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CENTRE LADIES' AID

It is very difficult to get accurate facts concerning the early history of many organizations, for the records are gone and no one is still alive to tell how it all began. So it is with Centre Ladies' Aid. We know it was an active organization in the early 1900's. Both Mrs. Ray Fox and Mrs. Roy Giles, married in 1909 and 1910 respectively, recall attending Ladies' Aid meetings when they came as brides to live in Centre neighbourhood. The meetings were held in the members' homes. Mrs. Giles remembers them knitting socks during the First World War. As in other communities Centre Ladies' Aid was the mainstay of the church, looking after its material needs, beautification and upkeep.

Mrs. Elmer Young has in her possession some of the Centre Ladies' Aid minute books, dating back to 1923. A fowl supper was held in 1923, taking in \$239.00 at the door. With expenses of \$39.00, they cleared \$200.00. Fowl suppers were also held in 1924 and 1925. With no hall at that time they were held in the school-house. Sometimes a tent was set up and used as a kitchen, with coal-oil stoves to keep the food hot. In 1924 minute book records purchases of coal oil, lamp chimney and wicks, plates and cups, stair treads, carpet, blinds, stove pipes, fly tox, varnish and \$10.00 donated to the Church Board. In 1926 they decided to collect instead of holding a fowl supper. That year they bought choir books, a coleman lamp and oil can, a curtain for church, and paid 90¢ as their share of taxes on parsonage.

In 1927 Mrs. Herb Pulver was President of Centre Ladies' Aid, Mrs. Harold Young was Secretary and Miss Minnie Howell Treasurer. They bought material and recovered the cushions for the pews. They held a social in August. Dues were 50¢ a member. Meetings were held the third Wednesday of each month. Officers were the same in 1928. An autograph quilt raised \$105.70 that year. Because Mrs. Stanton Fox collected \$83.00 of that total from persons wishing to have their name embroidered on the quilt top, the quilt was given to her; Mrs. Ray Fox still has that quilt. From 1928 to 1947 quiltings played an important role in their money-making activities. In 1930 a sale was held on the market.

In 1931 President was Mrs. Morley Wood, Secretary Mrs. Roy Giles and Treasurer Mrs. C. McFaul. Mrs. B.L. Redner was President in 1932, and Mrs. Stanton Fox in 1933. Mrs. Cecil McFaul was Treasurer from 1931 to 1943. Mrs. Roy Giles was Secretary for several years, then served as President in 1936 and 37. Quiltings, pot-luck dinners, pie and ice-cream socials, making aprons (sold for 60¢ each) were some of their money-making projects. In 1937 the ladies paid for the wiring of the church by Jay Sprague. They held a chicken supper again that fall.

Mrs. Ray Fox was President from 1938 to 1940. Mrs. Kenneth Green was Secretary those same three years. Their big accomplishment in 1938 was building on a hall and kitchen at the back of the church. Wellington Howell lent the Ladies' Aid the money - lumber and shingles cost \$300.00 and cement blocks \$108.00, - and paid him back with the proceeds from numerous dinners, quiltings, socials and fowl suppers. The hall was completed and a social evening enjoyed in it in January of 1939. Miss Minnie Howell donated 50 chairs for the hall. Dues in 1937, 38, 39 and 40 were 25¢.

In 1941 Mrs. Arza Pulver was President and Mrs. Winston Pulver Secretary. A pot-luck dinner and quilting was held almost every month of the year. The price for quilting was \$1.50 to \$2.00, and 50¢ for plain binding. An ice-cream social was held in July, admission 25¢ and 15¢. A fowl supper held in October netted them \$170.38; admission 60¢ and 30¢. Some of the quilts were donated to the Red Cross and handkerchiefs were also sent to British war victims. Eleven quiltings were held in 1942, price per quilt \$2.00 plus 50¢ for binding. Mrs. Earl Fox was President. Because of the scarcity of sugar they collected (objective - \$10.00 a family) instead of having a fowl supper. 15 quiltings were held in 1943, a box of clothing packed for Russian Relief, collected again instead of fowl supper. The pot-luck dinners and quiltings continued unabated all through 1944, 45, 46 and 47. many of them were for the Red Cross; these they had to piece as well as quilt. Price for outside orders was \$3.00 and \$4.00, depending on the amount of work on them. When they worked at the church hall the school children came over for dinner too. Mrs. Earl Fox was President from 1942 to 1945, then Mrs. Kenneth Green for 1946 and 47. Mrs. Winston Pulver was Secretary from 1941 to 1951. Mrs. Elmer Young was Treasurer from 1944 to 1956. The Ladies' Aid paid for the interior painting of the church in 1945 by a Mr. Gay. They held an afternoon tea in 1947, inviting Albury, Rednersville, Victoria, Burr's and Ameliasburg. Bought new choir books in 1947.

In 1948-49 Centre Ladies' Aid had 3 presidents, each serving for 4 months: Mrs. J. Cairns, Mrs. Mac Wallbridge and Mrs. E. Young. Quiltings were discontinued; afternoon and evening meetings were held in the members' homes. In 1949 the ladies had 2 food sales on Belleville market, a bazaar and tea, and began the catering which became their main money-making means from that year until 1966. In both 1949 and 50 they catered to the Rotarians, 100 @ \$1.50 a plate; in 1951 price was \$1.75. Admission to an ice-cream social was 40¢ and 25¢. In 1950 they paid Moran Enterprises \$221.50 for painting outside of church.

Presidents: Mrs. C. Vanclief 1950-51, Mrs. C. McFaul 1952, Mrs. W. Pulver 1953-54, Mrs. A. Cairns 1955, Mrs. Floyd Carter 1956-57, Mrs. C. McFaul 1958-61, Mrs. A. Cairns 1962-63, Mrs. Robert Cairns 1964, Mrs. E. Young 1965-66. Secretaries: Mrs. J. Cairns 1952-54, Mrs. W. Green 1955, Mrs. K. Green 1956-57, Mrs. W. Pulver 1958-64, Mrs. C. Vanclief 1965-66. Mrs. K. Green was Treasurer from 1957 to 1966. They built new cupboards in kitchen in 1954, decorated church interior - Mr. Bell costing \$614.43 and bought 2 oil stoves for church in 1955, bought stack tables and chairs in 1957, more chairs in 1959, planted shrubs around church and hall in 1961. Centre Ladies' Aid came to an end in 1966 with the closing of Centre Church. The ladies then joined the Rednersville U.C.W.

Contributed by Mrs. Elmer Young, March 1975.