

TWEEDSMUIR

VILLAGE

HISTORY



TALBOTVILLE W.I.

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TALBOTVILLE

A TWEEDSMUIR

VILLAGE HISTORY

Compiled by members of
Talbotville Women's Institute

1945.

Miss Catharine McIntyre, curator of the Tweedsmuir Book gave an excellent paper on the founding of the Tweedsmuir Book of History. Lady Tweedsmuir, while her husband was Governor General of Canada, had the idea of preserving history of Canada. Old houses and buildings which were a part of the past were quickly disappearing — the country was changing so completely due to new roads being planned that she thought something should be done to preserve the history of same. It was gratifying to Lady Tweedsmuir that the useful and satisfying task was undertaken by the Women's Institute members to see that nothing valuable was lost or forgotten and she urged that women should be on the alert always to guard the traditions of their homes and community and hoped that these records would find their way into these books. The histories will be the

basis of accurate facts much valued by the historian of the future. Lady Tweedsmuir was proud to think the Women's Institutes have called these recorded histories, The Tweedsmuir Village Histories.

It was in 1947 the North Yarmouth branch of the Women's Institute decided to compile a Tweedsmuir history with Mrs. Cyril Williams and Mrs. William Anderson conveners of historical research. Miss Catharine McIntyre then took over the work compiling the information she received through the help of other members. There is now three books just brimming with history of the community.

After Miss McIntyre's interesting paper Mrs. W. J. Shaw gave an excellent talk on, history of this day and age.

The Mary Stewart Collect

This is the Season of District Annuals . . . and From Ottawa to Sarnia and Wallaceburg to Fort William, Members of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario Will Be Repeating Together This Prayer.

By KATHRYN HANSULD.

SOME 47,000 women in Ontario alone know how Mary Stewart touched "the great human heart common to us all" with her collect which was first published in 1904 and is now used to open meetings of branches of the Women's Institute. Not only do the Associated Countrywomen of the World (of which the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada is a part) have as their own the Mary Stewart Collect, but year books of hundreds of groups around the world include this famous prayer to be used in their meetings.

The collect was first printed in *The Delineator*, a women's magazine no longer published, but then nationally popular in the United States. The first large women's organization to adopt it was the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

The author was a native of Ohio, but moved to Colorado when she was very young. Following her graduation from the University of Colorado she became principal of a high school in Longmont, where she wrote the famous collect.

The collect was introduced to the Women's Institutes in England by Mrs. Alfred Watt, M.B.E., who later presented it to the Associated Country Women of the World. She was president of the A.C.W.W. at the time and the author had given the copyright to that international organization. In a letter to Mrs. Watt, the author told how she came to compose the prayer.

"I wrote the collect when I was principal of the Longmont High School in Colorado. It was my first position after college and the friendly Longmont women made me a member of their Fortnightly Club . . . and the first far gleam of what women, working together, might accomplish, came to me. It was written as a prayer for the day. I called it *A Collect for Club Women* because I felt that club women working together with wide interests for large ends were a new thing under the sun and that perhaps they had need for the special petitions and meditation of this aim."

This must be true, for the collect has found its way round the world, wherever women, especially English-speaking women, get together.

Miss Stewart was a very public-spirited woman. She helped organize the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and was an enthusiastic supporter of women's suffrage. As well as being an educator (doing junior guidance work and placement work in its

pioneer days) she was a writer of some success. She contributed to newspapers and magazines and produced a volume impressively titled *Metrical Translations From the Latin Lyrics of Poet Catullus*. In 1921 she became assistant director general of the U. S. Employment Service and from 1928 until a year before her death in 1943 was assistant director of education in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1927 she was honoured by her alma mater, the University of Colorado, which conferred a degree in recognition of her work in education, social and civic service.

All the early copies of the collect were signed Mary Stuart, a spelling used as a pen name which led to some error in credit of authorship. The composition has even been accredited to Mary, Queen of Scots, who was also Mary Stuart!

A few slight deviations from the original text were bound to creep in with so many groups using it. When the title was *A Collect for Club Women*, some organizations used the wording "The great woman's heart common to us all," substituting "woman's" for "human." Miss Stewart herself acknowledged the substitution, commenting that "groups may decide for themselves which form they like." She preferred the latter, explaining, "While one of the ways we still work most effectively is in women's groups, we work for ends that concern men and women alike, and our greatest need, as our greatest strength, is to think and act in terms that are human."

One mistake she deplored was the substitution of "as one" for "at one" in the text. "At one," she explained, "is a fine old English idiom with rich connotation. To be 'at one' in aim and in spirit is not necessarily to be 'as one.' In fact, we may have one common purpose, fix our vision on one high, far goal and yet move toward it from many directions, richer for their diversity and ennobled for the tolerance which they demand."

Before her death in 1943 she released her own version and comments through the General Federation of Women's Clubs in the United States.

Institute members everywhere have reason to be grateful for the author who found words for their deepest thoughts. It might have been yesterday, instead of almost a decade ago that she wrote to those who had adopted her prayer, "Indeed, we have need to grow calm, serene and gentle, if in these dire days our judgments would be generous."

Mary Stewart's Prayers

By ELIZABETH BAILEY PRICE

FOR more than a quarter of a century women's clubs in Canada and the United States, particularly those in small towns and rural districts, have been opening their meetings by repeating in unison a prayer which they have called The Club Women's Creed. Unknowingly they have used the wrong title, and they have misquoted the prayer because there have been errors in many printed versions of the poem. These errors have taken greatly from the beauty of the expression and clarity of thought of this prayer written by a noted California educationist and author.

The name of the author is Mary Stewart. She wrote the collect in 1904. It was first printed in an

obscure corner of a well-known American magazine. It soon became popular and generally used by American women's clubs. Mrs. Alfred Watt, M.B.E., introduced it to the English Women's Institutes and later to the Associated Country Women of the World, of which she was president, and to which organization Mary Stewart has given the copyright.

When Mrs. Watt was in Edmonton attending the eleventh biennial conference of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (1939) she told of talking to Mary Stewart in England about the collect. The author was concerned about the garbled versions of the prayer which were being circulated.

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So she went to the studio of Robin Watt, the artist, son of Mrs. Alfred Watt, and personally supervised his work of copying out the prayer correctly, insisting upon it being correct down to the placing of a comma. Most people misquote the first and second last lines. Mr. Watt's copy, reproduced on hand-lettered cards, was placed permanently in many club rooms throughout the land. Mrs. Watt expressed satisfaction that plans had been taken to have this copy made while Miss Stewart was living. She had since died. While in England she wrote Mrs. Watt how she came to write the prayer which has made her famous.

"I wrote the collect when I was principal of the Longmont High School in Colorado. It was my first position after college, and the friendly Longmont women made me a member of their Fortnightly Club, which was my first grown-up club experience. Through organizations in college, I had touched the State Federation of Women's Clubs, but the first far gleam of what women working together might accomplish came to me as I worked in the Fortnightly. It was written as a prayer for the day. I called it a Collect for Club Women, because I felt that women working together with wide interests for large ends was a new thing under the sun and that, perhaps, they had need for special petition and meditation of their own. This must have been true, for the collect has found its way about the world wherever women, especially English-speaking women, get together. Indeed it has been reprinted in many forms in many lands."

Mary Stewart left Longmont to become a special teacher in a Denver high school and later dean of women and teacher of Latin and English at the University of Montana. In 1921 she was appointed Assistant Director of the United States Employment Service, a post which she held some years and where she had charge of the development of junior guidance and placement in its pioneer days. She has contributed to American newspapers and magazines and is the author of *Metrical Translations From the Latin Lyrics of the Poet Catullus*.

In 1927 her Alma Mater, the University of Colorado, conferred on her an honorary degree in recognition of her work in education, social and civic service.

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