

Erland Lee Homestead a step into the past



The Erland Lee Homestead on Ridge Road in Stoney Creek is open to the public year round.



Mrs. Beachin, curator at the Erland Lee Homestead, displays an early-day washing machine.



Here, guests from England and Stoney Creek take a closer look at the piano in the home.

Everyone welcome

The Erland Lee Homestead attracts visitors from all over the world. The home of the first Women's Institute is of international interest and is a pride to local residents.

Ironically, 95 percent of the nearly 9,000 visitors to the home each year are from out of town. Approximately 1,000 of those visitors are from overseas.

A second visit to the home is rarely the same as the first. The home is renovated quite often to provide returning visitors with some variety.

While visiting the home you will see kitchen utensils, furniture, china, needlework and clothing from the 1800's. Also on display are toys, sewing equipment, and the original constitution table.

The drive house, originally a barn, has been converted into a display room for the quilts and needlework. In August the landscaping will be changed to further reflect the era of the home. Paths will be installed with plants and wildflowers.

The home is open five days a week from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Beginning August 19, for the summer, the home will be open on weekends.

On Saturday it will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Sunday from 10 a.m. to sun-

down. Everyone is more than welcome to drop in. However, large groups are asked to give advance notice.

Historical background

The group of women who gathered at Squire's Hall in Stoney Creek on February 26, 1897 for the first Women's Institute meeting could not have possibly conceived its future success.

In 1897 Mr. Erland Lee shared Adelaide Hoodless' views on education for women with the area ladies. Adelaide Hoodless, of Hamilton, received an enthusiastic response from the women.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee worked earnestly spreading the word of the new organization being formed and of its first meeting. At that meeting, Mrs. E.D. Smith of Winona was elected the first president.

It was on the table which still stands in the Erland Lee Homestead that Mrs. Lee copied the final draft of the constitution.

In 1901 there were 33 branches of the W.I. in Ontario alone. By 1933, the W.I. groups had not only spread across Canada, but throughout the World.

The groups concern themselves with social welfare, education, community affairs, health programs, libraries and homemaking clubs.



All visitors to the home sign into a book before they leave. The signatures come from all parts of the world.



Curator Mrs. Victor Beachin, displays one of the many antiques at the Erland Lee Homestead to Detta Luxton (left) of the U.K. and her sister, Mrs. Brenda Brunt of Stoney Creek.



The tour guide explains to Joanna Brunt of the U.K. a little about each of the treasures in the cabinet.

Photos and story
by Kathy Hanley