

THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The village hall at Stoney Creek, Ontario, saw the founding by Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless of the first Women's Institute on February 19, 1897. Six years later, in July 1903, the East Northumberland Brighton Branch was organized with Mrs. Alexander M. Macklam as president and Mrs. G. Finley Clarke secretary-treasurer. Membership was about 20, including women from Brighton, Hilton and the surrounding area.

The motto for all Women's Institutes the world over since founding has been "For Home and Country." One of the first papers given by a charter member in 1903 was on "Labor Saving Devices."

During World War I Brighton Branch did much Red Cross work, including knitting, making surgical supplies, packing boxes for the boys overseas and assisting in fund-raising events. After peace was declared the branch found many other calls, including assistance to needy families. In 1922 \$344 was collected for Northern Ontario fire sufferers. The branch celebrated its 25th anniversary with a banquet at Presqu'ile Hotel. In 1933 a delegation waited on the Brighton Board of Education, requesting the teaching of music in the local school. Declining attendance and interest resulted in the Branch being disbanded about 1935.

Community Branch

The Community Branch was organized at Hilton on January 24, 1944 with Mrs. Norman Chatten as president and Mrs. Douglas Morrow, secretary-treasurer. The membership is drawn from Brighton, Spring Valley, Hilton, Edville and Carman and has ranged between 20 and 37.

Its work includes charitable donations, response to many requests for money from hospitals, help for the mentally ill, sewing layettes, help in the Unitarian service and Christmas cheer. During World War II donations were given to Red Cross work, British Children's Fund and Salvation Army work; contributed sewing and knitting and packed boxes for the boys overseas. The Branch also provided the food and catered to the banquet in Brighton Town Hall for returned service men of Brighton Township and their families and friends.

Community Branch has a link with a South Devon, England, Branch of the Women's Institute through correspondence and exchange of Christmas gifts.

Invaluable assistance is given to the girls' 4-H Club by providing leaders. And so, "For Home and Country" the work goes on.

The post office department issued a special stamp on May 13, 1959, as a tribute to the Associated Country Women of the World, a world-wide organization of some 6,000,000 rural women.

Centennial Float

Community Branch entered a Float in Brighton Centennial Parade, receiving 2nd prize. The Float depicted an old time "parlor" with five members (4 were Charter members), who were busy as follows - one in a big rocking chair with her baby, sometimes in her arms or in the cradle; one knitting, one winding

yarn on a "swift"; one hooking a rug; one playing an organ. A fancy oil lamp and "The Tweedsmuir History Book" rested on a marble-topped table.

Old Minute Books

The Old Minute Books of Brighton Branch 1903-1935 and all Community Minute Books up to date are held in safe keeping in the vault, in the Masonic Temple, Brighton, Ontario.