

OUR SUPERINTENDENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

MR. JOHN I. HODSON, 1897-1899

Mr. John I. Hodson was the Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes in Ontario when the formation of the first Women's Institute was authorized as given in schedule A. of the Act and Rules Governing Farmers' Institutes and automatically became the first Superintendent of Women's Institutes.

For many years Mr. Hodson had been prominent in Municipal and Agricultural matters, being an examiner in Agriculture and Live Stock at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph and chairman of the College Board.

For fourteen years Mr. Hodson had been a most acceptable lecturer at Farmers' Institute meetings and was aware of the growing interest shown by rural women in community affairs and had often expressed the hope that the day was not far distant when each Farmers' Institute would have a Women's Institute affiliated with it, and that young women as well as young men might receive special training to prepare them for life on the farm at a Provincial School where farmers' daughters would be taught Home Economics.

Mr. Hodson only lived to see the organization of two more Institutes, that of South Ontario at Whitby and Grey North at Kemble.

DR. GEORGE C. CREELMAN, 1899-1904

Professor George C. Creelman was appointed to succeed Mr. Hodson in 1899 and remained Superintendent of Institutes until 1904. When he retired to assume his duties as President of the Agricultural College in Guelph he retained his keen interest in the growth of Women's Institutes.

In addressing the Women's Institute delegates at the Third Annual Convention in Guelph in 1904 the Macdonald Institute course in Home Economics was introduced. Dr. Creelman, as President of the College, said, "I welcome you here with a full heart, because I feel in a sense you are my children.

"I have felt ever since I graduated from this institution (O.A.C.) that while we had met with success in bringing about improved conditions of agriculture, there was a want in the farm home that was not being touched. When I was Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes I felt there was something lacking. The delegates reported improvements in silos, in farm buildings, in stock, machinery and implements but there was no one to tell me that the farm home was better ventilated, and the homestead growing more attractive and convenient so I thought 'Young man, here is an opportunity for you to do something in this line. If you do not undertake it you will not be doing your duty to the State'". Thus Dr. Creelman aided in setting up the Home Economics course for girls.

MR. GEORGE A. PUTNAM, 1904-1934

The name of George A. Putnam B.S.A. became closely interwoven into the story of Women's Institutes during the thirty years from 1904 to 1934 in which he was its Superintendent. In his long term of office he saw the gradual development of the organization grow in numbers from 5,433 to 42,000 members.

Mr. Putnam was a native of Elgin County and after his graduation from Aylmer High School took a business course and later joined the staff of the Ontario Agricultural College as registrar, and secretary to the President of that institution. He remained at the College for twelve years until his appointment as Superintendent of Women's Institutes of Ontario.

The Institute was originally a rural homemakers' organization, but it was not long before women of vision and earnestness saw that they had a responsibility and opportunity in addition to their home duties. Community-housekeeping demanded their attention, and they began to take an active interest in schools, libraries, neglected cemeteries, relief, civic improvement and other projects which require the co-operation of the whole community.

The greatest latitude was allowed the officers and members with the result that many original ideas were developed into fine community enterprises.

Mr. Putnam very wisely used the information coming to his office as a basis for special consideration. He excelled in program planning and secured for the local Institutes and conventions qualified instructors and lecturers, thus developing through this method an organization which provided an opportunity for individual growth, increasing home efficiency; introducing co-operative methods, establishing high standards for community activities and providing better facilities for education, amusement and social intercourse and service.

MISS MARY A. CLARKE, 1939-1945

Miss Mary A. Clarke M.A. joined the staff as Superintendent in January 1939. To this position she brought an unusually fine personality and equally fine academic qualifications. Miss Clarke whose home was in Palmerston, Wellington County, is a graduate in Household Economics from Toronto University and holds an M.A. degree from Columbia University, New York. Up to the time of her appointment as Superintendent she taught on the staff of Macdonald Institute, Guelph.

Miss Clarke admirably guided the destiny of the Institutes through the critical war period. Through these war years which were years of much testing for Women's Institutes, Miss Clarke never wavered in holding us firmly to duty and in keeping us in remembrance of the high ideals and standards of our organization. As well as guiding the destiny of our Institutes, Miss Clarke ably acted as President of the Queen's Park War Service Guild, an organization of the women members of the Civil Service Association of Ontario.

In 1945 Miss Clarke joined the Department of Education staff as Inspector of Home Economics for the Province of Ontario. Our best wishes go with her in her work.

We Shall Look Forward to Meeting You at The

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

O.A.C. GUELPH ON JUNE 18, 1947

Messages and
Greetings 1.30 p.m.

Afternoon Tea
4 o'clock

Pageant
5.30 to 7 p.m.



MR. GEORGE A. PUTNAM
1904-1934



MISS BESS McDERMID
1934-1939

Miss Bess McDermid, B.Sc., was well qualified to become the fourth Superintendent of Ontario Women's Institutes. She came from a farm home in Elgin County and was a graduate of Macdonald Institute, Guelph and Teacher's College, Columbia University.

For a short time Miss McDermid had been on the Ontario Women's Institute staff and was assistant Superintendent of the Women's Institutes in Alberta and also on the staff of the extension service of Columbia and Cornell Universities, U.S.A.

Miss McDermid had a keen analytical mind and devoted her energies to raising the standards of homemaking to the highest level. She looked upon homemaking as a science, and the Women's Institutes as a means of furthering adult education in all that would assist women in the noble vocation of homemaking.

In the brief time from 1934 to 1939 in which she served so efficiently, the educational program of the Women's Institute was placed on a co-operative basis offering a definite outline of study in Home Economics in all its phases, and developing the members of the local Institutes by providing Local Leader Training Schools for members appointed to act as leaders with the understanding that they would conduct the local study groups. Many women in every part of the province found a new joy in homemaking and a keen desire for further knowledge.



MISS MARY A. CLARKE
1939-1945



MISS ANNA P. LEWIS
1945-

Miss Anna P. Lewis, B.A., present Director succeeded Miss Mary A. Clarke as Superintendent in July, 1945, and already has won the hearts of all those with whom she has come in contact.

The daughter of a Women's Institute member, Miss Lewis was born on a farm near Newmarket. As a girl she was active in Junior Institute work. The help and encouragement received in this work influenced her to study Home Economics. Following graduation from the University of Toronto Miss Lewis completed her student dietitian internship at the Toronto General Hospital, her teacher training at the Ontario College of Education and has taken post-graduate work at Columbia University. She has had a successful and varied career as dietitian at the Weston Sanatorium and Cornwall General Hospital and as a teacher of Home Economics at the Vocational School, St. Thomas.

Miss Lewis has always had a fine sense of community responsibility. Since assuming office Miss Lewis has expanded the program in Home Economics education, staff salaries have been improved and under her guidance many new Institutes have been formed.

With her sincere and enthusiastic interest in Institute work, her knowledge and appreciation of rural life and her kindly understanding personality we have high hope for the future progress of our organization.

(Contributed by Miss Edith Collins)