

INTERESTING DEVELOPMENTS OF
THE PAST FIFTY YEARS.

The year 1947 is a very momentous year in the History of Canada. This year marks the passing of the Canadian Citizenship Act. It is the fiftieth anniversary of the Women's Institute and is also the Hundredth anniversary of the birth of two great men, namely, Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison.

Because of the wonderful changes in the world, we have decided to write a story of the interesting developments of the past fifty years especially in our own district.

First we will consider the development of the telephone and give honor to the man who invented it.

Alexander Graham Bell was born in Edinburgh Scotland on March 3, 1847. He was a teacher, Scientist, Inventor and humanitarion, as well as the founder of the telephone industry.

The Elgin County Home had the first phone in this community. We do not know the exact date but it was late in the 19th century.

The Fingal Rural line was put through in the spring and summer of 1909. Poles and other equipment were transferred by horses and wagons. One farmer who had



his phone installed in 1913 tells us of how he was required to haul his own supplies.

Some of our local men helped with the work. Two that will be remembered by many were Mrs. H. Henderson of Fingal and Mr. John Begg (father of Lynwood Begg) who were threshers in the district at that time.

The first rural bell line was the 492 line which went through to Shedden. It was in use as early as 1906. The late Mr. B. Stinchcombe had one of the first telephones on this line. The 26 line was built in the summer of 1911 and the 564 line the spring of the following year.

These lines have been improved in recent years and are now operated on what is called the selective code system, which means that fewer rings come in as the lines are divided and all calls come from the St. Thomas Office.

Next let us look to Thomas Edison and the wonderful discovery of electric power.

As a boy Thomas Edison spent many vacations with relatives in the village of Vienna and this old Edison home can now be seen at Mr. Henry Ford's historical ^{field} Greenwich Village where it was moved some years ago.

Thomas Dubber, Charles Butler, Charles Begg,
Alex McNiven, Wm. Lyle, Tl Stinchcombe,
B. Stinchcombe, J. Futcher and the Elgin House
of Industry.

The uses of electricity have increased at
such a rapid pace that now much of our work is
made lighter by it. We have stoves, irons,
toasters, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, wash-
ing and sewing machines, radios, fireplaces,
water heaters, polishers and many other appliances
in our houses. Hydro also goes to the barn where
it is used for separating and cooling milk, as well
as milking the Cows, and for pumping water. Many
farmers also have their own grain grinders. Years
ago grain was ground by windmill or horse power.

The transportation of our livestock and pro-
duce to market was much different years ago. Most
of it was by Pere Marquette Railway.

The Railway came through Middlemarch in 1900.
Many farmers worked with their teams at building
the road bed. Some had as many as three or four
teams. The wage for a man and team was \$3.50 for
a ten hour day.

A station house and the stock ^{yards} were also

built in 1900.

Cattle, salt and later fertilizer were the main things shipped in.

During World War 1 many farmers shipped milk to Windsor every morning. Large numbers of cattle also were shipped from this point. The late Mr. Charlie Jackson, a drover shipped as many as 17 carloads in a single day. This was in 1917 and they were billed for France.

These cattle were all driven in herds to the yards and it was not an uncommon sight to see a drove of cattle a quarter of a mile long proceeding along the road.

Other produce shipped out were wheat, sheep and hogs. Sugar Beets were and still are shipped.

At one time there were four passenger trains a day through Middlemarch. It was a flag station and the only station-master was the late Mr. B. Stinchcombe.

When the passenger trains were discontinued the station house was sold to Mr. E. Graham of Fingal and is now used as a garage.

Just here we would like to mention that Mr. Peter McCurdy of this district who was retired from active work on the Railway this month operated the

first engine, on passenger, running out of Buffalo on this Division of the N.Y.C. Railway.

Trucks and tractors now do practically all the hauling of livestock and grain. Tractors have taken the place of the steam engine for threshing and buzzing wood and of the horse for much of the farm work. All of the early tractors were on steel.

Before trucks came into use the road work was done by the farmers and deducted from their taxes. There was a roadmaster in charge of each mile and a quarter. The gravel was placed in a heap in the centre of the road. But with the coming of the low motor car, it has become necessary to spread it more evenly and so trucks are used.

In 1941 our main road was surfaced with asphalt. For some years now, all road repairing has been taken over by the township and County Councils.

Of course the coming of the motor car was mostly responsible for the discontinuance of short run passenger trains.

One of the first automobiles in St. Thomas was owned by Dr. James Curtis a native of the Middlemarch community. This car was a Brush. A make practically unknown to most of us. The Brush was a single seated open car with chain drive and a speed of 20 miles or less.

In 1914 Messrs C.S. Butler , C.P. Welter and

Mrs. T. Stinchcombe supplied several 104
pictures for the book, namely the stage-coach,
pictures of P.M. trains, and one of 1910 picture of
Middlemarsh Church.

Mrs. Trevor Stinchcombe

~~The St. Thomas Postal Department~~ has supplied

the names of the Fingal stage drivers, namely:

Mr. MacDonald- Horace Holden- Thomas Warren-

Frank Blodale- Geo. Penwarden- Ed. Penwarden-

Albert Lawton- John Cameron- Dan Cameron.

Shortly before the end of the War German
prisoners were placed at the Fingal Air School,
many helping on farms in our district and the
surrounding country. After the War the German
prisoners were sent home and Polish refugee
laborers and Japanese families were brought to the
School. Many Poles are now helping on farms.

1947 also marks the 10th Anniversary of the
Trans-Canada Airways.

This is but a small part we have told of the
progress during the past half century along the
old Talbot road. This progress can be duplicated
all over Canada and with Canada's wonderful re-
sources many as yet untouched and with a growing
population we believe it will become a great
country.

"CANADA--- CANADA--- It is a country of which everyone speaks well and no man speaks evil.. It is a country which has never threatened the safety or well being of another nation, but which has twice played a vital part in saving the world. It is a country which is twice-blessed in having neither the hereditary rich nor the hereditary poor. I wonder if in its own way the Canadian way of life is not the truest form of democracy the world has seen."

Mrs. Tyrell Begg.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

How do you do Ontario Women's Institute Members!

To many of you I am a stranger, but in pride in our organization and high hopes for its future, you and I find common ground.

1947—the fiftieth year of the founding of our organization, will soon be behind us. But the achievements and the satisfaction of fifty years of unselfish service remain. Women of vigour and vision, fifty years ago, laid the foundation stones of our Women's Institute straight and true. I know it is your prayer, as it is mine, that we have the insight and spiritual strength to continue building in like manner.

That most wonderful and satisfying day at Guelph, with its beauty and its inspiration, was a fitting climax to fifty years of unselfish effort—Thousands of us, paying tribute that day to everything that our Institute stands for, went home with high resolves to greater effort.

The thought I want to leave with you for the new year is "Active Citizenship" in the four spheres of home, community, national and international. Active citizenship in the home embraces all our Institute program of better living and better home-making. Here we lay the first foundations of good citizenship by teaching our children, loyalty, tolerance and co-operation.

Active citizenship in our communities calls for our support of all worthwhile projects—such as community centres, play-grounds, parks, etc. It means constructive interest in our schools and health units. It calls for active help for our Juniors and the absorption of newcomers into community life. Be zealous in extending membership—rural women need the privileges and means of service that our organization offers.

1947 saw us with Canadian citizenship for the first time. The highest form of citizenship is use of franchise—the lowest form is espionage. Immigrants are flocking to our shores. We must help mould these different



MRS. J. R. FUTCHER,
F. W. I. O. PRESIDENT

nationalities into one great Canadian spirit! Canada needs their craftsmanship and their thrift. By another generation they'll make splendid citizens.

The war has made world citizens of us all. Our citizenship effort must now be international in scope. How fortunate we Women's Institute members are for through our International Organization we can so easily help to promote international understanding! Remember in planning next year's program to set aside the February meeting for International Day.

What an interesting future lies ahead really making citizenship work!

To Mrs. Summers I say "Thank you for a job well done!"

I will do my best, as far as I am able, to follow her example of devoted service and outstanding leadership.

And now, may happiness and satisfaction go with you in your work as you face the New Year.

Dorothy E. Futcher.
R.R. 1, St. Thomas

WE WELCOME OUR PRESIDENT

Women's Institute members from all parts of the province welcome our new Provincial President, Mrs. J. Robinson Futcher.

A teacher before her marriage, Mrs. Futcher lives on a farm near St. Thomas, in Elgin County. She has one son at home on the farm, a daughter in training for a nurse and twins attending St. Thomas Collegiate.

For twenty-four years Mrs. Futcher has been an active Institute member. During that time she has held various offices in her Branch and District. She was first elected to the F.W.I.O. Board in 1944 and while serving on the Board acted as liaison officer between the F.W.I.O. and Wartime Prices and Trade Board, was Chairman of the Finance Committee and was instrumental in organizing a delegation comprised of representative provincial women's organizations to present a beverage room brief to the Prime Minister of Ontario.

Mrs. Futcher has always been looked upon with high esteem by her many friends and associates. She

has made an outstanding contribution toward the welfare of her community by taking an active part in all worthwhile community enterprises. She has served on the Elgin County Federation of Agriculture executive, the St. Thomas Music Club and the Elgin Historical Society executive.

Her friendly personality, her clear, logical mind and her knowledge of and experience in Institute work all admirably fit her for the very responsible position she has been elected to fill.

The Women's Institutes of this province extend warmest congratulations and good wishes for a successful tenure of office as President, Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and pledge co-operation and support.

The wonderful invention of hydro changed the whole country from darkness to a great white way of light and a different way of living for all people. Before this candles made of tallow or wax were used for lighting purposes. Then we had coal-oil and gasoline lamps. Gas lights were also used and Delco plants which most closely resembled hydro were used by many large concerns as well as a few private persons.

Since electricity came the new brighter light of the Edison bulb has illuminated our homes. Early in 1900 the late Sir Adam Beck of London, Ontario, lectured in what was then the Grange Hall on the wonderful advantages of hydro to the rural people. At that time it seemed like a dream that hydro could do so many things for us.

However shortly after, Mr. Wm. Pranglin, north of Talbotville asked Mr. Alex Lyle to make a canvas of the farmers of this district and many of them signed to have to have hydro installed. World War 1 interrupted the building of the lines and it was not until 1920 that the late Mr. James Futcher and Mr. Lyle re-canvassed the community.

The following farmers had Hydro installed in 1923 and 1924. Walter Lunn, D.J. Begg, A.D. Lyle



P. M. train coming into Middlemarch Station.
from West.



P. M. train leaving Middlemarch Station
for St. Thomas.

plates and the piano have been donated to the church by friends.

LIST OF MINISTERS

Rev J. H. McCartney	1879-1882	
Rev Thos Cobb	1882-1885	
Rev G. Brown	1885-1888	
Rev R. D. Namilton	1888-1891	
Rev. G. McAllister	1891-1894	
Rev. W. Haynurst	1894-1897	
Rev Thomas Jackson	1897-1899	
Rev William Moss	1899-1901	
Rev A. J. Langford	1901-1905	
Rev A. L. Russell	1905-1907	
Rev J. W. Pring	1907-1909	
Rev A. G. Harris	1909-1913	
Rev J. Henderson	1914-1917	
Rev. W. Stirling	1917-1918	
Rev A. R. Johnston	1918-1920	
Rev F. Burgess	1920-1922	(Hugh Wilson Student)
Rev. A. McKibbon	1922-1925	
Rev. A. R. Kellam	1925-1927	
Rev J. Anthony	1927-1928	
Rev. W. G. Shaw	1928-1930	
Rev . E. S. Hiscocks	1930-1935	
Rev T. C. Wilkinson	1935-1938	
Rev. D. W. Pomeroy	1938-1943	



Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Vince



1910. Middlemarch Church.





S. S. No. 14 Southwold
Built 1865
Used until 1906

Alex Lyle purchased their first cars.

Since the opening of the Bombing and Gunnery School, at Fingal, bus service has been maintained by the Richards Coach Lines of St. Thomas. During the War the buses to Fingal Air School ran frequently. Since the War the buses run regularly from St. Thomas to Rodney twice a day. In addition to these, bus service is provided for the Secondary school children; since the beginning of 1947 this has been sponsored by the Elgin High School Area. Previous to this there was a stage coach which went twice daily from Fingal to St. Thomas, carrying passengers and school children. By paying a small sum you could have your paper thrown off at your gate. Mrs. E. Luton had a collie dog which was trained to meet the stage every night and bring their paper.

In 1910 Mr. A.F. McNiven and Mr. C.S. Butler canvassed the Community in the interest of rural mail delivery. They had both known the advantages of mail delivery. The mail couriers were Mr. Dan Cameron, *Jude Hughes,* Mr. and Mrs. Roy ¹⁹²⁷⁻Stevenson and now Mr. and Mrs. A.E. *1927-*French. Mrs. French informs us that when cars were first tried out in carrying mail, Mr. Sam Meek used his car to drive the mail man for several trips on our St. Thomas rural route 1.



Fingal stage-coach calling at
Middlemarch for the mail for
delivery to St. Thomas.