

# Link to bygone era passes on with Trenton's oldest citizen

HASTINGS

COUNTY - BIOGRAPHY - "H"

Trentonian Sept 10/82

Miss Amelia Hayes, Trenton's oldest citizen, passed away on Tuesday, September 7, and took with her an irreplaceable link with the people and times that were an essential part of the formation of this community.

Born on October 28, 1875, she was one of four children. Her father was Henry Stuart Hayes, a blacksmith who resided in Carrying Place.

Miss Hayes was a living witness to those eras which we can now only read about, the turn of the century, WWI, the Roaring Twenties, WWII, the Depression. She could remember when the Trent River was jammed with logs for Gilmour's Mill, and Trenton was riding the lumber boom. She remembered crossing the old covered bridge on her way to Trenton High School.

One of her favorite memories was that of sitting atop her father's shoulders to watch a tall, lanky man in a black hat, Sir John A. MacDonald, turn the first spadeful of soil on the construction of the Murray Canal.

She received her early

education at Carrying Place, and graduated from Trenton High School at the age of 14. She was admitted to the Picton Normal School by passing herself off as a 17-year-old. She finished her course, and then taught for three years there. At the age of 17, she enrolled in the Toronto Normal School, and spent three years there.

Miss Hayes returned to Trenton for her Christmas holidays one year, and was asked to substitute for an ailing teacher at Dufferin Street School. It was forty years later when she retired from Dufferin, after instilling in her students the value of an education earned "the hard way", as many former pupils will testify, with a gleam of wry humour still in their eye.

Miss Hayes was awarded an Honorary Life Membership in the Women's Auxiliary Anglican Church of Canada, and during Canada's Centennial year she was honored as Citizen of the Year.

She was an active member of the Trenton Library



MISS AMELIA HAYES

Board, and considered books an important part of life. She remained an avid reader all her life.

She had been involved in the Town of Trenton for many years, and considered this her true home. She felt that the area had much to be proud of, and this was one of her favorite topics of conversation.

Despite her increasing age, Miss Hayes participated in many local events, including the City of Trenton Centennial Celebrations when she rode in the parade, and appeared on Senior Citizen's Day.

Her memory was clear and her wit still notably sharp. She delighted former students at her 100th birthday party when she called many by name, and recounted their misadventures under her tutelage.

Miss Hayes was extremely proud of her United Empire Loyalist ancestry, she was descended from a Col. William March, who came from Vermont. His original ancestor fought opposite Oliver Cromwell in 1650.

Conversation was her en-

tertainment, and she had many peevish she enjoyed pursuing. One was what she considered the proper name for Carrying Place. She insisted that it was originally "The Carrying Place" designated so by the Indians who used it as a portage between the Bay of Quinte and Lake Ontario.

Another favorite subject was Mount Pelion. Miss Hayes felt that much more should be made of this great natural monument, stating that it gave character to the town.

It was the river, though, that impressed her the most, and gave her a sense of belonging that she could not find elsewhere, "I never felt I was really home until I had gone to the town bridge and stood gazing at the river; then I knew I was really home, back where I belonged."

Miss Amelia Hayes was a remarkable woman, not only for the achievements of a life that spanned 107 years, but for the tremendous affection and high esteem she commands even in memory.

HAYES, Amelia