

"Oh rest beside the dreary road and lead us to Eternal Light."

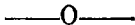
Many hundreds will gaily celebrate their 25th Christmas, many hundreds of "Main Street" readers will joyously observe their 50th Christmas and countless numbers will surround the heavily laden festive table to partake with young and old as they reflect on their 75th Christmas and there is another fine group of ladies and gentlemen who will quietly, but reverently, partake of the goodies of Christmas Day within the walls of mortar and brick at the County Home.

These are the venerable Christians who will be observing their 92nd, their 95th, 96th and 98th Christmases. They will not be forgotten and a number of them will be greeted by friends and relatives and the obliging Superintendents, Mr. and Mrs. Laughie Keeler and their wonderful staff.

Wesley Perrin who was born at Cameron and lived there all his life, is well advanced in his 98th year. "Sure I hung up my stockings when I was a wee lad," said Mr. Perrin. "The good old days have gone, the days when families gathered at their homes at Christmas day, the days when the turkey was large and the table laden with a real hot, steaming dinner. I well remember the days when people worked very hard and when put in a long hard day's work to receive a well earned dollar."

As Mr. Perrin became a young man he was recognized as one of the best builders of frames for large barns. "I helped to build many a large barn around the Township of Fenelon — the days when they held barn raising bees. It was a sight to behold when the men chose sides and these two sides raced to see which side could place the timbers in their right places—

it was fast and dangerous work. Christmas time was a great time for visiting and a time when country people went to Church. It s a lot dif-
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not the same, especially the young people."



John O'Brien is one of the talkative residents now at the Home. He was in excellent

spirits. "I had my day, I had my fling, but things are different today. I worked hard although some of my friends did not believe I did," said this typical Irishman. "I was always an outdoor man, liked to hunt, fish and trap — and I made good money but I also had a good time spending it."

Mr. O'Brien can relate many a fine yarn regarding his days as a Guide and his days spent trapping and fishing over the wide expanse of Pigeon Lake and River, especially around Bobcaygeon. "There was money in handling frog's legs. We caught them by hand, cleaned them thoroughly and shipped them by the tons to Toronto—the price was right."

"What about Christmas?" "Well, it was always fun and Christmas was one time in the year when we met friends and exchanged greetings," said Mr. O'Brien. "I lived at Cross Creeks and I remember the Christmas concerts and parties we had at the old Kenny School and also later on at the Murphy School in South Ops. That was fun."

"What about the young people of today?" Mr. O'Brien did not take long to answer. "They are different and they seem to be restless and at times they get into trouble. So did we, but we respected our elders, our parents and did as we were told or if we didn't we got into trouble."

"The stuff we hear on the radio and see on TV is terrible today. Sure, they do not know how to sing and the music is terrible. Give me the old fiddle. That's what I like and I played at many a concert and many a dance. No, I did not call off, but I kept them all happy as they swung their partners and sometimes they stamped their feet. That was fun."

"How about Christmas?" "We will get along all right—they treat us well out here."

Among the many paying residents of the Home is a dear old soul, liked by everyone, very congenial and very friendly and a person pleasant to talk to. Mrs. Thos. Ellis, (formerly Miss Lee), known as Dora to her friends, is in her 96th year, and is quite happy and content. "I have a wonderful son and daughter and they visit me often. I could make my home with them but to me Lindsay is home, and I get along very well with my friends here. Mrs. Keeler is very kind and so are the nurses."

Mrs. Ellis recalled her girlhood days spent in the Mount Horbe district. "Things are so different today," said Mrs. Ellis. "We had a wonderful time at the old school and I had to walk over two miles in all kinds of weather. I remember well the days when I walked across the fields on hard, glistening snow, over fences and around the bush. We had no big and warm buses to take us to school, but school was fun and I recall one teacher, Herman Hart. He was strict but he was fair and he did all he could for us. We respected him."

"There were some fine families--the Deyell's, the Moore's, the Magahey's, the Hart's and others. Christmas was a wonderful time. We hung up our stockings, we went to bed early and we were up bright and early to see what Santa Claus left in our stockings. We believed in Santa and brought up our children that way."

"It is so different today," said Mrs. Ellis with a sigh. I often wonder how young people will turn out, but I guess they will be just as good as they were years ago."

Mrs. Ellis has not a great deal of use for the TV or the

radio. "I have a radio in my room but I seldom use it — there is so much nonsense and the music is at times terrible. I am not fond of noisy orchestras and loud singing, but I do like to hear a violin. Violin music is real music to my ears and I do not hear too well."

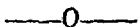
"It is very comfortable in this place. We have good meals, comfortable rooms and I find the people kind and friendly. Sometimes I miss my friends. My husband and I lived in the East Ward for awhile and we seemed to know everybody and they were kind people. We also lived for years on William St. and I had many good neighbours and friends in that neighbourhood. It is good to know that we still have our friends and I enjoy meeting them out here."

"Merry Christmas, Mrs. Ellis," and the reply: "Merry Christmas to you and may God Bless You".

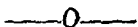


Residents at the Victoria County Home include many who are in their Nineties. To them Christmas in the old, their young days, is more than a mere memory — they can recall and relive much of the old glamour which is today a "thing of the past".

Joe Donaldson spent his early boyhood days on a farm in South Monaghan but his later years were spent around Omemee. "Christmas has not been the same in late years," he said. "The old one horse open sleigh is seldom seen or heard of and one never hears the sleigh bells."



A Christmas party for senior residents at the Ontario Training School for Girls has been arranged for those who can attend.



For the conclusion the writer takes the opportunity of wishing all at the County Home and readers in general A Merry and Joyous Christmas and a A Happy New Year.