

# Clute pioneer family reunited for birthday

Edith Frances (Cowan) Stiles celebrated her 80th birthday recently.

It was a celebration that attracted many members of the family from across the country, including fellow octogenarians: Mrs. Vera Wilkins, 83 of Waterloo, Ont. and James Cowan, 85, who still lives on the family farm.

The three siblings are the children of George and Eldona Cowan, original pioneers who settled in Clute in 1913.

George and Eldona Cowan came to Canada in 1910 from New York State, and three years later, ventured up into the northern wilderness. They were originally headed for the Peace River country, but once they reached the Northern Clay Belt, they immediately fell in love with this part of the province.

George and Eldona managed a store in Gardener, early in their years of marriage. George also worked on the construction of the railway to Moosonee, while his wife cooked for the construction workers.

When they settled in Clute, George worked as a hunter and trapper, in addition to being a shoemaker. The husband and wife also operated a store in Clute.

Their three offspring, Edith, Vera and James were re-united recently, at the home of Mrs. Eldona Chapman, on 17th Avenue for a birthday celebration.

Edith Stiles, and her husband, A.G. Stiles, raised three children of their own; Mrs. Eldona Chapman of Cochrane, Gayford Stiles of Sault Ste. Marie and Mrs. Brenda Lepage of North Bay. They had 13 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren.

A.G. Stiles passed away in 1981. He was a veteran of the first world war and charter member of the Royal Canadian Legion. He also farmed and was a secretary in the school board. He also worked for Clute township as a tax collector and an assessor.

Edith Stiles is a charter member of the Clute Women's Institute, joining the institute as long as 63 years ago. She has also worked for the auxiliary of the Lady Minto Hospital.

A few years ago, Edith moved from a farm in Clute into a house on Third Avenue in Cochrane. The new home always retained the homey atmosphere as befits the family tradition. Every day, at least five or six friends or relatives drop by for a visit.

Vera Wilkins moved to South Porcupine with her husband who worked for years in the mines. After his death, she has retired to a home in the warmer climate of Waterloo, Ont. but she still comes home at least once a year to visit with her brother and sister, and other relatives in the

Cochrane area.

James Cowan also worked in the gold mines in South Porcupine, where he was a hoistman. He also plied his trade during construction of the paper mill in Iroquois Falls, the hospital in Moose Factory and the motel in Hornepayne.

He has since returned to the original family farm in Clute.

At the recent celebration of Mrs. Stiles' birthday, friends and relatives from as far away as Courtenay on Vancouver Island, Edmonton and Calgary in Alberta, made the trip to be present on the occasion.

Visitors also arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lem Chapman from North Bay and Smooth Rock Falls, for the reunion of one of the few surviving pioneer families from Clute.