

# History of the Schomberg Women's Institute.

1911



1958.

Says I to my neighbor, "Come to Institute meeting  
It's down on the side road at Mrs. Muldoon's."  
Says she "sure I'm ironing." Says I "Well just leave it  
and laugh with your friends on this gay afternoon.

Putting dull care behind us, we hied to the meeting.  
And the fun that we had down at Mrs. Muldoon's!  
We learned about buns and we learned about babies,  
And "How to be happy tho' married", you goon.

A cup of fresh tea and the meeting was ended.  
Says I to my friend "Are you glad that you came?"  
Says she "It was grand; you may count me a member,  
I'll get to those meetings, tho' I go on my cane".

The Hand Book governing Women's Institutes, states that in any locality where a sufficient number of women will hold monthly meetings to provide educational and social opportunities for homemakers and carry on enterprises for the benefit of the Community, a Women's Institute may be formed. The first group was formed in 1897 and by 1910 six hundred and twelve such organizations had been formed throughout Ontario, many in our own county and some as near as Nobleton and Laskay. It was not until January 21st, 1911 that such a group of women around Schomberg were convinced that there was a need for such an organization here. A meeting was held in the Baptist Church to which Mrs. Doane and Mrs. E.O. Charles of Aurora were invited. Their addresses were practical and inspirational. They pointed out that women's work - mothercraft and homecraft were the most important jobs in the world since it concerned the home and the care of the families; who are the citizens of tomorrow. Twenty-five women were so impressed with the objects and aims of such an organization that officers were elected naming Mrs. Jas. Pearson as President and Mrs. Geo. Atkinson Secretary-Treasurer. The first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Chas. Davis on February 14th, 1911.

These were very happy days - the programs were designed for education on Child Welfare, Home Economics and Health. Meetings were held in the members' homes and good will and fellowship drew the women of the Community more closely together. In 1914 the tragedy of the First World War broke around us, and although a young organization, the members had already learned to work and plan together and had already learned to work and plan together and immediately they affiliated with the Red Cross to serve at home and abroad. Work rooms were provided by the members of the Masonic Lodge, in their ante-rooms, free of charge. Sewing machines and equipment were moved in and the rooms were opened weekly for volunteer workers. Figures at their best can never tell the whole affair. -The whole story of the tireless efforts of the Women's Institute across the Dominion who shared every undertaking to supply materials and bales of knitting and comforts - to undertake special projects - to make substantial contributions of money - to meet emergency appeals - to support War Time Prices and Trade Boards - to encourage co-operation in an all-out effort for peace - to welcome home returning men and to participate in the rehabilitation period of Post War living. A complete story of the war work accomplished by our branch will be found under the heading "War Work and the Cenotaph".

When the war was over the members re-doubled their efforts for health and child welfare - assistance was given to provide Hot Lunches in three schools, medical inspection in schools was advocated and supported, home nursing courses were sponsored and money donated to Queen Mary cot at Weston which we continued to support for over twenty-five years.

Again there were very happy years - we held oyster suppers, picnics, educational short-courses, fowl suppers and generally co-operated wherever there was a need. We enjoyed excellent programs - having good speakers and papers at every meeting. One series that was especially interesting and ran a whole year was the reviewing of the life of a famous Canadian Woman at each meeting. Many local projects were undertaken, such as equipping the Market Hall with kitchen equipment, supplying curtains for the stage and treads for the stairs; assuming the upkeep of the plot surrounding the Cenotaph and establishing a play ground on the Fair Grounds with an attractive sign of "Schomberg" made by Mrs. Botham and Mrs. C. Davis on the hillside. It was made of painted white stones that was very attractive and noticeable from the north entrance to the town. Needy families were assisted always and much help was given to York County Hospital. In 1925 we received permission from the Market Association to hold our meetings in the hall kitchen and equipped it with necessary furniture to make a comfortable Club Room. In 1927 our new school was opened and the W.I. was responsible for the social arrangements and gave, as their donation, a complete set of window blinds costing one hundred dollars. As early as 1926 the W.I. opened a Rest Room in what was then Mr. Harry Cabel's house (now demolished) and books were received from the Lending Library, but not until 1930 when Miss G. Amey and Mrs. C. Marchant canvassed the town for supporters did our real library get started in Miss Amey's home with Miss Amey as Librarian. It was supported financially for years by the W.I. and later supplied with free accomodation until the present time. In 1927 Mrs. Starr of Newmarket spoke to us about the wisdom of having a Historical Research Committee to compile the history of the Community. It is noteworthy that exactly thirty years later we began the compilation of our Tweedsmuir Village History - and how much better it would have been had we acted on Mrs. Starr's suggestion and secured valuable data before it was too late.

Records of Grandmother's programs, catering to the Masonic Banquets, supporting such causes as the blind, the Hospitals at Newmarket and Weston, the School Fair, the Children's Aid and many other activities appeared annually in the Minutes through the years. In 1929 Miss Amey was appointed to write up the history of some of the pioneer families - if this was ever done the material gathered has not been preserved. -At this same meeting the famous paper "My Grandmother, My Mother and Myself" written by Mrs. R. Pery (that has been used many times since, and a copy of which may be found in the envelope at the back) was given by the daughter of the author, Mrs. J. Amey. We celebrated our 20th birthday with a party in 1931. We had many guests including all the Past Presidents and the Roll Call was "Something to be thankful for". Mrs. J. Botham was President and Mrs. C. Marchant Secretary-Treasurer. In 1932 we sent bales of clothing to Northern Ontario where great privation existed. We helped to establish a woman Doctor for the community of Tobermory which had never had Medical care and we sponsored a Public Speaking Competition for the first night of the Fair and were instrumental in instituting the first Decoration Day held at the Union Cemetery. This was continued for many years and was faithfully looked after by Mrs. I. Shaw and Mrs. Botham. The year 1933 was memorable for the fact that in this year we formed our first Standing Committee groups and have since then functioned in this way. At that time the list included Temperance, the League of Nations and Immigration. The first Remembrance Day service on Armistice Day was held at the Cenotaph in 1934 sponsored by the W.I. It is interesting to note that the Delegate to the Convention that year was paid the sum of \$3.00 for her expenses, an increase of \$1.00 over the previous years.

The highlight of 1935 was the birth of the Horticultural Society which was also a brain child of the W.I. It was organized April 11th with forty-seven Charter Members and has functioned successfully in the Community ever since, making the village beauty conscious and assisting in beautification and floral education. The four flower shows held each year are a constant service of interest and a credit to the members. It was at this time also that arrangements were made with the Imperial Bank to occupy the rooms above the Bank and equip them with suitable furniture for a Club Room where we could hold our meetings and also house the Library. In January, 1936 they were completed and ready for occupancy and were a joy and convenience for all who used them. An item of interest appearing at this time was the Diamond Wedding Anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Davis. Mrs. Davis was a loyal and interested member for many, many years and appreciated the good wishes of her fellow members on this happy occasion. Sad events as well as happy ones come to every organization and in this same year the members were saddened by the passing of Mrs. J. Botham, our beloved and faithful Past President who gave unstintingly of her time, talents and outstanding leadership to the cause of institute work. The members attended her funeral in a body and carried the flowers to her last resting place.

Soon after, Mrs. Jas. Kitchen, another Past President, was called to higher service. She too, had been a loyal and faithful member and a silent tribute was paid to the memory of these two beloved officers on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary which was held in our new and attractive Club Rooms with many guests including the District Officers.

Inspired by the example of our Past Presidents we worked tirelessly to have musical instruction made available to both Schomberg and Lloydtown schools and sent a petition to the town commissioners to have a cinder path or sidewalk built from the bridge to the school for the safety of the children - twenty years later, in the summer of 1957, the sidewalk was built.

Rural improvement seemed to be the theme of these years and although we were going through a time of great depression the members were more resolved than ever to be of service to those less fortunate. The programs were filled with interesting topics; the school children came on many occasions and under the direction of Mr. Jackson, the music director, delighted everyone with their progress in music. Many short courses were held and good will and co-operation prevailed.

September 1st, 1939 brought the beginning of the second world war and again we set to work to meet the emergency. Our Club Room was put into use as a headquarters for the



"OFF TO THE INSTITUTE MEETING"

Mrs. W. Marchant (left), Mrs. E. Marchant (driving) and Mrs. Hague leaving for a meeting - 1928.

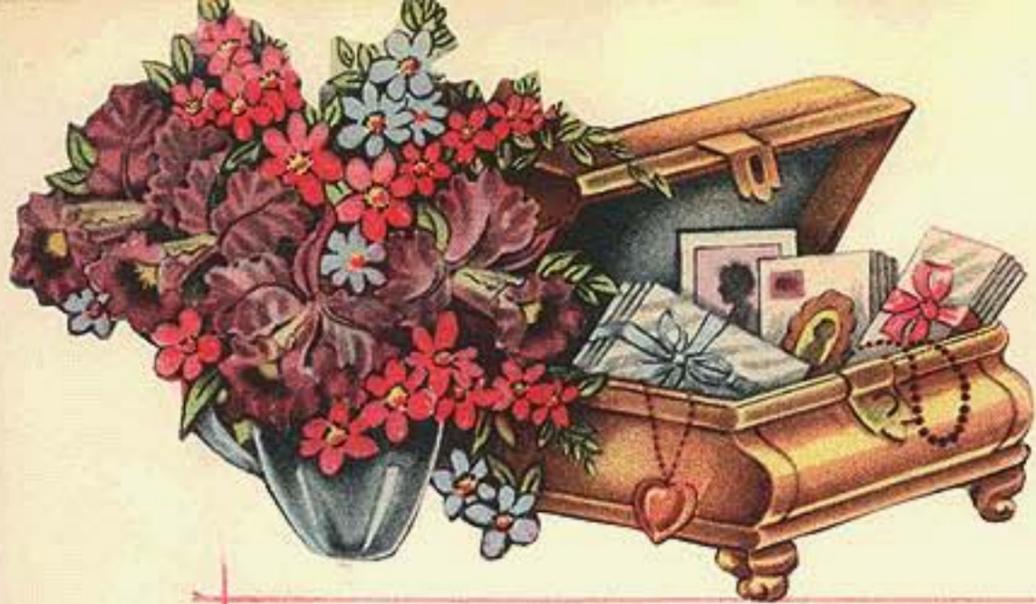


Red Cross with whom we were affiliated. Mrs. B. Skinner and Mrs. D.B. Davis were our efficient and faithful war work conveners and no time was lost in assuming the responsibilities laid upon us. But this time women seemed to have a fuller realization of the calamity of war. They sensed the need of a more closely knit brotherhood of men and women around the world for the removal of bitterness and hatred in agonized hearts and tortured lives and I think this feeling was the nucleus around which the A.C.W.W. was started. Although we were working for war we were praying for peace and held as our motto "We work for victory but Plan for peace".

During these trying times we tried to keep an even keel and carry on with Community Activities as well as an all out effort in war work. We continued worthwhile short courses, sent Jr. Institute girls to Guelph Conference, supported the usual charities, packed baskets for the needy, sent bales of used clothing to Northern Ontario again, prepared interesting programs for each meeting and included current events. Each month we raised money for our war work and charitable donations by euchres, banquets, salvage collections, scrap paper drives, concerts and draws. We sewed, knit, pieced quilts, made old wool collections for blankets, donated an article almost every month to be used in packing ditty bags, supported the jam and honey fund, The war Charities fund, seeds for Britain, Girls Knitting Club, Central Fund, Save the Children Fund and many others including constant co-operation with the Red Cross in supplying quilts, socks, clothing and money.

We took time to celebrate our 30th anniversary with District Officers as guests and a program of addresses by Charter Members and guests, but social meetings were cancelled and for economic reasons we discontinued having printed programs for the duration of the war. In 1942 Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Atkinson celebrated their Golden Anniversary and these happy occasions had a tendency to lift the morale and ease the tension of over-worked women.

By 1946 the Red Cross had finished their activities and needed the Club Rooms no longer. As the Bank was planning the construction of an apartment above the Bank, we again moved our meeting place to the room we now occupy in the Market Hall. We had it painted and cupboards installed and converted into a very comfortable Club Room that has served as a wonderful convenience for small groups of people ever since.



TREASURED MEMORIES  
of  
INSTITUTE MEETINGS



This picture was taken in the very early days of the Institute (1915-18) at the farm home of Mrs. T. Ellison (standing in centre with striped blouse) at Lot No. 825 Concession 8. President- Mrs. E. Marchant (seated in black dress) Sec'y. Treas.-Mrs. G. Atkinson (front row second from right)



Meeting at the home of Mrs. W. Sloan- Bell's Lake - June II, 1931.  
President- Mrs. J. Botham. (centre front) Sec'y Treas.-Mrs. C. Marchant.  
(seated L-R) Mrs. J. Pearson; Mrs. S. Dixon; Mrs. E. Marchant; Mrs. Robt. Hulse;  
Mrs. J. Botham; Mrs. T. Gallagher; Mrs. Jas. Kitchen; (standing (L-R) Mrs. W.  
Sloan; Mrs. G. Farquhar; Mrs. G. Hulse; Mrs. J. Boak; Mrs. H. Carter; Mrs. J. Lister  
Mrs. F. Hunter; Mrs. C. Marchant; Mrs. H. H. Sawdon; Mrs. W. R. Rogers; Mrs. H. Carr;  
Miss H. Winter; Mrs. W. Webb; Mrs. A. F. Kay; Miss Grace Amey; Mrs. O. Gallagher;  
Mrs. E. Pearson; Mrs. H. Thompson; Mrs. J. Doane; Mrs. A. Stewart;



TREASURED MEMORIES

of

INSTITUTE MEETINGS



The occasion pictured here was a very happy one- when honor was paid to Mrs. R. Hulse (l) on her eighty sixth birthday; July 13 1954. With her is her closest friend Mrs. E. Marchant who was eighty nine at this time. They are both Charter Members of the Women's Institute and the Anglican Church Missionary Society



This happy group of Charter Members all attended Mrs. Hulse's party on the spacious lawn of her farm home.

(L-R) Mrs. Ralph Davis.

Mrs. Wm. Marchant

Mrs. Robt. Hulse

Mrs. E. Marchant



1911



1961

## Schomberg Women's Institute

INVITES YOU TO ATTEND

## The Fiftieth Anniversary

Thursday, May 11, 1961

ANGLICAN CHURCH, SCHOMBERG

at eight o'clock

MRS. C. L. WATSON  
Secretary  
Schomberg, Ontario

MRS. GEORGE SHOULTS  
President

Anniversaries provide a time for looking back when we review the past and assess the contribution one has made to the world; and for looking forward to set oneself a higher goal for the future. 1961 was an important year in the life of our Institute for in this year we completed fifty years of achievement and prepared to turn a bright new page and accept new challenges in service to the community.

The first few months were busy with preparation for the fiftieth anniversary party that was held in the newly decorated Sunday School room of the Anglican Church, on the evening of May 11th. The room was beautifully decorated with the Institute colours and flowers, including a large basket of yellow mums from King Township Council. The one hundred and twenty guests from the surrounding Branches and the District and Provincial Boards were warmly welcomed by the Reception Committee - Mrs. Shoults, Mrs. C. Watson, Mrs. E. Pearson and Mrs. B. Skinner, and escorted to their places by Mrs. Rose Cooper and Mrs. Karen Thomas, daintily dressed in period frocks and bonnets. Mrs. Roy Stephenson played appropriate music while the guests assembled, after which our President, Mrs. Geo. Shoults, presided for a delightful program which carried the older members back over the years as Mrs. Blake Skinner read a list of the Presidents and Secretaries of the past fifty years. The Secretary, Mrs. Cecil Watson, read greetings from many sources, and regrets from many unable to attend. Miss Nancy Cooper played a lovely piano solo and Mrs. Clarence Marchant, Convener of Historical Research, read the history of the Branch, telling the highlights of the past fifty years as prepared for the Tweedsmuir History and found in the envelope at the back of the book. Mrs. Gordon Beard rendered two appropriate solos, after which Mrs. John Lister read the seventy-three names from the Memorial Plaque and followed with two minutes silence and prayer. Short addresses were given by Mrs. Elton Armstrong and Mrs. E. Reddick and several of the District and Provincial guests, followed by an expression of appreciation by Mrs. R. Hiscocks. The final number on the program was a clever skit prepared and presented by the members of the Four H Club under the capable leadership of Mrs. Frank Barnes, the topic being "Home Sanitation".

The tea table was beautifully arranged with gold and blue candles and golden tulips and centred with a triple storey cake ~~made~~ and decorated by Mrs. Wm. Crane and Mrs. Stephenson. Tea was poured by Mrs. E. Pearson and Mrs. Blake Skinner and the cake was cut by our two Charter Members, Mrs. Robert Hulse and Mrs. Pearson. The members of the Four H Club served a dainty lunch and after an hour of pleasant reminiscences and renewal of old acquaintances, a very happy event was brought to a close by the singing of The Queen.



An error. Correction- The cake was made by Mrs. C. Watson & Mrs. D. Archibald.

A WISH FOR YOUR

# Golden Anniversary



Pouring Tea -  
Mrs. E. Pearson, Charter Member



Cutting the Cake  
Mrs. R. (Grandma) Hulse  
Mrs. E. Pearson





Receiving the Guests:  
 Mrs. Max Cooper  
 Mrs. J.L. Thomas

Reception Committee:  
 Mrs. C. Watson (Sec'y)  
 Mrs. B. Skinner  
 Mrs. E. Pearson  
 Mrs. G. Shoults (Pres.)



Entertainers  
 4 H Club Girls

The Cake and its decorator  
 Mrs. Wm. Crane