



Preserving, promoting and developing Wellington North's unique cultural resources to build a vibrant community and a prosperous economy.

Our Cultural Moment for May celebrates The Women's Institute

The Women's Institute was founded in Stoney Creek in 1889 by Adelaide Hunter Hoodless who took it upon herself to spread the importance of domestic science in the home, city and country.

The Spanish Flu of 1918 was a huge influence on the Women's Institute as these women were thrust into roles that were not previously open to them as women. The surviving soldiers were just returning to Canada after WW1 and women outnumbered the men considerably. The medical profession were exhausted and thus the W.I. members went into action. They ran individual training at people's homes on the value of hand washing, cleaning, laundry, the value of fresh air and volunteered to assist doctors and nurses to let them get proper rest. Grown out of their tireless work and support, many of these women sought careers in the medical field and advocated that they be allowed to enroll in colleges and universities which had never been open to them before.

The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario is a not-for-profit charitable organization with affiliations around the world, working with and for women in Ontario. Through the network of Branches, they offer educational programming and community support, advocate for social, environmental and economic change, and work towards the personal growth of all women, for home and country.



While the local organizations in the Township have somewhat disbanded their legacy lives on, especially in the Tweedsmuir History's of their local community farms and families and also through the past fundraising and donations made to the communities. The biggest project for the Conn W.I., formed in 1905 and officially disbanded in 1985, was purchasing the closed church known as Levendale in 1933 for \$150 and had it moved to Conn to be used as a community centre. Farewell W.I., formed in 1948, met in the Bethel United Church basement and at one time was honoured to be the 2nd largest group in the district. Another group formed for the North Arthur area in 1951 and was known as the Northgate W.I.. The Kenilworth W.I. ran from 1905-1923, the Arthur Centennial W.I. ran from 1972-1990 and the Damascus Women's Institute from 1968 -2009 whose main project was the Damascus Community Hall.

The track record of the Women's Institute is wide and runs deep in most communities around the world working true to their motto: For Home and Country.

Submitted by Bonny McDougall; Wellington North Cultural Roundtable