

MRS. DUNCAN BROWN

Mrs. Brown was the wife of Duncan Brown of "Walnut Grove Farm" and was born in South Dorchester. Mary Stewart, as she was then known, was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Stewart, - her mother was the former Mary McLarty of Southwold Twp. She attended school in S. Dorchester and the Presbyterian Church in Belmont, and was one of a family of seven, five brothers and two sisters. After her parents passed away she lived for a year in Washington, D.C. with her sister, and a year in Granite Falls, Minnesota. While in Washington she took painting lessons, the result of which her family enjoyed through the years.

She was married in St. Thomas at the home of her uncle, Dr. McLarty, in 1895, and there were five children, four sons and one daughter. She and her husband and family lived on the family homestead in Southwold Twp. on No.3 Highway near Iona.



During these years, being a person who liked people, it was natural for her to become interested in the Women's Institute. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and work with others whom one did not meet regularly in church. As the first President of Iona W.I. she enjoyed working with her executive. The vice-president was Mary Jane Pollard (later Mrs. McIntyre) and the secretary, Lydia Pollard (now Mrs. Lloyd Smith). The Activities of the W.I. depended on the needs of the community and varied accordingly.

The conventions in Toronto proved an inspiring experience. To be exposed to the ideas of the various speakers was a wonderful opportunity at that time. As a child, I remember the warm glowing spirit of my mother as she returned from those meetings. As a District President, the experience was enhanced by the opportunity of meeting more and more people. Miss Minnie Gow was the secretary of the District at this time. An appreciation of the quality of the members in the District left rich memories of the time spent as District President in 1911 and 1912.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown and family attended the Presbyterian Church at Fingal. The family attended Sunday School, joined by their parents for the church service.

Mrs. Brown was actively interested in the immediate community. School teachers were always welcome at the Brown home and young people were encouraged to meet there. A community Sunday School was established in the local school on Sunday afternoons. It was probably one of the first United Sunday Schools - the Superintendent was Baptist, the organist Presbyterian, and there were several Methodists in attendance. Mrs. Brown passed away at the home of her daughter in 1947 at the age of eighty-three.

MRS. C. A. WRAY

Mrs. C. A. Wray was formerly Sarah Cobean who came to Rodney from Orangeville, Ont. to visit an aunt and secured a position as head milliner and an instructor at the Mistele Bros. & Co. store.

She married Mr. C. A. Wray and for many years assisted her husband in the book store he owned in the village.

She was a past President of the local branch of the Women's Institute and active in that organization until shortly before her death. She served as President of the West Elgin District W. I. in 1912 and 1913.

She was a devoted member of Rodney Baptist Church, taught in the Sunday School and was a past president of the Missionary Society.



MARY MACPHERSON

DISTRICT PRESIDENT 1913-14

Miss Mary MacPherson was born in 1883, the daughter of John and Isabella MacPherson. She was born and spent most of her life on the family farm, lots 1 and 2, first range south, Lake Road, Southwold Township.

She took a very active part in operating the farm, overseeing the shipping of apples and maple syrup products to overseas markets. She and her brother Jim also had a fine herd of Jersey cattle.

In addition to her farming activities, Miss MacPherson was active in her community and was an early president of Central Elgin Junior Institute. She also was president of the now disbanded Fingal Women's Institute and Elgin West District President in 1913 - 14.

Miss MacPherson was a fine soprano soloist and was much in demand for community concerts and garden parties. She sang in the choir of Knox Church, Fingal, for many years.

An avid gardiner, Miss MacPherson grew many plants in her gardens and she hybridized some new flower varieties.

In 1953 Miss MacPherson sold her farm and retired to St. Thomas where she died in 1974.

*(Compiled by Beth Vicary)  
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*Robert Mawby,  
Mary MacPherson,  
Alice Vicary.*

MRS. THOMAS W. SIMS

Mrs. Sims, whose maiden name was Emily Alberta (Birdie) Matthews, was born at Port Dover on January 2, 1882.

Following two years of teaching in a school near Harrow in Essex County, Miss Matthews married Thomas Wellington Sims, editor and publisher of "The Thamesville Herald". Six years of residence in Thamesville followed with one year at Leamington, at the end of which time, in 1909, Mr. Sims purchased "The Elgin Sun" of West Lorne. After fifteen years Mr. Sims sold the paper to Mr. E. Lashbrook of Rodney, and moved to Kitchener where he set up "The Commercial Printing Co." After the death of Mr. Sims in 1931, Mrs. Sims continued to operate the business with the assistance of her two sons, George and Austin, until 1939, when she moved to Hagersville. While in Hagersville, Mrs. Sims was associated with a ladies' ready-to-wear business for five years, following which she retired to Brantford.

It was during the time that the family lived in West Lorne that Mrs. Sims organized



the local branch of the Women's Institute and was its first President - this was in January, 1913. Having been a member of the W.I. in Thamesville, Mrs. Sims felt the need of such an organization in West Lorne - one that would draw together the ladies of the community in one common purpose. From 1919 to 1922 Mrs. Sims was president of the branch. During this period the Institute was instrumental in having a well dug at the cemetery and also made a donation toward the fence there. These being post-war years the aim of the Institute was to raise \$1000 toward the building of a Memorial Hall. Upon completion of the Hall, a room was set aside therein for the W.I. It is in this room that the meetings are still held. The

Armenian Fund was assisted to the amount of \$53.92, and the proceeds of four concerts by the Lyceum Co., were contributed to the Navy League.

In 1963, Mrs. Sims, at the age of eighty-one, attended as a guest of honour, the 50th anniversary celebration of the West Lorne Women's Institute, the organization to which she had contributed so much of her time and talent. A few months later, total blindness overcame her

and for the past two years she has been in residence at the Hamilton Institute for the Blind.

An interesting and conversant hostess to any visitors, Mrs. Sims delights in flowers, which she "sees" through the sense of smell, and enjoys music - these things together with her continued interest in current events, carried to her over the radio, bear evidence to the fact that alert mind and indomitable spirit are hers still.

While in West Lorne, Mr. and Mrs. Sims were sadly bereaved when their daughter, Dorothy, three and a half years of age, passed away. She was born in West Lorne and lies buried there. One other daughter, Mrs. F.N. Francis (Helen) resides in Toronto. Sons, George and Austin, live in Chatham and Oakville respectively.

1967 -

Mrs. Sims died on April 8, 1967, and was buried at Kitchener, Ont.

MRS. J. H. TRESTAIN

Mrs. J. H. Trestain was the former Lettie Whiting and taught in several public schools in the district of Clachan before her marriage.

Coming to Clachan as a bride, she and her husband had the village store for many years. Here they raised a family of three daughters and four sons. They were loyal members of Lee's Methodist Church.

Mrs. Trestain was a valued instigator of Clachan Women's Institute. She always had the best interests of the community at heart and with much pride watched the W.I. branch prosper. During the war the branch carried on an extensive and valuable war effort - much to Mrs. Trestain's pleasure, and she was beloved by all.

She was President of Clachan Women's Institute in 1914 and then went on to the District where she was President of West Elgin District W.I. in 1915 - 1916.



Mrs. Trestain and her daughters.

MRS. MALCOLM MCKILLOP

Mrs. Malcolm McKillop, a charter member of the West Lorne Branch of the Women's Institute, served the local organization on many committees and as president, before accepting the office of District President in 1920 - 21. As local president for the year beginning June 1917, she directed the group in one of its busiest war years. In addition to the above-mentioned offices in which she served, Mrs. McKillop was also a District Director, represented the local organization at many conferences, and was a member of the first committee on the Tweedsmuir History. In 1951 she was presented with a Life Membership.

Mrs. McKillop, the former Margaret Ferguson, was born on a farm near Eagle. She obtained her formal education at Eagle Public School, Ridgetown High School, and at Chatham Model School from which she graduated as a teacher. Following her marriage to Malcolm McKillop in 1903, they settled in West Lorne. Mr. McKillop established the hardware firm of "McKillop and Ferguson" in partnership with his brother-in-law, J. B. Ferguson, and continued to operate the store for more than 35 years.

During these years Mrs. McKillop took an active part in the work of her church, - the Church of Christ (Disciples), in the Horticultural Society, and in Electa Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star, of which she was a charter and later a Life Member. However, all community interests took a secondary place in her life for her chief role was that of a homemaker.



Following her husband's death in 1942, she remained in West Lorne until 1951 when she went to Windsor to live with her daughter Annabelle. In addition to the daughter there was one son, John Douglas (J.D.)

Mrs. McKillop died in 1961, at the age of 83, following invalidism of five years.