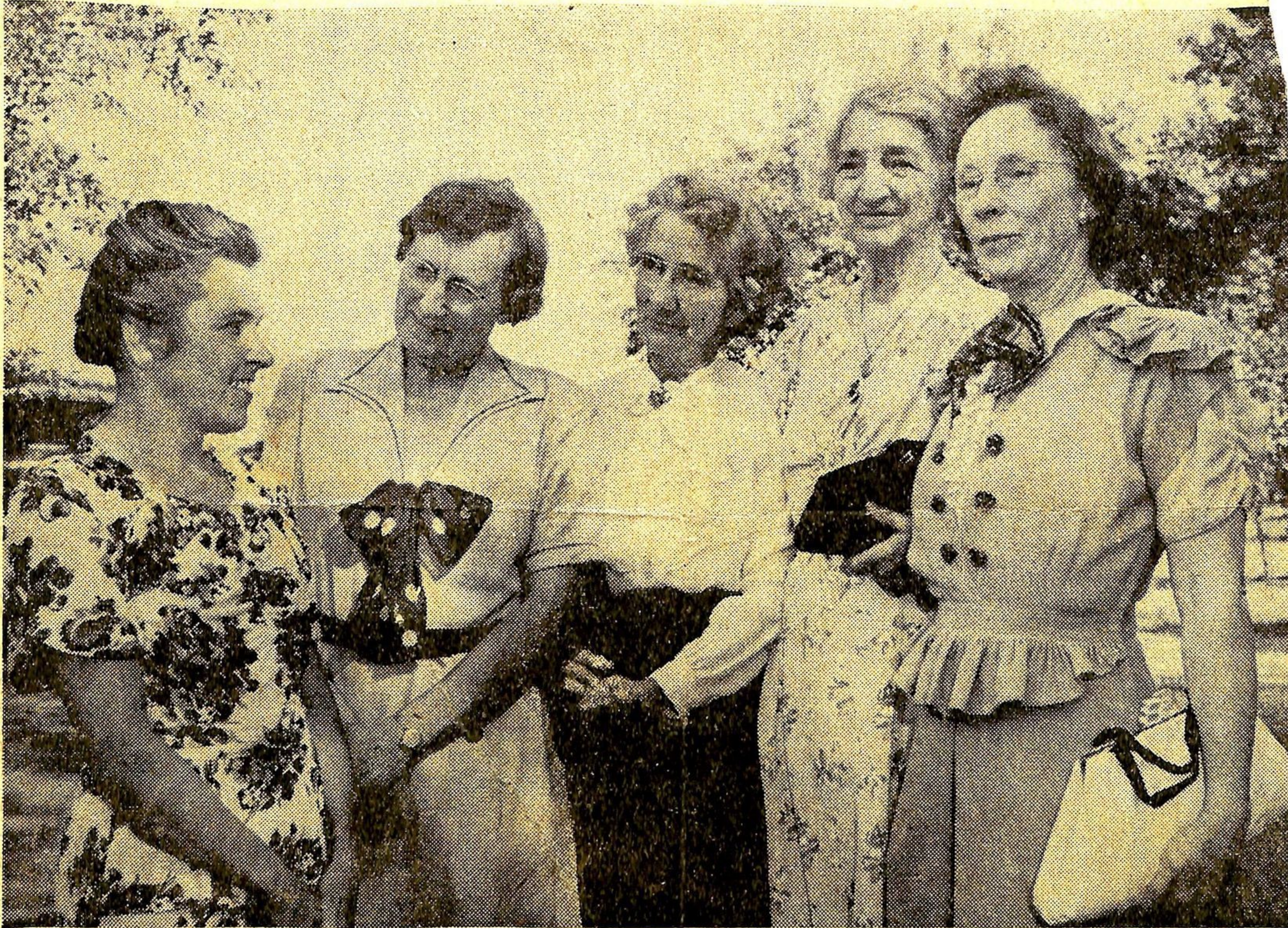


Meeting of 1946 - when jewelled pin was presented to Birr W.I. by Mrs. Irene Grose.

Recall Founding of Birr Institute In 1911



Charter members recalled early days in Birr Women's Institute at the 35th anniversary meeting held yesterday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Reuben Hall, 13th concession, London Township. Presence of the first president, Mrs. Earl M. Grose, of Toronto, in whose home on the Proof Line road the Institute was organized, gave added interest to the occasion. Mrs. Grose presented a jeweled

pin to the branch in memory of her late sister, Miss Emily J. Guest, who had received it from an English Institute. Mrs. Clarence Lewis, of Denfield, present president, shown at the extreme left, is wearing the pin. Beside her, from left to right, are: Mrs. H. B. Hodgins, Denfield; Mrs. John Middleton, Granton; Miss Dora Stewart, Denfield, and Mrs. Earl M. Grose, all charter members.

First President of Birr W.I. Gives Jeweled Pin to Branch

By L. F. M. 1946

BIRR, August 14—The jeweled pin which had been presented to one of the two Canadian founders of the Women's Institute in Britain became the treasured possession of Birr Women's Institute today when the first president of this district branch, Mrs. Earl M. Grose, of Toronto, gave it to the present president, Mrs. Clarence Lewis, Denfield. The ceremony took place at the 35th anniversary meeting of the Institute held at the farm home of Mrs. Reuben Hall, 13th concession, London Township.

It was in Mrs. Grose's home on the Proof Line road that the first meeting of Birr Institute was held. She was then Miss Irene Guest, and it was in memory of her late sister, Miss Emily J. Guest, that she and another distinguished sister, Dr. Edna Guest, O.B.E., parted with the pin that it might be a lasting tribute to her as it passes from one Birr Institute president to another. Accompanying the pin was an address, emphasizing Institute aims and ideals.

English Gift

With depth of feeling, Mrs. Grose brought before present members a glimpse of her sister as a woman who all her life had had a keen interest in education and a great love for people. It was she with Mrs. Alfred Watt, M.B.E., president of the Associated Country Women of the World, who founded the W.I. in Britain. The pin had been a gift to her from an English Institute in 1918. Miss Guest's interest in the Women's Institute had never

lessened. Her second last public address had been given to a Women's Institute audience at Springbank, related Mrs. Grose.

Looking around the room at present members, Mrs. Grose said that she was glad that the small group of women in the early days had ventured to organize an Institute.

Mrs. H. B. Hodgins, Denfield, also a charter member, told of that first meeting on April 16, 1911, when 13 people were present, 12 of whom became members. During the first year, the membership grew to 34, and of that number 12 members are living. There were two other charter members present today, Mrs. John Middleton, now of Granton, and Miss Dora Stewart, of Denfield.

Early Minutes

Reading some of the minutes of those early days, Mrs. Hodgins came across the record of the time when the branch considered buying a vacuum cleaner on a co-operative plan. When some one asked if this had gone through she had to admit that the branch had ended by renting one.

A history of the branch during the past five years was read by Mrs. R. S. White, who told of war work, Red Cross work, contribution to the mobile kitchen purchased by district branches, and mentioned innumerable ways in which the branch had been active

in the community and district. War brides had been welcomed and many donations made to charitable causes and the branch had taken its part in district W.I. work.

A Tweedsmuir History Book was on display. This gives not only a history of the branch, complete with early pictures, a poem by one of the members, and accounts of highlights, but also a history of the district.

Mrs. John Middleton, bringing greetings from Granton Institute, told of the interest of many new members as well as older members in her branch.

Table Presented

The program had another highlight. Miss Hattie Hodgins, who is leaving to reside in Lucan, was presented with a handsome end table from the Institute.

This was a combined anniversary and children's meeting and it was a group of children who gave the program. Frances Adams played a piano number; Mary Anne Kohl sang a solo; and there were recitations from Bernice Deblock, Marie Lewis, and Ruth Dickinson. Little Doreen Garrett donned an attractive costume to give her clever tap dance.

After the meeting members sat on the lawn where refreshments were served.

