

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ERLAND LEE HOME

August 9th, 1973

Over 400 Women's Institute members and interested friends gathered at the Erland Lee Home, Ridge Road, Stoney Creek, for the official opening. The weather was cooperative, the shade of the front lawn trees inviting, and the group excited in the culmination of the project of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.

The Honourable William A. Stewart, Minister of Agriculture and Food, brought greetings from his Ministry and commended the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario for the great contribution made over the years toward the growth of the individual member, to the communities of Ontario, and now in acquiring the "Home" for members all over the world.

Greetings were extended from the Associated Country Women of the World by Deputy President, Dr. Irene Spry, and congratulations were read from Mrs. J. McLean of Nova Scotia, President of the FWIC.

Chairman of the event was Mrs. Harvey Noblitt, President of FWIO, who gave a short history of the Lee family from James, a staunch United Empire Loyalist who came to Canada in 1792. High tribute was given to this progressive, public-spirited family who had played such a prominent part in the development of their community, and especially to Erland and his wife Janet for their initiative and support in the formation of the Women's Institute. With Adelaide Hoodless providing the idea, and Erland Lee the stimulus, the first WI was founded in 1897. The original Constitution was hand written by Janet Lee on the beautiful dining room table, still in the dining room of the Home.

The last of the Lees to reside in the Home was Frank, son of Erland, and his wife Katie.

Mrs. Gordon Conant of Oshawa, daughter of the first President (of the first Women's Institute), shared some of her memories of those days. Mrs. Leslie Tulk spoke for the Frank Lee family, expressing their pleasure that their home is being preserved by the Women's Institute.

Mrs. Thomas McCreadie, President of Wentworth South District WI, recalled the day -- May 28, 1961 -- when the District erected a memorial plaque on a large boulder at the front of the Home in recognition of Erland and Janet Lee. Mrs. Everett Small of Essex, a past President of FWIO, told of the ceremony which took place at this identical site on October 1, 1967, when the Historic Sites Board, at the instigation of the FWIO, erected a plaque in honor of the part played by Erland and Janet Lee and Adelaide Hoodless.

The ribbon to officially open the "Home" was cut by Mrs. Russell Wise of Puslinch along with Mrs. Allan Dickenson, Mount Home, both of whom were members of the Committee which was instrumental in initiating negotiations for the acquisition of the "Home", and by Mrs. Lilah Lymburner of Port Colborne, President of the FWIO during the early period of negotiations.

Among the special guests at the event were the daughters of Frank and Katie Lee: Mrs. R. L. Davis, Grimsby; Mrs. Frank Ryan, Oakville, Miss Alison Lee, Guelph, and Mrs. Leslie Tulk of Newfoundland. Miss Marjorie Lee of Hamilton and Mrs. H. C. Freal, Stoney Creek, daughters of Erland and Janet Lee, were also present.

Following the impressive ceremony the guests toured the Home and Drive House, then enjoyed refreshments served beneath a large marquee erected at the back of the property by members of Wentworth County Women's Institutes.



L.R. to R.: Mrs. R. Wise, Mrs. A. Dickenson, Mrs. L. Lymburner