



Dumblane Presbyterian Church, one of the few log churches left in Ontario marks its 97th anniversary Sunday. It is situated on the bank of the Saugeen River near Port Elgin. (Photo by Cantelon, Wingham.)

Mrs. Priscilla A. Elsie turned 104 yesterday and began celebrating by inviting the press to morning tea. In the lounge she proudly displayed an African violet, presented when she was made an honorary member of the Mary Hastings' Housewife Club last year. (Photo by Free Press Staff Photographer Jeanne Graham.)

London's Oldest Housewife Turns 104, "Eat Potatoes in Skins," Says Mrs. Elsie

Mrs. Priscilla A. Elsie, 728 King street, turned 104 yesterday. To get in trim for the event she has been strolling along the sidewalk recently — alone.

This morning, surrounded by the fragrance of bouquets of flowers and smartly decked out in a fashionable black frock, she welcomed the press and invited them to tea and cookies.

Mrs. Elsie just doesn't look her age. Her hearing is almost gone — she wields an effective, old-fashioned ear-trumpet — and her sight is failing. But her mind is as agile as it was 70 or 80 years ago.

When well-known bachelor-girl Free Press Photographer

Jeanne Graham said, "hello," Mrs. Elsie grinned.

"Aren't you the girl who took my picture a couple of years ago?" she asked.

"That's right," said Jeanne. "You remember me, eh?"

"Of course I do," Mrs. Elsie said. "Say, are you married yet?"

"No. Still trotting around," Jeanne laughed.

"Oh, you're just a girl yet," Mrs. Elsie said.

When CFPL-TV newsreel cameraman Frank Guile snapped on his lights, Mrs. Elsie asked what she was supposed to do.

"Whatever you normally do every day," Frank replied.

At this point Mrs. Ada Doyle, the daughter with whom Mrs. Elsie lives, stepped in.

"She eats, sleeps, sits down and goes for walks," she said. "You'd never think she was 104."

Mrs. Doyle sighed.

"She felt better all winter than I did — and I'm only 74."

After answering a few questions and chuckling over the past, Mrs. Elsie suggested some tea. Mrs. Doyle prepared it.

After a tentative sip, Mrs. Elsie frowned.

"Too hot," she said. "Some more milk, please."

Last year she became an honorary member of the Mary Hastings Housewife Club. She is believed to be the oldest living "Housewife" in the world.

"I'd like to get to one of the picnics this summer if I can," she said to her daughter.

Born in Lambeth, Mrs. Elsie has lived in the London district all her life. When she turned 100 in 1951 she received letters and telegrams from all over the country — and a very special one from Buckingham Palace.

Until 1950 she traveled as far as Michigan to visit members of her family. She has eight children and around 23 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and more than a dozen great-great-grandchildren.

Her secret of longevity?

"Eat lots of potatoes with their skins on," she grinned. "That way you get all the goodness."

And she hasn't added an ounce in years.

Bruce Church Built Of Logs 97 Years Old

BY MERRILL CANTELON

PORT ELGIN, August 5 — Historic Dumblane Presbyterian Church near Port Elgin will celebrate its 97th anniversary Sunday with the Rev. Wilfred McLeod, of Wiarton, as anniversary speaker.

Nestled on the bank of the Saugeen River, it is one of the few log churches remaining in Ontario. It was constructed in 1859 from cut cedar, taken from the banks of the Saugeen River by early settlers and is still in excellent condition.

The interior woodwork and pulpit were fashioned by Peter Scott, who had served his apprenticeship with a joiner in Scotland. The boards were split, then smoothed with a draw knife.

Mr. Scott then studied for the ministry, though middle aged. Following his graduation he served the church for some years.

Came On Rafts

Early history records how some members came down the river in rafts to church while others walked from Lake Huron through the virgin forest.

Pioneers who shared in the building included the Gowans, Scotts, Wallaces, Rowlands, Bells, Christies, Bryces, Armstrongs, McKnechnies and others.

Services have been held ever since in the now-sided church with the exception of the winter months.

In the early days the congregation was affiliated with Port Elgin Presbyterian Church, but more recently with Burgoyne Presbyterian Church.

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