

ADLAIDE HUNTER HOODLESS HOMESTEAD

June 13, 1959, a plaque sponsored by the Blue Lake and Auburn Women's Institute was unveiled by the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board, Ontario Department of Travel and Publicity, at the birthplace of Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, Founder of the Women's Institute. All levels of Women's Institutes were in attendance: Branch, District, Area, Provincial, National and International, the latter represented by an Area Vice-President of the Associated Country Women of the World.

In July, 1959, at Charlottetown, P.E.I., the Board of Directors of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada decided to purchase the birthplace. A three month's option was taken and the home purchased for \$11,500, with approximately three acres of land.

Following the FWIC purchase of the property a National Homestead Committee was set up. An appeal was made to the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board to take over the property, and the project was placed on the agenda of the FWIC Board Meeting in Vancouver, June 1961. It was discussed at the National Convention that followed, both in discussion groups and in plenary sessions. As a result, \$5,000 was voted from the funds to restore the Homestead and \$500 for landscaping. Later, by a Board letter vote, \$50 was added to the amount for landscaping.

Basically the house was well built. The foundation needed little attention and the roof only minor repairs. The basement floor was cemented and set tubs installed with a new cold water tank. Cupboards from the old kitchen were placed in the basement, also a counter space and electric outlets to prepare for picnic parties. The outside basement entrance was rebuilt with an easy ascent. An oil furnace with forced air vents was installed and gives adequate heat to the whole house. The Ontario Hydro did a complete re-wiring job with a new hot water tank and marked a very substantial bill as paid. They also moved an unsightly pole from the front of the house to the side.

The Horticultural Department of the Ontario Agriculture College, Guelph, planned and did the landscaping around the Homestead. A flagstone walk was placed in front and to the side steps. Sturdy and attractive steps both front and side were constructed. The Township of South Dumfries donated the use of heavy machines and labour, which improved the site as well as the parking area. Picnic tables were the courtesy of the Ontario Department of Highways for three seasons.

Few changes were made in the interior of the house. A door was cut in the lower hall to the former pantry, which has been transformed into a kitchen for the hostess, with lovely cherry wood cabinets and a tile floor. A closet at the head of the stairs was made into a bathroom with an inconspicuous window added under the eaves. The hostess uses the kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms at the top of the stairs, and a living room on the main floor. All the pine board floors were sanded and refinished. All the paper was removed and the plaster repaired or redone where necessary. Wallpaper was chosen with the advice of the consultant of the Canadian Wallpaper Mfg. Co., which donated the wallpaper. Blinds and storm windows were furnished where necessary.

September, 1961, North and South Brant District W.I. entertained at Open House at the Homestead. It was an historic day - an end and a beginning. It was the end of the first lap in the planning begun at the Board meeting in Charlottetown, and the beginning of the planning of the furnishings for the finished memorial to our Founder.