

# Institutes' Work For County Museums

*Editor's Note: A steadily increasing number of Ontario Women's Institutes are working to establish County Museums. We have here reports from a few counties, but knowing that this does not begin to give the complete picture we would be glad to hear of what is being done in other parts of the province.*

## Simcoe County Women's Institute Museum

Simcoe County Women's Institute Museum was opened on June 25, 1930, in the Public Library. On October 11, 1934, the Registry Office in Barrie was procured by Mrs. C. P. Stocking of Waubaushene. It is financed by contributions from the treasury of Simcoe County Women's Institutes, and other gifts or donations. The building has stone walls, floors and casements, and is protected by iron bars across the windows. It has four rooms and is centrally located in the county town.

Miss Arnold is looking after the museum articles at the present time. The caretaker of the County Building helps with janitor service. Mrs. Geo. G. Johnston, Minesing, is museum convener.

The Museum was open in 1954 during July, August and September on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and in the evenings from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Many articles of historic value have been added this year. Mrs. J. R. Boyes of Lefroy presented the Book Plate of John Buchan and its accompanying letter by Lady Tweedsmuir which had been given to Mrs. Boyes sometime ago. In 1949 the first Judge's chair used in Barrie Court House was presented by the Hon. E. C. Drury to the Women's Institutes of Simcoe County at the Barrie Area Convention. The chair was accepted by the Simcoe County Women's Institutes and placed in the museum. Mrs. Thomas Ferguson Burrows of Stayner has donated two dessert spoons carved from the horns of Highland cattle in Scotland. They were brought from Ayrshire, Scotland to Stayner by Mr. Ferguson, who was clerk of Sunnidale Township in Simcoe County for over 48 years. The spoons are a work of art and are in perfect condition although they were used to "sup the porridge" times without number. The latest additions this year are an old fashioned sausage grinder and a harmonium.

Printed cards with a picture of the Museum were placed by the Women's Institutes in the Chamber of Commerce Office in Barrie and in the office of the Information Bureau at the edge of town so as to advertise the Museum to tourists as well as to interested local citizens.

—Mrs. Sanford Aikins, Provincial Convener of Historical Research and Current Events.

## From Elgin County

At the time of writing we are starting on our project, which we realize will take years, with a historical exhibit at our big Department store, Anderson's, in St. Thomas. We hope 25 Institutes will participate. Each Institute is to have the space of two card tables to show their articles, with room behind these tables and at the side. Behind the tables can be hung quilts, spreads, etc., and at the side small antique articles such as small chairs. We plan to use high clothes-horses to display the quilts. We are planning to establish a pioneer atmosphere by having some of our members sitting weaving and rug-making—even one of them sitting in a 100-year-old slipper chair, rocking a cradle over a century old.

We are also planning a showing of some of the smaller farm implements, such as the sickle and flail. We are not charging admission to the exhibit but are having a sign printed asking for donations for our Elgin County Museum. We also plan to serve tea—a substantial one, following the pattern of the Women's Institute fall teas, and charging 50 cents to help along our fund.

We are planning on having school children of Grades 7, 8 and 9 attend, as children must be interested. Cards are to label every article, giving its history and use.

We hope, too, that every Institute in Elgin will do something to augment our Museum Fund between now and District Annual time next spring, and that they will report on this at District Annuals. As our project gains momentum we hope to interest other organizations and city and county councils.

—Mrs. J. R. Fitcher.

## York County

The members of the fifty Women's Institute Branches in the County of York have had very pleasant co-operation with the York County Pioneer and Historical Society in furthering a project in which both organizations are very much interested.

This project is the extending of an already established Museum to a "County of York Museum." The building is known as Sharon Temple, a former house of worship for the followers of David Willson. Much time, energy and money has been spent by the group of interested people in cleaning the interior and re-labeling the many relics of pioneer days that are exhibited there. The exterior, too, has been painted, which adds much to the general improvement.

So that all interested persons and organizations in the County may know of the "plans," the four Women's Institute Districts in York