

Sixteen other members paid their membership dues prior to September 1 and are considered charter members: Mrs. Gordon Axford, Mrs. Phoebe Dancey, Mrs. Percy Cloes, Mrs. William Matthews, Mrs. Wm. Blakely, Mrs. Walter Flintoft, Mrs. George Flintoft, Mrs. Mary Mann, Mrs. Cliff Young, Mrs. Chas. Cloes, Mrs. P. N. Hillisheim, Mrs. Harry Horswell, Mrs. Reg. Young, Mrs. Chas. Ryckman, Mrs. Annetta Mills, Mrs. Max Jamieson. Eleven of the charter members have passed away, two members have transferred to other Branches, and fourteen have not continued their membership in the Women's Institute, therefore there are only three charter members in this Branch: Mrs. George Flintoft, Mrs. Gowan Young and Mrs. Marshall Field. Throughout these 25 years, there have been 73 different women with their name on the roll. Mrs. J. A. McKenzie and Mrs. Andrew Mills are considered first-year members.

To go back to the beginning to compile the history, we must start in 1940 when a group was organized on the 6th Concession for the Yarmouth Township Red Cross. This group worked for five years, knitting, quilting and sewing for overseas relief. When their work was completed for the war effort, they still kept together and formed the "Friendly Circle". It was in November 1945, this group took out their first hospitalization with Mrs. Wm. Blakely as secretary. A Sunday School was started in 1947, meeting in S. S. #12 school. In June 1948, the Friendly Circle started to talk about forming a Branch of the Women's Institute. And so on September 1, 1948, it all became a reality--Central Yarmouth W. I. was born.

In September 1948, "hot lunches for the school children--the teacher Miss Jean Cook to use cups and hot plate and to procure milk from the "Cook" farm. She was to purchase assorted soups and any other food or utensils to make project workable". Total bill for supplies, \$44.12. A storage cupboard was built at S. S. # 12 school in the girls' entry. The labor was done free of charge by Harry Horswell, Bert Pettit, J. O.

Dunning and William Edmonds.

Mrs. Angus McKenzie and Mrs. Gowan Young were the first leaders of the 4-H Girls' Club, The Milky Way.

1949-1950: Mrs. Gowan Young was the leader of the Garden Club too. The new 50¢ membership fee was to be paid. Donations were given to the Cancer Unit and the Community Chest. Three dances were held in Yarmouth Centre hall in Feb. and March of 1950. A bale of 83 pounds of clothing was packed for overseas relief. The 4-H girls presented a skit, No Time for Dreaming. Grant Matthews of Belmont was to print our yearly programs. Meetings were held in July and August. A motion was passed "That all ladies wear hats to the 1st anniversary tea at the Y.W.C.A." Proceeds from the tea were \$107.31. Catered to a noon lunch for the Elgin County Ploughing Match. Discussed school beautification and supplied soup and cocoa for school lunches this year, the bill \$42.68.

1950-1951: Corresponded with an Institute in England. Bought card tables and chairs for use at the school. Held a family night for the community, a community picnic and a school picnic. Gave a \$25. donation to the Manitoba Flood Relief. Held 3 dances at Yarmouth Centre hall in Jan., Feb. and March (1951).

1951-1952: This year there were demonstrations on sewing machines by Harold Phillips; making Kleenex flowers by Mrs. Verna Price; plastic demonstration by Mrs. Mary Ponsford; and toured the Borden plant at Belmont. Held a community picnic, card parties, food sale, travelling bake shop and talent money project. Gave to the Tractor Fund for Greece. Was hostess to the Elgin East District Annual which was held in First United Church.

1952-1953: A pledge of \$200. was made to the Elgin General Hospital and this was to paid over a three-year period. The first instalment of \$70.



Mrs. Charles (Luella) McLean
President 1948 - 1950

The first president of Central Yarmouth Women's Institute when it came into being on September 1, 1948, was Mrs. Charles (Luella) McLean.

Luella May Kelley was the daughter of Emma Louise Jones and George John Kelley of the Townline of Delaware and Westminster in Middlesex County.

She received her education at Littlewood Public School and was married to Charles Lauchlin McLean on June 19, 1926. She was a housewife until 1950 when she began working at the Memorial Hospital Annex and from there she went to the Ontario Hospital from 1953 to 1969. Luella was a certified Mental Health Aide in both ward and sterilization rooms and also had a first aid course certificate.

Charles McLean was a farmer and they live on the 6th Concession of Yarmouth Township. Their only daughter was born on Dec. 23, 1927, and Marion Annabelle McLean married Max Jamieson of Union, on August 15, 1945.

The grandchildren and great grandchildren are: Joan Elaine Jamieson married Edward Alexander Lawton and they have 2 children, Ryan and Randi of St. Thomas; Patricia Lee Jamieson married Duncan McPherson and with their two children, Douglas & Gary live in Goderich; Linda Gale Jamieson married William Gordon and their two children, Lisa and Darryl live at R. R. #7, St. Thomas; Jacki Lynn Jamieson married William Douglas Finney and they have no family and they live near Port Stanley.

Luella McLean had worked in the Red Cross organization of Johns= town for many years when they did knitting and sewing during the war years. She was the last president of the Red Cross group so when Central Yarmouth was organized she became the first president. She continued to support the Institute and community, although when she started to work, she was unable to attend all the meetings. She is not a member at present, but it is hoped she will come back into the group.

Luella and Charles McLean are still living on the farm on the 6th Concession of Yarmouth Township.

Information supplied by Mrs. Charles (Luella) McLean
January 1982.

Written by Mrs. Marshall (Dolly) Field, Curator.



Mrs. Margaret McKenzie

President 1950 - 1952

1960 - 1962

Mrs. Margaret McKenzie was born to Charles and Lillian Lankin of St. Thomas. She attended Wellington St. Public School and Arthur Voaden Vocational School.

When she was married to Jack McKenzie and they lived on the 6th Concession of Yarmouth Township, Margaret did much community work in the Red Cross group and then becoming very active in Central Yarmouth Women's Institute as she was a charter member.

Since moving into St. Thomas, she is a very conscientious salesperson for Anderson's Limited.

Margaret served as a vice-president, president (2 terms) District Director, Resolutions convener, Home Economics and Health convener, Citizenship and Education convener and also secretary. Margaret was a member of Central Yarmouth from 1948 to 1967.

Her favourite hobbies are sewing, knitting and reading. Her other interests are church work, being president of the Candlelight Unit of the UCW of Union United Church this year. She also helps with the C.N.I.B. and W.S.O.J.

Throughout the years that Margaret McKenzie worked for the Women's Institute, she was always willing to help in any project.

Information supplied by Mrs. Margaret McKenzie
February 1982

Written by Mrs. Marshall (Dolly) Field, Curator



Mrs. Reginald (Alice) Young

President 1952 - 1954

Mrs. Alice Young was born to Edgar and Katharine (Dertinger) Hawes at Otterville, Oxford County.

She received an education in business, bookkeeping and shorthand. Alice was married to Wm. Reginald Young on June 6, 1922, who was a Penn Central Engineer and also a farmer.

Their family are: June (Toogood); Joyce (Sikora), Richard Young and James Young.

Alice Young was a charter member of Central Yarmouth Women's Institute and is presently a member of South Yarmouth W.I.

The different offices she has held in Central Yarmouth are: 1st vice-president, president, District Director, Historical Research and Current Events convener, and secretary-treasurer. Alice was also president of the Elgin East District W. I. and Federation Representative as well. She was the president when the first Elgin County Rally was held in Union United Church.

Her favourite hobbies are sewing, crocheting, knitting and making quilts. Over the years, Alice has done a great deal of sewing for the Shriner's Hospital for Crippled Children.

In the last ten years, Alice Young has made over 30 pineapple-patterned tablecloths for daughters, daughters-in-law, granddaughters, granddaughters-in-law, and great grandchildren of which she has five.

Alice Young was widely known for her work in the lodge and of the volunteer work and time that she has devoted to this cause. Alice has brought ladies to the Institute meetings and also offered her home for teas so the Branch could make extra money. Alice was co-convener with Mrs. Reeka McKenzie for the sewing that was done for the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (1953) when over 1300 articles had been sewn and made by members of Central Yarmouth Branch.

Mrs. Reginald (Alice) Young still resides at 84 Myrtle St., St. Thomas, Ont.

Information supplied by Mrs. Reg.(Alice)Young

February 1982

Written by Mrs. Marshall(Dolly) Field, Curator



Mrs. George (Alma) Flintoft

President 1954-1956

Mrs. Alma Flintoft, the daughter of William and Grace (Overberry) Munro, was born at Paynes' Mills in Southwold Township. After two years of high school at Alma College, she took Domestic Science for 1 year at the College.

She married George A. Flintoft on May 20, 1922, and they lived on a farm at R. R. # 2, St. Thomas, Ont.

Their family are: Dorothy Lydia (Jagoe) of 14 Opechee St.; St. Thomas; Jean Collean (Brown) of R. R. #4, St. Thomas; Ruby Grace (Eden) of R. R. #1, Woodstock; and George Robert Flintoft of R. R. # 2, St. Thomas, (on the home farm).

Alma was active and interested in community work and was the first treasurer of Central Yarmouth in 1948. Since that time she has been Agriculture and Canadian Industries convener, 2nd vice-president, 1st vice-president, president, District Director and Resolutions convener.

Alma Flintoft is a charter member of Central Yarmouth W.I. and at the December 1980 meeting was honored with a life membership in the Branch for her faithful and dedicated work throughout the years.

Her favourite hobbies has been helping with all farm work and enjoying her family and grandchildren. Alma also has been very active in helping out at the Elgin Manor Tuck Shop for the Branch and is enjoying her fellowship with the Senior Citizens group at Union every Wednesday.

Information supplied by Mrs. Geo. (Alma) Flintoft
February 1982

Written by Mrs. Marshall(Dolly) Field, Curator



Mrs. Clara (McKenzie) Axford

President 1956 - 1958

Clara Anne Mills, daughter of Andrew and Cordelia Jane (Russ) Mills was born November 5, 1891, in South Yarmouth, Centennial Avenue extension.

She attended New Sarum Public School and then St. Thomas Business College. Clara was a ready-to-wear buyer in the Dress and Suit Department of the J.H. Gould Ltd., and later became a homemaker.

Clara married Erle D. Windsor in 1913, who was a farmer in the Mapleton area and they had two sons, Andrew D. and David Erle. In 1920, Clara married Angus Grant McKenzie, a farmer in South Yarmouth and they had three children, Jack Mills McKenzie, Clara Marion McKenzie and Donna Ruth McKenzie. In 1959, Clara married J. Russell Axford, a retired farmer in South Yarmouth.

Clara joined the Kingsmill-Mapleton W.I. in 1916, then later joined the South Yarmouth W.I. She was one of the charter members of Central Yarmouth W.I., in fact, suggesting the name for the Branch and playing a large part in the formation of it. She had been active in the Friendly Circle, a Red Cross group in the community and other activities within the S.S.#12 area or Johnstown as it was called.

Clara held many offices within the Branch: publicity, Historical Research and Current Events convener, 2nd vice-president, 1st vice-president, president and Tweedsmuir Curator, being the first Curator of the Branch and doing the ground work.

Clara wrote many poems, many historical articles which gave the Tweedsmuir History Book some valuable information.

Her many hobbies included piano, choir, Red Cross, Hospital Auxiliary, knitting, sewing, painting in oils and water colors, writing poetry, short stories, dancing, horticulture and travel.

She was very interested in the Knox Presbyterian Church Country Circle, Ladies Aid of Yarmouth Centre United Church and the choir as well for many years, the dairy industry and Holstein cattle, agriculture, Home and School Association, youth activities and 4-H work.

Clara (Mills) McKenzie Axford, passed away on August 23, 1972, residing on Wood St., St. Thomas, at the time.

Although Clara had not joined Central Yarmouth W. I. after 1969, her memory will live on because of her many contributions and writings in the many projects undertaken in the "Johnstown" area.



Mrs. Leonard (Irene) Norman

President 1958 - 1960

Mrs. Irene Norman was born to Gilbert and Elva (Gilbert) Zavitz in Yarmouth Township.

She attended secondary school and then became a dressmaker. Irene and Leonard Norman were married on December 9, 1939, and resided on #3 highway near Yarmouth Centre, where Leonard farmed.

Irene joined Central Yarmouth Women's Institute in 1952 and has been a 2nd vice-president, 1st vice-president, president, Resolutions convener, and Branch Director as well as a 4-H leader and a leader of short courses for the Branch.

Her favourite hobbies are sewing, crocheting, tatting, and her other interests are travelling and gardening.

Leonard and Irene Norman built a beautiful new home on the back section of their farm and they live now on Elm St. east. Irene is a very faithful member in the Branch and has always been willing to participate and help in any project throughout the years.

Information supplied by Mrs. L. (Irene) Norman
February 1982

Written by Mrs. Marshall (Dolly) Field, Curator



Mrs. S. B. (Agnes) Cook
President 1962 - 1964

Mrs. Agnes Louise (Peggy) Cook was the daughter of William and Louise Gage. She was born in Somerset, England-- one of six children. After being educated in England, she worked as a shorthand typist.

In 1920, Agnes came to Canada and married Stanley B. Cook that same year. They had a family of eleven children, so she was kept busy on the farm at Lot 15, Concession 5, Yarmouth.

Agnes Cook was a member of St. Luke's Anglican Church, St. Thomas and a charter member of Central Yarmouth Women's Institute. That first year, she held the offices of District Director and Historical Research Convenor.

Agnes was the seventh president of the Branch and throughout the years she held many other offices. In 1954, she agreed to help compile the Tweedsmuir History and in 1965-66 she was the Tweedsmuir History Curator.

Agnes (Peggy) passed away in May 1965, but she had served her home, community and church so well, that she will be long remembered.

Information supplied by Robert Axford
April 1990

Written by Mrs. Catherine Lemon, Curator



Mrs. Robert (Helen) Axford
President 1964 - 1966

Mrs. Helen Edythe Axford was the daughter of Stanley B. and Agnes Cook, being born in the St. Thomas area. No doubt inspired by her mother, who was a charter member of Central Yarmouth Women's Institute, Helen joined in 1958. She immediately became Public Relations Officer for a year and then served as 2nd Vice-President until 1964 when she became President until 1966.

Helen was an outstanding 4-H Leader (1959-1975) and is known for her inspiration to so many young girls of Central Yarmouth.

Helen was very active in Union United Church being a Life Member of the UCW and was well-known for her leadership qualities.

Helen received her education at S.S. #12, Yarmouth, Sparta Continuation School and Arthur Voaden Vocational School. She worked at Airforce Headquarters, Ottawa during the Second World War.

In 1947, she married Robert Axford and they had 2 children, John and Joan (Enns). They resided all their married life on the farm at Lot 12, Concession 5, Yarmouth. Ill health forced Helen to give up her community interests and she passed away March 1986.

Information supplied by Robert Axford
April 1990

Written by Mrs. Catherine Lemon, Curator.