

90 YEARS OF INVOLVEMENT

This is one celebration for the Tweedsmuir Book
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One for the Tweedsmuir book

Hillier WI celebrates 90 years of community involvement

By Rick Fralick
Gazette Staff

The Hillier Women's Institute celebrated its 90th anniversary with a special meeting June 17 that included historical information, special recognition of members with over 40 years of service, and a birthday cake followed by afternoon tea and sandwiches.

Distinguished guests included eastern board director Cecilia Mains, area chair Marilyn Rennie, provincial adviser Mary Ellen Closson and Maureen Finnegan, wife of Prince Edward County Mayor Leo Finnegan.

The long-term members present were Doris Wright, with 56 years of membership in Hillier WI; Jean Alexander, with 51 years; Lorena Best, with 51 years; Mabel Wright, with 44 years; Phyllis White, with 41 years and Lois Conley, with 41 years.

Current president Pamela Littlefair introduced Marilyn Rennie who proceeded to give an overview of some of the history of Hillier WI.

The group was founded by a Mrs. Cox of Bloomfield (women were always referred to by their husband's name in those days) on June 24, 1914.

(Wellington WI, which celebrated its 95th anniversary last June 17, became the first branch in

Prince Edward County when it was founded in January 1908.)

Shortly after the founding of the Hillier Branch, the Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated and the First World War got underway, with Women's Institutes putting their efforts into war work.

Although the minutes of the early meetings have been lost, the first annual meeting was recorded on May 14, 1915.

In that first year, Hillier WI donated \$212.48 to a hospital ship.

In 1920, they raised \$200 to fund a room at the hospital in Picton and in 1931, each branch paid 50 cents for a WI banner.

Demonstrations in those days tended to focus on such subjects as how to cut a chicken properly or how to iron a shirt.

A 1936 resolution was passed to make home economics mandatory in the schools.

During the Second World War, Hillier WI did a lot of work for the Red Cross. At the end of the war, in 1945, the Tweedsmuir History was started.

In 1948, the group was heavily involved in welcoming new Dutch families to Canada and in 1959, Mrs. Fred Way donated a couch for the (WI founder) Adelaide Hoodless home at Stoney Creek, Ontario.

Hillier WI celebrated

its 50th anniversary on June 14, 1964 and four days later, on June 18, 166 guests attended a ceremony in the Hillier town hall.

A new kitchen for the hall was forthcoming and in the centennial year of 1967, new flags were purchased for the hall.

Members have also cared for the township cemeteries and served tea at the Picton Fair.

In 1985, they started to tie a quilt at their November meetings. This continues to this day, with the quilt donated to the Children's Aid Society.

In 1986, Hillier WI sent pies to the WI booth at the International Plowing Match in Belleville.

In 1989, the membership fee was raised to \$5 a year and in 1996, the agriculture office in Picton closed, leaving the group without access to a home economist.

In 1997, new drapes were made by hand for the Hillier hall and blue and gold vests were made for the CML Snider school band.

Hillier WI can boast three generations of past presidents: Ruth Crawford, who served from 1995 to 1998; her mother, Eva Foster, who served in 1949-50; and her grandmother, Miriam Foster, who served from 1940 to 1942.

The group can also lay claim to a former member, prominent children's author Janet Lunn, who has won the Order of Ontario, the Order of Canada, and the Governor General's Award for literature.

The history books belonging to Hillier WI have now been put on CD-ROM and are available at Prince Edward County Library branches.

PICTON GAZETTE 06-23-04

JUNE 17 - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Hillier Hall
ROLL CALL: "A goodly thing it is to meet"
ACTIVITY: Hillier W.I. 90th anniversary.
HOSTESS: President, Pamela Littlefair



Gazette photo by Rick Fralick

Cutting The Cake - Doris Wright, who with 56 years of continuous membership is the senior member of the Hillier Women's Institute, gets set to cut a cake celebrating the group's 90th anniversary during a June 17 meeting at the Hillier town hall. Joining Doris are, from left, fellow long-term members Jean Alexander-51 years; Lorena Best-51; Mabel Wright-44; Phyllis White-41; and Lois Conley-41. PICTON GAZETTE 6-23-04