

The History of the Women's Institute

The first Women's Institute in the world was organized in Saltfleet Township, Wentworth County, Ontario, on February 19, 1897, in the village of Stoney Creek; and through that fact the name of Stoney Creek is now known throughout the ten Provinces of the Dominion of Canada and to more than a score of other countries in the world.

STONEY CREEK—In history it has special significance. Apart from its place as the home of the first Women's Institute, this little village nestling under the shadow of the Niagara escarpment, has been the scene of stirring events in the history of Canada. It was the field on which was fought the decisive battle of the War of 1812-1814, a battle in which the American forces were defeated on June 6, 1813. On a high hill behind "Battlefield House", in which the Gage family lived at the time of the battle, a beautiful monument has been erected. This monument was unveiled by Her Majesty Queen Mary by electric cable on June 6, 1913, to commemorate one hundred years of undisturbed peace between Canada and the United States. Yearly, thousands of tourists visit this historic spot, attracted by the stately monument which is a gem of stonework in its jewel-like setting of emerald mountain and vari-coloured foliage.

Just across the road is a small burying ground where the soldiers who fell in that battle, Canadian and American, sleep side by side. Here, on June 26, 1926, an impressive ceremony was held, when a bronze tablet, the gift of the National Society of United States Daughters of 1812, was unveiled by the American Consul of Hamilton. This tablet is in memory of the unknown American soldiers who gave their lives for their country, and it was the first of its kind to be placed on other than American soil.

So Stoney Creek, having been the scene of a struggle for the preservation of Canadian life and living, was a fitting setting for that other event of outstanding historic interest—the founding of the Stoney Creek or "Mother Institute".

Previously there had been organized in the Township of Saltfleet a Farmers' Institute of which Mr.