

Intelligencer - June 21/02 p. 2

Mathews, Rachel

Rachel still going strong at 100; her secret — no water

Intel
June 21 / 02
By Bruce Bell p. 2
THE INTELLIGENCER

WEST LAKE — A full century of living and life just keeps getting better for 100-year-old Rachel Mathews.

A large crowd of family and friends gathered at the West Lake Terrace Thursday afternoon to wish the home's oldest resident happy birthday and despite being the focus of everyone's attention, she still wasn't about to start acting her age.

"Life is good and it keeps getting better," she said as she greeted the continuous arrival of guests. "I'm enjoying myself a lot more in my later years and I keep very busy. There was a lot of sadness in my early years, but there isn't much now."

One of 10 children, she was born Rachel Cannons on June 20, 1902, and came to Canada from England as a young bride with husband Charles and settled in Ameliasburgh in 1922. Just over a year later, they moved to Cannifton when Charles secured employment at Corby's Dis-



INTELLIGENCER PHOTO BY BRUCE BELL

Rachel Mathews relaxes during her 100th birthday celebration Thursday at West Lake Terrace.

tillery, where he would work for 33 years. Widowed in 1977, her stay in Cannifton lasted almost 60 years,

before spending the better part of the next two decades in Belleville. She moved to West Lake in Janu-

ary, 2000, and hasn't looked back. "This is the place for me," she said with her eyes twinkling. "They treat me so well and I have so many friends."

Longevity runs in the family. Of the 10 children in the Cannons family, nine lived past the age of 80 with only one of her brothers dying young, an 18-year-old sailor who died when the HMS Good Hope was sunk by the Germans during the First World War.

Her secret for long living is simple. "I never drank water — didn't like it much. I didn't mind the odd drink and I smoked a little too," she added. "I didn't much like the cigarettes, but my husband wanted me to smoke, so I did a little — but I don't miss them."

Staff members at the Terrace credit Rachel for keeping the atmosphere busy at the home.

"She's the biggest spitfire we have in the whole place," said nurse Tracy Dowdall. "She organizes a lot of the activities around here and she's knitting someone here a present — and she is some sharp."