



MRS. D.W. GRAHAM
OUR FIRST PRESIDENT

Elgin Women's Institute

St Thomas Journal April 19, 1916

(By Minnie C. Gow, Dutton.)

The largest organization of Canadian women is that known as the Women's Institute, under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture. Over 30,000 women and girls are associated with the work in Ontario, which has a direct beneficial influence upon practically every individual in the twenty-five thousand homes represented. Each county is divided into districts with their officers elected each year. These officers visit each branch at least once a year.

Each branch secretary reports each monthly meeting to the district secretary, who in turn sends monthly reports to the superintendent of Institutes, Toronto. The Department send out twice a year graduates of

MacDonald Institute to address the Institute. One of these speakers organized a branch in Dutton in 1905, which was the beginning of the West Elgin Women's Institute. At present there are seven branches: Wallace-town, West Lorne, Rodney, Clachan, Iona, Fingal and Shedden. The Dutton branch disbanded in 1911.

Each branch holds monthly meetings, at which two of the members give papers or addresses. At first the subjects discussed were principally on cooking and cleaning, but the women soon decided that eating and scrubbing are not the most important objects in life, and subjects on broader lines were introduced.

The Department has been very generous with their help, especially with their demonstration lectures,

and prospects for an extension of this work were very promising when the outbreak of war turned the attention of the women to Belgian Relief, Red Cross and other patriotic work. The Institutes have responded nobly to every appeal made. Half of the time allotted to each meeting is now given to discussing ways and means of raising money to buy materials for Red Cross work, and for donating to the different appeals received. Each branch controls its own patriotic work, independent of the District or Department. For this year some of the branches have appointed a Red Cross secretary and treasurer.

The first appeal to the Institutes was for pillows, and this met with such a generous response from the

Preserve Local History

Jennie K. Lewis

FEW of us realize that beyond the outstanding events in general Canadian history there is very little record kept of local events of interest. It was Lady Tweedsmuir, wife of the late Governor-general of Canada who aroused the interest of Canadians to this important subject.

I mentioned this to a lady in her late seventies recently and she said "why I can remember quite distinctly a great many events which have happened since Canada began" (meaning of course since Confederation). But before that time there were numerous incidents in local history which occurred and which have been recorded. What a pity that they have not been kept, because those tales—humorous or otherwise—but which really happened, are what make history interesting to its readers.

I am told that in England every hamlet and borough has its historian whose duty it is to record the interesting events of his time in a "year book". After a term of years these accounts are revised and recorded into a larger history book. This custom was started away back at the time of William the Conqueror when he started his "Doomsday Book" and has been carried on down through the centuries.

Lady Tweedsmuir had this in mind when she urged women's organizations to start "Village History Scrap Books" because she thought it was regrettable that so much local history had been neglected.

Perhaps some of the readers of this article may have in their attics, some faded photograph of a landmark which dates back to pioneer days.

If you haven't already started a Tweedsmuir Village History Scrap book in your Women's Institute you'll be surprised to find out what an interesting project it is. So don't delay in getting one started.

Veteran Workers In Wallacetown

St Thomas Journal April 19, 1916
(By Maggie McCallum, Wallacetown.)

Special mention should be made of the splendid socks made by patriotic old ladies, a number of whom were over seventy, some over eighty, and one ninety-four years of age. One of these old ladies, who is in her eighty-ninth year, made for the last shipment one of the most perfect shirts that has been shipped.

One young lady, though totally blind, is always ready with her contribution of socks for each shipment. She has also contributed liberally to the fancy work booth of every bazaar.

Another shut-in who has been confined to her house for many long years, has also donated many articles to these bazaars, and has been an untiring knitter since the outbreak of the war.

Nor are the old ladies and young women the only patriotic workers, for the young girls as well are busy making shirts and socks.

The envelope system of every house canvass has proven very successful. Envelopes are left in the homes, and the contributors enclose their monthly contributions, and place envelopes in patriotic banks in the store and post office in Wallacetown.

Many Ways of Raising Money

St Thomas Journal April 19, 1916
(By Maggie McCallum, Wallacetown.)

Since August, 1914, Wallacetown Women's Institute has raised patriotic money by means of teas, donations, fish-pond, auction sale, autograph quilts, bazaar, concerts, school concerts, boating parties, sale of food, ice cream, dahlias, flowers, fair lunches, home made candy, flags and stickers.

Bales have been shipped containing 39 pillows, 78 pillow slips, 201 pairs of socks, 19 pairs wristlets, 152 handkerchiefs, 40 flannel shirts, 7 separate collars, 2 blankets, 2 scarfs, 1 cholera belt, 20 night shirts, 1 pair of mitts, 140 pints of fruits, 1 pail of honey, 40 towels, 6 bath towels, 3 autograph quilts, 6 mattresses, 11 hospital gauze bands, 108 large sponges, 36 small sponges, 19 bed pads, 52 pounds of old cotton and linen, 3 personal property bags, 500 mouth wipes, 3 soldiers' outfits, 2 large bales and barrel for Belgian Relief, autograph quilts from Women's Institute, Presbyterian Y. P. H. M. S., and the Methodist Ladies' Aid.

The money taken in amounted to \$540.80. The money forwarded was as follows: For the Red Cross, \$224.80; British Patriotic Fund, \$10; Soldiers' Christmas, \$2; Ontario Sock Fund, \$15; Belgian Relief, \$40.90. The following was also forwarded: Belgian Relief from Mrs. Docker, \$5; St. Peter's Boating Party, \$7.91; S. S. No. 1, Aldboro and Dunwich, \$12.50; S. S. No. 14, Dunwich, \$2.81; S. S. No. 4, Dunwich, \$20; Y. P. H. M. S., \$43.10

We received for the Red Cross, from Mrs B. Bobier, \$12; from Mr. B. Sifton, \$20. The remainder was used for material and express.

Wallacetown Woman at 82 Has Knit 260 Pairs of Socks

Mrs. Ada Keillor, Mother of Great War Veterans, Helping War Effort

Mother of four sons who fought in the last Great War, with one of them paying the supreme sacrifice, Mrs. Ada Keillor, grand old lady of Wallacetown, is setting an example by her war efforts. Eighty-two years old, Mrs. Keillor's busy fingers have not lost the knack of manipulating knitting needles, acquired as a girl in the pioneer district of Tyrconnell. Since the outbreak of the war, Mrs. Keillor has knitted more than 260 pairs of socks for men in the active services. Her score to October 31 of this year was 255 pairs—an average of more than ten pairs a month.

Think of that effort by a woman who has passed the four score mark, who continues to do her own housework and also works and cultivates a neat garden during the spring and summer months.

Mrs. Keillor, who is the widow of Alvro Keillor, well-known resident of Wallacetown for many years, knitted during the first Great War, just as she is knitting in this war. She knitted for her four stalwart sons in the active service forces and she knitted for the sons of other Canadian mothers.

Truly a grand and patriotic woman is Mrs. Ada Keillor, a charming and winsome old lady, a consistent Christian, a true friend and a good and loyal citizen of Canada. The people of the Wallacetown district are justly proud of Mrs. Keillor and the record of war service she has achieved.



MRS. ADA KEILLOR



JUN 57

Triple Trio, MEMBERS of W.I.
IN GRANDMOTHER'S COSTUMES AT A MEETING AT COMMUNITY HALL 1956.
SEATED: MRS. DAMES, MCKELLAR, PEARCE, SMALL (LEADER), GRAHAM, PAGE.
STANDING: MRS. DAMES, LUCAS, DAVEY, KAIRNS, LAMB, [pianist], WIGHT, MCKELLAR.

XCVI

Tweedsmuir History Workshop Held In Iona Hall

In spite of snow and freezing temperature, about thirty West Elgin Women's Institute members met in the Iona Hall to attend the Tweedsmuir History Workshop. The chairman for the day was Mrs. Frank Silcox.

The session opened with the Institute Ode, after which all repeated the Lord's Prayer. The speaker, Mrs. Robert C. Walker, St. George, was introduced by Mrs. Richard McLellan.

Mrs. Walker is the Provincial Curator of Tweedsmuir History Books. The book on which she has been working for ten years won first place honors in the province and second in the dominion in 1951, with both firsts being won in 1953.

The speaker was very pleased with the splendid research that is being carried on by the many branches working on Tweedsmuir histories. Her idea was that, when Institute members undertake this vast task, they should strive to have interesting and artistic books, containing authentic and historical records characteristic of their own particular area of Ontario.

Mrs. Walker gave many helpful suggestions to the group. The committee should consist of at least three members. It would be an excellent idea to have an elderly gentleman on the committee who knows the early history of the community. After all, notes are compiled they should be read over by the committee before they are printed.

Mrs. Walker stated that each group should mark on a map the boundaries of their territory so there would be no overlapping in the books. "Do not neglect your own community to get highlights from another one," she advised.

The size of the book could be left with the committee, but the speaker hoped the books would be home-made of leather, metal, felt or wood. The paper for the book is an important item. It should be No. 28 blue bond paper, with cockle tissue fly leaves between.

Mrs. Walker thought it would be an excellent idea to acknowledge each person's work by writing below who had done it.

Current events are to play an important part in the book. Also Indian lore should be entered.

The speaker went through each of the Tweedsmuir Histories brought, giving helpful ideas for improvement. She then displayed her own group's beautiful Tweedsmuir History. Many helpful ideas were gained from it.

A basket lunch was enjoyed at noon with tea served by Iona Institute.

Mrs. Duncan Galbraith thanked Mrs. Walker for her inspiring talk, and the Iona group for their hospitality.



COSTUMES OF LONG AGO—This merry group of choristers lent colors and enjoyment to the 50th anniversary celebration of Wallacetown Women's Institute, observed in July, 1962. Seen in the photograph, as they prepare to sing, are Mrs. J. A.

Lucas, Mrs. W. S. McKillop, Mrs. E. A. Cairns, Mrs. John E. Pearce, Mrs. M. Foreman, Mrs. J. R. McKellar, Mrs. Morley Page, Mrs. Clarence Small, Mrs. Archie MacFarlane, Mrs. Edward Lamb and Mrs. Mac Graham.—(T.-J. Photo)

Plans of Wallacetown WI Flourished, Became Reality

Many of the officers and members of Wallacetown's Women's Institute made real sacrifices in the early years and arranged meetings and it can be truly said of them, that they contributed their best to Home and Country.

The Wallacetown Branch of the Women's Institute was organized in July, 1912. On July 3, Mrs. W. J. Hunter, delegated from the Department of Agriculture, addressed a meeting of the women of Wallacetown and vicinity in the town hall. Miss Minnie Gow, district secretary, presided. Mrs. Hunter explained the aims and objectives of the W.I. and after some discussion a branch was formed. The following officers were elected: president, Mrs. D. W. Graham, vice-president, Mrs. E. V. Docker; secretary-treasurer, Miss Maude Cameron.

The first meeting was held in September 1912, and from the first the programs were varied. Papers were read on practical and cultural subjects, recipes were exchanged and helpful suggestions along housekeeping and home-making lines given. The first winter a circulating library was secured. Musical talent was encouraged by invitations to contribute vocal or instrumental numbers on the programs.

When the First World War broke out the energies of the women were spent almost entirely on war work. A Red Cross secretary was appointed, Miss Margaret McCallum, who served in that post for many years. Funds raised by collections, bazaars, food sales, candy sales, socials and many other ways were donated to worthy causes.

After the close of the war a movement was started for a new town hall, and the Institute started a fund for that project. Meals were served at Wallacetown Fair, garden parties were held as well as candy and food sales to earn the needed money. This pro-

ject was later abandoned and a contribution of \$50 was made from the fund to the South Dunwich Choral Society, and a recreation ground for the young people was purchased. During World War II the Queen's fund was given \$100, and the balance was invested in War Saving certificates.

Red Cross work was the chief effort of the Branch during World War II. Boxes of food and other necessities were packed and sent monthly to local boys overseas, knitted articles and other comforts were sent to the Red Cross for shipment overseas.

One of the most diligent of the Red Cross workers then was Mrs. Alvro Keillor, who though she had passed the age of four score years, knitted approximately 300 pairs of socks. She had given four sons to serve in the first war, one of whom made the supreme sacrifice, an outstanding contribution to the cause of home and country. Her daughter, Mrs. Ermyrn Lucas, is one of the charter members of the W.I. and is still active in the branch.

After World War II attention was again focused on acquiring a community hall. Through a vast effort the present hall became a reality in 1947 and it has served the community most efficiently. On a table, purchased by the W.I. for the stage in the hall, is a brass plaque commemorating the local men and women who were in the armed forces.

The members have continued to serve meals at the local fair, have catered to ploughmen's banquets and to other societies and organizations and have made money in various other ways to support many worthwhile projects.

In 1947, assistance was given in organizing and conducting the first T.B. clinic in Dutton. After the second war the members adopted a needy family in England and sent much appreciated parcels to

THE SPARROW

I sit upon a lofty perch
And chirp my little tune.
So small a task, and yet 'tis all
That I can really do.

I see the passing crowd below,
All bustling to and fro,
They never seem to scan the sky,
Or watch the sunset glow.

The days are cold, the nights are too,
There's little I can do.
But peck amid the snow to find
A frozen crumb or two.

They say God cares, I never knew
For no hands seem to show;
Has He not willed that I should meet
More than His tender view?

My song is growing fainter now
My life will not be long.
Oh God! that I might spread it out
And sing a lovelier song.

Before I go, how I do long
To see a kindly deed,
Some little act, performed of love,
Spontaneous to a need.

A little boy came on the scene,
A radiant happy smile
Shone in his eyes. And in his hands
He clasped a bag of seed.

He whistled softly as he looked
About the gnarled tree,
And took the seeds from out his bag
And spread them lovingly . . .

The sun sets gently in the west
The clouds glide silently,
But oh the joy! for now I know
That someone cared for me.

St. Thomas

M. PERKINS.

them as long as they were needed.

Among other projects undertaken have been—donation made to the St. Thomas-Elgin Community Centre; a bed endowed in the children's ward at the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital; joined with the Tyrconnell Branch in furnishing a private room in the Bobier Home, Dutton; sponsoring 4-H Clubs; adopted a child under the Foster Child Plan along with the Tyrconnell Branch; assisted the community in furnishing a room in the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital in memory of Dr. W. J. Glanfield, a beloved local doctor.

In 1960, when Wallacetown held its centennial fair, the W.I. entered a float depicting early life of the branch and won first prize. When the centennial of Elgin County was marked the members assisted with the pageant by supplying clothing, time and talent.

The present officers are—president, Mrs. Stuart Graham; first vice-president, Miss Bernice Halpin; second vice-president, Mrs. Mac Graham; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Claire Blue. The branch is compiling a Tweedsmuir history of the community and Mrs. E. Martelle is the curator.

March 1st, 1924 Wallacetown, W.I.

The largest Institute in the county, from the available records is that at Wallacetown, which has a membership of seventy. This branch was organised by

Mrs. W. J. Hunter of Brampton on

July 1912, the first officers being

Pres.—Mrs. D. W. Graham, Vice Pres.—Mrs.

E. V. Docker, Sec. Treas.—Miss Maude

Cameron, with a membership

That year of 36. For this year,

(1924) Pres.—Mrs. James R. McKellar,

Vice Pres.—Mrs. H. Fox, Sec. Treas.—Miss

Eva Cusack. Regarding our

activities, we have tried to help

all charities, local and others

especially those of distress and

hardship caused by war and

were active in Red Cross work.

Papers were given on Art, music,

autobiographies, on past and present

celebrations, study of Laws of

our country and matters of

world interest