

The Erland Lee Homestead

Committee Chairman Mrs. Austin Zoeller reported that F.W.I.O. now has sufficient funds in donations and promises to pick up the option to purchase this Homestead in June 1972.

Mrs. Zoeller said that the committee has now made a complete inspection of the house and were pleased with the structure. Remaining in the house will be the dining room table, six dining room chairs, a built-in desk, a sideboard and the curtains. The front part of the house, downstairs, consists of a main entrance, living room, dining room, kitchen, and a small utility room. Upstairs are 4 bedrooms and a bath. The older and back part of the house has one large and 2 small rooms, with 5 rooms upstairs. Two complete bedroom outfits will remain in the house.

Some articles for furnishing the Homestead have been offered and acceptance of these will be considered by the committee.

A motion was passed that the Homestead Committee be given the power to do what is deemed necessary with regards to the Homestead for the period of time after the property is purchased until the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Board Directors in November 1972.



The interior of the Erland Lee Homestead showing the famous walnut table on which the first Constitution of the Women's Institute was written.

THE ERLAND LEE HOMESTEAD

Originally a letter was received from Wentworth County Women's Institutes requesting the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario to look into the possibility of assuming ownership or preserving the Homestead.

Unveiling and dedication of an Historical Plaque at the Erland Lee Homestead, Ridge Road, Stoney Creek by the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario took place on October 1, 1967.

In 1969 FWIO was granted the right to become a charitable organization for this single project from the Department of National Revenue. This means that individuals or groups receive an official receipt which can be used when filling out their income tax. In this same year the option was signed for \$40,000.00 to be picked up in June 1972.

Donations to date: Stoney Creek W.I. \$3,000.00 promised

County of Wentworth \$5,000.00 at time of purchase, with possibility of further donations for the next two years.

Industry, Women's Institutes and individuals \$8,500.00 as of February 28, 1971.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND OF THE ERLAND LEE PROPERTY

This property is known as Edgemont, crown grant 1801 to John and Mary Lee on their marriage. The first dwelling was a log cabin built by John Lee for his bride. The young couple surrounded it with cuttings of Sweet Mary, Myrtle, Yellow Roses and a Snow Ball Bush.

The cabin has long since vanished but the plants are still flourishing. A frame house was later built and in time the back part of it was removed by Abram, son of John, and in the 1860s the present house was planned. It was built in front of the older part. The wood was virgin pine cut on the property and a fourteen-year-old boy spent the whole summer hand cutting all the ornamentation on the outside of the house.

All the hardware is original and the old iron latches and hinges are still there in the older part of the house. Much of the furniture has been handed down through the generations. Of interest is the walnut dining table which Janet Chisholm brought with her when she came as a bride of Erland Lee. The table was her grandfather's and on it she and Erland worked on and wrote the Constitution of the first Women's Institute in the World.

It is important to Women's Institutes that this house be preserved for its historical value but more important that eventually it might be used as a centre for Women's Institute activities.