

# An '80s man helped start Institute

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You may wonder what an '80s man has to do with a women's organization like the Women's Institute. You may think his role might only be that of a husband who stays home to mind the house and relaxes while his wife attends her WI meeting.

There was an '80s man who not only had a wife, raised a family and supported her activities, but who was co-founder of the Women's Institute organization. The difference was that this '80s man was from the 1880s.

Erland Lee was a public spirited and prominent farmer who raised purebred Jerseys on his farm in Saltfleet Township near Stoney Creek. He was a school teacher

who also received a certificate in agriculture in 1885. His wife Janet was a school teacher as well, and they married in 1889.

In 1896, Erland attended a meeting of the Farmers Experimental Union at the Ontario Agriculture College in Guelph. There, he heard a dynamic address by Adelaide Hoodless of Hamilton. Mrs. Hoodless had great ideas on the need to educate farm women and emphasized the need to raise the standard of health and safety while improving homemaking skills. It was with Erland Lee's encouragement that he and his wife Janet invited Mrs. Hoodless to speak at "Ladies Night" of the Saltfleet Farmers Institute. Erland and Janet travelled the roads and encouraged all the women to attend this meeting in

Squires Hall, Stoney Creek on Feb. 19, 1897.

Assisted by Senator E.D. Smith and Major F.M. Carpenter, Erland Lee helped the women draft the original bylaws and constitution and carried out the necessary negotiations with the Minister of Agriculture to secure the Charter. These were hand penned by Janet Lee sitting at the walnut dining-room table which remains in the Lee Home today.

The "Erland Lee Home" is now an historic Museum purchased in 1972 by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. It has been beautifully preserved and maintained and as you enter the kitchen, the scent of homemade bread and freshly churned butter is wonderful. If you haven't been to see this lovely home, filled with

everything from antique chandeliers to children's hand-made toys and beautiful quilts, then you have missed a very unique visit.

They have plenty of picnic and parking facilities and an interesting craft shop. They are located at 552 Ridge Drive, Stoney Creek. Buses should book in advance by calling 416-662-2691. They are open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. year round except for the month of February.

## Education meetings

The Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education in Ontario public elementary schools will hold a series of 17 public meetings across the province this fall, chairperson Dr. Glenn Watson has announced.

"We want to give as many groups and individuals as possible an opportunity to make their views known on this important educational issue," Dr. Watson said.

The meetings will be held as follows:

Southwestern Ontario: Windsor, Sept. 6; Sarnia, Sept. 7; London, Sept. 8.

Central and Eastern Ontario: St. Catharines, Oct. 3; Kitchener, Oct. 4; Cobourg, Oct. 5; Ottawa, Oct. 11, 12; Brockville, Oct. 13; Orillia, Oct. 17; Toronto, Oct. 18, 19; Mississauga, Oct. 20.

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