

WALKERTON W.I. BRIEF HISTORY . . .

On June 16th, 1901 the Walkerton Women's Institute was organized just four years after the first Institute was organized in 1897 at Stoney Creek. There were 27 members at the first meeting when Miss Joan Rowand became the first president. These charter members began the work of this Branch that through 80 years has carried out the Institute Motto

"For Home And County"

The immediate cause for forming the Institute in Walkerton was that Mr. Wm. Moore had bequeathed \$15,500.00 to be used for the building of a Bruce County Hospital in Walkerton. He had stipulated that the hospital must be constructed within five years.

Two years had elapsed with no action being taken by the County Council. In 1902 a delegation of Institute members led by the president Mrs. Jean Rowand, met with the County Trust and presented the need for a hospital.

The first endeavour was to raise the required additional \$5,000.00.

They did this and the Bruce County Hospital was opened in Walkerton in 1903. The Walkerton Branch maintained a private room in the hospital until in 1906 when the new addition was built.

During the first World War funds were collected and placed in a War Work Fund and used for knitted parcels for the boy's overseas, and for donations to many worthy causes such as; the Red Cross, Y.M.C.A., Belgium Relief, Prisoners of War, Merchant Marines, and the Field Kitchen for the 71st Battalion.

A Memorial Fountain, honouring the War Veterans of 1914-18, was erected, by the Institute, in front of the Public Library in Walkerton. World War II found the Walkerton W.I. ready thus, under the direction of Mrs. Fred Graham, the members engaged in knitting and raising money for the soldier's needs. Numerous bundles of clothing and bedding were prepared and sent to various organizations.

The Walkerton W.I. was principally instrumental in having a Cairn erected, in 1953, in the Walkerton Cemetery, as a memorial to the Pioneers of the district.

The Walkerton W.I. has sent delegates and conveyors to the District Rally each year, as well as attending the Area Conventions.

In the F.W.I.O. the Provincial Board is the governing body and the members are proud that Mrs. L.G. Crozier served on the Board in 1937, 38, 39 and Mrs. Bernice Cameron in 1958, 59, 60.

The Walkerton Women's Insti-

tute helped organize the Jr. Institute, placed iodine tablets in schools, donated to the Band uniforms, a flag for the Boy Scouts, and donated to the building of the Confederation Arena. Through the years numerous donations have been made to many worthy causes. In the local schools Scholarships were given to Grade 10 students for the highest marks in Home Economics. Awards were given to Grade VIII pupils who showed the best citizenship qualities. In 1952 a Well Baby Clinic was sponsored by the Institute and two members assisted at each Clinic, until 1967.

Quilts were prepared and sent for the benefit of Participation Lodge. During the last 20 years the Institute has contributed to; Mental Health, Save the Sight, the Humane Society, Little Royal Fair.

During the summer months, the Walkerton W.I. members have taken their turn as hostess at the Bruce County Museum at Southampton or have made a donation, or contributed by sewing and doing repairs.

At the International Plowing Match in 1976, as the Bruce County W.I. had a Drop-in-Centre, giving information and having displays, the Walkerton ladies took their turns in serving the tea, coffee and cookies. The distinguishing feature of that Plowing Match was the Bruce County Tartan which had become the property of the Women's Institutes of Bruce. Accordingly, the tartan caps were made by all the Institute members of Bruce and these caps were wore by the members of the Plowman's Association.

The history of the Afternoon Branch of the Walkerton Women's Institute from 1901 to 1981 is contained in three Tweedsmuir History Books. The Curators have been: Mrs. Edith Harkley, Miss Jessie Kerney, Mrs. C. Remus, Mrs. E.W. Kramp and Mrs. Bernice Cameron. The three Tweedsmuir Books have been taken to the Bruce County Museum and have been Micro-filmed. The three books and a scrap book are now in storage at

the Public Library for safe keeping.

The Afternoon Branch of the Walkerton Women's Institute has many memories to treasure. There has been the Anniversary celebrations - 25, 50, 60, 70, 75, 80. The 75 in 1976 was a special occasion when 20 members attended a dinner at the Hartley House. The year 1981 was the 80th Anniversary and it was the last celebration but it was a memorable occasion for, although we were few, had formed very deep friendships.

feeling that it's members were too small to carry on, decided to amalgamate with the Evening Institute. Of the six members who joined the Evening Branch now in 1988 only three are left, Mrs. Ruth McBurney, Mrs. Carrie Wiles, and Mrs. Margaret Inglis.

Mrs. Ruth McBurney is the only living member of the Life Members on the Life Membership Scroll. She is 92 years old. She has been President, Secretary and has filled most positions on the Institute Programs. She has been a member of the Institute for almost 50 years. She has many happy memories of her friends and special occasions spent working together. The Valentines Tea and Bake Sale which was held every year at the Town Hall from 1959 to 1968 and from 1969 to 1973 at the Hartley House. The special Christmas dinner held every year at the Hartley House was an occasion of great joy to the members.

The Walkerton Women's Institute treasures a picture of the first convention held in Walkerton in 1927 when 400 delegates were present. It was called 'The Birthday Women's Institute Conven-

tion. Mrs. C. Crawford, Tara, was the Chairman and Mrs. C. Lamb, Walkerton, as secretary. Twenty Walkerton ladies dressed in 1901 costumes, highlighted the occasion.

Mrs. Ruth McBurney is the only living member of the 12 Life Members on the Life Membership Scroll. She is 92 years old. She has been a member of the Institute for almost 50 years and has been president, secretary, and has filled most positions on the Institute Programs.