department, such as Refinishing of furniture, Meat Cookery, and a Sewing course. A Junior Institute was formed but the girls now belong to the regular Institute.

They were very much interested in music for the school, and wanted to buy a piano, but this project was finished by a group from the Institute, calling them selves "The Community Club", which was successful in buying a piano for Talbotville School.

Another thing was the Cemetery, I think Mrs. J. Lindsay was instrumental in obtaining a deed of said Cemetery, and each year a committee was appointed to take care of the grounds and to plant flowers and bulbs and see it was kept a place of beauty. They donated \$15.00 annually to the board, for work being done.

When the Children's Aid had a home in St. Thomas, donations were sent regularly of eggs and butter.

Many guest speakers attended the meetings.

We catered to the Elgin Girls and Junior Farmers banquets and to the Tournament and Shedden Fair.

The women have taken advantage of Hospitalization, sponsored by the government.

During the War years, we made Jam to be sent to England, and worked with the Red Cross to knit and sew comforts for the men Overseas, and sending cigarettes and parcels each month.

In February, 1946, the two Institutes decided to go their separate way, as the membership was too large for the hostess to accommodate comfortably in her home, so that now our Institute is named the Talbotville Women's Institute.

"God bless our Institute,
Give each a mind astute,
Reverent and kind.
As we together meet,
May thine own concord sweet
Our spirits bind.

Anne McKellar.

Mar 19th, 1941,

This list of Officers is recorded in the minute books of the
Talbotville and Paynes Mills Institute

PRESIDENTS

- 1 . Mrs. W. H. Sutton
- 2 . Mrs. E. C. Gilbert
- 3 . Mrs. H. Appleford
- 4 . Mrs. E. C. Gilbert
- 5 . Mrs. J. McCormick
- 6 . Mrs. H. Appleford
- 7 . Mrs. Anna Kelly
- 8 . Mrs. Mabel Downs
- 9 . Mrs. H. Clark

1946
Mrs H Humphries 1948 - 1949
Mrs A Thomas 1949 - 1951
Mrs W. Busch 1951 - 1953

SECRETARIES

- 1 . Mrs. H. Appleford
- 2 . Mrs. J. McCormick
- 3 . Mrs. Bessie Graham
- 4 . Mrs. Flossie Abbott
- 5 . Mrs. Agnes Travers
- 6 . Mrs. Anne McKellar
- 7 . Mrs. Elinor McCallum
- 8 . Mrs. Alice E. Thomas

9 . Mrs H Stewart - 1948

Mar. 19th, 1947.

- - - CHARTERED MEMBERS - - -

Mrs. Harley Appleford

Mrs. Wesley Abbott

Mrs. Ward Ackford

Miss Nellie Auckland

Mrs. J. Billington

Mrs. J. Calcott -

Mrs. E. C. Gilbert

Mrs. S. Orchard

Mrs. Frank Graham

Mrs. E. Haines

Mrs. William Hicks

Mrs. William Kelly

Mrs. Fred Knight

Mrs. James Lindsay

Miss Margaret Monroe

Mrs. Charles Monroe

Mrs. J. McCormick

Mrs. F. Merrill -

Mrs. H. Pow -

Mrs. G. Powles

Mrs. C. Pettit

Mrs. W. H. Stutton

Mrs. W. E. Taylor -

Mrs. A. E. Thomas

Mrs. Harvey French

Mrs. Ross Boothman

Mrs. ^{Stewart} Stewart

Mar. 19th, 1947.

-- - IN MEMORIAM - --

"Somewhere back in the sunset
Where loveliness never dies
They live in a land of glory
Midst the gold and blue of the skies."

Mrs. D. Graham

Mrs. W. Meek (nee Edith O'Dell)

Mrs. J. McGugan

Mrs. N. Vann

Mrs. R. Dunning

Mrs. W. D. Munroe

Mrs. F. Bennett

Mrs. John Auckland

Mrs. Ralph Hannon (nee Leta Humphries)

Mrs Lewis Cole 1952

Mrs Lawrence Flashman 1952

Mrs Harley Appleford 1953

Mrs Ross Boothman

Mrs A E Thomas 1962

Miss Nellie Auckland 1963

Mar. 19th, 1947.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE BRANCH ORGANIZED
SHEDDEN, ONT. APRIL 30, 1927.

A well-attended meeting of the women of Talbotville and Payne's Mills was held at the home of Mrs. W.H.Sutton on Friday afternoon ^{April 29/27} to consider the organization of a branch of the Women's Institute. Mrs. J.H.Sells, Shedden, district president, presided, and gave a brief outline of the growth of the Institute since it was organized thirty years ago.

Mrs. H.C.McKillop, West Lorne, district first vice-president, told of some of the benefits of the Women's Institute to a community by bringing all the women in closer contact with one another. Mrs. J.C.McMillan, Crinan, district representative, spoke of the value received by having a Women's Institute in a community, through short courses in nursing, millinery, household science that are given by the Department of Agriculture.

It was decided to organize, and the following officers were elected- President, Mrs. J. McCormick; First Vice + Mrs. W.H.Sutton ; Second Vice- Mrs. E.Gilbert ; Sec'ty Treas. - Mrs. H.Appleford ; Branch Directors - Mrs. F.Graham, Mrs. A.E.Thomas, Mrs. F.Knight ; Dist. Director - Mrs. A.E.Thomas ; Pianists - Mrs. W.Meek and Mrs. I. Gilbert ; Press Reporter + Mrs. W.Hicks ; Auditors - Mrs. Nellie Vann and Mrs. W. Hicks.

Mrs. A.E.Orchard, president of the Shedden Institute, wished the new branch success in their work, and hoped they would visit the Shedden branch soon. Mrs. H.C.McKillop moved a vote of thanks to Mrs. Sutton for so kindly opening her home for the meeting.

The meeting closed by singing the National Anthem and a social half-hour was enjoyed by all present.

The above is a copy from an article in the St. Thomas Times-Journal of April 30th, 1927.

TALBOTVILLE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.

1. Talbotville Women's Institute was organized as a joint Institute with the neighboring community of Payne's Mills, as Talbotville and Payne's Mills Women's Institute on April 29, 1927. It continued as one branch with members from both communities, until it was re-organized on February 21, 1946 into two separate branches - Talbotville W.I. and Payne's Mills W.I.

2. The first Institute in 1927 was organized by the West Elgin District officers. The late Mrs. J.H.Sells, Shedden, District President, was in the chair. Other Institute workers present were: Mrs. H.C.McKillop, District Vice-President, West Lorne, the late Mrs. J.C.McMillan, District Representative, Crinan, Miss Eva Morrison, District Representative, Shedden and Mrs. A.E.Orchard, Shedden.

At the re-organization meeting in 1946, Mrs. J.R.Futcher, a member of a neighboring Institute, then a regional Vice-President, but now Provincial President of the F.W.I.O., was the organizer.

3. First Officers in 1927 were: Pres.- Mrs. W.H.Sutton, Vice-Pres. Mrs. E.C.Gilbert, Sec'y Treas.- Mrs. H.Appleford, District Director- Mrs. A.E.Thomas.

First Officers in 1946 were: Pres.- Mrs. H.Clarke, Vice-Pres.- Mrs. H.Appleford, Sec'y Treas.- Mrs. A.E.Thomas, District Director - Mrs. J. McCormick.

4. Outstanding accomplishments throughout the years:

We have always followed yearly printed programs, devoting one month to each of the standing committees.