

Name of Branch: Kinniburgh Women's Institute

Location: Purple Springs near Taber

Organized: July 18, 1918 on the foundation of a previous organization, the Home Circle, which had organized in 1915 and was the only women's group between Taber and Grassy Lake

Charter Members: Mrs. H.G. Ridley, Mrs. Annie Rutherford, Mrs. E.M. Danforth, Mrs. Clement Campbell, Mrs. W.A. Alexander, Mrs. R.L. Rash, Mrs. Fred Porter, Mrs. Oscar Craddock, Mrs. Philip Craddock, Mrs. Floyd Martin, Mrs. Will Johnston

First Executive: Mrs. E.M. Danforth, pres; Mrs. Clement Campbell, secretary

Disbanded: 1997



Activities: In a letter from Bernice Abell to Elizabeth Lefsrud, Jan. 8, 1975, Bernice writes: "Due to the fact that nearly half of our minute books were destroyed by fire or lost in the shuffle from one secretary to the next, this [compiling the Kinniburgh WI history] has been quite a chore. Mrs. Ridley is our only Active charter member left so had to rely on her for a lot." Such has been the fate of many AWI branch records. It should be noted that the typescript letter to Elizabeth Lefsrud is an exact copy of the entry in the Taber local history cited below.

From the letter: "In 1921, Mrs. Fred Porter, then Provincial Chairman of Public Health and Welfare and a member of Kinniburgh Women's Institute inaugurated Child Welfare Baby Clinics." This was a great leap forward in public health for the province and was one of the highlights of AWI's relationship with the Provincial Government.

In addition to this lobbying for institutional development, the Kinniburgh WI started a scholarship fund, and began a children's day and fair in 1923, which continued for many years. While vegetables, flowers, baking, and handicrafts were being judged, the children had fun participating in games and races. The WI provided the prizes. In 1933, the WI organized a girls' club, called the Kinniburgh Sunshine AWI Girls' Club, supervised by Mrs. R.L. Rash for 6 or 7 years. The Club continued until a "shortage of girls of the right age forced it to disband."

The Kinniburgh WI was a leader in the AWI's contribution to the cancer fund. "In 1937 Kinniburgh WI assisted [a] District IV project which instigated the fund to purchase radium for the cure of cancer. Radium was free to all cancer patients." The branch was also active in

agricultural advocacy. “In 1949 Kinniburgh Women’s Institute was responsible for starting the Brucellosis Control of Cattle campaign with the area becoming a Bangs free area.”¹

Notable Members:

Book of Remembrance II

- [Edna Ridley](#) first joined the WI in Ontario in 1909; after she and her husband moved to the Taber district, Edna became a charter member of the Kinniburgh WI and its first president. Edna held many leadership roles from the branch level to Provincial Chairperson of Citizenship and Immigration. She was one of the women who started the Sunshine AWI Girls’ Club in 1933. Edna attended six ACWW conventions, many Federated conventions and all but one AWI of the conventions. In addition to her devotion to the WI, Edna was a noted quilter. She is shown here with her trademark Lone Star Quilt.



Life Membership:

- [Edna Ridley](#): “To travel to meetings through mud, snow or drifting sand; to be an active member when weary or in sorrow is not easy, but Edna Ridley has done all this and has counted it as one of the blessings of a long and busy life. Here let us pay tribute to her husband, Gordon Ridley, who has been her steadfast supporter in all her W.I. endeavors.... The Ridley home has always been a hospitable home. Flowers bloom in the house and in the yard and all who live in the dry areas of the south know that this calls for unremitting hard work. Her other hobbies include sewing and do-it-yourself carpentry. Edna Ridley has a genial friendly personality; is broad in her outlook and interested in the needs of others. She especially enjoys attending Women's Institute Conventions. It was her privilege to tour Europe in 1959 and to attend, while Overseas, the ninth Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World in Edinburgh. South Taber Constituency presented Mrs. Ridley with a Life Membership in April 1959.” (pp. 159-60)

Sources: PAA 2010.0685/32 Box 6 – Disbanding 195- - 199- “District Four – AWI – Information Herein Compiled March 1, 1964”; 1924, 1928, 1930 Convention Report; *Book of Remembrance*

¹ Editor’s Note: Bangs is another name for Brucellosis, a highly contagious disease that can cross species lines, producing Undulant Fever in humans.

Vol. II; *Life Membership Book*; PAA 2007.0380/55 Box 2 AWI Branches Vol. 2 [nd]; Taber Historical Committee. *From Tank 77 to Taber Today: A History of Taber, its District and its People*. Taber, AB: Taber Historical Committee, 1977. 564-565.