

Mrs. Isaac Willson succeeded Miss. Freeman as President in 1938. An interesting diversion early in 1939, was the Alma College Extension Course in dramatics, under the direction of Mrs. D.H. Connor and Miss. Straight. Two plays were produced by our members and in March, the play entitled "Women at War", was given at Alma College, when other dramatic groups in Elgin County presented plays, the South Yarmouth players being highly commended on their performance. At the completion of the new Nurses' Home in St. Thomas, it was decided to furnish a room and in June 1939, Mrs. L.S. Johnson graciously offered her home for a tea which was largely attended and most enjoyable.

In January 1940, our Hall was again pressed into service as head-quarters for Red Cross work, the women of the community accomplishing a large amount of work each month, Mrs. L. S. Johnson at present being our capable leader. We are greatly indebted to Mr. James Todd for providing our cupboard in which to keep materials for our war work. In the summer of 1940 and again the next year, very successful carnivals sponsored by the Yarmouth Red Cross, were held on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. M. G. Mc.Laws, when the Institute members gave splendid support.

In the Autumn of 1940, our members in co-operation with members of the Union United Church Womens' Association, served hot dinners each day to the throngs of people attending the Provincial Plowing Match which was held on the grounds of the Ontario Hospital, now being used as a Technical Training School, for the duration. Every-one will remember that week as a hectic one, but once more, the women of South Yarmouth had accomplished what they had set out to do, and by the end of the week, although worn out and weary, there was a satisfaction in knowing that their efforts were appreciated and the



splendid profits, when divided, helped each society very materially to carry on their work.

Mrs. Kenneth Russ became our President in 1942 and is the present head of our busy society, with the demands of war work ever increasing and being met. Since early in the war, our Institute members in co-operation with the ladies of the Union United Church Womens' Association, have made quantities of jam and jelly for over-seas and have also provided and packed Christmas boxes for our boys and girls in the service. This Spring, our Institute members served a delicious chicken dinner to donors at the Kiwanis Blood Clinic also making substantial donations to the fund to carry on this work.

The East Elgin District Annual Convention was held at Union in 1921 and again in 1941 at the Union United Church, where other large gatherings have been held from time to time, our society being greatly indebted to the church board, for these courtesies.

In reading the minutes from year to year, there is scarcely a meeting where a worthwhile donation has not been made, to some worthy cause, besides gifts of food and clothing made to needy families and help given where assistance was acceptable. There have been many splendid papers prepared and given by our members on subjects in which every-one is concerned and we have had a great many guest speakers address our meetings, throughout the years- outstanding medical men who spoke on mental illness and various subjects regarding health, talks on first-aid and nutrition, child welfare, lantern slides showing home beautification and Henry Ford's Greenfield Village with all its treasures, a splendid paper given by Miss. Maud Bristow on the life of Josiah Wedgewood, an educative address on Municipal Legislation by Mr. Harvey Lawton, a splendid talk by Mr. Scott Mc.Kay on "Peace Education!"



Mrs. J. McLaughlin delighted every-one with her absorbing description of the shipbuilding yards of "Clyde Bank"- a talk by Dr. Dobson on "Mexico" which he called our second door neighbor- Mrs. Eva Mc.Killop, who gave a travel talk, "Europe as I saw it", her party arriving home not long before hostilities began abroad- Mr. Leonard Sifton gave a graphic description of the Legionnaires' "Pilgrimage to Vimy", giving a vivid picture of this great assemblage. We will all recall the late Mrs. J. D. Lamont's fascinating story of her trip to Vienna, Austria as a delegate to the Conference of the International Council of Women. She had gone alone to the little village of Oberammergau to witness the Passion Play which was being given that summer. She chanced to hear that Queen Marie of Roumania was the guest of a friend in the village and decided to try her luck at getting a glimpse of Her Majesty. When she arrived at her destination and explained that she was a delegate from Canada at the Vienna Conference, the Queen, being in a gracious mood, said that she would be pleased to receive her, she and Mrs.Lamont having a most delightful half-hour's chat. When Mrs. Lamont rejoined the rest of her party in Paris and told them of interviewing Queen Marie, they were consumed with envy.

In reviewing the many projects, large and small, which we have sponsored through the years, let us not under-estimate the benefits we have derived from meeting to-gether from month to month or the many occasions when we have met with neighboring Institutes, providing pleasant social intercourse and the exchanging of ideas, while our District Annuals and Conventions have furnished profitable instruction and inspiration which make for greater understanding and a broader vision, in our fields of service.



In closing, may I quote a verse of Evan Mc. Coll, the Scottish poet:-

"Let us then, in loving mood,  
Each help each, through life's short span.  
If we can't do all we would,  
Let us do the best we can."

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*Edna Scott*

Mrs. Stephen (Blanche) Haight  
1st President of S.Y.W.I  
1920  
East Elgin District President.  
1922- 1924.



*Photo from granddaughter  
Mary Macaulay  
Victoria  
B.C.*

*1973.*



From left to right; Mrs. E.J. Shelly, Pres. of South Yarmouth Women's Institute, Mrs. Nellie Dufty, Miss. Edna Scott and Mrs. Cyril Williams, a Past District President of East Elgin. Mrs. Dufty and Miss. Scott were given life membership certificates and pins, Mrs. Williams making the presentations at our September meeting in the year 1954.



## HISTORY OF SOUTH YARMOUTH WOMENS' INSTITUTE

(The Village of Union, which is the home of the majority of the members of South Yarmouth Womens' Institute, is situated on the splendid new three lane highway No. 4 in Yarmouth Township, Elgin County, Ontario and is six miles from the City of St. Thomas and three miles from Port Stanley which is a thriving lake port and a very popular summer resort.)

A few years ago, a fine modern three roomed public school was built in Union and on the brow of the hill to the south, stands the new United Church, an imposing stone structure with it's many stained glass windows and furnishings, gifts of members of the congregation, some of whose forebears formed the nucleus of the first Methodist Church at Union at a small gathering held in the year 1820. The three beautiful stained windows in the west gable, were placed as a memorial to those in the congregation who served in two World Wars. Over the crest of the hill, one has a magnificent view of the countryside with it's rolling hills and valleys. On the hilltop to the west, stands the spacious club house of The Elgin Golf and Country Club, which course is considered one of the finest in Ontario, attracting many visitors.

Several years ago, the young people of Union formed a Sports Club, acquiring land which is known as The Memorial Recreation Park, honoring the young men and women of the district who served in two World Wars. The old school was remodelled and serves as their club house. During the summer season, large crowds assemble for the baseball games, giving pleasure to young and old alike, truly a living memorial and one that lives on in the growing generations of the youth of this community.



South Yarmouth is a highly productive and progressive agricultural district, which has also become one of the largest flue-cured tobacco areas in Southern Ontario. There are many extensive fruit farms and fine orchards - a community of well equipped farms and fine modern homes, some of it's residents operating the farms which were acquired from the Crown by their ancestors, the pioneer settlers of well over a century ago.

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During the first World War, the South Yarmouth Patriotic Society was formed with Mrs. Geo. H. Jackson it's very capable President. In 1918 Mrs. Stephen Haight was elected President and after the close of the war, the members raised funds to furnish a room in the new St. Thomas Memorial Hospital, two mammoth carnivals being held, one on the home farm of the Hon. Mitchell F. Hepburn. In 1920 the Patriotic Society became a branch of the Womens' Institute, Mrs. Haight continuing as President of the newly formed society. The following is the list of officers when our Branch was founded:-

|                 |                       |                 |                     |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| President       | - Mrs. Stephen Haight | Directors       | - Mrs. Wm. Dufty    |
| 1st. Vice Pres. | - Mrs. Walton Owen    | "               | - Mrs. Geo. Smith   |
| 2nd. Vice Pres. | - Mrs. J. Webster     | "               | - Mrs. Thos. Scott  |
| Secretary       | - Mrs. Joseph King    | (Social         |                     |
| Treasurer       | - Miss. Edna Scott    | (Convenors      | - Mrs. C. Pettit    |
| Pianist         | - Mrs. L. Bailey      | "               | - Mrs. L. Bailey    |
| Press Reporter  | - Mrs. Austin Smith   | (District       |                     |
|                 |                       | (Director       | - Mrs. S. Waite     |
|                 |                       | (Representative |                     |
|                 |                       | (to District    |                     |
|                 |                       | (Annual         | - Mrs. Austin Smith |

In 1922 our Institute raised funds to furnish a second room in the St. Thomas Memorial Hospital, there being a room bearing the name "The South Yarmouth Patriotic Society" and one "The South Yarmouth Womens' Institute", these gifts being South Yarmouth's tribute to the memory of her boys who served, many making the supreme sacrifice, in the first World War and whose names are inscribed in Elgin's beautiful "Book of Remembrance".



It was Mrs. Stephen Haight who originated the idea of holding Winter picnics, these enjoyable gatherings still being held annually in both East and West Elgin. In the year 1933, our membership having increased considerably, it was decided to remodel the old Foresters' Hall in Union, for our use. This property had been deeded to the community in the year 1863 by William Mandeville and wife, whose generosity and foresight had made it possible for our Institute to have the use of this building. Groups were formed, contributing substantial sums, the men of the community held bees, doing most of the work themselves. Furnishings and equipment were added and the renovating finally completed and down through the years, the hall has been our Institute's meeting place, has been available for any community activities, Red Cross headquarters during the two World Wars and also the scene of many pleasant social gatherings.

In June 1936, a number of our members enjoyed a trip to the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, when a conference was held by The United Country-women of the World. An interesting diversion in 1939 was the Alma College Extension Course in dramatics. Our members produced the play "Women at War" which was given at Alma College, St. Thomas, where other dramatic groups in Elgin County presented plays, the South Yarmouth players being highly commended on their performance.

In the year 1940 the Ontario Provincial Plowing Match was held on the grounds of the Ontario Hospital, south of St. Thomas which was then being used as a Technical Training School for the duration of the war. Our Institute members and the members of Union United Church Womens' Association, served hot dinners daily to the throngs of people attending. It was a prodigious undertaking but a satisfaction in knowing that our efforts were appreciated and the splendid profits, helped each society very materially to carry on their work.