

## Dromore W.I. Events

### THE HISTORY OF DROMORE HALL by Florence (Clark) Harrison

The Hall was built in the lower part of the village of Dromore and was a large frame building with an auditorium, a platform at the front and two dressing rooms behind it. It was built by Mr. Alexander Taylor and named Russell Hall in honour of his wife whose maiden name had been Russell. As far as we can ascertain, it was built in the late 1800's. In those days the Independent Order of Foresters was flourishing and their meetings were held in the Hall as were prayer meetings when Rev. D.L. Campbell was the minister of Amos Church from 1898 to 1906. The Foresters held a Rally each winter - a great event - a program, then dancing followed by lunch and then more dancing until the wee small hours. Sometimes travelling entertainers came and put on entertainment for a whole week - usually advertising some patent medicine and giving some premium for the most popular girl in the community. The Hall was condemned, taken down and moved to the East end of the village and rebuilt on the Taylor farm. It then had an upstairs with wood stoves both upstairs and downstairs for heating. Upstairs, hooks were around the walls for hanging up coats. Cards were played up there by those not so interested in the dancing going on below. Babies and younger children slept on coats and rugs on the floor and older children ran and played among the card players and the sleepers. There was a platform and dressing rooms on the lower floor and many programs took place. People came in sleigh loads in the winter time and put their horses in Taylor's stable and sometimes the overflow went to Renton's stable. There was a big open shed across from the Hall where the horses were tied during events taking place in milder weather.

The first Dromore Women's Institute At Homes were begun in 1909 and were held for some years in February and then it was a tradition to hold them in November. The last one held in the Hall was in 1989. Dromore was always noted for its good plays and music. Some I remember taking part in the programs over the years were Al Hastie, Alex Milne, Eva Milne, Archie Clark, Nellie and Wilfred Renwick, Alex and Florence Renwick, Sandy, Russell, Jean and Dorothy Taylor, Russell and Edith Drimmie, Margaret, Harvey and Ken Leith, John Hopkins, Florence Patterson, Edith Hunter, Alex McGillivray, Mrs. Robert Taylor, Agnes Renwick, Lloyd Long, Gordon and Alex McCannell, Lorne Eccles, Mr. and Mrs. John David Drimmie and Russell and Edith, Bob Weir, the church choir under Wm. Ramage, Agnes Renwick and later Mrs. Sam Patterson. Dance orchestras were all local talent, - the Hoopers, Charlie McDonald, Art and Gordon Watson, Leonard McKeown and later on Bill and Jean Bourn. Calling off for the square dancers were Campbell Watson, Neil Philips, Alex McCannell and Clarence Moore. Round dancing gave the callers, players and dancers a chance to cool off from the lively square dancing.