

Feb 5/86

Couple celebrate 50th anniversary

A Queen's Line couple spent their 50th anniversary in their home quietly enjoying the cards and greetings they received. Arnold and Doreen Oattes had been honoured by their family last month.

"It was a bitterly cold day when we were married January 29, 1936," says Mrs. Oattes. "The snow was up over the fences. We travelled with a horse and cutter, of course."

Their three sons and one daughter celebrated with them in a reception in December at the Cobden Agricultural Hall. The family decided it would be better to get together before winter again set in in earnest.

Mr. Oattes was born and raised on the Queen's Line, about three miles from the farm where the couple has spent their entire married life. Mrs. Oattes, the former Doreen White, was born in Beachburg.

The two met at a dance at the Beachburg Fair. A year later their paths crossed again, and they were engaged six weeks later.

But a wedding was not imminent. It was only six years later, after Mr. Oattes had completed two years of agricultural college at Kemptville and Mrs. Oattes had spent some time working in Pembroke, that wedding bells rang.

Even though the horsepower for transportation came from horses, and Beachburg and the Queen's Line were a formidable distance apart, the young couple managed about one date a week, except when

the prospective groom was away at school, of course.

The Oattes' were married in Pembroke, and went to North Bay to visit Mr. Oattes' sister for their honeymoon.

When they returned, they settled on the farm where they still reside. Their friends held a reception for them on February 4 at the home of Mr. Oattes' brother, Jim.

They were married during what survivors of that era call the "dirty thirties". They operated a mixed farm, owning 100 acres, but farming as much as 400 including rented land.

Mr. Oattes owned a threshing mill, and travelled the Queen's Line from one end to the other from August until Christmas. Farmers would store the sheaves of grain in their barns until their turn came to thresh, unlike today when combines do the job in the field.

Electrical power came to the Oattes farm in the early 40's. Soon a milking machine was installed so that the 13 to 15 cows would no longer have to be milked by hand. And Mrs. Oattes got a washing machine to help her keep ahead of the laundry for her growing family.

Mr. Oattes is now 77; Mrs. Oattes will celebrate her 76th birthday soon. They have three sons and one daughter; Jack of

Sudbury, Barclay of North Bay and Wayne and Helen (Mrs. Murray Pettigrew) of Ottawa. They have 10 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Oattes is a life member of the United Church Women of the Queen's Line United Church. Mr. Oattes is an honorary elder there.



Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Oattes are still living in the home on the Queen's Line where they came as newlyweds fifty years ago.