

Established 81 years ago, Grey South steeped in history

Established in 1902, Grey South District is one of the oldest and historic Women's Institute districts in Ontario.

Its current secretary-treasurer, Rose Blasing, has the minute book, cash book and membership book dating back to those early months when it all began. And it is interesting to note the annual budget that first year was \$9 and expenditures were \$2.15 compared to today's budget of over \$1,000!

Grey county is bounded by Bruce, Huron, Wellington, Dufferin and Simcoe, with Georgian Bay to the north. It is divided into five WI districts which are Grey North, Grey Centre, Grey West and Grey East, as well as Grey South.

Grey South is defined by Egremont Township, Glenelg, Bentinck and Normanby. Its major highways are 6, going north and south and 4 travelling east and west. Mixed farming is a livelihood for many residents in Grey South, but the area is also known for the large amounts of gravel deposits, particularly in the north.

There are 276 WI members in Grey South among 13 branches. They are; Ayton, Campbell's Corners, Cedarville, Dromore, Durham, Gleneden, Hampden, Hanover, Holstein, Neustadt, Priceville, Sunnyview and Victory. Originally there were two branches, Holstein and Durham, and for the first few years, the women met together, later splitting into individual branches.

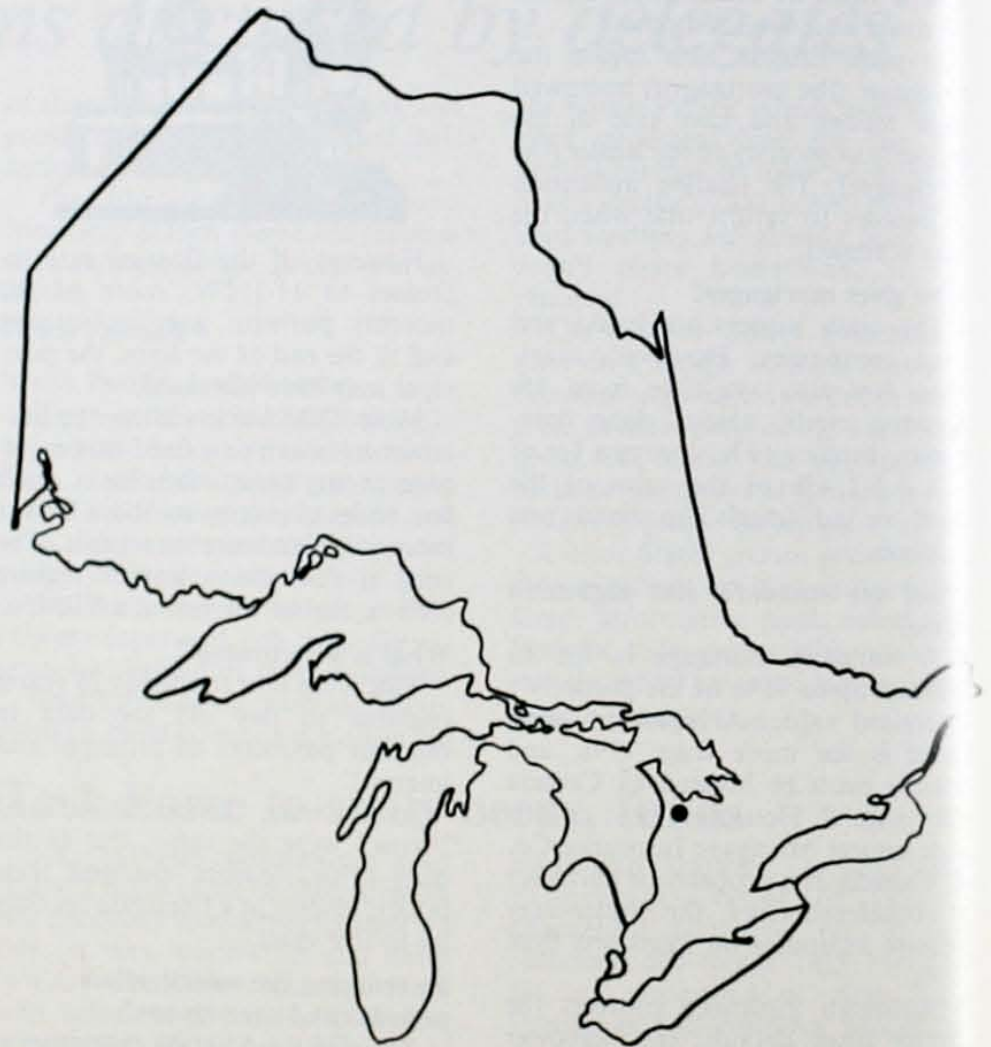
Hampden, Dromore and Cedarville all own their own halls. The Hampden facility is a former fieldstone schoolhouse, now over 110 years old and purchased by the branch in 1965. Mrs. Blasing, a member of Hampden, explained the building wasn't improved much at first since quite a bit of money had to be used to purchase from the school board. Church chairs were purchased

from Hanover for 10 cents each and a kitchen alcove was built.

The Hampden WI members cater to help finance the hall and also collect grocery tapes from community members. The hall is used every weekend in the summer months and receives a lot of community support, said Mrs. Blasing.

Dromore Branch purchased its hall in 1944 and up until that time it was the Russell Community Hall. The Cedarville Hall is used quite a bit by the community and is also supported through catering.

District President Ruth Thomas said Grey South does not have a district project it works towards, but



Geographically, Grey South is located in southern Ontario, close to Georgian Bay.