

COWAL WOMEN'S INSTITUTE 1925-1972
By Mrs Hugh Carroll



Mrs D. E. Carroll
1st President

To endeavour to write a history of one's own branch of the Women's Institute tempts the writer to become reminiscent, to ponder, maybe sadly, sometimes sadly, sometimes happily over the many changes that have taken place in 47 years; but it also leads one to rejoice over the many happy gatherings, good friendships made, and the fine accomplishments which have attended its growth.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING May 5, 1925.

A well attended meeting was held in the Cowal Hall May 5th to consider organizing a branch of the Women's Institute with Mrs Luke H. Brown, District President in the chair.

The meeting opened by singing The Maple Leaf. Mrs Brown then gave a talk on the aims and objectives of the Women's Institute.

Twenty-two ladies joined and the following were elected;-

- President - Mrs D. E. Carroll
- 1st Vice President - Mrs Gordon Little
- 2nd Vice President - Miss Stella Smith
- Secretary Treasurer - Miss Jennie Campbell
- Assist. Secretary Treasurer - Miss A. B. Murray
- Directors - Mrs A. McLachlin, Mrs A. M. Campbell, Mrs Robert Campbell
- District Director - Miss Jean Carroll
- Auditors - Miss Janet McCallum, Miss Margaret Patterson
- Organist - Miss A. B. Murray

It was moved and seconded to hold the meetings the second Wednesday of the month in the Hall.

Mrs J. H. Sells, 1st Vice President of the District gave a talk on the Essentials in Institute work.

The meeting was closed by singing God Save the Queen. King

OFFICERS THROUGH THE YEARS

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>SECRETARY-TREASURER</u>	<u>DISTRICT DIRECTOR</u>
1926 Mrs Thos. Gervis	Miss Jennie Campbell	Miss Jean Carroll
1927 Mrs D. E. Carroll	Mrs Bruce Thompson	Miss Jennie Campbell
1928 Mrs Robert Campbell	Miss Annie Smith	Mrs D. E. Carroll
1929 Mrs A. M. Campbell	Miss Annie Smith	Mrs Robert Campbell
1930 Mrs Bruce Thompson	Mrs D. E. Carroll	Mrs Mary Clarke
1931 Miss Stella Smith	Mrs A. M. Campbell	
1932 Mrs A. T. McCallum	Mrs A. M. Campbell	Mrs D. H. McCallum
1933 Mrs Mary Clarke		Mrs A. T. McCallum
1934 Mrs John McDougal		Mrs Mary Clarke
1935 Mrs Robert Martin		Mrs Mary Clarke
1936 Mrs Hugh Carroll	Mrs Hugh McCallum	Mrs Robert Martin
1937 Mrs Frank Martin	Mrs Hugh McCallum	Mrs Hugh Carroll
Mrs A. D. McTavish		
1938 Mrs A. D. McTAVISH	Mrs Hugh McCallum	Mrs Hugh Carroll

OFFICERS THROUGH THE YEARS

1939		
Mrs A. M. Campbell	Mrs Hugh McCallum	Mrs A. D. McTavish
1940		
Mrs Humphrey Campbell	Mrs Fred Keates	Mrs A. M. Campbell
1941		
Mrs A. T. McCallum	Mrs Fred Keates	Mrs H. Campbell
1942		
Mrs A. T. McCallum	Mrs Fred Keates	Mrs H. Campbell
1943		
Mrs D. E. Carroll	Mrs A. M. Campbell	Mrs A. T. McCallum
1944		
Mrs Hugh McCallum	Mrs A. M. Campbell	Mrs D. E. Carroll
1945		
Mrs Dave Bennett	Mrs A. M. Campbell	Mrs Hugh McCallum
1946		
Mrs David Bennett	Mrs A. T. McCallum	Mrs Hugh McCallum
1947		
Mrs Fred Keates	Mrs A. T. McCallum	Mrs David Bennett
1948		
Mrs Fred Keates	Mrs A. T. McCallum	Mrs David Bennett
1949		
Miss Catherine Livingstone	Mrs Stuart Patterson	Mrs David Bennett
1950		
Mrs Hugh Carroll	Mrs Ray Jewell	Mrs D. Bennett
1951		
Mrs A. D. McTavish	Mrs R. D. Campbell	Mrs Hugh Carroll
1952		
Mrs Mary Clarke	Mrs R. D. Campbell	Mrs A. D. McTavish
1953		
Mrs Ray Jewell	Mrs W. J. Campbell	Mrs Mary Clarke
1954		
Mrs Ray Jewell	Mrs W. J. Campbell	Mrs Mary Clarke
1955		
Mrs D. Bennett	Mrs R. D. Campbell	Mrs Ray Jewell
1956		
Mrs D. Bennett	Mrs R. D. Campbell	Mrs C. R. Jewell
1957		
Mrs Robert Murray	Mrs Don McCallum	Mrs D. Bennett
1958		
Mrs Robert Murray	Mrs Don McCallum	Mrs D. Bennett
1959		
Mrs Robert Murray	Mrs Walter Gosnell	Mrs D. Bennett
1960		
Mrs A. D. McTavish	Mrs Walter Gosnell	Mrs Robert Murray
1961		
Mrs Donald McCallum	Sec. - Mrs Hugh Carroll	Mrs A. D. McTavish
	Treas - Mrs Russell Campbell	
1962		
Mrs Ken. Campbell	Sec. Treas. Mrs Russell Campbell	Mrs D. McCallum
1963		
Mrs A. T. Campbell	Mrs Russell Campbell	Mrs Don McCallum
1964		
Mrs A. T. Campbell	Mrs Russell Campbell	Mrs Marion Campbell
1965		
Mrs A. T. Campbell	Mrs Russell Campbell	Mrs Marion Campbell
1966		
Mrs A. T. Campbell	Mrs Russell Campbell	Mrs Marion Campbell
1967		
Mrs Ronald Campbell	Mrs Russell Campbell	Mrs A. T. Campbell
1968		
Mrs Ronald Campbell	Mrs Neil McCallum	Mrs A. T. Campbell
1969		
Mrs Ivan L. MacAdam	Mrs Neil McCallum	Mrs Ronald Campbell
1970		
Mrs Ivan L. MacAdam	Mrs Neil McCallum	Mrs Ronald Campbell
1971		
Mrs Ivan L. MacAdam	Mrs Neil McCallum	Mrs A. T. Campbell
1972		
Mrs Russell Campbell	Mrs Arch. T. Campbell	Mrs Ivan L. MacAdam

OFFICERS CONTINUED

President

Secretary-Treasurer

District Director

1971-72

Mrs. I.L. Mac Adam

Mrs. Neil McCallum

Mrs. Ronald Campbell

1972-73

Mrs. Russell Campbell

Mrs. A.T. Campbell

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

1973-74

Mrs. Russell Campbell

Mrs. A.T. Campbell

Mrs. Alex. McWilliam

1974-75

Mrs. Russell Campbell

Mrs. A.T. Campbell

Mrs. Hugh Carroll

1975-76

Mrs. Donald McCallum

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

Mrs. Russell Campbell

1976-77

Mrs. Donald McCallum

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

Mrs. Russell Campbell

1977-78

Mrs. Bruce McMillan

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

Mrs. Donald McCallum

1978-79

Mrs. Bruce McMillan

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

1979-80

Mrs. Bruce McMillan

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

1980-81

Mrs. Jamey Campbell

MRS Donald McCallum

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

1981-82

Mrs. Jamey Campbell

Mrs. Donald McCallum

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

1982-83

Mrs. Jamey Campbell

Mrs. Donald McCallum

Mrs. I.L. MacAdam

1983-84

Mrs. Bruce McMillan

Mrs. Neil McCallum

Mrs. Jamey Campbell

1984-85

Mrs. Roy Guest

Mrs. Joe Peternel

Mrs. Bruce McMillan

At the beginning the meetings were held in the afternoon on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.30; but, for the last few years, except on special occasions, the meetings were changed to Wednesday at 8.00 p.m..

The Institute has always tried to co-operate with all groups in the community. Each year, on the first Wednesday in May, The Farmer's Club held its Annual Consignment Sale. The ladies provided full course dinners and suppers which were enjoyed by the young and old; buyer, seller and onlooker. It is interesting to note the various prices charged for these meals. At first, the full course meals, which might even include second helpings and two or three pieces of home-made pie cost 25¢ for adults, children free. By 1942 the meals were raised to 35¢ for adults. But in 1943 the adults paid 35¢ and the children 15¢. A note of interest here was their Grocery cost list; - 42½ lbs meat - \$11.35. 15 loaves of white bread \$1.35. Salt, Oxydol and Mustard - .70¢. In 1950 the prices were raised to 65¢ per meal for adults, and 25¢ for public school children. By 1959 the meal was 75¢ and later raised to \$1.25.

The ladies continued to serve meals more as a convenience for the men, rather than a profit making adventure until the sale was discontinued in 1962. So important did the First Wednesday in May become, that it was named "Cowal Civic Holiday".

In 1930 the Hall trustees decided to remodel the Hall. Here again we find the women sharing one quarter of the expenses. Through the years they have added stage curtains, dishes, silverware, chairs, card tables and cards. In 1965 the Ladies purchased plastic curtains to dress up the windows to match the new panelling on the walls.

For many years Oyster Suppers, sponsored jointly by the Women's Institute and the Farmer's Club were one of the social events of the Winter. The last Oyster Supper was held on 15th March 1940.

In 1939 War was declared. Many Homes were affected and again every woman in the Community did War work of some kind. As well as quilting at the regular Institute meetings, the Community divided into four groups, namely, Valley Group, 4th Group, 5th Group, and West Group, and quiltings were held in the homes and Red Cross sewing and knitting done. The Farmer's Club joined with the Institute to sponsor dances, auction sales etc., to raise money for overseas work.

At the March Meeting, the following report on Knitting. The following articles had been completed; - 92 sweaters, 43 scarves, 116 pairs of socks, 43 pairs of 18" socks, 6 pairs of 25" stockings, 35 pairs of mitts, 34 pairs of gloves, 10 washcloths, 4 aero caps, 4 pairs of women's stockings, 2 women's vests, 21 pairs of ankle socks, 15 pairs of women's knickers, 1 helmet, and 1 pneumonia jacket. Sewing reported on 13th March 1940 was, 19 bed gowns, 16 pillow slips, 16 sling bandages, 9 pneumonia jackets, 6 abdominal binders, 5 suits of pyjamas, For May and June 11 hospital gowns, 2 pairs of pyjamas, 8 pneumonia jackets, 4 pillow cases and 5 bandages. The ladies never ceased their sewing and knitting as long as there was a need for it.

This is only one small part of the volunteer work in the Community. Tickets were sold on quilts, on afghans, hopechests, blankets and other articles. Other projects such as salvage drives, door to door canvassing, teas at quiltings and numerous ways to raise money so badly needed to provide the necessities for our boys overseas.

Boxes were sent regularly to our soldiers. 85 boxes were sent overseas in 1943-44 alone. Total expense was \$217.77. We were a very fortunate Community - all our boys returned.

In appreciation of their sacrifice, the Institute presented each one with twenty five dollars in cash, or an equivalent gift.

We did not forget the people of Britain who gave so much. Boxes were sent after the war for distribution. In 1940 each member was asked to give 50¢ towards furnishing a Ward in a Canadian hospital in England.

In 1941 the Institute was asked to send jam to Britain. It was decided to use the surplus fruit to make jam. A committee of 3 members reported making 96 pounds of jam to be sent overseas through the Red Cross. For several years the Institute sent 100 pounds of honey to England as a food supplement to their tight rationing.

In their busy schedule the Women's Institute still found time once a month for two members to help serve the boys of the Airforce at Hostess House, Fingal Airport.

One of the highlights of the July meeting in 1958 was the presentation by Mrs Chester Crawford to Mrs Fred Keates of the medal for the outstanding work she had done for the Red Cross in Dutton district during the Second War and afterwards.

In July 1944 a garden party was held at the Cowal Hall sponsored by the Women's Institute assisted by the Junior Girls and Junior Farmers to raise extra money for the Overseas Box Fund, and these were continued later as a social event until 1952.

The Institute included two school sections, S. S. # 9 and Union 8 & 20, Dunwich and Southwold. For a number of years the teachers and pupils of these two schools were guests of the Institute at their regular meeting. Gifts of books such as National Geographic, were placed in the schools. Transportation was provided for the pupils to local industries. Public speaking contests were sponsored by the W.I. With a feeling of sadness in our hearts we have seen these schools amalgamated into a larger unit of education.

In January 1944, Hospitalization, (Blue Cross and later Elgin Co-operative Medical Services) was made available to the community by the support and efficient work of the Institute.

In 1928 a committee of three members compiled the first Cowal Cookbook. By 1951 the first Cookbook had served so well that again, a committee of three members compiled the second Cookbook, which sold for one dollar a copy.

The Women's Institute have always been noted for their quilting. In 1952 it was only natural for them to make the Morning Glory Quilt sponsored by the Salada Tea Contest. During Elgin's Centennial it was on display in Anderson's Store in St Thomas. Money made on this quilt was given to the Elgin County W.I. Centennial Scholarship Fund.

In 1950 the Bobier Convalescent Home was opened in Dutton. The W.I. undertook the responsibility of furnishing one bedroom and a plaque was obtained for the door. Through the years one or two members have represented the Institute on the Hospital Auxiliary. The Institute has remained active in any project the Auxiliary undertakes such as teas, food tables, draws etc. The room was redecorated recently.

The Institute has always been ready to dip into their treasury if they felt the need was merited. Down through the years donations have been made to the Memorial Children's Hospital, The Blind, Wallacetown Fair, Unitarian Service, for the "Bread for Greece" Campaign, Elgin County Museum, West Lorne Arena 1953, Manitoba Relief Fund 1950, Muscular Dystrophy Association, United Welfare, Canadian Cancer, tractor Fund for Greece, Mental Health, Retarded Children's School, St Thomas, Adelaide Hoodless Homestead, International Scholarship Fund, Membership in the Consumer's Association of Canada, N.E.S.C.O. Coupon, Pennies for Friendship; and are continuing with help with new needs of the last part of the Century and changing world and generation.

The Institute has always had a wide scope of interests. The members were always willing to help with the Baby Clinic, now named the Child Health and Adult Immunization Centre in Shedden. To make life more pleasant for our elderly citizens members take their turn helping to operate the Tuck Shop at the Elgin Manor, serving tea and taking time to visit with the residents. Cookies were taken and help given at the Ontario Hospital Carnival, also Cancer Teas and Museum Teas.

The Institute helped with meals and lunches at the Ploughing Match October 13th 1960. The Institute also served meals on Corn Day in Elgin County at Belkoon Farms in 1964.

* It was a pleasure and an honour to have the privilege of catering to two Warden's Banquets in the Cowal Hall. The Institute worked with other organizations and served meals at the Caledonian Games in Dutton in 1952 and 1953. On 21 July 1965, the ladies catered to a pork barbeque which was a new venture.

Our regular meetings have been varied and the programs have always kept pace with the changing times.

* The two warden's who were served banquets were John D. Thomson in 1935, and Clarence Patterson in 1940.

The ladies have always taken advantage of the many courses given by the Instructors from the Department of Agriculture and Food, Toronto.

As the records of the meetings are missing up to 1939, we find beginning in that year, Meat Cookery was the winter project. Other projects have been Glove Making, Meat in the Menu, Tailored Slip Covers, Refinishing Furniture, Needle Point, Slippers, Sew to Save Dollars and Make Sense, Hooked Rugs, 143 Pounds of Meat, Take a Pound of Hamburg, Dessert Course, Block Printing, Quilting, Women's Institute Procedures, Focus on Finishes, Hats for You, Choosing and Using Fabrics, and Baking with Yeast.

In 1938 the Institute along with 6 neighboring Institutes put on an exhibit for the Wallacetown Fair. They carried away first prize on their exhibit. This success has been repeated a number of times down through the years.

With T.V. and Air Travel our world appears to be getting smaller. This was true in April 1965 when the world wide affiliation of W.I. was recognized by Cowal W.I. with an exchange meeting with Compton, Abbas W.I., Shaftesbury, England.

Suggested programs, pictures, books, magazines, scrapbooks and topics of Canadian Industry sent by Cowal W.I. were used in the English Institute, while the history and travelogue of Compton Abbas was presented at Cowal W.I.

An interesting outcome of this was the visit of Mr. and Mrs. B.M. Chick of Fontnell Magna as guests of the Cowal W.I.

Dramatics have proved very interesting and entertaining with three act plays and one act plays. Short skits have been written by our talented W.I. members, and enjoyed at Winter Picnics.

Through the years a number of interesting and educational bus trips have been enjoyed. A few of these were to Guelph, Wallaceburg, a trip through a glass factory, brass factory, and Greenmilk Factory, McCormick's in London.

The Institute has always played an important role in the social life of the community.

Wiener roasts were held on the banks of the Thames River for a number of years.

Family nights proved very popular. These gatherings were first in the form of a banquet, later a pot-luck supper with either a speaker or a travel talk illustrated with slides.

Halloween parties were always popular for young and old.

Card parties have always been popular. Cowal W.I. is the one centre to sponsor "500" card parties.

The Grandmothers meeting has always been a very important day at the May meeting.