

Barnum House curator Luella Young dies

Mrs. Luella Mae Young, curator of Barnum House Museum at Grafton, and one of the village's most active citizens, died quietly in her sleep at her Grafton home Sunday morning a few hours after listening by telephone to carol singing from the annual



Luella Young

Christmas party at Barnum House Museum on Saturday evening. Mrs. Young and her husband had been toasted by the assembled guests, and when

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board chairman Doug Johnston opened the carol singing, Mrs. Dorothy Laroque telephoned Mrs. Young so she could listen on her bedside phone. Later, the party's guest list was taken to her, and her husband read her the names of all those who had attended. A few hours later, she was dead.

Mrs. Young had been in failing health for over a year, and had been in and out of Cobourg General Hospital. Her husband, Gorman, was with her at their home, and had checked her early Sunday morning.

Last year, she and her husband had been present at the Christmas party and had been honored by friends. They received a painting of the two of them which now hangs in the hallway of Barnum House.

The funeral service will be Wednesday, from St. Andrew's

Church, Grafton, with burial in Fairview Cemetery.

Mrs. Young was born in Grafton. Her father, William Munroe, had been a stonemason and then worked with the highways department for 36 years. His father, James Munroe, had come from Scotland, and was a blacksmith in Grafton a century ago. Mrs. Young's mother was Lilly Harnden, of an old Haldimand Township pioneer family.

Mrs. Young attended elementary school in Grafton, then four years of high school at Brighton where she lived with her grandparents, then completed high school at Cobourg, before attending Peterborough Normal School.

A highly successful elementary school teacher, she taught for a total of 41 years before retiring in 1968.

She has hundreds of former pupils throughout the province and Canada. She was 12 years with York Road School in Trenton, 13 years at Grafton and 15 years at Cobourg. She also taught for one year at a small school which used to be located on Highway 2 between Cobourg and Grafton. She was an early member of teachers' groups, and was a district president of the teachers' federation.

Active in the United Church at Grafton, Mrs. Young led the CGIT there for 25 years, and also operated a CGIT girls' camp at Oak Lake in summer. She worked with the Women's Institute and with the Horticultural Society.

In 1960, she became curator of Barnum House, and played an important role in saving the old building and developing its collection. Assisting her every move was her husband, Gorman, who was always there with a willing hand to patch a chimney or fix a window or door and make an exhibit operate.

Barnum House is now recognized throughout the province as one of the finest local museums in existence, and

it attracts thousands of visitors each year. It was Mrs. Young's view that a museum should be active and put to use, and she planned many events at Barnum House, including the Christmas party, art exhibitions and opening ceremonies. School children attended by the hundreds, as she made local history live.

Until recently, Mrs. Young would be present at the house throughout the summer, to welcome guests and to give them details of the exhibits.

The Youngs have no children. She was predeceased by one brother, Thomas James Munroe.

Source: Cobourg Sentinel Star
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