



Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless

The story of the founding of the Women's Institute is so well known to Institute members that it's scarcely necessary to repeat it here. It might be enough to say that Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless lost a baby and she felt that, as a young mother, she should have had a chance to learn more about how to care for babies. She didn't want other women to suffer as she had done, so she started a campaign to have household science taught to girls at public schools. Of course, this didn't help women who had finished at school and who were already in charge of a family. The only way for women- or at least rural women- to get this education, Mrs. Hoodless thought, was to have an organization of their own to study homemaking, just as farmers had their Experimental Union and their Farmers' Institutes. Mrs. Hoodless said this at a farmers' meeting at the Ontario Agriculture College and one young farmer, Erland Lee from Stoney Creek, was so impressed that he asked Mrs. Hoodless to come to his community and talk to the women about it. The women came to hear her- 101 of them from the village and all over Saltfleet township. The result was that on February 19th, in the year 1897, the first Women's Institute was organized in Squire's Hall in the village of Stoney Creek.

Taken from a play given in 1957 at Ontario Agriculture College on the occasion of the Sixtieth Anniversary and written by Miss Ethel Chapman.