

# Nobleton Women's Institute celebrates 100th anniversary

By Jon Yaneff

The mission statement of the Women's Institute (WI) is to better the lives of women and families through personal growth and community action.

King Township originally had eight WI branches and throughout all the growth the community has endured over the years, Nobleton is the last that remains after 100 years.

The Nobleton Women's Institute celebrated their 100th anniversary at Nobleton Community Hall Thursday.

In March of 1908, ladies from Laskay and Nobleton joined together to form a new branch, with meetings to be held at both villages. But they soon discovered that winter weather with bad roads and long distances, combined with travel by horses and sleighs, lowered attendance at meetings, so the branch separated into two at either village.

"In the 1930s every Women's Institute in Ontario was asked to make a record of their local history in books," said the secretary and events co-ordinator of the Nobleton WI, Joan Jackaman. "Nobleton did their's in the '50s and I added a section in '96. As we start our 100th

anniversary celebration people were invited to view the books, as well as three quilts, which were made by a former president of Nobleton WI and the grandmother of Karl Davis (owner of the Nobleton Farm Service)."

The records from all the disbanded WI branches in King Township were given to the King Township Archives and members of the King Township Library were on hand to scan any new WI archives as well as explain what the archives are.

The Women's Institute movement started Feb. 12, 1897, as Adelaide Hoodless spoke to a Ladies' Night meeting of the Farmer's Institute at the Erland Lee home in Stoney Creek, near Hamilton, where she reminded the male farmers: "You are in the midst of a campaign to improve the health of your animals. I am here to tell you the health of your wives and children is more important," said Louise DiIorio of King Township Archives in her speech to the Nobleton WI Thursday.

The warm response of her audience, as well as her considerable experience with women's organizations, encouraged Hoodless to

suggest that rural women should have an institute of their own.

Also in DiIorio's speech, it was noted that further support of the Women's Institute came from Lady Susan Tweedsmuir, the wife of the Governor-General of Canada, who was committed to promoting both literacy and local history. Lady Tweedsmuir was an active Institute member in England, and she served as honorary president of the WI of Canada during her stay in the country.

At a meeting in Athens, Ontario, in 1936, she encouraged the Institutes to collect and preserve local histories, and to act as caretakers of their local heritage.

There are now more than 1,100 Tweedsmuir books in existence in Ontario. These books range in size and quality from a few scrapbooks housed in WI members homes, to large leather-bound volumes stored in museums or public libraries. The books were published with the support of municipal governments and local historical societies.

The King Township Public Library has put many of the local Tweedsmuir history books online for



This group of women stood in front of three quilts, which were made by a former Nobleton WI president. Seen here are (back row) Joan Jackaman, the secretary and events co-ordinator for the Nobleton Women's Institute; Lynda Rogers; Sharon Bentley, deputy chief librarian; Louise DiIorio of the King Township Archives; (front row) Mary Anne Merritt, Jean Boynton and Judy Craig of Arts Society King.

public viewing, including the Kettleby, King City, Laskay, Schomberg, Snowball and Temperanceville Tweedsmuir Histories. These are available at <http://www.king-library.on.ca>.

Also as part of the Nobleton Women's Institute 100th anniversary celebrations there will be a performance of "For Home and Country" at The Country Day School's Performing

Arts Centre, July 8-12.

Auditions will be held April 1, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Nobleton Arena (Nobleton Sports Park), April 6, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at King City Seniors' Centre (30 Fisher St.) and April 17, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Nobleton Community Hall (lower level) at 19 Old King Rd.

There are two female leading roles of Judy and Lorna available, as well as eight plus adult female roles, two plus adult males roles

and three children's roles.

Script excerpts for auditions will be available after March 26 for download on the ASK website ([www.artsocietyking.ca](http://www.artsocietyking.ca)) or as a pdf by e-mailing Joan Jackaman at [joanjackaman2@gmail.com](mailto:joanjackaman2@gmail.com). People can also email Jackaman if they are interested in participating in the off-stage aspects of the theatre, including stage crew, sets, costumes and makeup.

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