



WI History in Homes

In the fall of 1896, Erland Lee attended a meeting of the Farmers' Experimental Union at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph. He heard a stirring address by Adelaide Hunter Hoodless of Hamilton. She spoke of tragedy - the death of her 14 month old son and several other babies who died from drinking contaminated milk. She also spoke of the need to better educate girls and women in rural Ontario.

Erland Lee was inspired by the ideas and enthusiasm presented by Mrs. Hoodless. He agreed that there was a need for an educational organization for rural women.

Hoodless accepted an invitation from Lee to speak at Ladies' Night at the Saltfleet Farmers' Institute in Wentworth County. All thirty-five women present agreed to attend a meeting the following week. Erland Lee and his wife Janet travelled the roads of Saltfleet Township encouraging women to attend the upcoming meeting.

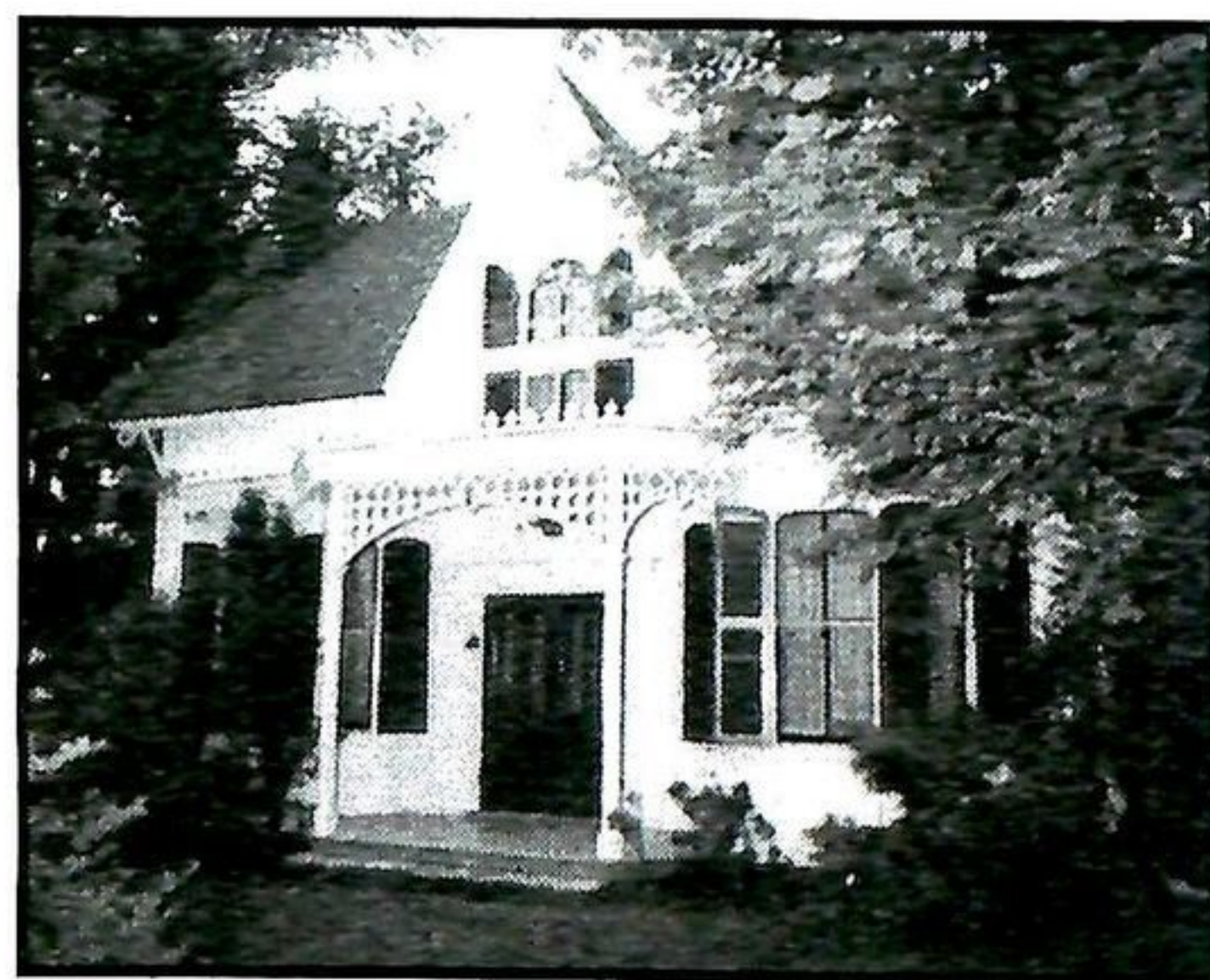
On February 19, 1897, 101 women and one man, Erland Lee, met at Squires Hall in Stoney Creek. The outcome of this meeting was the organization of the first Branch of the Women's Institute in the world. The bylaws and constitution were later drafted at the home of Erland and Janet Lee.

The Women's Institute movement grew steadily. To meet the needs of younger women in rural Ontario, the Junior Women's Institute was organized in 1915.

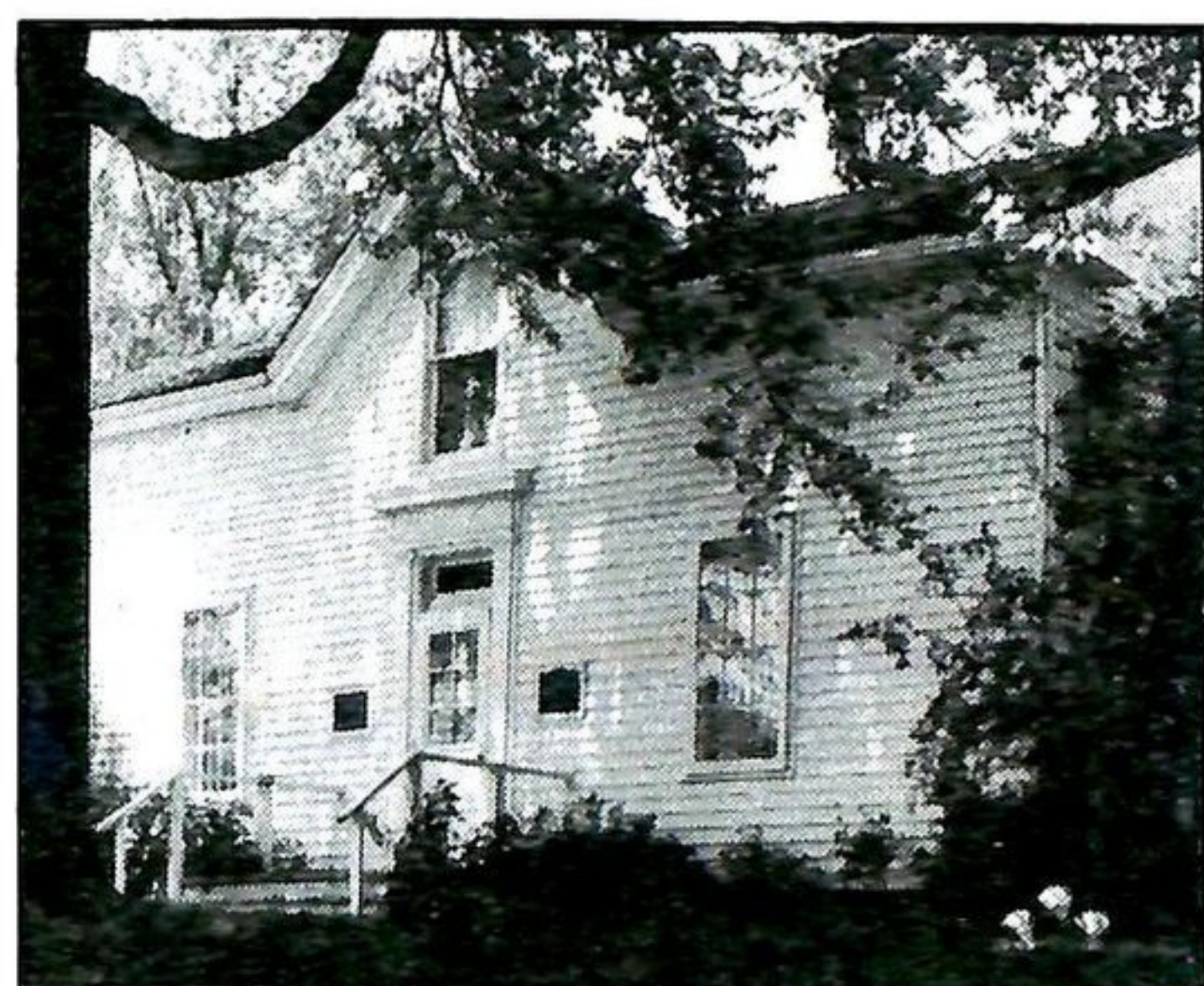
On February 6, 1919, the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario was organized to help co-ordinate the work of the Branches. A week later, the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada was organized to better co-ordinate the work of the provinces.

And, to further relations at the international level, the Associated Country Women of the World was organized in 1930.

The Erland Lee (Museum) Home at Stoney Creek, Ontario. Home of the co-founder of the first Women's Institute, Mr. Erland Lee. It is owned and maintained by the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario.



The Erland Lee (Museum) Home, Stoney Creek, Ontario. For more information contact the Home at 552 Ridge Rd., Stoney Creek, Ontario, L8J 2Y6, or call (905)662-2691.



The Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead, St. George, Ontario. For more information contact the Homestead at RR 1, Blue Lake Rd., St. George, Ontario, N0E 1N0, or call (519)448-1130.