

Former Browns Corner resident celebrates a century

Laura Green
SPECIAL TO THE WEEKENDER

Over the past 100 years, Lucille (Symons) Bennington has lived in many parts of Oxford County and never without family until she moved to the Maples Home for Seniors in Tavistock at the age 99. She actually celebrated her 99th birthday in Woodstock General Hospital and moved to the Maples in June of last year.

Lucille celebrated her 100th birthday on Apr. 2 with her only child Kathryn Bennington, her niece Mary (Muir) Walton and four of Mary's children who affectionately call her "Aunt Lucille," at the Maples. Mary made chocolate cupcakes to share with the other residents and staff, and Lucille wore a button that said "The Birthday Girl." The Walton clan have many fond memories of their Sunday afternoon trips to the Bennington cottage at Long Point on the "Old Cut" and their holidays at the Zenda home.

On Saturday, Apr. 4 an open house was held at the Anglican Church in Huntingford. 180 well-wishers attended the event including three great-great-nephews and one great-great-niece. MP Dave Mackenzie and MPP



Celebrating her 100th birthday on Apr. 2 at The Maples Home for Seniors in Tavistock is Lucille Bennington. She's shown here with her great-niece Kathryn Walton, and, in the second row Henry Veenstra (great-nephew by marriage), her daughter Kathryn Bennington, great-niece Elizabeth (Walton) Elliott and niece Mary Walton. In the back row are great-nephews Tom Walton and Jim Walton. (Laura Green photo)

Ernie Hardeman also came for a piece of birthday cake. The family had a display of photos, both historical and family, and a computerized slideshow of family gatherings, including her 95th birthday party.

Lucille (Symons) Bennington was born in the house

that her father built on the farm known as the "Hog Back," Lot 29, Con 5 of West Zorra or 376750 37th Line north of Brooksdale. Her parents were Edgar and Lena (Innes) Symons and she had four older siblings: Clara (Mrs. James Muir), Edna (Mrs. Cecil Kerr), Ella (who died at age four), and brother James, who died as a newborn. She lived on this farm for 10 years, and then the family moved to a farm north of Browns Corners in East Nissouri Township.

S.S. #8 Wadlands was the first school (located at the corner of Road 96 and 37th Line) that she attended and her first teacher was Miss Lottie Richardson.

Lucille remembered going to school on the first day and being concerned that she might have to sit with a boy in the double seat. To her relief she sat with Bella Tuffnail. She also attended Browns school, which is still in use today as a community hall.

Lucille married Albert (Benny) Bennington in March 1932. He was the son of Thomas and Lillian Bennington from St. Marys. Benny was working at the cheese factory in Wellburn at the time, and continued the cheese making profession at Newark and Tillsonburg. When the cheese factory at Zenda was for sale, Benny was ready to go on his own. By now he had won several prizes including the British Empire Open at a Belleville competition. He operated the cheese factory until the late 1950s. After the factory closed, he worked for Oxford Farmers' Cooperative in Woodstock.

Working along side her husband in his business, Lucille prepared the noon meal for the cheese factory workers and many workers would board in their home.

In her spare time, Lucille loved to quilt, crochet, knit, and do other crafts, which have become family keepsakes. From 2000 to 2003, one of her quilts named "Tornado 1979" travelled with a collection of quilts to England. This project was coordinated by the Woodstock Museum under the direction of Sheila Johnson. Many of her quilts were on display at her party including one crazy quilt that has been on display at many heritage events.

Lucille was a great supporter of locals fairs with her many entries in the sewing and needlework sections. She would submit items to be judged at the Drumbo, Embro, Simcoe, Tillsonburg and Woodstock Fairs.

This love of exhibiting has been passed down to her niece Mary Walton and Mary's daughters and grandchildren. Lucille's great-great-nephew Ken Walton was Embro Fair Ambassador in 1999 and great-great-niece Kathryn Walton is the current Embro Fair Ambassador.

Lucille and her husband of over 50 years loved to "Shun Pike" on Sunday afternoons. They loved family gatherings and playing cards.

Lucille was member of the Zenda Women's Institute and the Zenda United Church Women — both organizations have closed. Lucille is a member of the Foldens United Church.

She enjoys the programs at the Maples and attending family gatherings.

When asked about her longevity, Lucille didn't comment but her niece Mary said, "it is eating healthy" and "lots of work."

Hearing loss topic of Oxford WI Spring Board meeting

Ruth Skillings
LAKESIDE CORRESPONDENT

On Mar. 25 the Oxford District Women's Institute met at the Springford Community Centre for its Spring Board meeting. President Carol Innes called the meeting to order with the Ode and repeating the Mary Stewart Collect. It was noted that 822 wash cloths will be sent to be used in Third World countries, by new mothers to bath their babies. President Carol managed to get them without any out-of-pocket cost. The Roll Call was answered by each branch giving a review of their activities this past year. We may be only 10 branches but they all are very active in their own communities.

Kim Paulton is a hearing care consultant for the Canadian Hearing Society, and brought with her Caroline Kerr, who is a former native of Oxford County. Kim travels over five counties talking to groups and individuals about hearing and hearing problems. Of the five counties she works in is Oxford, and it is the only one that does not have a spe-

cialist to deal with hearing problems. Each branch reported having members with hearing problems. Fifty per cent of people over 65 will have hearing loss, while 80 per cent over 80 years will have hearing problems. Our hearing is at its best when we are 20 and it normally starts downhill from there. For more information call 1-877-347-3427 or visit www.chs.ca.

Members were reminded of the need to have their volunteer hours calculated for their annual meetings in April. The Oxford North Women's Institute banner is now retired and we are looking for a home for it. The Tavistock Museum was not interested and so the Beachville Museum will be approached.

Liz Harrison reported on the Scholarship Committee. Melanie Aarts won the Oxford Scholarship last year and Amanda Hart won the Oxford Bursary. The new applications have been sent out via the Oxford 4-H Newsletter, that goes to every 4-H member in Oxford.

Sheila Greason reported on the Antique Fair which was held in

St. David's Church in Woodstock. It was a huge success and will likely be repeated again next year. There was very good media coverage and interest.

The District Annual will be held at the Browns School House on May 26 and starts at 9 a.m. Lunch will be pot luck, bring food to share, dishes, cutlery and cup. The special speaker is Pattie Pizziola, Rose Program co-ordinator will be speaking about FWIO and her work with ROSE.

Ruth Gourley reported for FWIO. She noted that Marlene Archer, our Board member, had surgery this week and is doing well. The theme for this year is to "Get Involved" with five key areas: WI, family and friends, community, health, and environment. The Spring Book will be available in the fall. Tweedsmuir Workshop is Aug. 4 at Shedden.

Carol Innes reported on her day at the Farm Show, where they were celebrating the 90th Anniversary of FWIO by honouring Alice Edwards (1860-1951), a member from South Lobo who was inducted into the Agriculture Hall of Fame