

---

## The Elgin County Pioneer Museum

---



---

A Memorial to the Past and Its Traditions

---



It is into an early Canadian home and doctor's office that the visitor walks when he enters the Elgin County Pioneer Museum, for it has been established in the home of a pioneer doctor of this district.

To the right of the entrance is a large living room which depicts the gracious way of life of over a century ago, and beyond it is a kitchen which goes back to pioneer days, with its open hearth, cooking utensils for the fireplace, commodious cupboards and the gun upon the wall to provide food and repel marauding animals. The dining room, too, has treasures of early furniture, china and glass.

Upstairs, a bedroom with four-poster rope bed, trundle bed, cradles and other early furnishings continues to depict the home of many years ago, while other rooms contain a wealth of miscellaneous articles dating back to the days of the Indian residents of this community. Throughout the house, interesting furniture (some made by a gifted local cabinet maker), pioneer utensils, manuscripts, paintings, papers, all help to revive a picture of home life of early days.

But this museum does more. It is situated on a lot which was the site of the home and office of Dr. Charles Duncombe, who, with Dr. John Rolph, founded in St. Thomas in 1824 one of the first medical schools in Canada. It was Dr. Rolph who later went to Toronto and established the nucleus of the medical school of the University of Toronto.

This present house is believed to have been built in 1848-49 for Dr. Duncombe's youngest brother, Dr. Elijah E. Duncombe, who came to join him in St. Thomas some time about 1822. Dr. Charles left St. Thomas about 1828, but Dr. Elijah Duncombe continued to practise here until a few years before his death in 1870. Over a century ago, living in this house with his wife and four daughters, he presided over an apothecary shop and consulting room which together occupied the east side of the building. The medical room to the left of the entrance is a unique feature of this museum, commemorating this special aspect of the history of this lot and house. It displays many interesting articles of early medical practice in the county.

Overlooking the broad valley of Kettle Creek, the pioneer museum is situated at the top of a hill at the foot of which began the little settlement from which the city of St. Thomas later developed. It is on historic Talbot Road, named for Col. the Hon. Thomas Talbot, the Irish founder of the vast Talbot settlement who returned to Upper Canada in 1803 to establish residence beside the lake a few miles west of here and who later used to call St. Thomas the capital of his settlement. Museum treasures include an oven from Col. Talbot's home at Port Talbot, a cradle used by the family of his nephew, Lord Airey, there, and the original surveying chain used by Col. Mahlon Burwell for much of the early settlement.

The spacious, tree-shaded grounds on which the museum stands have a history that goes back even before Dr. Charles Duncombe's early residence here, for they are part of the 200-acre property for which the original crown patent was received by one of the first settlers of what is now St. Thomas, Daniel Rapelje. Part of his property, looking towards the south and west over the valley, was given by Mr. Rapelje to the Church of England, and the pioneer church of the community, erected there in 1824, may be visited just a short distance south-east of the museum.

Thus happily situated in a pioneer home in the heart of the Talbot Settlement and so closely linked with its early history, the Elgin County Pioneer Museum seeks to preserve the interesting and worthy story of life in this community and the traditions of its pioneers.

---



Play presented in 1930

# CRANBERRY CORNERS

A 4-Act Comedy Drama will be Presented  
by the Women's Institute of Shedden, in

Under the Auspices of

*Shedden W. I.*

*1930*

## Caste of Characters

TOM DEXTER, one of Nature's Noblemen.....LYNN STAFFORD  
SIDNEY EVERETT, of the World Worldly....SYDNEY ORCHARD  
BEN LAUTHAM, a Wanderer .....ARCHIE WRIDE  
ANDREW DEXTER, Tom's Father.....A. A. SILCOX  
HEZEKIAH HOPKINS, Fond of an Argument.....GEORGE ROSS  
NATHAN SPECK, the Hired Man .....CHARLES HAMILTON  
CARLOTTA BANNISTER, a Child of Fate .....INA ATKINSON

ANASTASIA BANNISTER, Her Stylish Aunt from New  
York .....MRS. W. ROSS  
AMELIA DEXTER, Sister of Andrew .....MRS. CHAS. MOORE  
MRS. MUSLIN, Something of a Talker "as you might say"  
.....MRS. LEN. MOORE  
BELLA ANN, Help at the Farm .....MRS. CHARLES HAMILTON  
FLORINE, the Maid .....MRS. E. C. MOORE

Good Music Between the Acts

ADMISSION

Adults

Children



SHEDDEN W.I. AT PINECROFT, (Aylmer)<sup>21</sup>



Aylmer, August 1950

Shedden W.I Group.



Displaying Copper Tooling

CONTINUING LIST OF OFFICERS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
1948 --49	Mrs. E. L. Baker	Miss Grace McCormick
1949 -- 50	Mrs. E. L. Baker	Miss Grace McCormick
1950 -- 51	Mrs. E. S. Down	Miss Grace McCormick
1951 -- 52	Mrs. E. S. Down	Miss Grace McCormick
1952 -- 54	Mrs. E. L. McCall	Mrs. Herbbert Parks
1954 -- 56	Mrs. Hugh Silcox	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1956 -- 58	Mrs. E. H. Silcox	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1958 -- 59	Mrs. George Ayling	Mrs. E. L. McCall
1959 -- 61	Mrs. George Ayling	Mrs. E. S. Down
1961 -- 63	Mrs. Ted Silcox	Mrs. E. S. Down
1963 -- 64	Mrs. Ted Silcox	Mrs. Geoffrey O'Hara
1964 -- 66	Mrs. C. E. Moore	Mrs. Geoffrey O'Hara
1966 -- 68	Mrs. E. S. Down	Mrs. Geoffrey O'Hara
1968 -- 70	Mrs. Ralph Palmer	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1970 -- 71	Mrs. Alex Turner	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1971 -- 72	Mrs. Alex Turner	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1972 -- 73	Mrs. Ted Silcox	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1973 -- 74	Mrs. Ted Silcox	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1974 -- 75	Mrs. Donald Vicary	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1975 -- 76	Mrs. Donald Vicary	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1976 -- 77	Mrs. Ralph Palmer	Mrs. Herbert Parks
1977 -- 78	Mrs. Ralph Palmer	Mrs. Herbert Parks



May 31, 1963

From left to right:

Miss Eva Morrison - Charter Member

Mrs. Lloyd Atkinson - Charter Member

Mrs. Ted Silcox - President, May, 1963

Mrs. A. E. Orchard - Charter Member

Mrs. Frank Trace - Charter Member

WRITTEN FOR THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SHEDDEN WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

MAY 31st., 1963

Madam President and Fellow Members of Women's Institute and Friends

First might I add a few words of welcome to the well-spoken ones of our president, of the pleasure it is to see so many of you here today.

When I was first approached on the subject of compiling and reading the history of our 5- years of Institute work, I felt rather honoured. I was surprised, however when I began to read through the past record books, that this should give way to one of unworthiness. It was with a good deal of pride that I read the names of the many really gifted, clever women, who took part in the work. This pride is mixed with sadness that so many are gone, one just this month. So I can assure you that I feel inadequate and only hope that I can give this some degree of justice.



## HISTORY OF FIFTY YEARS OF SHEDDEN WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

On May 31st, Miss Margaret McKenzie, principal of Shedden Public School, invited all the ladies of the community to the school house to meet Mrs. Wray of Rodney, the district president for the West Elgin and Dr. Annie Backus of Aylmer, a speaker for the Department.

The branch was organized as follows :

President .....	Mrs. W. Guest	(note picture)
Vice-President.....	Mrs. J. A. Orchard	
Secretary-Treasurer.....	Mrs. Frank Trace	
Directors.....	Mrs. Dan Hamilton	
	Mrs. C. Pettit	
	Miss M. McKenzie	
Auditors.....	Mrs. D. Russell	
	Mrs. M. White	

### CHARTER MEMBERS

Joined May 31, 1913

Mrs. W. G. Eadey	Mrs. F. Trace
Mrs. W. Guest	Mrs. M. White
Mrs. Mary McArthur	Mrs. G. T. Hopkins
Mrs. A. E. Orchard	Miss Clara Horton
Mrs. D. Russell	Miss Eva Morrison
Mrs. T. Tanner	Miss Edith McGibbon

Our first meetings were arranged month by month but later the yearly programs were carried out. There was a Question Box at each meeting, the questions answered by the president.



We sang O! Canada, the Maple Leaf Forever and I also noticed one meeting where Rule Britannia! was sung for an opening.

The attendance rose from 15 to 30 and 40 and more. One of our first money-making activities was a "Hard Time" social.

Some of the subjects for the topics given are interesting.

"Bread - making " - Mrs. Mary McArthur, also later on

"Southwold Township"

"When and How to Rest" - Mrs. Dan Russell

"Canning Fresh Meats" - Mrs. Eadey (Comment - very interesting -  
They kept what is now Palmer's Store)

"Why Are Women Today So Busy" - Mrs. J. A. Orchard.

"The Kingship of Self Control" - Mrs. Hopkins (remembered paper)

"Children of Past and Present" - Mrs. Jas. Orchard

"Vacation for the Busy Home Maker" - Mrs. Thos Wride

"The Influence of and Character" - Mrs. N. Bawtenheimer

"Tempting Invalid Appetites" - Mrs. Manson Horton (For a  
child she suggested a picture or  
flowers on bottom of dish

"How to Keep the Boy or Girl on the Farm" - Mrs. Arthur McIntyre

On Nov. 22nd 1922, a Grandmothers' Meeting was held, Mrs. Martha Sells, then the oldest W. I. Member, presiding. Dorothy Wride read the "Runaway Grandmother", by Nellie L. McClung. Grandmothers took part in the meeting.

Miss Annie Brown, contributed readings, often comic, as did Mrs. C. Hamilton. At an early cookie contest, Mrs. C. E. Moore won the prize. Miss Annabel Sells gave a paper or talk on pie making. I remember they chose her because they said she made more pies than anyone in the community.

I realize that to be nice and proper you should not mention personal things, but I was astonished when I saw that Mrs. C. Holborn and I sang a duet at a meeting. Mrs. M. B. Stafford accompanied .



We also held debates, and I remember a buttonhole contest judged by Miss Annie Brown, who showed us how to make a proper buttonhole. We held many contests, on Sewing and Domestic Science, As well as other subjects. We had a picnic and served meals at Shedden Fair which we do to this very day, but later with the Women's Association.

During World War I, all the war work done in Shedden, was under the auspices of the Women's Institute. Money was raised by grant from the Council, donations, serving meals and booth at Shedden Fair and and ice-cream parlour in the village. Hundreds of knitted articles and clothing were made by the W.I members and women of the community.

A Patriotic Association was organized under the Red Cross in Shedden at the first of the Second World War. This organization took charge of all the work, the Women's Institutes contributing money to buy supplies.

In 1922-21 the W. I. gave \$100.00 toward improving the cemetery and a new fence; later they planted shrubs and a flower bed. They assisted the library every year by donations of money to purchase new books. We used to have a social evening, the proceeds to go to the library.

In 1928 the W. I. had a small child treated in the Sick Children's Hospital for defective bones and put on an Amateur Play, "Cranberry Corners", to help raise funds for the operation. Mrs. A. E. Orchard trained the play as well as others.

In 1916 we had our first Demonstration Lecture Course on Home Nursing and First Aid; later we had a four-week course in 1924 on Sewing and Domestic Science. This created a great deal of interest and the women turned out in goodly numbers. It ended



with a banquet. Other courses were Refinishing and Arranging Furniture; this course attracted a lot of attention and many a bureau, table, chair etc., was made good as new, but it takes a lot of rubbing and hard work, so only the energetic women took part. Others outside joined the W. I. to take this course. Crafts, such as Glove-making, Personality and Dress, Your Food and Your Figure, Millinery, Rug-making, moccasin-making, were taken in these courses.

One year we bought Baby Bonds for Children's Aid work. We always attend the Winter Picnic in good numbers; in 1947 a large number went to Guelph for the 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of the W. I. in the world. In 1938 we celebrated our 25th anniversary and our 35th in 1948, and now in 1963 we are gathered here again for our 50th. We often entertain neighbouring clubs and institutes and meet in a friendly way with other women and visit them in return.

Through the years our meetings have been a source of pleasure and profit to the members and visitors. We had talks and papers on a wide range of subjects and sometimes we had a speaker from the department or a doctor or lawyer. But the talent brought out among our members is ever a source of wonder for many of us had little more than common school education. We had also many fine musical numbers.

At one time there was talk of us building a hall in Shedden and a motion was made that \$50 be set aside for this purpose with more added. The hall never did materialize but for many years that \$50 was kept in a separate fund and came in for some lively discussion. At last it went into the general fund.

We have had many splendid subjects for roll calls. Only one



I remember on Household Hints given by Mrs. W. H. Turner, was to spread a newspaper under your work and gather it up after with any clippings, dispose of it and your table was clear.

We have responded to many appeals down through the years; one was the Sick Children's Hospital , and others.

#### Later Appeals

When the new hospital was built we pledged \$1000 and got it paid too. We also gave \$500 to the Women's Building for Shedden Fair, where we serve meals. We donate money each year for prizes.

Then there is the Well Baby Clinic, perhaps one of our best projects. Several Women have worked faithfully at this with assistants. Mrs. Lola Baker had charge, also Mrs. E. H. Silcox.

We adopted a child overseas and have kept the pledge, and also have sent gifts.

We have made many donations and given help to the Elgin County Pioneer Museum.

We have for many years sponsored 4-H clubs for girls and given leadership to these.

Then there are the cards and in some cases flowers for the sick and shut -ins. In 1942 the Blue Cross Hospitalization was sponsored, and several joined to secure benefits.

A few years ago we entered the Quilt Block Competition for Ontario. Our book was 1st at the District Annual and was among the number taken to Toronto for display and competition. One of my pleasantest days was when Mrs. M. D. McCormick, Mrs. G. Ayling and myself went to Toronto to see the display at the Royal York Hotel. In 1948 we compiled the Tweedsmuir Book, which is the history of our school section and community.

For some years now we have exhibited in the W. I. display at London Fair, which added pleasantly to our funds.



The W. I. also sponsored a good many bus trips which were much enjoyed.

We have given 8 life memberships and pins to those of long standing.

While we have no hall and held many meetings in the homes, we are very grateful to the United Church and I. O. O. F. hall trustees for generously allowing us to use their rooms and facilities on many occasions.

Several from Sheddem have served as District Officers:

As President - Miss Lettie Sells

Mrs. John H. Sells

Mrs. Geo. Silcox

Mrs. E. S. Down

As Secretary - Miss Eva Morrison

Miss Grace McCormick

Mrs. Herbert Parks

In going over the books, I cannot help but admire the fine handwriting of many of the secretaries and the neat appearance of the books.

There are two who are with us today that I feel should be mentioned for they were with us from the first and are still active, Miss Eva Morrison and Mrs. Frank Trace.

But our work has been the combined efforts of a lot of faithful, efficient women and as this is our own anniversary we feel nothing is being said boastfully. Tribute might be paid to not only the early workers in our W. I. but to those who carried on in the late years, sometimes not easy going. Our Press Reporter, Mrs. C. E. Moore, has faithfully reported our meetings through the years.



I hope I have not said any of this as boasting of our achievements. We must remember it took quite a small army of women to cover it all, and each filled her own place. We have members who take no part in public speaking in meeting but have filled their places well. "They also serve who only stand and wait." But no one stands who is a member of a Women's Institute and all have served according to their talents.

## Mrs. Mary J. McIntyre Was Well-Known as Janet

Mrs. Mary J. McIntyre, whose homely, bucolic writings in The Times - Journal under the pen - name of Janet have appeared every week for the past 40 years, died on Sunday in the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital after an illness of three weeks. Her home was about a mile north of Shedden and she had lived there for more than 50 years, her husband, Arthur J. McIntyre, who was well - known throughout West Elgin as a farmer, died 20 years ago.

Mrs. McIntyre's pithy, rustic little articles were published every Saturday on one of the women's pages of this newspaper and won for her a wide readership which was not confined to country women. Women of the district's urban communities and many menfolk were also among her constant readers. She found for her subjects the goings - on in a typical country home and life on the farm, and her comments and observations on the affairs of the day made meaty and pleasant reading.

She was 78 years old and continued writing her once - a-week article up to the time of her last illness, the last of them being printed on Sept. 19. Mrs. McIntyre continued to live on the farm north of Shedden after her husband's death and after her four daughters had all married and moved away, but had spent the past three or four winters here in St. Thomas with one of them, Mrs. Marion Mitchell, 20 Hemlock Street.



MRS. MARY J. MCINTYRE

She was the former Mary Pollard and was born at Iona, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Levi (Margaret) Pollard. She was a young woman when she moved to Shedden and she spent the rest of her life in that district. She took a keen and active interest in the Shedden Women's Institute and the Shedden Library Board, of which she had been president, and was among those who took an active part in establishment of the Elgin Pioneer Museum. She was an adherent of the

Compiled by;

Mary J. McIntyre.

November 10, 1963

Covenanted Baptist Church, Wallacetown.

Mrs. McIntyre is survived by four daughters, Mrs. Alex (Margaret) Turner, Shedden; Mrs. Marion Mitchell, 20 Hemlock Street; Mrs. Max (Kathryn) Churchill, Detroit, and Mrs. Lucien (Frances) Lepage, Three Rivers, Que.; by four sisters, Mrs. P. H. Schleihauf, West Lorne; Mrs. H. C. Lumpkin, Muncie, Ind.; Mrs. Lloyd Smith, Iona Station, and Mrs. Robert Clark, Rosetown, Sask.; two brothers, W. R. Pollard, Iona, and John Pollard, London, Ont.; and three grandchildren, Rosemary and Ramon, Lepage, Three Rivers, and Karen Mitchell, St. Thomas.

Elder George Ruston, Dutton, pastor of the Covenanted Baptist Church, will conduct the funeral service at the P. R. Williams and Son funeral home at two p.m. Tuesday. Interment will be made in Black's Cemetery, Dunwich Township.



October 1, 1969

31



THEIR EFFORTS SPREAD CHEER—Yesterday, the LOOF hall at Shedden was a busy place as a coffee break and tea were held to raise funds for the West Elgin Cancer Unit's gift cupboard. The West Elgin Women's Institute arranged the pleasant event, and the Shedden WI branch was the hostess group. Some of those taking an active part were

(left to right, standing), Mrs. Alex Turner, Shedden WI, a committee member; Mrs. Ralph Palmer, president of Shedden WI; Mrs. David Saunders, Dutton, president of West Elgin Cancer Unit; Mrs. Herbert Parks, a committee member from Shedden WI. Mrs. Donald Forsythe (seated) is service to patients chairman of the West Elgin Cancer Unit.

—(T.-J. Photo)

Standing, from Shedden W. I., Mrs. Alex Turner, Mrs. Ralph Palmer, Mrs. Herbert Parks (extreme right) Mrs. Dave Saunders, Dutton W.I., is third from left.

On October 1, 1969, the Shedden W. I., arranged and were hostess group, for a coffee break and tea, to raise funds for the West Elgin Cancer Unit's gift cupboard. A goodly sum was realized for this worthwhile project.