

Intelligence - May 5/02 p3 Sunday

"A neighbour, Jim Bailey, came over to the store, looked around and asked my father, 'Did you come to starve?' Well, the store lasted over 50 years and provided our family with a good livelihood."

Mary and her two other siblings worked in the store while they went to school. She remembers having a lot of fun packaging bulk goods like sugar, spices and potatoes and, her favourite, candy at Christmas time.

She attended Belleville Collegiate Institute and graduated in 1945. She taught for one year in Blessington while studying two summers in normal school.

Goldie, meanwhile, grew up on the family farm on the Fifth of Thurlow. He went to BCI for a while but then decided to work on the family farm.

Mary and Goldie met at a dance, dated for a while and got married in January of 1946. The couple has a son, David, two grandchildren and one great grandchild.

They both worked for Mary's father until they bought the business — along with her brother — in the spring of 1949.

The Livingstons purchased a lot at the corner of West Moira and Hillside streets in 1947 and built their two-storey home a year later. They remain in the house to this day, which was only a stone's

throw from their former grocery store.

"It really was a family operation," she said.

Goldie purchased the groceries, stocked the shelves, did the deliveries — yes, there were home deliveries until the day they closed — and did all the finances for the business. Mary ran the cash register and helped with the books.

James Wright was the butcher and his wife, Gwen, helped him at the meat counter.

"We sold everything, from soup to nuts, and fresh meat," Goldie said.

Mary said the store "was our life. We enjoyed what we did and we had lots of time together as a couple."

Goldie said he loved the grocery business, especially dealing with his clients.

"We knew everybody who lived on the street and could call everyone by name. When you stop and think, it's a great way of life."

The partners sold the business in 1986, largely because they wanted to retire and it was getting tougher to compete against the bigger operations. Less than a year later, the store closed and the space was converted into apartments.

For the Livingstons, there is life after the grocery store.

They are charter members of the Quinte Curling Club and, in fact, are only two of five life members.

"We both enjoy curling but we're very seldom on the same team," Mary said.

She curls twice a week, Goldie three times. Both are past club presidents.

They are members of Christ Church and have served in different capacities over the years.

They have been canvassing door-to-door as a team for the Cancer Society for the past decade.

And they're in their fourth year working together at charity bingos for the Quinte Cultural Centre. They spend every other Tuesday inside the Lions Bingo Hall on Dundas Street East.

"We had never been to a bingo hall until then," Mary said.

They enjoy gardening together and travelling.

There are times when they're apart.

Mary, for example, goes to a local health club for fitness classes three times a week.

Goldie is content doing some woodworking in his basement shop.

And the store?

"We don't miss the store but we miss the people. It was wonderful to meet so many nice people over all those years," he answered.

Livingston, Mary and Goldie