

# Ruth Massey celebrates century of life

See Ruth Massey on page 3

For his part, Lloyd had been a cheesemaker during the Depression in Wagarville near Sharbot Lake.

According to family lore Lloyd was on a harvest excursion seeking work and got a job on the Elsey family farm. Ruth was cooking the meal in the absence of her parents one evening and he came in with hired hands to eat. One look at her, and he was in love. She had lovely curly hair, was very pretty, and a good cook. He was smitten. After a lengthy courtship, and many letters they married on Ruth's 29th birthday in 1936.

After the wedding they boarded the train for Ontario returning to Wagarville, where Lloyd once again worked in the cheese factory.

It was a time when life was hard, but neighbors were generous and supportive. Many stories are told of those who helped by bringing meat and vegetables to Ruth and Lloyd as they struggled to establish roots and build a life in Ontario.

It was nine years before the couple experienced the joy of their first daughter, Linda. They were now living in Brantford.

Younger sister, Meda had a more intriguing introduction to life.

She was born in the back kitchen of the family home in Peterborough four years later with help from Daisy Stewart. The doctor arrived just in time to take Meda to the hospital. Lloyd tagged along in a second vehicle with Ruth.

Together Linda and Meda have five children and nine grandchildren.

Their only brother, Garry, died in an accident at age five.

It was a time when families were close. The Masseys continue to be tied by the

bonds of the stories that made up their childhoods with their mother, Ruth and father, Lloyd.

Linda recalls how her dad and his younger brother Dean always told each other jokes, the funny, slapping-the-knee kind of jokes. Both being farmers they had a camaraderie as well as a strong brotherly love. She can see them yet in the kitchen by the woodstove, laughing and enjoying being together as her Mom and Aunt Agnes had tea and prepared the meal.

Ruth, being of Scottish descent, perhaps was more serious, particular and proper than her husband, Lloyd, but she nevertheless appreciated a good laugh says Lloyd's sister Helen Smith.

Lloyd and Ruth always took helped out with Helen's kids because there were seven of them. They loved to come out to the Massey farm and run and play in the open fields and hay mow. At age 93, Helen is the only other member of that generation remaining. She lives with her daughter in Regina.

The holiday out in the country was a big deal for the Smith kids. Holidays were rare in the fifties. It was a chance to stretch out in wide-open spaces, have adventures with farm and wild animals, eat delicious farm cooking. For Rosemary it was also a time to try to keep up with her cousins, Linda and Meda both of whom she idolized, along with her big sister and brother, Marguerite & Eric.

Rosemary has vivid memories of her times on the farm.

Aunt Ruth had a no-nonsense way of managing the kids and all their ups and downs, remembers Rosemary. She wiped away many a tear, from hurts physical or emotional, and made sure they all got

along.

"She provided miles of ideas for things to do, places to go on the farm. The farm was rich with fields to walk, flowers to discover, trees to climb, gardens to raid, dogs, cats, cattle and chickens to pester." Then there was the big barn where they would sneak in and jump up and down on the bales of hay until they were caught and disciplined.

There were also the pony and cart—a wonder to any city child, and a portable building they called the dance hall because of its shining floors.

And when the day's adventures were done there was always the warm farmhouse waiting for them when they got back, the smell of good, home-cooked food, hot baths and hair-washes, a change of clothes or band-aid if needed.

Rosemary says, "I learned a lot from her about how life should be lived and these experiences became part of my own life and character and have been reproduced in my own family."

Helen remembers a visit made by Lloyd and Ruth on June 2, 1953. They came in to see Helen's new baby Ruth, born April 22, and named after her aunt. Helen and older daughter Rosemary both remember a whole lot of oohing & aahing over the new baby girl.

They also remember a lot of oohing & aahing over something else. Helen's husband had purchased one of the first colour TV sets in the city of Peterborough and the young Queen Elizabeth was being crowned that day! All heads were crowded around that set to view all that splendour—and in colour!

Linda remembers one day her mother was resting after a busy fall of canning food for winter. Suddenly Linda heard a terrible crash in the basement.

Family members ran down and saw that a shelf had broken and all their food lay in a heap of glass mixed with beet juice, tomatoes, beans, pickles, peaches, raspberries. It was a mess. More than that, everyone knew how much the family relied on those jars for its winter food. Linda remembers her father just grabbed a shovel and started cleaning it up. Her mom

assured the girls that they would get along somehow with God's provision.

That faith in God has been a lifelong source of strength for the family.

Once the children were all off to school Ruth taught throughout Peterborough County as a supply teacher, and was much loved by her many students. She started the first mission band and organized yearly bales of clothing and supplies to be sent to Hay River N. W. T. She was the church pianist for many years and organized and led both youth and adult choirs. Her many hobbies included beachcombing, gardening, sewing, and walking in the woods, camping, boating, and traveling.

Ruth was an avid reader and well versed on many subjects. She rarely missed reading the evening paper.

Her kindness and hospitality were well known to relatives, friends and neighbors, many of whom had a meal at her table. She spent many hours helping with suppers at the church and for endless years played for and helped with Christmas concerts at the church. She visited shut-ins for years when she was well into her eighties.

She enjoyed exhibiting at the fair—particularly flowers and baking.

She supported the blind mission for years and followed the work of Billy Graham and other evangelists.

In 1978 after forty-two years of marriage Lloyd passed away. Though Ruth was deeply grieved she kept busy closing Lloyd's business, selling the old home and having an auction as well as planning and designing a new home, and taking trips to Europe and China.

Being a close family was always important to Ruth. She loved all of her family dearly and in later years spent many happy hours with grandchildren taking them sledding, or skating on the pond as she had done with her own children.

She was known to dress-up on more than one occasion tricking most close friends and neighbors especially at Halloween. She took time to listen, to laugh, to share a story or smell a rose.

Ruth has lived in the nursing home in Warkworth for seven years.