

Pharmacist discovered herself married to the profession

By PAM BUCHANAN
Gazette Staff Writer

When Florence Boyce decided to become a pharmacist over 60 years ago, she never realized it was a profession she would practically be married to.

Mrs. Boyce was one of Ontario's first women pharmacists, a teacher and now at the age of 87 she's trying her hand at journalism.

As a resident of the Hallowell House Ltd., Picton, Mrs. Boyce contributes to the weekly publication of the Hallowell House Herald with a variety of witty quotations she enjoys writing.

Known in the rest home for her "Thoughts for the Day", Mrs. Boyce's latest effort is, "Even if marriages are made in heaven; man

has to be responsible for the maintenance."

Making these fun slogans has become a pastime for Mrs. Boyce but writing has always been a favorite, hobby.

From the age of 11, Mrs. Boyce began to keep diaries and the last thing she does before retiring at night is to write down daily occurrences. In her room she has a library of five-year diaries dating back to 1930. A complete story of 55 years of her life.

Her daughter Rosemary of Bowmanville has the earlier collection of diaries belonging to Mrs. Boyce.

"I don't know what got me started writing in a diary but now I like to look back through the years to see what happened on cer-

tain days," says Mrs. Boyce.

Although small in build, Mrs. Boyce is a giant in her generosity, goodwill and patience.

Through the years she has been put to test after test. Numerous times Mrs. Boyce has tried to quit the business but always put it off to help her fellow pharmacists.

Going through life with nicknames like "Tiny Boyce", "Dot", "Little Doc", Mrs. Boyce is still affectionately known as "Little Ma" to her family.

A premature baby at birth weighing only three-and-a-half pounds, Mrs. Boyce said, "Mother had large children but when I came along she said, 'That's not a baby that's a dot' and I've been tagged

with that and other nicknames ever since."

"To all my nieces and nephews I've always been Aunt Dot," she adds.

Mrs. Boyce came to Prince Edward County at the age of seven, spending her childhood in the Black Creek area where she also attended school.

Recalling she was always a good student, Mrs. Boyce said both her father and grandfather had been teachers. She tried her hand at teaching, instructing classes at Greenbush and Consecon.

Mrs. Boyce was 19 when she married her husband, Harold, and it was with her father-in-law who owned a drug store at Sydenham, near Kingston, that she served her pharmacist apprenticeship. She has been widowed about 20 years.

"Back then to become a

pharmacist it took three years of apprenticeship and one year at college," Mrs. Boyce said, "today it's just the other way around."

Mrs. Boyce was one of three women to attend the pharmacy college in Toronto. Following that she continued her education at the University of Toronto for a higher degree, graduating with honors.

"In those days it was quite unusual for a woman to be in such a profession but I can't say we were

treated any different because we were women," recalls Mrs. Boyce.

Running the family store following her father-in-law's death, Mrs. Boyce became well-known in the Sydenham area as the local druggist for 38 years. Afterwards she and her husband returned to the Black Creek farm.

When Mrs. Boyce thought she could relax and enjoy her retirement, she found no rest.

"Just when I thought things were slowing down, I