

The Commercial Girls' Club of Assiniboia

Ms. Wylde, a young Black woman is a stenographer whose services are available to all at Gingerbread Hall through the auspices of a program administered by the Commercial Girls' Club of Assiniboia. The CGC was formed last fall as an assistance program to help unemployed office workers. It has two tiers of membership, the unemployed and the supporters who pay monthly dues. The group has an office in the Power Building, 428 Queen Avenue across from the Hudson's Bay store. They have weekly meetings and arrange for lectures and training sessions so members can enhance or maintain their skills. A very successful program was when a home economist from the University of Manitoba did some cooking classes in how to prepare healthy meals when you're poor. They use the money they collect from dues and fundraisers to find positions for the unemployed at churches, charities and the like. Young Miss Wylde apparently volunteered to work at Gingerbread Hall.

The group first got media attention when a story was run in the Free Press. "It comes as a shock to many Assiniboia citizens to learn that there are babies being born in Assiniboia whose parents have nothing else to wrap them in but newspapers."¹ The CGC sprung into action arranging for a local company to donate several rolls of flannelette. Several of their unemployed members received free training in sewing and produced blankets that were then donated to needy families. They're still producing these blankets as the need has not gone away. The outstanding event of 1932 was the club's first Birthday Tea which took place in the Annex of the T. Eaton Company's store on October 14, 1932. This was without doubt the most astounding tea party ever put on in Assiniboia. Thousands of friends of the club thronged to the tea tables and a sum of \$2,411.80 was received to swell the funds of the organization. The club has an unemployed membership roll of 835 members and a contributing membership of 3,500.

¹ "Newspapers, however hot the news, poor covering for newly-born infants." Assiniboia Free Press February 6, 1932 p. 7