

Where WI constitution was signed

The first steps have been taken to preserve the Erland Lee Home at Stoney Creek, Ont., where the constitution of the first Women's Institute was signed in 1897.

The first contribution of funds toward the purchase of the building came from England. A delegate to last summer's Convention of the Associated Country Women of The World at Lansing, Mich., sent the money to the Ontario WIs as a tangible thank-you for the post convention hospitality she received from the members.

This was revealed at a board meeting of the Federated Women's

Institutes held in Toronto the last week in November.

The home of Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless, furnished in the fashion of her day, was made a historic site some years ago, and has been the focus of many pilgrimages by members of the Institutes and visitors from the international alliance of farm women, The Associated Farm Women of the World.

A pioneer in the farm movement, Erland Lee was co-founder of the Women's Institutes with Mrs. Hoodless. It was in his home that the constitution was signed, and a plaque commemorating that historic event was placed there in October of this year.

In 1964 a committee was set up to study the possibility of purchasing the home and preserving it on its original site at Stoney Creek. At the board meeting a motion by the incoming president, Mrs. Austin Zoeller, was approved that funds be received for the purpose of making the purchase possible.

The 33,000 member Ontario Women's Institutes with 1,353 branches throughout the provinces, raised \$25,005.95 during the year for various causes, including education, historic and museum projects, 4-H, work, Unesco, Pennies for Friendship, and many other efforts within the communities and abroad.



Sketch of Stoney Creek, Ont., home of Erland Lee, founding father of the Women's Institute which has spread across Canada and around the world since Feb. 19, 1897.

Ont. W.I. restores place of birth

STONEY CREEK, Ont.: The Erland Lee home, opened here last week, will be maintained by the Ontario Women's Institute as the birthplace of the world-wide organization. Here, in 1897 Mr. Lee gathered 101 women together at a South Wentworth Farmer's Institute to hear Adelaide Hunter Hoodless. Out of this came a new women's organization and its original constitution was handwritten at a dining room table in the old house.

The Ontario WI has spent \$40,000 on the home and the province's 30,000 members will be assessed 10 cents a year to build a maintenance fund. One member donated \$5,000 and the National Federation of Women's Institutes in England sent 100 pounds sterling.

19

FREE PRESS WEEKLY REPORT ON FARMING, August 18, 1973

★ ★