

*armers in late nineteenth century
Canada read agricultural
newspapers such as*

*The Farmer's Advocate and
Nor'west Farmer to keep
abreast of developments
in scientific farming.*

*Farmers' Union and
Grange meetings
provided an outlet to
discuss concerns in
their local community
with their peers.*

*Unfortunately their
wives and daughters
had no such outlets.*

*Despite offering
recommendations on
cake recipes and curtains,
agricultural papers rarely
mentioned household science,
and discussions at farmers'
union meetings certainly never
touched on the domestic realm.*

In 1881, Adelaide Hunter married John Hoodless and moved to a comfortable home in Hamilton where most observers expected her to settle into a life of middle-class domesticity. In August of 1888 her fourth son, John Harold, died of "summer milk fever," likely from drinking unpasteurized milk. The helplessness that she felt as a mother

Adelaide Hoodless, ca 1890

University of Guelph FWIO Collection

prompted Hoodless to start lobbying for domestic education for girls in public schools as well as at the university level. Although from the perspective of today this might seem antiquated, one must remember that her aim was to introduce the same level of science to the operation of a household as was applied to the cultivation and fertilization of fields.

This was also a period when much was being written about improving standards for household hygiene and domestic science. Hoodless began by speaking at Farmers' Union meetings on topics of importance to farm women. From those activities came the idea to create a parallel organization of value to rural women. Out of the first meeting held in 1897 at Stoney Creek, Ontario, grew an organization called the Federated Women's Institutes (WI) of Canada.