

The Argyle Lutheran Ladies' Aid

The first Argyle Lutheran Ladies' Aid was held in a small log house the home of Hildur Thorsteinson, in June, 1885. The women who organized the Ladies' Aid were: Johanna Bjornsdottir; Jonina P. Jonsdóttir; Herborg Sigurbjornsdóttir; Vilborg Jónsdóttir; Anna Kristjansdottir; Stefania Johnsdottir. Hildur Halldorsdottir; Malftidur Hallgrimsdottir, Gudny Aradóttir; Thorbjorg Bjornsdottir; Helga Jonasdottir; Thóra Jonsdottir; Gudny Jónsdóttir; Arnbjorg Jonsdottir; Halldóra Sigvaldadottir; Elisabet Danielsdottir; Helga Jónsepsdottir; Gudny Antóniusdóttir, Kristin Hansdottir.

The first slate of officers were: President - Helga Jonsdottir; Secretary - Anna Kristjansdottir; and treasurer - Gudny Aradóttir. A committee elected to draw up the constitution and laws for the society were: Arnbjörg Jónsdóttir, Thorbjorg Bjornsdottir and Helga Jonasdottir. The first regular meeting was held at the home of Johannes Sigurdson 12-6-14, on July 10, 1885. The meeting was called to order by the president and hymn No. 309 in the Icelandic hymnal was sung.

The secretary then read the laws and explained that the object of this society was to work towards improving conditions in the community both spiritually and materially, and to inspire friendship and good-will among the people.

The first major project of the group was a tombola.

At a meeting July 20, 1886, a new topic was introduced - the lack of medical care in the community. It was suggested, and much discussed to import a trained mid- wife. The following year it stated a Karolina Jonsdottir did arrive and took over her duties as mid-wife at a salary of \$50.00 per year. This was paid by the Ladies' Aid the first year or two. Later the congregation assumed and paid half the cost. One project dear to the hearts of these women was the church building fund. On Aug. 22, 1888, a motion was passed to put on a play to raise funds for the church building. The sum of \$200.00 was realized. After 1890, when the church had been built, it is recorded on several occasions that \$25.00 was paid to Pastor's salaries. In 1890, a resolution was passed to authorize the buying of a new organ for \$300.00 and with help and co- operation from the Dorcas Society a beautiful altar was bought. Carpets were paid for and lamps donated. In 1895, the church was painted by volunteer labour: The Ladies' Aid paid for the paint. In 1895, the society split up. Bru ladies resigned and organized the Bru Ladies' Aid. It was after this time the Dorcas Society and Grund Ladies' Aid bought the altar.

The women kept right on working. "Skjaldbreid" Hall was built at Grund and the Ladies' Aid bought a share for \$100.00.

Generous gifts of money were made yearly to the Winnipeg General Hospital and the Children's Aid. They also made regular donations to the organizations of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod - the J.B. Academy, home and foreign missions and the Betel Home.

Shortly after the Lutheran Women's League was organized the Ladies' Aid joined and were active in supporting Sunrise Camp at Husavik, Man.

June 14, 1905, the Icelandic people in Argyle sponsored a celebration - "Íslandingadag" at Grund and the Ladies' Aid did their share to make this event a real success.

In July, 1917, Mrs. Bergljót Frederickson died - instead of the usual flowers being sent to her funeral by family and friends the sum of \$55.00 was donated to the L.A. to be used for charitable purposes. Thus the "Blómsveigasjóður" or Floral Tribute Fund was established.

In 1927, the membership of the Ladies' Aid was at a low ebb, and it was feared that the society would cease to function. But rather than let this happen the Dorcas society which had been organized during the war years closed their records and seven new members joined the Ladies' Aid giving the society a real lift and the work went on with renewed interest.

The 40th Anniversary of the society was celebrated by having a concert in the Grund Church with the late Dr. B.B. Jónsson as guest speaker.

There have been traditions of service and loyalty displayed - one such was the annual Icelandic picnics sponsored by this organization - and held at Ninette Sanatorium when the Argyle community entertained the patients and staff. Gifts were also sent to Icelandic and other patients from the district at Christmas. There was also the Ladies' Aid meeting held every year on the first day of summer at the home of Mrs. Jonas This was her big day when she served her guests hot chocolate with whipped cream and ponnukokur - according to an old Icelandic custom.

When the Frelsis Lutheran Church (Grund) merged with Baldur, the Ladies' Aid disbanded.

Ninety-six years ago Hildur Thorsteinson greeted her guests when they came to organize this Ladies' Aid and all these years the story has repeated itself - the Christian message of compassion put into action. The message of loving thy neighbour and rejoicing with him when he is glad and weeping with him in his sorrow.

Hand in hand with the work of the Ladies' Aid has been loyalty and love for the Frelsis Grund Church. It is a sacred place with tender memories of confirmation, wedding days, and the last farewells to loved ones.

This was taken from an article written about 25 years ago in Ardis by Gudlaug Johannesson.



The last Ladies' Aid at Grund. There were 12 members: Edith Arason, Ellen Rawlings, Laura Christopherson, Betty Gudnason, Hilla Johnson, Bogga Goodman, Sigga Johnson, Millie Anderson, Budda Oliver, Christine Gudnason (non-member), Olga Arason, Veiga Helgason. Gudrun Isfeld is missing from the picture.