



Verna Maluski, Women's Institute member, sits at the harvest table in the pioneer kitchen of the Erland Lee home in Stoney Creek. The home is the site of the first Women's Institute meeting in 1897.



Birthday cake symbolic of the 80 years since Women's Institutes were organized. At base of cake, Adelaide Hoodless and Erland Lee sit at Constitution table.

#### JARVIS WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The Jarvis branch of the West Haldimand Women's Institute was organized February 2, 1906 in the Workmen's Lodge Room, which was then on the second floor of the A. & M. Grocery Store. The branch was organized by Mrs Thompson of Canfield, and Mrs Phillips of Selkirk. Fifty-six members joined during the first year, Sixty-eight members in 1926 was the largest membership in any year.

The first President was Mrs. J. J. Parsons, wife of a well known Walpole Township farmer. She tells the story of how she became president. At the inaugural meeting, the presiding Officer was giving some household hints and at the same time was sizing up those present. She gave this hint "when starting to cook an old rooster if you add a tablespoonful of vinegar to the water, the fowl will be tender when cooked". Mrs Parsons replied "I'm going home and try that on our old rooster". All the ladies present had a good laugh and the chairman, after asking the name of the lady who was going to fix her rooster, said "Mrs Parsons wouldn't you like to be President? After a little coaxing Mrs Parsons accepted, and was President for seven years. Mrs Parsons said she thought she was asked to take the position because she was not afraid to speak out.

The first Secretary was Miss Maude Parkinson (later Mrs Andrew Miller). She died on December 24, 1925.

For the first ten years the members made out their own programmes, then in 1916 began buying the County printed programs, and have continued this practice up to the present time.

The popular opinion has been that in early years, the Institute was more or less a cooking class with the program mainly the giving of recipes. "Tis true we find records of Roll Calls such as "An eggless dish", Strawberries and how to can them". An Apple Dish, but we also have some such as this "A thought on Economy", "Name a song or Poem". We find records, and discussions "bandaging" "Boning a Chicken" and others along the line of Homemaking which is one of the most important aims of the Women's Institute. We also find papers given "Hygiene in the Home" "The value of a Reading Circle" "The Children's Aid Society", "Responsibilities of Mothers to daughters" "Effect of our home influence on our National and Political life" "Youth and Character", "The legend of the Willow Pattern", and many other splendid topics. These Topics were used up to 1916.

Because our Motto is "For Home and Country" the history of one branch is not very different from that of another. The variation being in the need in each community. From the beginning Jarvis Women's Institute helped in any worth-while project in the Community, as well as helping the needy in the community. Flowers, and cards as well as visits are listed for shut-ins and bereavements.

In 1910 it is noted that a vacuum cleaner was purchased for \$24.00 for rent in the community. In 1910 a grant of money was made to the Library.

Efforts from 1914 to 1918 were chiefly directed toward the work of the Red Cross socks, bed jackets, pajamas, towels, sheets, pillow cases were donated as well as cash.

Following the first World War the Women's Institute was instrumental in having a monument erected to the memory of the soldiers who had lost their lives. They still pay for keeping the plot in condition, and keeping flowers planted around the monument.

During the years following the First World War we find the Jarvis W.I. engaged in many activities for the betterment of the community, among which are listed purchase of a piano for the arena, First Aid Kits for the schools, Donating cash toward purchasing tables for the Agricultural Society, assisting with the Jarvis Fair, and School Fair. When the village took over Peacocks Hall for a Town Hall the Institute bought a stage curtain, dishes, towels, utensils, piano, and other equipment.

The Jarvis Branch celebrated its twenty fifth anniversary on February 12 1931, at the home of Mrs J. J. Parsons with over seventy present. Guests were the charter members, fourteen of whom were present; the Jarvis clergy and their wives, Haldimand District Officers, Pres Mrs J. C. Payne; Sec. Mrs Doc Parkinson, Fed. Representative Mrs J. peart, also the provincial President Mrs A. E. Walker.

During World War II we co-operated in every possible way with the Red Cross offering hospitality to the strangers who came to the community in connection with the Bombing and Gunnery School. The advent of the Women's Division at the Airport brought the visit of Dr. Charlotte Whitton to the Air School, where she addressed a large audience. Owing to a number of plane crashes an International Plot was established in the Presbyterian Cemetery. The Institute has tried to keep flowers on these graves, during the summer months, and provides a wreath for Armistice Day. When the armed Forces returned the W. I. played a prominent part in planning the celebration held in the Park.

J. J. PARSONS  
of Mrs. J. J. Parsons  
removed one of the  
most highly valued  
deeds of the Institute