

The Howe Sound Women's Institute



Above: Members of the Howe Sound Women's Institute pose for the Sunshine Coast's first female photographer Helen McCall. The women, and a few men, are attending a picnic at Camp Artaban, Long Bay, on Gambier Island. The year is 1934, eight years after the formation of the HSWI, when women paid 50 cents for their membership. Below: The HSWI Hall.

The mandate of the Howe Sound Women's Institute was to empower women and to build a better tomorrow for themselves, their families, and their communities. These dedicated women spearheaded a variety of significant projects, the creation of a school scholarship, organizing Fall Fair exhibitions, visiting the sick, donating their time and talent to raise money for the Crippled Children's Hospital in Vancouver and consistently supporting the local library, hospital, and schools.



The women were hard workers, but they also knew how to have fun. One of their members, Louisa Bryson Dougall, composed the "Gibsons Landing Women's League Song," a portion of which is reproduced here. **CL**

They had a sub-organization for girls aged 12-18 years, who were affectionately known as "Associates".

The Institute started the first dental clinic in Gibsons in 1926 (arranging for a woman dentist to be funded provincially), and built the Community Hall in 1929, only three years after the formation of the Institute. This hall was so integral to community functions that they donated it to the Town, and bought a house on South Fletcher for their meetings. The Hall was declared a Heritage Building in 1989 and is home of the current Heritage Playhouse.

— Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives
716 Winn Road, Gibsons, 604-886-8232
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10:30-4:30

The Gibsons Landing Women's League Song

CHORUS:

We are Women of Gibson's
Landing,
When trouble comes around,
We take it standing,
We can bake, and we can brew
And we can saw a log in two,
Oh!

There's nothing much that we
can't do
In Gibson's Landing

When fences are to make
We can drive in many a stake
And then go home
And make dinner too
When houses are to build
Or potatoes are to be hilled
We can lend a hand
And drive a nail quite true.
CHORUS

When a bird is in the air
And our chickens get a scare
We just slip into the house
And get a gun,
Bang, Bang, there goes the bird
A hawk, upon my word!
We don't get scared.
We just enjoy the fun.
CHORUS

When a wedding's coming on
And we haven't got a gown
Misfortune or neglect we
don't confess,
We push a purring wheel
Till stitches off it reel,
And lo, 'twixt noon and night
a pretty dress!
CHORUS

In fact we have a pity
For women in the city
Who haven't half a chance
to grow up smart.
The country for brawn
and brain!
The country, we maintain,
is the place
To develop head, hands
and heart.
CHORUS