



Gordon Gilmour shows off photos which are mementos of his career with Dominion Magnesium, where he went to work in 1942. He retired in 1970.

The spirit of Christmas remains constant, says Cobden nonagenarian

By Marie Zettler
Sun Editor

There hasn't been too big a change in Christmas over 91 years, says Gordon Gilmour of Cobden, who celebrated his 91st birthday last August.

"The love and kindness of family and friends remains the same," says Mr. Gilmour. "The Lord was born on Christmas Day many years ago, and he's still alive today."

Of course, some of the trappings of Christmas have changed.

"They didn't cut down Christmas trees in 1901," says Mr. Gilmour. "We hung up our socks instead."

And what would be in those stockings?

"An orange, and sometimes a banana or an apple," he recalls. "Sometimes we got new clothing for Christmas."

As for toys, the youngsters in the family of nine made their own.

"We used to make stilts," he recalls. "And we played checkers and crokinole a lot, and rode horseback."

The youngsters were kept busy helping with the chores, which included milking cows by hand.

"We had lots of fun," he says. "There's always be an old cat somewhere against the wall, and we'd squirt milk right into it's mouth."

"We had no power until 1942," he says of his

home on the Queen's Line.

The family attended the Ross Presbyterian Church, of which Mr. Gilmour is still a member.

"We had Sunday School until Christmas, and would end the season with a big Christmas social," he said. "At Christmas, Sunday School ended for the winter and would start up again in April."

Christmas dinner at home would consist of roast goose with all the trimmings with Christmas pudding for dessert.

"Mother would cook the pudding in a bag with broken china in the bottom of the pot so the pudding wouldn't stick," he says. "There were great cooks those days."

Mr. Gilmour married Viola Wallace in 1925.

"Love is a great thing," he says, pointing out framed congratulatory certificates for the couple's 50th and 60th wedding anniversaries. "I often thought if I'd had a pile of money it would have been better. But I see people with lots of money that are divorced."

Religion, too, is not necessarily a guarantee of happiness, he says.

"I see lots of religious people that can't stand the sight of each other."

Mrs. Gilmour died in 1988, after sixty-three and a half years of marriage.

The couple¹⁹² started married life farming, but lost the farm during the depression. In 1942, Mr. Gilmour took a job at Dominion Magnesium, now Timminco, at Haley Station, working with his team of horses. The starting wage was 35 cents an hour.

He retired in 1970. The couple raised three children: Margaret (Mrs. Mac McLaren), Evelyn (Mrs. Harvey Pilgrim jr.), and Cecil.

Christmas trees became part of the family's Christmas tradition as the children were growing up.

"Times were hard," he recalls of the depression years of the 30's. But we always managed a few toys, and we made our own amusement."

"It can be a blessing to be poor. People learn to depend on themselves and be more careful."

In all of his 91 years, he has never been hospitalized, and still lives alone in the apartment in Cobden he shared with his wife until her death.

"God has been good to me through the years," he says. "And I have a wonderful doctor. Doctor Pye is very good to me."

He says that people sometimes go to a doctor when it's not really necessary.

"Years ago people didn't go to the doctor -- the doctor visited the pa-

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Childhood memories

I wish I were a boy again
Without a single care,
With freckles scattered on my face
And hayseed in my hair.

I'd like to rise at 4 o'clock
And do a hundred chores,
And feed the pigs and milk the cows
And curry mules galore,

And wear my brother's cast-off clothes
And walk four miles to school,
And get a licking every day
For breaking some old rule.

And then come home again at night
And do the chores once more,
And then go weary up the stairs
And see my little bed
And hear my Uncle Samuel say:
"That boy don't earn his bread."

By Gordon Gilmour
Cobden

Editor's note: Happy Birthday to Mr. Gilmour, who turns 91 on Tuesday, August 11.

Nonagenarian

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tients. And sometimes he waited a long time for his money."

He said in the years when he owed the family doctor money, he never received a dunning letter.

"But he always sent a

Christmas card," he said.

"Funny -- when I finally paid the bill, we got no more Christmas cards."

He enjoys living alone, and appreciates frequent calls and visits from his family and from VON vo-

lunteer visitors Tony and Johanne Van Kessel.

"But I like being alone some of the time too," he says. "It gives me the chance to think and to remember the old days."