

# Resident celebrating 105 years

Her eyesight and hearing aren't what they used to be, but, at 105, Frances Rowland still carries her wit and charm like a teenager. Just a couple of years ago, she was still living at her home in Embro and taking care of herself. Today she is a resident at PeopleCare, and a member of the three-century club.

"I never thought it would come to this," Mrs. Rowland said at a family gathering on her birthday last Thursday afternoon where a close friend and some family members gathered to celebrate the special day. Her only child, daughter Doris and husband Howard McCall, of RR 3, Lakeside, were there. Mrs. McCall read all the special greetings her mother received including congratulations from Queen Elizabeth 11, Prime Minister Paul Martin, Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, Oxford MP John Finlay, and Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman. Janet Lange, who lived "around the corner" from the Rowlands for many years, was also there to reminisce. The ladies talked about their years of leading 4-H in Embro and the many craft and baking competitions Frances entered. Mrs. Rowland showed at the Embro Fair for over fifty years and also took her best to the Woodstock and London Fairs. "It had to be just perfect," Mrs. Lange said, "or she wouldn't take



**Frances Rowland in 3-century club**

it." Doris recalled her mother baking two or three cakes (especially Queen Elizabeth and Angel cakes) just to get the perfect one for the competition. Mrs. Rowland also enjoyed knitting and crocheting and is a charter member of the Brooksdale Women's Institute.

Frances (Youngs) Rowland was born on the 6th line of Zorra, just east of Brooksdale on May 13, 1899. She is the oldest and last remaining sibling in her family. At an early age she moved to Youngsville with her parents (Charles Youngs and Barbara Swanson), two sisters, Inez (Mrs. Shewan), Cylene (Mrs. Crosson), and two brothers, Charlie and Cyrus. Three of her siblings were

deaf, so at an early age, Frances learned sign language with two hands. It was a difficult process, and she said she was never able to learn one-handed sign language. Her parents ran the hotel and post office in Youngsville, but at the age of 13, France's mother died and Frances had to learn all of the domestic skills and take care of her younger brothers and sisters. She recalls preparing full-course meals for the local council members who held their meetings in the hotel.

Mrs. Rowland has six grandchildren, Shirley Hanlon of Tavistock, George of RR Annan, Barbara (Mrs. Cussons) of Ingersoll, Margaret (Mrs. Marchant) of Ingersoll, and twins Howard of RR Embro and Harold of RR Thamesford. There are seventeen great grandchildren and sixteen great-great grandchildren, with another due in June, and one great-great-great grandchild. Mrs. Rowland lived on the farm with her husband George, until the couple retired and moved to Embro in 1961. He passed away in 1978 and she remained in the home until about two and a half years ago when she moved into the PeopleCare.

Although Frances has had the opportunity to witness first-hand many changes over the years, she still appreciates lovely flowers, visits from family and friends and reminiscing about the "good old days". 2004