

Name of Branch: Hoping Women's Institute

Location: Etzikom, near Medicine Hat

Organized: Jan. 11, 1956 by Mrs. Peter Hertrich, Constituency Convenor in the home of Mrs. Waldo Dixon, with 10 ladies present. By 1958, the membership had climbed to 21, but settled down by 1960 to a fairly stable 13 or 14 members.

Charter Members: Mrs. Ray Cooper, Mrs. Tony Herbst, Mrs. Ralph Dixon, Mrs. Geo. Baugh, Mrs. Victor O'Connell, Mrs. Ralph Lee, Mrs. Russell Dixon, Mrs. Waldo Dixon, Mrs. Melvin Shannon, Mrs. Kent Stoddard

First Executive: Mrs. Ralph Lee, pres; Mrs. Russell Dixon, [first] vice-pres; Mrs. Ralph Dixon, [second] vice-pres; Mrs. Glen Lee, sec

Disbanded: Resting 2004; Disbanded 2005

Activities: In 1956, Hoping WI had various ways of making money to support its projects; it had card parties, playing court whist. Each person was charged 35 cents, which included lunch. Also that year the WI held a Strawberry Supper, charging \$1.00 per plate per person or \$5.00 per family. The WI held a talent hunt, a bazaar and dance; the charge was 50 cents for women, 75 cents for men, and 25 cents for children. Lunch was included.

Like many other WIs, Hoping held a Christmas Supper for WI families, something that became a tradition for the group. Each woman donated a dollar on her birthday, which paid for the turkey. The club catered for dozens of weddings and other events over the years.

Each year, Hoping WI sent someone to the District 4 Conference. In 1958, the conference was in Lethbridge. The expenses looked like this: \$10.00 for travel, \$7.00 for a room for two nights, \$1.65 for the banquet, and \$1.00 for the banquet ticket.

Much of the money raised by Hoping WI, including raffling quilts, was spent on the upkeep of the Community Hall. The WI bought the piano, kitchen sinks, coffee urns, kettles, dishes, drapes and curtains and helped to purchase a large gas restaurant-type range and a P.A. system.



Hoping WI Ladies, 1957: back: unknown, Margaret Scherer, Dora Stadlemen, Edna Cooper, Florence Dixon, Mary Dixon, Mildred Laqua, unknown. front: Frances Herbst, Adeline Dixon, Doreen Lee, Isabella Laqua.

Hoping WI has often been a prize-winner at handicraft competitions at the constituency conferences, winning the plaque for 3 years running from 1979-1981, 1984 and 1985, and 1988.

The Hoping WI has been very active in keeping community social events going. After Hoping School closed, the WI started Christmas concerts, involving all children in the community; this continued for years. The WI sponsors 4-H girls to go to Gold Eye Summer Camp; donates money to the Hoping Clothing Club's trophy fund; it helps the needy; provides Christmas gifts to the Mental Homes in the area, cookies to the Nursing Home in Lethbridge and has donated money to the Bow Island Auxiliary towards a two-way communication system.

Notable Members:

Book of Remembrance:

- [Ellen Burns](#) was born in 1906 in Medicine Hat and lived the rest of her life in southeast Alberta. She moved to Foremost in 1967, where she joined Hoping WI. She had been a member of Picture Butte WI for a number of years previously.
- [Mary Dixon](#) was born in 1894 in Kentucky; she and her husband moved to farm in the Groton area and she joined the Hoping WI when it formed in 1956. Mary was an avid gardener and received a prize for the best garden in Foremost in 1972. She was an active member of all the organizations she joined; with the WI, she served in several convenor positions, entered every constituency handicraft competition and attended all local conferences. At the age of 90, Mary was voted a Life Membership in Hoping WI.
- Since [Hannah Griffiths'](#) mother died a year after Hannah's birth in 1904 in Montana, Hannah and her brother were sent to live with their grandmother in Ontario for a while. They were then returned to Montana to live with their father. He eventually homesteaded in Alberta at Aden in 1917; it was here that Hannah received her education. She married a farmer from the district in 1921. She was devoted to her children and was highly skilled in baking and handicrafts. She and her husband made beautiful articles from diamond willow, including gavels donated to the WI. Hannah joined the WI in 1956 and served in many positions for the next thirty years.
- [Frances Herbst](#) was born in 1914 at Maple Creek, Saskatchewan and married an Alberta farmer in 1924. She and her husband farmed in the Faith district near Foremost. She was a charter member of the Hoping WI, serving as president, social convenor, and as district director. She entered every handicraft competition and attended every conference she could. Frances enjoyed life – knitting, crocheting, and making furniture for her grandchildren with her husband. She was voted a Life Membership in the Hoping WI.

- [Marge Mitzel](#) was born in Krupp, Saskatchewan and worked in the Medicine Hat area, where she met and married her husband in 1937. They farmed in the Faith-Hoping district. Marge was actively involved in her community, serving for 25 years as head leader for the 4-H Multi Club, member of the Catholic Women's League, the Warner Tops Club, and as Hoping's Coordinator of the Forty Mile Further Education Council. For the WI, Marge was always willing to lend a helping hand. She enjoyed quilting, woodworking and sewing. She always used to say that she was closest to God when she was in her garden.
- [Dora Stadelman](#) was born in Davos, Switzerland in 1891, where she received her education; she was an avid student who could speak four languages: German, French, English, Swiss and a little Italian. She met her husband to be in Kloster in 1913, but he emigrated to Canada before she was able to leave her duties with her family. After WWI, they were re-united in 1919 and married in Alberta. Dora loved farm life and spun her own wool; she was known for her knitting and received recognition from the Red Cross for the number of garments she produced. Photography was one of her hobbies. Dora joined Hoping WI in 1956.

Sources: PAA 2010.0685/32 Box 6 – Disbanding 195- - 199- “District Four – AWI – Information Herein Compiled March 1, 1964”; PAA 91.3041/ 10 AWI Branch Listing and Contact 1944-1961; *Book of Remembrance* Vol. I, II; *Home and Country* Spring 2005, p. 6; PR 2009.0324 26 Box 1 (AWI Report 1999-2004); Etzikom Historical Society. *Etzikom: Prairie & People*. Etzikom, AB: Etzikom Historical Society, 1990, pp. 104-105; Photo borrowed from *Etzikom: Prairie and People*, p. 104.