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Historical Research and Current Events

Quoting from an address given by the Honourable Vincent Massey, Mrs. W. C. Mack, Convener of Historical Research and Current Events, said, "Without a knowledge of, and a feeling for, the past we cannot build as we should in the present and for the future. We, as Canadians, have been rather neglectful of this truth in years gone by. We have allowed ancient buildings to disintegrate. We have permitted historic documents to disappear. And we have, I think, done less than we should to remind our people of the achievements of our forebears from whose courage and labour we so greatly profit."

With this thought in mind Mrs. Mack urged all branches to make plans for Canada's Centennial in 1967 by planning a special project to mark that year. Suggestions included the preservation of an old building; marking an historic site; starting a new park or recreation centre for the community; publishing a community history; making a collection of good Canadian books and presenting them to the library; or a scholarship to a clever but needy student. "Most projects take time, so start now and report on your progress next year," suggested Mrs. Mack.

Displays of antiques and talks on local history and pioneer social conditions were always interesting and many were reported. One family history traced nine generations in Canada, from 1818 to the present and told of different ways to compile a Family Tree. Studies of pioneer industries dealt with "Early days of the Fur Traders"; "The Logging Industry"; "Discovery of Silver and Mining"; "Development of Farm Machinery". Historic research of things around the home brought out talks on Early Canadian Furniture; The First Sewing Machine; Quilting; Soap-making; Making candles; Making butter and cheese. Many of these included demonstrations. A paper on Early Post Offices and the History of Canadian Stamps told the story of mail delivery.

An Indian Chief spoke on conditions past and present. The story of Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks at Brantford was told. Dr. Wilfred Jury's work was reviewed. Mohawk Indians and Indian History and Lore were interesting topics.

Displays of Glass, Clocks, Ironstone China, Baskets, Knives and Forks, Shoes, etc., accompanied by a talk on their manufacture from earliest times, were popular topics. Biographies of local and famous people included Pauline Johnson, Air Vice-Marshal William (Billy) Bishop, Nellie McClung, Adelaide Hoodless and Sir Charles G. D. Roberts. Book reviews included: 50 Years of Achievement; Life in the Clearings, by Susanna Moodie; Up and Down the Glens, by Dorothy Dumbrille; Silken Lines, by Dr. Fox; and Uncle Tom's Cabin, by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

A Quilting Bee, with participants in costumes of yesterday, was a popular demonstration as were antique displays at regular meetings. Included were: articles used in pioneer kitchens, heirloom pieces; cups and saucers, glassware, coins, old photograph albums, Institute pictures taken years ago, old books including a Bible dated 1827, cook books, an autograph book of the early 1800's, Eaton's catalogue of the early 1900's, old maps and an Atlas, old advertisements, a scrap book showing fashions of sixty years ago, a dressmaker's chart of 1893 and a blouse made from it, old quilts, shawls and capes, Tweedsmuir Histories.

Women's Institute members have sponsored the "clean up" of many pioneer cemeteries, assisted museums in many ways, co-operated with the Historic Sites Board of Ontario in the erection of historical plaques, worked with Historical Societies, providing programs for meetings and helping with historical projects, sponsored essay competitions on historical subjects in schools. A Guest Book was presented to the Adelaide Hoodless Homestead, a stained glass window to the Chapel of the Mohawks at Brantford and a bedroom in the Brantford Museum, furnished with period furniture. Bus



F.W.I.C. Board Members from Ontario. Left to right: Mrs. L. G. Lymburner, a Senior Board Director; Mrs. Jas. Haggerly, President; Mrs. Bruce Connell, Junior Board Director; Mrs. Elton Armstrong, Member at Large.