

# The Official Opening—Erland Lee Home

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Erland Lee Home, Stoney Creek, Ontario

Women's Institute history was made on August 9th, when over 400 Women's Institute members from across the province and interested friends from all over gathered at the Erland Lee Home, Ridge Road, Stoney Creek, for the official opening of the "Home". Eight bus loads came from as far as 350 miles to be present. The occasion was to celebrate the acquisition of the property by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario in June, 1972 and to honor Erland Lee and his wife Janet.

With Adelaide Hoodless providing the idea, Erland Lee, then secretary of the South Wentworth Farmer's Institute, and his wife had helped found the first Women's Institute in 1897. The first constitution was written by Janet Lee on the beautiful dining room table still sitting in the dining room of the "Home".

The last of the Lees to reside in the house were Frank, son of Erland, and his wife Katie. Among the special guests at the event were Frank's sisters, Miss Marjorie Lee and Mrs. H. C. Freal, both of Stoney Creek; daughters, Mrs. R. L. Davis, Mrs. Frank Ryan and Miss Allison Lee of Hamilton also Mrs. Leslie Tulk of Newfoundland.

The crowd gathered under the shade of the whispering pines in front of the house for the brief ceremony. The Honorable William Stewart, Minister of Agriculture and Food, brought greetings from the Ministry

of Agriculture and Food, commending the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario for the great contribution it had made to the growth of the individual member, to the communities of Ontario and now in acquiring the Home for members all over the world.

Greetings were brought from the Associated Country Women of the World, by their deputy president Dr. Irene Spry of Ottawa and congratulations were read by Mrs. Austin Zoeller, New Hamburg, from Mrs. John McLean, Nova Scotia, president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.

Mrs. H. L. Noblitt, president of the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario chairman of the event, gave a short history of the Lee family from James, a staunch United Empire Loyalist, who came to Canada from USA in 1872, to the present, paying respect to this progressive, public spirited family who had played such a prominent part in the development of their communities and especially to Erland and his wife for their part in the formation of the Women's Institutes. Credit was also given to the members of Wentworth County for their enthusiasm in accepting the idea put forth by Mrs. Hoodless and in organizing and forwarding the idea, which spread in Ontario within 15 years to a membership of 29,000 and has since encompassed the world.

The daughter of the first president, Mrs. E. D. Smith, Mrs. Gordon Conant of Oshawa, who was nine years old at the time of the first meeting, in 1897, shared some of her memories of those days. Mrs. Leslie Tulk spoke for the Frank Lee Family; Mrs. Thomas McCreadie, present president of the South Wentworth District, recalled the day on May 28th, 1961 when her District erected a memorial plaque on a large boulder in front of the house, to Erland and Janet Lee; Mrs. Everett Small of Essex, president of the F.W.I.O. at the time, told of the plaque erected there on October 1, 1967 by the Historic Sites Board at the instigation of the F.W.I.O.

The ribbon was cut by Mrs. Russel Wise of Puslinch and Mrs. Allan Dickenson of Mount Hope, who had been members of the committee who began negotiations to acquire the Home, and also Mrs. Lyla Lymburner of Port Colborne, president of the F.W.I.O. at the time. Following the ceremony the guests toured the house and drive shed and enjoyed refreshments out under a large marquee erected at the back of the property.

Mrs. H. L. Noblitt, Ottawa.



Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead Entrance Hall and Dining-room 1973 Silver Tea Service and flat ware used in Mrs. Hoodless' home. Blue willow ware dishes, antique glass and china tea set gifts of Women's Institute members.