

WALKERTON EV. INSTITUTE

On the evening of February 4, 1947 seven ladies met in the I.O.D.E. Room of the Town Hall to organize what was to become the Young Women's Evening Institute. District Director, Mrs. W.A. Tolten, and President of the Walkerton Women's Institute, Mrs. W.H. McBurney assisted in formation of the new branch. The first meeting was held on February 11th with 21 in attendance. Mrs. Norman Crozier was the first president; Mrs. W.C. Schmidt was Vice-President; and Mrs. Chester Cunningham was Secretary-Treasurer. Among the Charter Members was Mrs. Ray Taylor, who still attends meetings when she can. Monthly meetings of the new branch were held in the I.O.D.E. Room until February, 1948 when the first house meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Charles McNaughton. By 1956 the name had become the Walkerton Evening Institute. Proceeds of early fund raising events were given to the Hospital Building Fund.

In 1957 the first Maytime Musical was organized to provide a platform for local music talent, and to raise money for the Walkerton District Retarded Children's Association. Proceeds of

this event amounted to \$100.00. The Maytime Musical became a popular annual tradition, and was continued until 1976. A total of over \$4,500.00 was raised and donated to the Walkerton Association for the Mentally Retarded and at Bruce Haven School, shop, forerunner of A.R.C. Industries.

For several years from 1967 onwards, Institute members assisted with registration and weighing of babies at the Bruce Baby Clinics run by the County Health Unit. Once the Heritage Fair became established members manned a booth to sell home made jams, jellies, candy and pickles.

Over the years the group has made several quilts. Some quilts became fund-raising prizes; others were donated for use or for sale by Participation Lodge.

In June 1982 the Walkerton Afternoon Institute felt that due to declining numbers, they could not continue to operate. They amalgamated with the Walkerton Evening Institute, and five ladies transferred their membership. One of these was Mrs. W.H. McBurney, who had been instrumental in starting the Walkerton Evening Institute 35 years previously.

In the early years of the Institute penny postcards reminded members of forthcoming meetings. After March 1951 phone calls served this purpose. Later still a monthly bulletin was distributed. Currently members are again contacted by phone before a meeting.