

Janetville, a tidy and somewhat tiny village, some 13 miles southwest of Lindsay, was at one time a hive of activity according to its popular and most respected senior citizen, Mrs. J. McDowell.

Janetville, which owes its origin to pioneers of Irish ancestry, was born 132 years ago and as Mrs. McDowell decorated her birthday cake with 99 candles on October 12, this estimable lady knows the history of the village and pioneer families.

Many years ago the village had two hotels to look after the patrons who loved a bit of grog and a supplement of home brew, but there were also two churches in the village to handle the spiritual needs of the population in the village and surrounding area.

The village also was industrialized by two saw and shingle mills and a grist mill, where the farmers for miles around teamed grain which was ground into flour by revolving stone wheels. Entertainment was plentiful and wholesome and almost everyone attended dances in the village and in farm homes.

In a reminiscent vein, Mrs. McDowell recalled that she was born in the Township of Ops but practically all her life was spent in Manvers. Days on the farm were tough but she added: "People in those early days had the will and determination to get along; the kids had to walk miles to a school.

"I was one of six girls and six boys and I was right in the middle. We wore the clothes of others as they outgrew their dresses and pinafores, and we used the same books and slates when we went to school. I remember wearing moccasins my father made for me and they were soft and warm. We needed warm clothes for the winters were cold and fierce with snow drifts banked high around the farm and around the school and the church."

This lovely and gracious lady of 99 summers loves to watch her television set. "It is on all day and I look at and listen to stories, the news, a church service and I just love to watch the hockey games. I would like to see the Toronto Leafs win this year," she said.

Switching the talk to baseball, Mrs. McDowell named the players on the Janetville team in the days when the Burns family of four and five generations played and the Burns, McGills, Stinsons and Staples were baseball heroes.

“Storekeepers come and go. There was the Hobbs store, the Howe butcher shop, the Burns store and the Tommy Hawkins silk shop and others” said Mrs. McDowell. All in all it was a pleasant visit and more could be typed, of an historical nature.