

Women's Institute Founded On February 19 in 1897

BRANTFORD, Feb. 19—Women's Institute members throughout Western Ontario will be interested to recall that February 19 marks the 57th anniversary of the founding of the first Women's Institute in the world at Stoney Creek. The Institute branches of Brant County take particular pride in the fact that Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, founder of this organization, which is today world-wide, was a native of this county.

The birthplace and childhood home of Mrs. Hoodless, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. John Miller, is situated about a half mile west of the junction of Highway 5 and 24, on the Blue Lake road, near St. George. It stands on the north side of the road, lot 14, concession 3, containing 50 acres of land. The barn is directly opposite on the south side of the road on lot 14, concession 2, containing 90 acres.

The frame house contains eight rooms, four on each floor. A centre hall from the front door is the plan. The main door of the house faces south. The west window is the living room with a bedroom at the north, while the east window is the dining room, with the kitchen at the back.

The woodwork is of a very fine type. A large oval arch separates the dining room and kitchen and at one time there was a three-section door in the arch. A long half-storey shed at the east of the kitchen has been torn down.

Mr. and Mrs. Miller bought the home in October, 1945. Previous owners were the Pall, Robinson, Burnaby and Keirle families. The Keirles purchased the property from the Hunter family in 1905 and remained until 1938.

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless was one of 13 children of Mr. and Mrs. David Hunter, who are buried in the old Presbyterian cemetery at St. George. Her brothers were university men and Adelaide grew up in a home of culture and uncompromising Presbyterian ethics. She attended the German's School in South Dumfries.

Loss of her first child, whose death at 18 months was attributed to lack of knowledge with regard to proper infant feeding, was a dominant factor in Mrs. Hoodless' desire to bring within reach of all the education necessary to prevent such tragedies. She approached the Department of Education urging that the rudiments of home-making be taught in the public schools. But she received no encouragement.

Her first forward step came when Erland Lee asked her to address a meeting of the Farmers' Institute at Stoney Creek. There she discussed the value of domestic science and sewing instruction in public schools, and, finding the women interested, suggested the

The outcome was the organiza-

tion meeting of the Stoney Creek formation of an organization for women along these lines.

Women's Institute on February 19, 1897. Mrs. Hoodless addressed 100 women and one man, Erland Lee, who was chairman. She was elected honorary president and Mrs. E. D. Smith, president.

In 1899, Mrs. Hoodless suggested that the Women's Institutes ask the Government to provide for the scientific education of women by establishing a women's department at the OAC, Guelph. She approached Sir William Macdonald, of Montreal, and he was so interested that he contributed \$200,000 for the building at Guelph now known as Macdonald Institute.

The now-familiar motto, "For Home and Country," was adopted in 1902, through the suggestion of Mrs. Laura Rose Stephens, first Government lecturer. Mrs. Hoodless was convener of the committee to discuss the matter. The next year the emblematic pin was selected. It was designed from a signet ring worn by Mrs. Stephens, and bore the motto and the letters OWI (Ontario Women's Institutes). The colors were clear cornflower blue and gold.

Mrs. Hoodless was only 52 years old when she died. She had seen the teaching of domestic science started in public schools and a permanent school of home economics established at Macdonald Institute, Guelph.

But she felt the need for a course at some university to give more advanced training in household science. The Government was not willing to commit itself to capital expenditures. So, as usual, Mrs. Hoodless set out to find the capital. While she was pleading with the women of Toronto at a special meeting at the Federation of Women's Clubs, on February 25, 1910, she dropped dead on the platform.



LAKESIDE W. I.

The following is a brief history of Lakeside W. I.:

A meeting was held at the home of the late Mrs. F. G. Seaton for the purpose of organizing a Women's Institute on Feb. 10, 1911. The county representative, Mrs. Gilholm was present to help organize and to address the meeting. The following officers were elected:

Mrs. Jane Seaton, honorary president; Mrs. F. G. Seaton, president; Miss Greta Sutherland, vice-president; Miss Annie K. Murray, secretary. The meetings were to be held the first Wednesday in every month. There was a membership of 20. At each meeting papers were read by the members, music, etc., with a special speaker several times a year.

On Sept. 13, 1915, it was decided to turn this society into a Red Cross and the time was spent in making material for hospitals and packing boxes for the soldiers. After this meetings were held twice a month.

From Nov. 28, 1917, until Nov. 7, 1918, money raised through council grants, concerts, collections, totalled \$972.79, which went toward Red Cross work. In the year 1920 it was re-organized as the Women's Institute. Through the efforts of the institute a public library has been established in the village, bales of clothing have been sent to Capetol, Ont., and other districts, quilts and clothing to the Woodstock Children's Shelter. At the present time the W. I. is supporting needy families in the district. President at the present time is Mrs. A. Baker, with Mr. James Matheson secretary. Mrs. A. Baker has been a member of the institute since it organized, also Mrs. C. Dawes and Mrs. C. Sutherland.