

Grand Bend - 1945 - 1995.

On April 5, 1945 a group of women met at the home of Mrs. Edward Gill Sr. at Grand Bend to organize a Women's Institute branch. Mrs. Harry Hess of Zurich, president of south Huron District, was present to explain the objectives of the organization and a decision to form a branch was made. Since the women were all from Grand Bend and vicinity, the name Grand Bend Women's Institute was chosen. There were 18 charter members - Mrs. Ed Gill Sr., Mrs. Sam Hendrick, Mrs. Harold Walper, Mrs. Ed Gill Jr., Mrs. Raymond Kading, Mrs. Carlyle Taylor, Mrs. Elmer Webb, Mrs. Don Hendrick, Miss Maude Hodgins, Mrs. Wm. Love, Mrs. Colin Love, Mrs. John Lovie, Mrs. Max Turnbull, Mrs. Garnet Patterson, Mrs. Allan Miller, Mrs. Lloyd Walper, Mrs. Verne Ridley, Mrs. Manford Luther, Mrs. Lloyd Fahner. The first president was Mrs. Sam Hendrick and Mrs. Raymond Kading was secretary-treasurer.

In 1951 Grand Bend was incorporated into Lambton County, and the Women's Institute voted to remain in South Huron District.

At the first meetings were held in the members' homes, then the town hall after it was built, then to the United Church Sunday School rooms and now at Sauble Court.

The Grand Bend Institute celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1970 with eight other South Huron branches as guests.

In April 1985 Grand Bend W.I. honoured eight members with Life Memberships - Ruth Hendrick, Olive Miller, Fern Love, Nola Taylor, Olive Webb, Verna Lovie, Jeanne Kading, Clara Hamilton.

Grand Bend celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1995.

Some projects have included - furnishing a room at South Huron Hospital. Sponsored 4-H Clubs, Placing a plaque at the Brewster dam site on the old river, helping fire victims in the area, in the summer of 1958 donated money to build a picket fence at the entrance to the Grand Bend cemetery, purchased a flag pole and flag for the village, helps with delivering meals on wheels, finger puppets made for Sick Children's Hospital - London and the Grand Bend Medical Centre. To commemorate Stephen Townships 150th Anniversary, Grand Bend, along with Dashwood and Crediton made a wall hanging, which now hangs in the township office. In the summer of 1994 a Historical Plaque was erected commemorating the cutting of the AuxSable river to Lake Huron. Some fund raisers have been - selling apple pies, table at Farmers' Market, catering to meals.

Donations have been made to Boy Scouts and Cubs, Girl Guides and Brownies. In 1971 donated to the Grand Bend Medical Centre, Children's Hospital in London, Exeter Hospital, Friendship House at Goderich, Exeter Fall Fair, Pennies for Friendship and also special need projects in the community.

Grand Bend has had many interesting and informative speakers and guests at their meetings.

Most of the members have taken advantage of short courses provided by the Department of Agriculture and have learned a lot of crafts through the years.

- Verna Lovie, Curator.

GRAND BEND PLAQUE

Grand Bend derived its name from a hairpin turn in the Ausable (Aux Sables) River a short distance inland from Lake Huron where sand dunes blocked the river's outlet to the lake. Frequent flooding hampered farming in the region; nevertheless, a small milling community developed at the "Grand Bend" in the 1830s. In response to a local petition, the township cut a new riverbed directly to the lake along an old portage route in 1892. This improved drainage in surrounding farmlands and provided access to the Lake Huron fishery. In subsequent years, the sand dunes attracted summer vacationers to Grand Bend and made the village a popular summer resort. - Ontario Heritage Foundation, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation.

At the plaque dedication in 1994 there were W.I. members in attendance.



LIFE MEMBERSHIPS 1985 - Fern Love, Nola Taylor, Olive Webb, Verna Lovie, Jeanne Kading, Clara Hamilton, Ruth Hendrick, Olive Miller.

Hurondale - During the First World War, the ladies of the community belonged to the Hurondale Patriotic Society and for three years they did Red Cross work. With the end of the war, the ladies felt that they would miss the meeting and working together, so on March 26, 1919, the Hurondale Women's Institute was organized. Nineteen ladies were charter members and another thirty-five joined the first year. Mrs. Arthur Mitchell was president and Miss Laura Jeckell was secretary-treasurer. Mrs. Alvin Moir joined the first year and is still an active member.

The name Hurondale was chosen after the local school, S.S. #1, Usborne Township, around which most of the community activities centered.

Most meetings are held the last Wednesday of the month and for years were held in the members' homes. This was often preceded by a flurry of housecleaning. More recently, most meetings are held at Usborne Central School.

Education has always been an important aspect of the Hurondale Women's Institute's activities. In the 1920s, school fairs were sponsored for the children at the Hurondale school with the institute providing the seeds and prizes. The children planted and cared for their gardens and