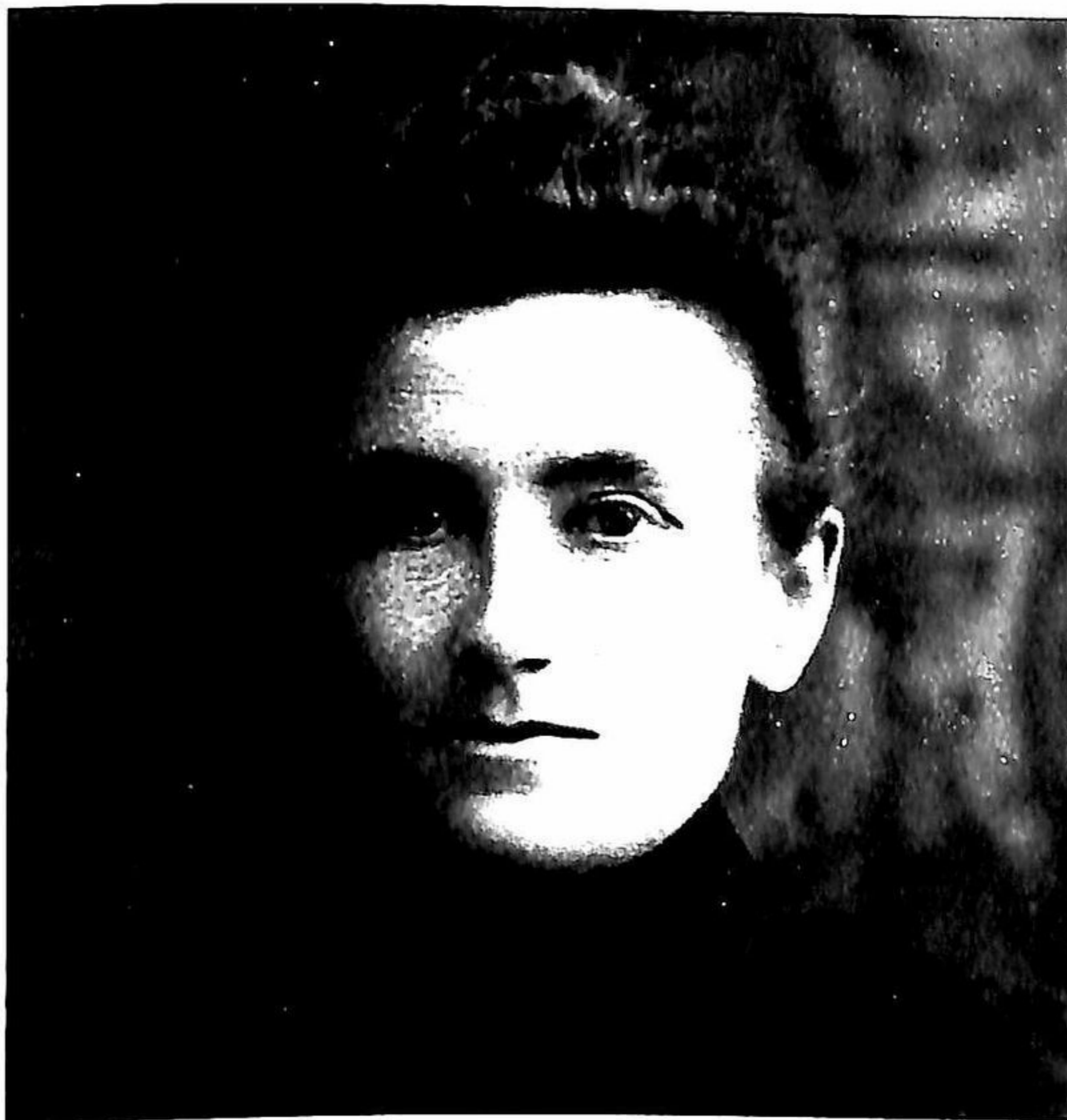


SPRINGFORD WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

In 1903, the Springford Women's Institute was formed. The men of the Farmers Institute of South Oxford met in the town hall. Their wives met in the schoolhouse and elected their executive: president: Mrs. F.W. Vardon, Springford, vice-president: Mrs. M.R. Stover, Norwich, secretary, Mrs. J.C. Smart, Springford, Directors: Mrs. S. Pratt, Springford, Mrs. M. W. Rice, Springford, Mrs. A. McFarlane, Otterville, Miss Maggie Paul, Otterville. This institute covered quite a territory so meetings were planned in advance and members notified by postcard. Officers arranged the first meeting for May 6, 1903.



Mrs. F.W. Vardon, First President Springford Women's Institute 1903-5; 1917-1920; 1931-1932

From 1914-1918 the Institute made shirts, quilts, socks, etc. for the war. During that time the young ladies organized a club known as the Girls Patriotic Club. Toward the end of the war, they became a Junior Institute. This was a very active group and for awhile Springford had both a Junior and a Senior Institute. Gradually, the senior group became smaller and the Junior group invited them to meet with them. In December 1925, a motion passed to become known as Springford Women's Institute.

After much discussion and planning, the Women's Institute accepted the Springford town hall from the trustees of that hall in 1928. Mr. William Bell gave a plot land on

Main Street and it was moved there for a cost of \$2310. The ladies borrowed \$1000 on a mortgage and held social evenings, garden parties, debates, plays, concerts, chicken suppers and strawberry suppers. By February 1940, a social evening was held to which the entire community was invited and the mortgage was burned.



Springford Women's Institute Hall - 1960

By this time the Second World War had begun and the ladies were involved in making quilts, socks, sweaters and holding an annual bazaar to support the war effort. In 1943 Springford made the most quilts and gave the most honey-200 lbs.-of all the branches in Oxford South District. By the end of the war, Springford had made 310 quilts.

Repairs to the hall and construction of a basement kept the ladies busy at further fund-raising. In 1948 a basement was completed for the cost of \$700 and a good deal of donated labour.

In 1950, Mrs. Lena Fox began the Springford Tweedsmuir Books. This was an important means of recording the local village and community history. She was followed by other members who helped preserve written information about our history. Mrs. Lillian White made immense progress recording the histories of specific farms, personalities and early village history. During her term of office, Mrs. White and her committee prepared a set of 82 slides with an accompanying tape about the history of the village of Springford. This was entered in a provincial Tweedsmuir competition where it garnered first prize. More recently, much credit goes to Mrs. Joyce Pettigrew who spearheaded the project to print this book and also completed many property histories prior to publication.