

Centennial and The Women's Institutes

Pioneer Open House

by Mrs. Howard Grier



West Kent District celebrates Centennial. Left to right — Mrs. George Barr, Chatham, President West Kent District; Mrs. Everett Small, Essex President, Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario; Mrs. Maurice Irwin, Chatham, Provincial Board Director; Mrs. Joan Winfield, Home Economist, Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food; Mrs. Donald Longmore, Chatham, Vice-President West Kent District.

AN ARTICLE in the Winter 1967 Home and Country written by Ethel Demaine said, "Be a participant rather than an on-looker in Centennial Year. You'll be the happier for it and Canada will be the better for it."

It seemed that many people were rather indifferent to the significance of 1967 as we approached Canada's birthday; but as the Centennial Year has progressed, there seems to have been developed an excitement and a pride in Canada and its past history. Celebrations of many kinds are being planned or already have taken place. Attics are being ransacked for the articles that grandmother tossed out as junk and that are now considered precious and known to be irreplaceable. Clothes are being taken out of old trunks. Stories are being recalled and there is a growing appreciation of the deeds and hardships of the pioneers.

The Women's Institutes for many years have been conscious of the importance of preserving the history of their communities. This year they are the leaders, in many cases, in planning Centennial programs. Many members have made or rejuvenated, and are wearing Centennial Costumes. They are having a wonderful time, and they are teaching the younger generations Canada's history in a painless and delightful way. The ingenuity that our women are showing in some of their plans is worth recording.

(Editor's note — It is not possible to tell in Home and Country of all of the interesting Centennial programs that have been sent in by our members, but here are a few accounts and some pictures. More will appear, as space allows in the Fall Issue.)

MORE THAN 1000 people—adults and children from the local schools had a look at life of yesterday when Pine Ridge Women's Institute held Pioneer Open House at Wyevale in March.

The United Church Centre was completely filled with a collection of family pictures, dishes and furniture in three furnished rooms—parlour, kitchen and bedrooms, also a room for tools and small implements.

The members of the Women's Institute were dressed in old-time costume and were ready to explain the uses of many articles.

In the church basement the members served bread, butter and jam — all homemade as well as Centennial cake and tea, through out the afternoon and evening.

Scale models of the Wyevale grist mill, the old blacksmith and sugarbush shop were in operation. These were built, loaned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Gerry Columbus.

A replica of the first local Church, with pulpit, benches, organ and communion set was arranged on the platform and at nine in the evening there was a short program.

The choir, in centennial dress, led in singing, our Township reeve, Mr. Michael Asselin gave a short address, the Tweedsmuir History Committee lit the 100 candles on the cake and later, Mrs. Mary Brock, the mail carrier for the past 50 years, cut the cake. The program concluded with a parade of Centennial Fairy.

Mrs. Walter Marcellus, Tweedsmuir History Curator, was in charge of the occasion.



As a Centennial Project, the Ayr Branch of the Women's Institutes has made Centennial gowns which they are renting and thus adding to their treasury.