

Salem-Nilestown Women's Institute History

The Salem Women's Institute was organized February 17, 1916 and held its first meeting on March 16, 1916. The first officers were:

President	Mrs. C. Shiels
1st Vice President	Mrs. J. D. Thompson
2nd Vice President	Mrs. J. P. Beattie
Secretary Treasurer	Mrs. Andrew Dodds
Directors	Mrs. J. Jackson, Miss A. Brownlee
District Director	Miss Daisy Thompson

The main reason for forming a branch at this time was the need to do war work during the First World War.

To give some idea of the work accomplished, by May 1917 the following articles had been made: 169 shirts, 106 pajamas, 108 towels, 13 kimonos, 10 comfort bags, and 316 pairs of socks. Sewing bees were held at the Salem church. Some monies were donated by the North Dorchester and Westminster Councils to help buy supplies, However a lot of money was raised by the Institute collecting junk which had to be gathered and taken into London and sold. They also held box socials and garden parties. According to their financial report at the end of the first year they had \$59.75 on hand, having raised and spent \$365.62.

The first meeting in 1917 was held in Salem church when Belmont W.I. was invited. The highlight of this meeting was that Miss Ethel Chapman from the Department of Agriculture, Toronto spoke on the subject "Institute work for the coming year." Also Miss Scott of Nottawa spoke on "Foods and their preparation."

For the next two years sewing bees were held at the church to make quilts for soldiers in England. Food boxes were packed for the boys overseas. Mite boxes were placed in the Derwent and Nilestown schools to raise funds for postage for these food boxes.

A library was started with the books kept at the Salem church. Mention is made in the minutes that the Library Board bought 221 books for \$40 in 1925. And in 1926 the secretary was given \$25 to buy more books.

In the fall of 1920 interest and attendance were at a low ebb. The war was over and the disbanding of the Branch seemed imminent. However they decided to wait until after the Convention which was held in London. The Provincial President was invited to come and address