

A Medal for Loreen Rice-Lucas

By Kay Cloughley

The Women's Institute Branch at Mitchell Square, Ontario, began on February 3, 1913. This rural hamlet between Barrie and Orillia consisted of a community hall, store and blacksmith shop. In 1946, Loreen Rice and her husband, Arthur, moved from Midland with their family to operate the general store and Post Office which formed the hub of the community.

That same year, when Loreen joined the Mitchell Square WI, the Branch had not been meeting regularly. Loreen opened her home for Institute meetings and interest was rekindled. She was soon elected President. While the hamlet is no more (the store having burned down in 1954), the Women's Institute Branch is still active.

During her 46 years as a member, she has held all of the offices at the Branch level, and is currently the Tweedsmuir Curator. She was District Secretary in 1964 when the Simcoe East District was divided in two to become Kempenfelt and Simcoe East.

At this time, the local children gathered at the Oro Township Park on Lake Simcoe to play in the water and on the sandy beach. Loreen felt that there should be swimming lessons provided; so she organized a committee with members of both the Mitchell Square and nearby Shanty Bay WI instructing the children. The county finally took over the operation of the annual swimming classes in 1982. The balance of the committee's funds bought swings and play equipment for the park.

Loreen was proud to be appointed by her Branch to a board to work with the Simcoe

County Council when the County Museum was moved from their cramped quarters in Barrie. The first building was maintained with input from the local Branches and WI artifacts were stored there.

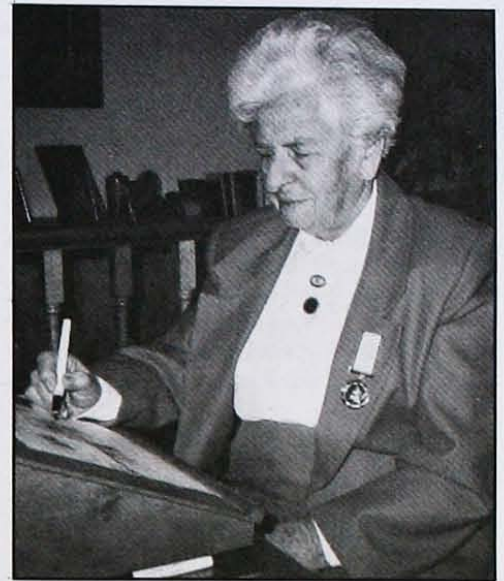
Loreen served four years on the board and near the end of her term she suggested the establishment of an archives. Her successor followed up on this suggestion and now the Simcoe County Museum has an up-to-date archives where Tweedsmuir histories and minute books are housed.

In 1969, Oro Township Council member Howard Campbell became concerned about the Township's history. He knew about the wealth of information in the local Tweedsmuir History Books and called the Branch Curators together with the purpose of preparing a history of the township.

At that time, Loreen became a member of the Oro Historical Committee, and is serving as Chair at present. She became interested in the little one-room schoolhouses, the churches and other original buildings of the township. She has become noted for her pen and ink drawings of these buildings and often has requests for prints, which can also be seen at the "Inky Fingers Studio" at her home in Hawkestone.

Other projects undertaken by the Oro Historical Committee in which she has participated include *The Story of Oro* published in 1972, with a second printing in 1987, and *Kith and Kin* published in 1978. *The Hills of Oro and Other Landmarks* is in its final stages.

In view of her volunteer work for Oro



Loreen Rice-Lucas

Township and the Women's Institute over the years, Loreen's name was proposed for the Canada 125 Medal in 1992. She was awarded the medal last January. The Mitchell Square Women's Institute recognizes and congratulates this busy and dedicated lady. As Loreen says: "The inspiration and opportunity given by the Women's Institute has been a profound influence on my life, and the Mary Stewart Collect says it all."

Kay Cloughley is a member of the Mitchell Square Women's Institute. Mitchell Square is located between Barrie and Orillia on Lake Simcoe.



One of Loreen's sketches of Mitchell Square General Store, circa 1950.

Congratulations

Anniversaries:

Community WI	50
Nassagaweya WI	60
Tincap WI	65
Rylstone WI	70
Bethany WI	80
Cavan WI	80
Guthrie WI	80
Ice Lake WI	80
Maples WI	80
Pine Grove WI	80
Walter's Falls WI	85
Selkirk WI	92

Certificates of Merit:

Dungannon WI - Esther Gibson

Life Memberships:

Dunvegan WI - Joyce MacKinnon

Guthrie WI - Reta Caldwell

- Myrle Mason

Zephyr WI - Mary Esposito