

MRS. JOHN C. McMILLAN

Mrs. John C. McMillan was born in 1863 on Concession 2 in Aldborough Twp., county of Elgin.

She was a member of Argyle Presbyterian Church, Crinan, and a faithful member of the Missionary Society of the church.

During the war years she worked in the Crinan Red Cross Society. At the conclusion of the war this organization was disbanded and the Crinan Women's Institute was organized in April, 1919. Mrs. McMillan was the first president, an office she held for a number of years.

She became president of West Elgin District W.I. in 1921, and later was elected president of London Area W.I. Mrs. McMillan was a very capable and far-seeing person - interested in all world affairs and giving of her best in every capacity in which she served.

Mr. and Mrs. McMillan had one daughter, Mrs. Grace MacColl, who likewise is a valued member of the Women's Institute.

Mrs. McMillan passed away in June, 1937 on the farm where she was born. A grandson, William MacColl lives on the farm and is the sixth generation to have his home here.



MRS. LUKE H. BROWN

Mrs. Luke Brown was born on July 4, 1865, and was the daughter of Henry and Rebecca Mills Silcox, pioneers of the district. Their farm was two miles east of Iona on #3 Highway.

In 1895 she was married to Luke H. Brown of Iona, and lived all the remaining years on the farm to which she went as a bride. Mrs. Brown became very interested in the work of the Women's Institute. She was president four times, and during the war years was the Institute's dynamo. In 1953 Iona W.I. saw fit to honor Mrs. Brown by making her its first Life Member.



She was a member of Iona Baptist Church, continuing her membership when the church moved to Iona Station. Having united with this church at a very early age, she remained a tireless worker for a probably seventy-five years. Mrs. Brown was president of West Elgin District in 1919 -20. After a life of service to her family, her church, and her community, she passed away on May 1, 1955, two months short of her ninetieth birthday. Mrs. Brown had a keen sense of humor which she retained until her last day. Her ability to write was remarkable.

MRS. JACK McINTYRE

Mrs. Jack McIntyre, the former Letitia Sells, was born in 1874 on a farm on the outskirts of Shedden and attended Frome school.

She joined Shedden Women's Institute with her mother, Mrs. A. Sells. Mrs. McIntyre was president of Shedden W.I. from 1916- to 1918, and president of West Elgin District W.I. in 1916 -17. This was when she was still single, as she did not marry Mr. McIntyre until July, 1918.

She was a dressmaker, and interested in all community activities, was a Sunday School teacher as well as taking part in many other forms of service.



MRS. JOHN H. SELLS

Mrs. Sells was born on the 10th concession of South Dorchester Twp. on March 20, 1876, and was one of nine children born to Samuel and Eliphel Warwick. She was christened Edith Jane, and as a girl attended the rural school in the neighborhood. Her brother, Charles Warwick operated a basket factory in Shedden and she lived with him for a time. Here she met and married John Hamilton Sells, a prosperous farmer of the district and settled on the farm near the village of Shedden where she spent the remainder of her life.

Two children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Sells - Wilfrid, now deceased, and Gertrude, now Mrs. Harold Davies of Belmont.



Mrs. Sells had a wide variety of interests outside her home, but was always delighted to welcome her children's friends at parties and meetings - it was a happy home to visit. She was an expert seamstress and could also knit and read at the same time.

Mrs. Sells was President of the Shedden branch of the W.I. in 1919 and 1920, and also filled most of the other offices through the years. She was an excellent speaker and was often asked to speak at meetings.

Some of her other activities included working in the Southwold and Dunwich Agricultural Society - she was superintendent of Needlecraft for years; Shedden Methodist and later United Church where she worked tirelessly in the women's organizations as well as teaching the Young Ladies class for some time; she was a member of Wabuna Rebecca Lodge, and was also chairman of supplies for the Red Cross during the first World War.

Mrs. Sells was vice-president of the District W.I. for two years before she became president. At that time there were twelve branches in the District and the attendance at the annual meeting was almost two hundred.

MRS. WALTER A. BECKER

Norma Sherk McKillop Becker was born in the little village of Lyons in Elgin County. When only three years of age her parents moved to Aylmer where Norma started to Kindergarten and later to Public School. Her next move was to Kingston where she attended the Collegiate, later moving to Belleville where she went to St. Agnes Girls' School. During these years her music had not been neglected and she continued her study in Toronto where her rich soprano voice attracted the attention of a famous "Teacher of Voice" from Pittsburg.

Her father travelled for a machine company so was often transferred and Norma's next move was to St. Thomas where she entered Alma College as a day pupil in voice culture.



Her voice having been particularly pleasing to the Pittsburg teacher, she went there to study and train under him, and while there was much in demand for solo and choir work. The following year she returned to St. Thomas where she met Mr. Hugh C. McKillop, of West Lorne, whom she married in 1909.

Her life in West Lorne was one round of activity, her church, choir, and Sunday School came first. She was a charter member of West Lorne Women's Institute and its first Secretary, following in the work to become its President and later District President. She gave much of her time to the promotion of community activities sponsored by the Institute, such as plays, concerts and welfare work, and was willing at all times to use her voice for any worthy cause.

Mr. McKillop died in 1937, and in 1939 she married Mr. Walter A. Becker, of St. Thomas, and resided there until her death on February 19, 1963. Her family consisted of two sons, Ronald McKillop of Toronto, and Lionel McKillop of Blenheim.

MISS MINNIE GOW



Miss Minnie Gow was born near Wallacetown, the daughter of John R. Gow and Mary Backus, and grand-daughter of Mrs. Story who gave the land where St. Peter's Church and Cemetery are situated. She is a charter member of Wallacetown Women's Institute.

Miss Gow was secretary of Talbot Chapter of the I.O.D.E., and later regent of this Order. In 1914 she came to Dutton and joined that branch of the Institute, serving in various offices which included secretary and president. Miss Gow then served for eleven years as sec-treasurer of West Elgin District and in 1937 was elected president, an office she held for three years.

Throughout her life, Miss Gow has always been well-versed, and well-read on world affairs, as well as having affairs of the immediate community near to her heart.

She is a loyal member of Knox Church, Dutton, serving as leader of the W.M.S. and president of the Ladies Aid.

Miss Gow has always served in any capacity where she felt her services were needed.

MRS. G. A. McLEVEY

Mrs. McLevey was the former Lillian Barnes who married Dr. G. A. McLevey, a Veterinary in Rodney for many years.

Mrs. McLevey was an early member of the Church of Christ in Rodney, and was organist for many years. She took an active interest in promoting community activities - particularly the Girl Guide and Boy Scout movements.

Mrs. McLevey served as District of West Elgin Secretary during 1920 and 1921, and as P resident from 1931 to 1935. She was a Life Member of Rodney W.I.

Mrs. McLevey died at the Barnwell Nursing Home in Ridgetown in December, 1966.



MRS. NEIL NICKLESON

Knowing that the Women's Institute was an organization for the promotion of "Home and Country", Mrs. Nickleson felt obliged to join since there was a need at that time for helping in many homes where the head of the house had gone overseas, and she was interested in progress towards good citizenship.

Mrs. Neil Nickleson was the former Louise Vanloon. She was born on a farm on Silver Street, Aldborough, and when a child moved to the nearby village of West Lorne where she attended school and also took music lessons from Miss Florence Bale at twenty-five cents a lesson. After two quarters of music and much practice, she became organist of the Church of Christ for a time, later serving as one of the soprano singers.

Her work in the Women's Institute has meant much to her as she says it has helped her to become a more helpful citizen in taking her place in the community. It developed her ability to speak at many special programs, particularly in plays which were often presented.

She served the Institute as President, also filled out a term as District President, as Secretary and reporter for twelve years, and as Museum representative.

Mrs. Nickleson considers the time spent for the Institute as the best years of her life and that she has received more benefit from the Institute than she will ever be able to repay the organization.

Mr. and Mrs. Nickleson have a son, Carman, living in St. Thomas, a baritone singer of repute, and a daughter Noreen, wife of Rev. Vernon MacDormand, a minister who lives in the United States.

