

**Name of Branch:** Wildmere Women's Institutes

**Location:** Vermilion, located at the intersection of Hwys 16 and 41, 60 kms west of Lloydminster

**Organized:** Dec. 4, 1946 by Rosalie Gilford, convenor of the Vermilion-Alexandra Constituency at the old Wildmere Post Office, in the home of Mrs. Gary Whitlock

**Charter Members:** Mrs. J.M. Wilson, Mrs. Frank H. Gibson, Mrs. W. J. Garnett, Mrs. J.H. Batke, Mrs. R.H. Martin, Mrs. J.C. Wallington, Mrs. Guy Whitlock, Mrs. Wm. Steele, Mrs. Otto Weisenberger

**First Executive:** Mrs. J.M. Wilson, pres; Mrs. Frank H. Gibson, sec; Mrs. W. J. Garnett, first vice-pres; Mrs. J.H. Batke, second vice-pres; Mrs. R.H. Martin, treas; directors: Mrs. J.C. Wallington, Mrs. Guy Whitlock, Mrs. Wm. Steele

**Disbanded:** Nov. 1973

**Activities:** Mrs. Anne Garnett writes that some "of the projects were: a silver engraved spoon was always given to a member's new baby as most of the members were young mothers. As it was the post-war period and there was [sic] great shortages of some foods, etc., the project for 2 years was sending parcels overseas of food monthly, to individuals, and to Wildmere pen pal's WI branch in Great Britain parcels of soap and lard which were much appreciated.

In 1949 the branch formed an AWI Girls Club called "The Wildmere Beavers." The leader was Mrs. Doris Martin and when she left the district Mrs. Elsie Dibben took over. It was eventually disbanded as the 4H Clubs were quite active and the roads were built up and good roads in winter made it easier to travel distances.

Three of our members, Mesdames Dibben, Garnett and Gibson were Constituency Convenors.

The project for centennial year was a gift to the Preston Community Centre of a complete set of a china dinner service and stainless steel flatware, to use for special occasions.

Delegates were always sent to the different conferences and conventions. We donated to the USC [Unitarian Service Committee] layettes, blankets and clothing through the years.

The membership grew to 20 or more members, but our numbers declined as the organizations appeared later until there were only 4 members left, so were forced to disband in 1973. However, 3 members joined the Vermilion WI in 1974."



## **Notable Members:**

### **Book of Remembrance:**

- [Annie Garnett](#) and her husband emigrated from their farm near Liverpool, England to the Vermilion area of Alberta in 1929. Annie was active in many aspects of the community but focused her work on the AWI for the 44 years of her membership. She was a charter member of the Wildmere WI and served in many leadership roles in the branch; she also served as Constituency Convenor, organizing several new branches during her two terms in that position. Annie attended national conventions in Guelph, Winnipeg and Banff as well as many AWI conferences. When Wildmere disbanded, Annie joined the Vermilion WI. She received a life membership in 1983.

**Sources:** PAA 2007.0012/29 Box 3. Charters from Disbanded Branches 1915-1979; private correspondence from Anne Garnett to Elizabeth Lefsrud, 1975.