

Middlesex institutes mark 75th anniversary of founding of WI

By JEAN SYMINGTON
of The Free Press

Women's Institute members from East, West and North Middlesex marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of the institutes at a celebration in Thorndale Community Hall Monday night.

The first Women's Institute in the world was established at Stoney Creek in 1897 by Adelaide Hoodless, aided by Erland Lee.

Mrs. H. L. Noblitt, Ottawa president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, was guest speaker.

In an interview Monday, Mrs. Noblitt said, "Apart from these celebrations being fun, there are resulting benefits."

Preparing for celebrations develops leadership, an objective of WIs, she said, and members will learn the history of the organization doing research for programs.

"Because they're more familiar with the history, they will appreciate what we've accomplished over the years so much better. It will offer the women a challenge to work constructively," she said.

Mrs. Noblitt has attended nine celebrations, including the provincial celebration in Toronto in February.

She said the celebration that interested her most was at a small branch, where husbands and children were invited to participate.

"Our motto is 'for home and country,' and they certainly brought in the whole community," Mrs. Noblitt said.

The groups are formed to teach homemaking skills, leadership, and involvement in community problems. Membership in Ontario is 31,031, almost half the total Canadian membership of 66,000 women.

Although originally a rural organization, Mrs. Noblitt feels the program is valuable to any homemaker, city or country.

Ontario WIs offer scholarships on both area and provincial levels. This year \$100 scholarships are being offered to 31 girls entering family and consumer studies at the University of Guelph.

A scholarship is also offered through the international organization, The Associated Country Women of the World. Money recently aided a Turkish girl.

According to Mrs. Noblitt, the WI's future plans include a

membership drive, completing purchase of the Erland Lee homestead in Stoney Creek, and possibly the establishment of archives.

Other guests at the celebration were: Past president, FWIO, Mrs. Austin S. Zoeller;

provincial board director, subdivision 21, Mrs. James Pilkington; London area presi-

dent, Mrs. Charles Munro; Middlesex West president, Mrs. Verne Towers; Middle-

sex North president, Mr. Clifford Playter; Middlesex East president, Mrs. Kenneth

Hogg; a home economist from the London department of agriculture and food, Miss Betty

Conway; and, curator of the provincial Tweedsmuir histories, Mrs. R. C. Walker.



By George Blumson of The Free Press

Mrs. Kenneth Chapin of RR 1, Brantford, a member of the WI in that area, performed a history of the WI in song and dance. She wore a variety of hats illustrating events in WI history.



Members of Women's Institutes in Middlesex marked the founding of the WI at a celebration Monday night in Thorndale Community Hall. Mrs. H. L. Noblitt of Ottawa, FWIO president, left, and Mrs. James Pilkington, Mt. Brydges, look over an iced replica of the homestead of Erland Lee, one of the founders.