

# Hard work has been her companion for 90 years

By Eileen Argyris

Marion Blight of Castleton is one of those inspiring people, who, when life hands them a lemon, makes lemonade.

Mrs. Blight celebrated her 90th birthday on Feb. 3. Hers has been a life of hard work and sacrifice, but she has a smile and a story for everyone.

She was born Marion Bennett, in a tiny (now non-existent) hamlet near Port Hope.

She thinks it was called Zion, but is not sure, since she didn't grow up there, but in the town of Port Hope.

## ELDEST OF 13 CHILDREN

She was eldest child of Ed Bennett and his wife, Sarah Sheppard, and she had 10 sisters and two brothers, all of whom are now deceased.

"I had to get out and work when I was 15," she recalls, but, fortunately, work was something that agreed with her.

She worked in the home and office of a local doctor and his wife, whom she classifies as "society people."

By day, she worked in the doctor's office and in the evenings, she worked in the home, often helping to set up entertainments for the couple's "society" friends.

In spite of being parted from her family, especially the father she adored, she says, "I enjoyed every bit of it. I loved working. I love housework."

## MARRIED AT 17

At the tender age of 17, she married Jack Blight, also 17, and the young couple moved to Trenton.



Marion Blight, age 90, of Castleton

During the Depression, her husband worked helping to build the airport that later became CFB Trenton. He also worked for the Canadian Pacific Railroad and at a local creosote plant.

The marriage was not without its troubles. In

fact, the couple was separated for 25 years, but reunited when Mr. Blight contracted cancer.

Mrs. Blight nursed him through his final illness, which lasted two years. He died in 1980.

The Blights had seven children, one of whom

died as a baby and another child, Frances, who died in the early 1940s at the age of five.

## A DOLLAR A DAY

During the time that she and her husband were separated, and she had the children with her, she did various things to keep the wolf away from the door.

Housekeeping, practical nursing and care of the elderly were some of her jobs.

She also ran a small nursing home in Brighton for a time, and remembers working for a tourist resort in Trenton, washing dishes for one dollar a day.

"I've had a very busy life," she acknowledges.

Soon after the death of her husband in 1980, Mrs. Blight moved to her present home in Castleton where, up to a year ago, she continued to work for a living.

## RAN BAKERY IN HER 80S

Most recently she was a child-care provider but, prior to that, she operated a bakery from her home for "two or three years."

She says, "I baked what folks around here like — pies, cakes, tarts — I didn't do the fancy stuff."

"Quite a few from around Castleton came in here."

She stays busy, in spite of her age and a few health problems of her own. She still loves housework and takes pride in being able to do that.

Until recently, she raised a large garden of flowers and vegetables. "I love gardening; I love flowers," she notes.

## PEOPLE WEREN'T 'SCARED TO SPEAK'

She sees "a horrible difference in the times" from when she was young.

In those days, she says, "people weren't scared to speak to you."

And automation, she believes, has made modern people "too lazy."

"I don't think it's for the best," she advises.

Mrs. Blight makes her home with her daughter, Margaret. Her other sons and daughters include: John and his wife Kathleen, and Albert and

his wife Elsie, all of Colborne; Hugh and his wife Donna of Oshawa, and Jean (Mrs. Wilfred Lambert) of Cobourg.

She has 19 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She is a devoted member of Colborne Pentecostal Church who says, "I wouldn't trade my church for anything."

And, in spite of the hardships she has known, she insists, "I thank God I worked hard. I knew what work was, and I wasn't afraid to tackle anything."

## PACKARD, ELSIE MAY (NEE MUTTON)

Died peacefully at Streamway Villa, Cobourg on Sunday, February 9, 1997 surrounded by her family. Loving mother of Argyle and his wife Esther of Saskatoon, Shirley and her husband Cecil Oliver of Stittsville, Eunice Blyth of Colborne, also Winston predeceased. Mother-in-law of Betty Packard of Dundonald and George Blyth of Salem. Good friend of William Legacy of Colborne. Cherished grandmother of 24 grandchildren, 39 great-grandchildren and 9 great-great-grandchildren. Sister of Grace Samson, R.R.# 2, Colborne, Lawrence and Beryl Mutton of Shiloh, Sarah and Don Bennet of Trenton and sister-in-law of Ted Gillespie of Shiloh. Predeceased by Laura Mutton, Amy and Bob Pretsell, Myrtle and Blake Perry, Edith and Walter Pearson, Clarence and Martha Mutton and Edna Gillespie. Funeral service was held at the Eden United Church, Dundonald on Wednesday, February 12 at 11am. Spring interment at Shiloh Cemetery. Friends called at the MacCoubrey Funeral Home, 11 King St. W., Colborne on Tuesday from 7-9pm. If desired, memorial donations to the Streamway Villa, Eden United Church or the charity of one's choice would be appreciated by the family.

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