

Ed and Bette Footitt met on 'The Crescent'

By Julie Conroy

June has been designated as Seniors Month in Ontario. I have been writing about some well known members of the Acton Seniors Centre over the past few weeks. Some have lived in Acton most of their lives. Others adopted Acton as their home later in life, but all have contributed to Acton in some way. This week we are featuring a well known couple in Acton, Ed and Bette Footitt.

Ed was born in Galt (now Cambridge) in 1917 and christened Albert Edward. He had two brothers and a sister. He lived in Galt for two years and then the family moved to Acton. Ed has called Acton home ever since. He went to school here starting off in the primary class which was then held in the old town hall. From there he went to Robert Little school, and then Continuation (high school). He finished his schooling at 18.

Ed worked for Beardmore and Co. almost continually starting in 1935 until 1981 except for the time in the army. During WWII he served from 1943-1946, spending most of his time at Camp Borden as an instructor. When the war ended in Europe he was transferred to Camp Plauche (near New Orleans, USA).

There were 300 Canadians stationed in New Orleans waiting to be transferred to active war zones during the Japanese engagement. As luck would have it, the war was over before they were

shipped out. There were also 500 German prisoners of war there at this time. He tells me they enjoyed being so close to New Orleans, especially the night life.

In 1936 when Beardmore and Co. had a slowdown and people were being laid off Ed and his wife moved to South Porcupine where Ed worked for a gold mining company called Dome Mining for two years. Quite a few men from the Acton area "rode the rails" looking for work and ended up staying in South Porcupine, says Ed. To prevent "free samples" in the gold mine employees had to shower and change their clothes completely before they could leave the mine, but Ed says, some people still managed to smuggle gold out by swallowing it.

Ed has done many interesting things. He tells me he was very involved with the local Y.M.C.A. in the days when they could boast 50 active men in the Y's Men's Club. They held dances and auctions to raise money. He was



RETIRED: Bette and Ed Footitt relax at their cottage in Bracebridge with their dog Sasha.

also an assistant cub leader and worked with another well known Acton character, Esther Taylor. Ed was also elected to Acton council for five years, and was the deputy reeve for five. He enjoyed playing hockey and baseball and was manager of Acton Tanners hockey

team at one time. He is a life member of Branch 197 Acton Legion, and was involved with building both the new Legion, and Birchway Legion apartments. He has been an active volunteer with A.S.S.I.C. (now HHCSI) for 20 years and helps with Meals on Wheels.

Born in Bracebridge

Like many Acton people, Bette was born (Minerva Bradshaw) in Bracebridge where her father was the captain of the Cherokee, a pleasure ship on Lake Muskoka. When he wasn't able to sail he worked for Eaton's. Bette had three older brothers. Her mother died when she was eight years old, so her aunts helped raise her. Her father died when she was 12 and her aunt continued to raise her in Bracebridge until she completed high school.

Bette came to Acton at age 15 to live with her brother on Poplar Avenue. That's where she and Ed met since Ed also lived on the "Crescent," and their homes were back to back. (The 'Crescent' is composed of Poplar Ave. and Crescent St.).

They married in 1936 and son Ted was born in South Porcupine in the local hospital. Ed remembers taking Bette to the hospital, and the nurse telling him to get off back to work. Ed says South Porcupine is 600 miles due north, and winter lasts nine months of the year.

Bette worked at Mason Knit, (as did many ladies in Acton). The original plant was at the corner of Willow and River Streets, near the Robert Little school and it later moved to a new location on Eastern Avenue, which is now known as the

olde Hide House. They lived in the large house across the road from the plant, (which later became "The Olde Book House"). Ed received a "free" phone from Amos Mason, owner of Mason Knit, on the understanding Ed would keep an eye on the property. He laughs when he remembers the sprinklers going off one evening and Amos rushing down the road on his bike.

Son Ted lives in Mississauga, and worked for many years for Kodak. (So lots of complimentary film, and many beautiful photographs). Ted was a salesman and travelled all over the world. When he was thinking of retirement, he met a gentleman in Taiwan who was the owner of a tea company, and a new career opportunity arose. He is now the sole Tea Merchant for the Dynasty Green Tea Company. Now they have complimentary green tea, which might account for their healthy appearance and interest in life.

Ed and Bette are justly proud of the fact they have two grandchildren named Michael and Kelly. Michael has great grandson number one Steven, (carrying on the Footitt name). Kelly married Brian Keegan (a good old Irish name) and they have three children Amy, Owen, and Emily. This

Continued on page 19

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We look forward to seeing you all again next year.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

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