

## SPECIAL REPORT

# Women's Institute keeps an eye on the future of the family

Stories by KATE BARLOW  
The Spectator  
BINBROOK

When Cleda Yachetti first stepped into a Women's Institute meeting she felt as though she had stepped 50 years back in time — and that was 25 years ago.

"I remember thinking, I like these ladies, I'm not quite sure what I'm doing here, but I'm interested in what they're talking about and in what I know and can contribute."

She had come at the urging of a neighbour and because the Mary Stewart Collect, which starts

every meeting, had struck a chord with her.

It begins: "Keep us O Lord from pettiness; let us be large in thought, in word and deed" and ends, "And may we strive to touch and know the great human heart common to us all and O Lord God, let us not forget to be kind."

"It appealed to me because here was a gathering of people together in a non-judgmental fashion ... it was straightforward in a lovely way."

Cleda Yachetti's original branch in Blackheath, near her family's hobby farm, disbanded in the mid-1980s and she moved to the Binbrook branch, where she's held several positions including

branch and district president.

Yachetti, 55, is now a convener, one of several appointed in each branch to line up speakers on the variety of subjects which are the focus of each meeting, held monthly in members' homes or Binbrook Memorial Hall.

She credits the Institute for giving her leadership training in chairing meetings, making up agendas, public speaking and formulating resolutions, all within a supportive fun-loving sisterhood.

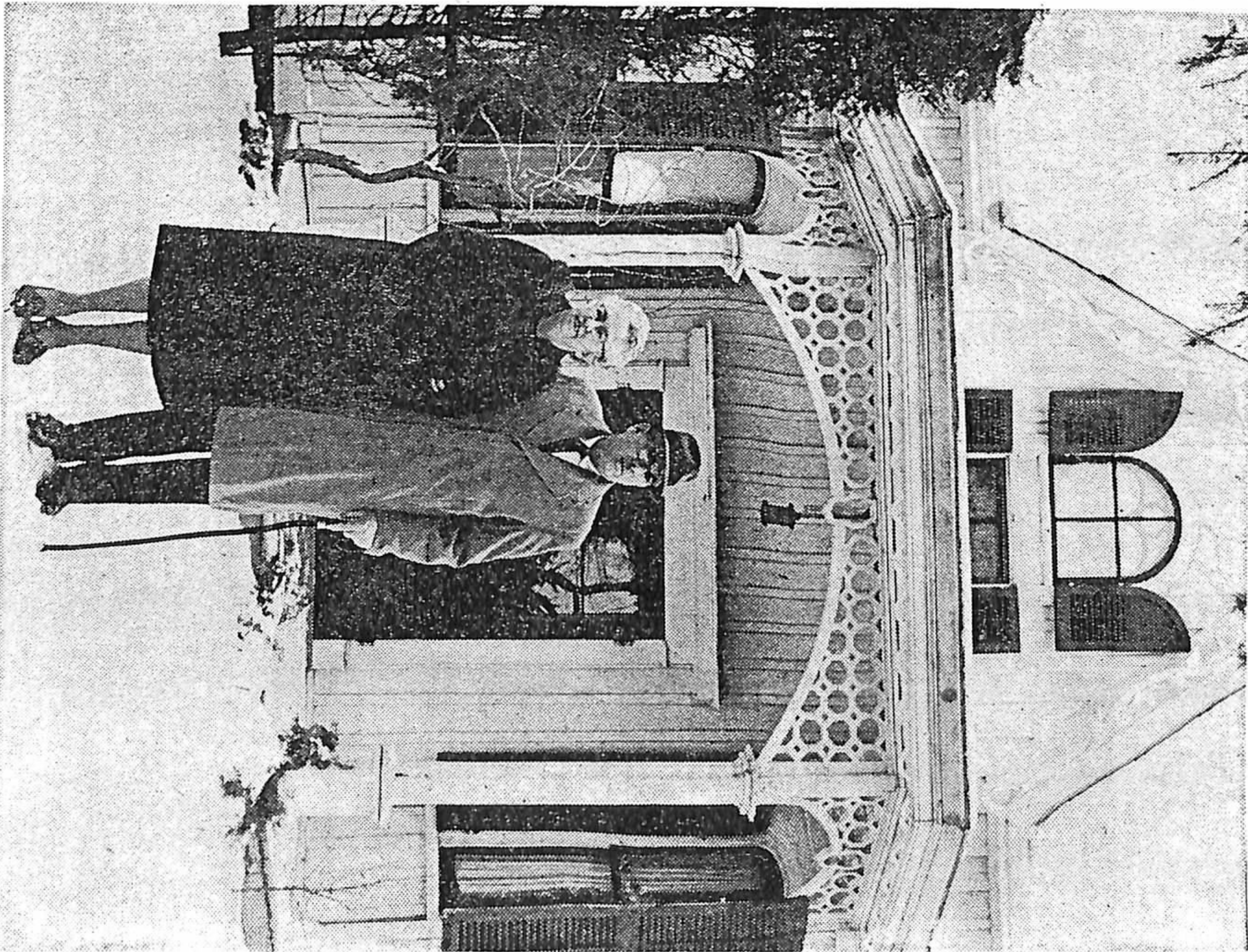
The Binbrook membership includes women ranging in age from their early twenties to their

late eighties. Many of the younger members work full time outside the home.

The membership shares her concerns about the stresses faced by families today.

Yachetti believes the Women's Institute will come into its own once again as women around the world fight to make the family the base for a healthy social structure.

"To me the Women's Institute represents what was stable and what we must get back to. I'm seeing at this time in my life a huge and wonderful role for the Women's Institute in a leadership capacity."



Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Lee of Stoney Creek stand outside the home of Mr. Lee's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Erland Lee, in which the first constitution of the WI was drawn up, 65 years ago. Mr. Lee's father was a founder of the Institute. His mother was one of its first directors.