

# End of an era on Orr's Island

ORR'S ISLAND — The end of an era was marked last week when the Willing Workers met for the last time and voted to disband. After 60 years of fruitful service, the club, its ranks thinned by death and illness, ceased to exist.

It was on Jan. 7, 1908, that a group of Orr's Island women met at the home of Mrs. Nellis Allen and voted to organize a club to work for the beautification and maintenance of the Orr's Island Cemetery which had been neglected for some time.

The first officers were Mrs. Jessie Richardson, president; Mrs. Vidie Brigham, vice president; Mrs. Annie Linscott, secretary; and Mrs. Angie Doughty, treasurer.

The members met each week at the homes of various members to sew quilts and aprons, embroidery, knit sweaters, stockings and mittens, and do other handwork. Once a year a sale was held. The money received was spent repairing the fence, resetting the head stones, and keeping the grass mown. The cost was often in excess of \$200, even in the early years. The present cemetery is several times the size it was when the Willing Workers first began.

Down through the years the faces have changed. Mrs. Doughty was not one of the original members; she joined the club in the 30's as a young married woman.

When asked the actual beginning date of the cemetery, Mrs. Doughty admitted she didn't know, but said with a chuckle that it was an old Down East saying that they had to kill the first one if they wanted to start a cemetery.

She recalled that every year the Willing Workers used to go on a picnic. And one year she remembered with a warm smile, for a change they had an outdoor corn bake at night at the Lisbon home of Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Grey. "They baked the



The annual picnic of the Orr's Island Willing Workers, 1938, at the Lisbon home of Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Grey. In the foreground left to right: Mrs. Mildred Hillman and Mrs. Olive Gilliam. Front row seated: Mrs. Jessie Richardson, Mrs. George Graves, Mrs. Lewis Hanson, Mrs. Melvin Huff and Mrs. Flora Orr. Standing front row: James Trowell, Mrs. Alice Wilson, Mrs. Elsie Stilphen, Miss Virginia Grey, Miss Ann Bougle, Mrs. Emma Linscott, Mrs. Edith Wilson, and Mrs. Myra Stilphen. Back row standing: Mrs. Lucy Doughty, Ed Wilson, Mrs. Nettie Blackwell, Dennis Wilson, Lewis Steel, Mrs. Dennis Wilson, Mrs. Florence Hersey and Irvin Wilson.

corn with the husks on in wet burlap bags, and ummm was it delicious. We had some awful good times. The last year we had a picnic was in 1947 at Thomas Point beach."

This August the oldest member of the Willing Workers, Mrs. Ella Hanson, 104 years old, died. Holding office at this time had been Mrs. Alwilda Stackpole, president; Mrs. Myra Stilphen, vice president; Mrs. Lucy Doughty, secretary; and Mrs. Ella Hanson, treasurer. With the serious illness of Mrs. Stilphen, Mrs. Hanson's death and Mrs.

Stackpole's returning to her Durham home, the few remaining members met and closed the books for the last time. The remaining funds in the treasury were turned over to the Annex.

The Junior Annex of the Orr's Island Cemetery Assn. is actually a misnomer since its members are the older women of the community. The Annex has been inactive for some time, but does have a fund to pay for the two yearly mowings of the cemetery, which run over \$100 each cutting. The Cemetery

Association adds the amount in excess of \$100.

According to Mrs. Ruth Doughty, a member of the Annex, "We'd hoped the younger women would take it (our work) up and carry on, but . . ."

"There's just a few of us left in the Annex," she went on. "If we need some money for a mowing, we'll put on a food sale or something. We do receive donations. We'll do what we can just to keep the grass mowed. I think so often a place is judged by the neatness of its cemetery."