

# Castleton Women's Institute: the story of a

The Castleton Women's Institute celebrates its 100th birthday next Wednesday. Its records tell the story of domestic life in Cramah Township. They include a detailed commentary on life in this area, supported by some fascinating historic photos.

*CLARENCE CHRONICLE JUNE 2/5*  
**The first meeting**

In 1905, Mrs. Farley of Brighton organized the inaugural group which was founded in November of that year. Little is known of the initial membership, but the President was Mrs. Raymond Walt and the Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. J. L. Gerow. Receipts for the first seven months were \$11.50 and expenditures \$2.80.

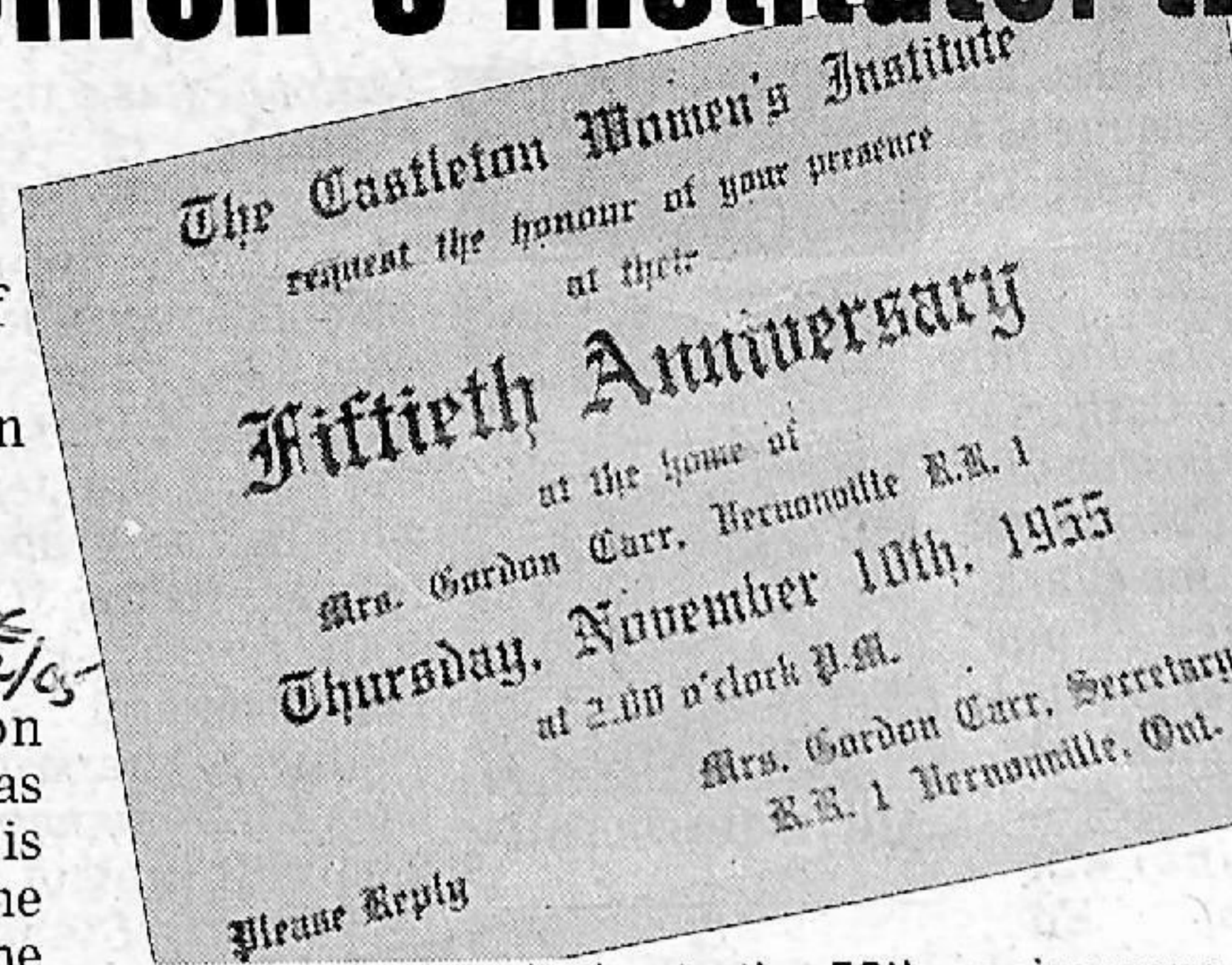
The records kept by the current Tweedsmuir, Sue LaBerge, include the minutes of the May 9, 1906 meeting and the membership for that year. Tucked in with a list of the 40 members is a Castleton W.I. ribbon belonging to charter member, Mrs. Henry Brown who died that April.

Groups today might wish for the kind of attendance found a century ago. Thirty-six of the 39 members were there for the meeting which closed with the singing of God Save the King. Within five years it had grown to 72.

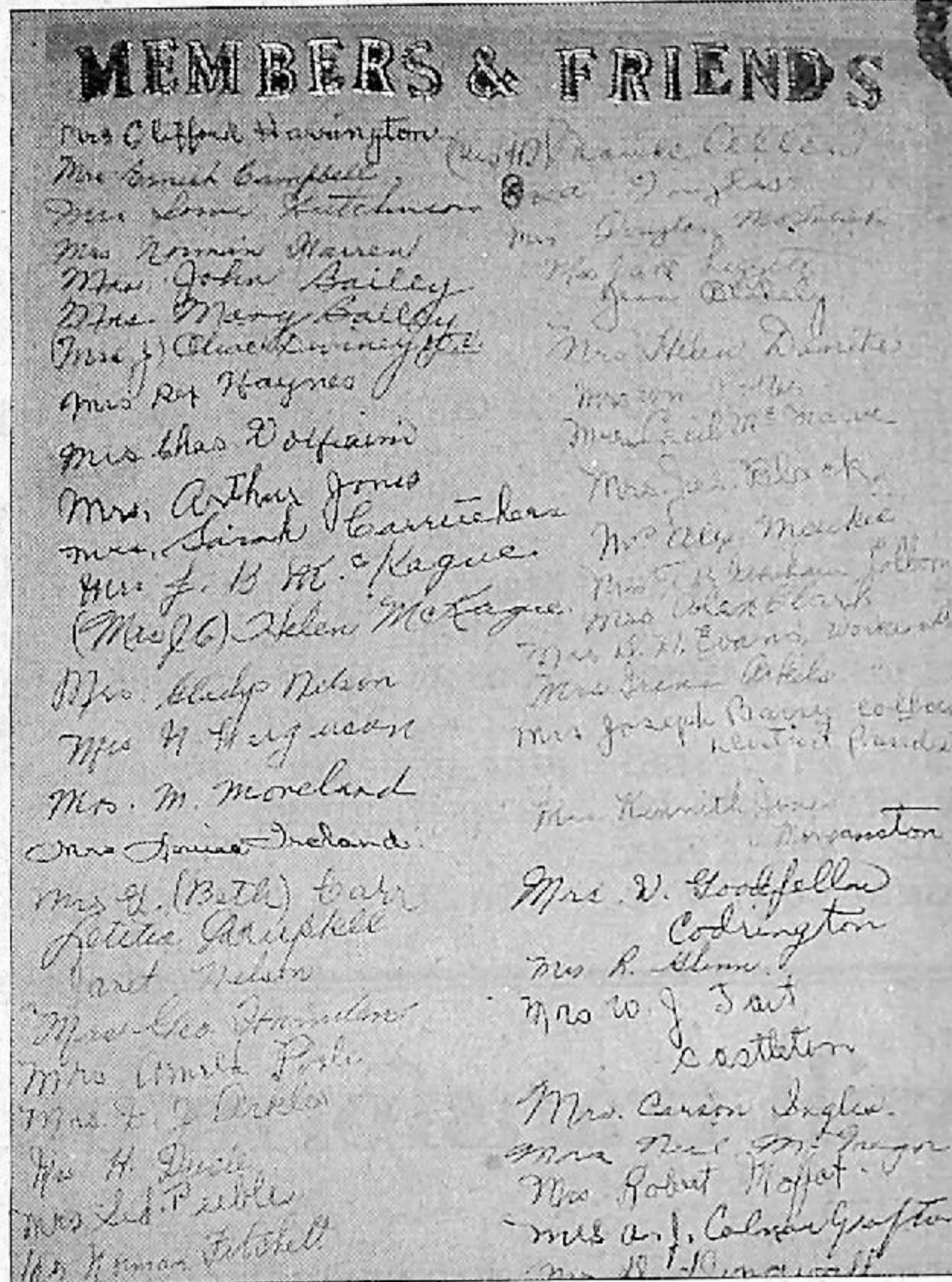
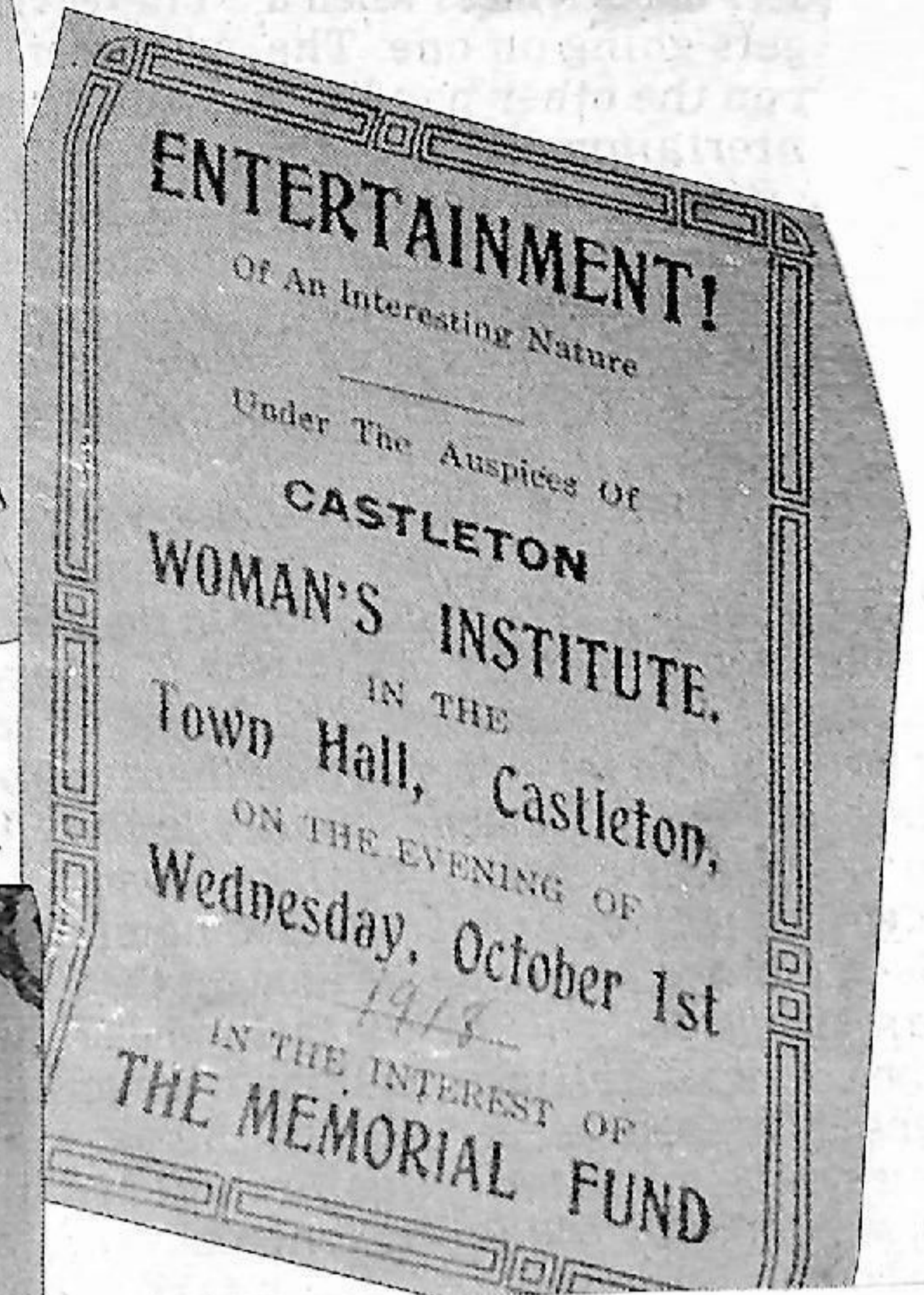
**The goals and activities**

The goals a hundred years ago mirror the aims of today - "active concern for the human need of sympathy, determination to better the group itself, and the acumen to reach out into the community to improve the level of community life".

Records from the first few years show that the women were busy exhibiting their domestic skills and winning prizes at the Castleton Fair. In 1906 they won a total of \$5, a considerable sum a century ago.



A formal invitation to the 50th anniversary required a reply.



Thirty-two women who sewed carpet rags in 1922 sat on the porch of Mrs. A. Johnson.

Plenty of guests and friends shared the 50th anniversary in 1955.

Members of that same group shared their skills in making patterns, recipes for candy making, and discussed labour-saving devices. They considered how cleanliness would help prevent disease - commonly-known now, but a