



Champion COMMUNITY Page

Patterson, 90, remembers the good old days

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

Ella Patterson has spent most of her nine decades of life on a 100-acre Milton farm.

She has learned that though time puts its mark on almost everything, one or two things stay constant.

For Ms Patterson, farming is one of them.

"All my life I've been a farmer," she said. "I'm a farmer's daughter. My son Cecil and his family are sixth generation farmers."

As an adult, Ms Patterson (nee Peacock) achieved local recognition by writing a weekly column for The Champion, highlighting local, folksy events like births and anniversaries.

"If they were sick, or there were birthdays in the community, I tried to make them happy — that they belonged in the community," she said.

She wrote that column for 40 years, until an injury to her arm forced her into retirement.

"I lived for that paper," she said. "I loved it. It was the joy of my life."

One reason is it kept her involved. And despite running a farm and raising her two children, Joanne and Cecil, Ms Patterson made it a point to stay involved.

So she served almost 27 years with the Halton 4H Club, as well as various other community organizations such as the Hornby Women's Institute and the Ontario Agricultural Museum.

She kept the friends she made, and many of them attended her 90th birthday bash held at Boyne Community Centre August 6. About 100 people attended and a large cake was cut.

But when the party was over, Ms Patterson returned to the farm she says in time will be sacrificed to the upcoming James Snow Parkway expansion.

And that isn't the legacy she hoped to leave behind.

"I feel very bad," she said quietly. "It was a century farm and I'd hoped it would be here forever for my family."

So as the town prepares for growth, Ms Patterson watches the change swirl around her. "I do shed many a tear. Right below me they have it all staked out for new housing. A body just has to go along with them and hope for the best."

"All the people knew each other. The children and the parents would gather every Friday for a party. Now that's all gone. People come and go."

ELLA PATTERSON

But life is ever-changing, and Ms Patterson has seen a world of change in her day. Even the weather has been modified since the years when her husband, Cecil Sr., delivered milk from their dairy farm in icy winter squalls.

"Many's the time we were snowed in," recalled Ms Patterson. "Years and years ago we used to have five feet of snow."

Those were the days when communities were closely knit and the local one-room school house was a regular meeting place.

"All the people knew each other. The children and the parents would gather every Friday for a party," said Ms Patterson. "Now that's all gone. People come and go."

Even the schools vanish. "All the one-room school houses disappeared and they went to Percy Merry," she said. "Now I hear that Percy Merry may be closing."

But if the landmarks of her past are dissolving, Ms Patterson was once on the cutting edge of a quickly-accelerating era.

In 1949, she and Cecil Sr. were among the first in the neighbourhood to buy a television set, which enthralled her.

"There was a Mrs. Brown demonstrating making tarts from Buffalo, I think," she said. "Oh, and there was the wrestling."

Today she largely skips television in favour of tating, a type of old-fashioned needlepoint that some residents have seen her demonstrate at local events such as Steam-Era and the Milton Fall Fair.

It was another way of keeping her connected to the town she has always called home. "My motto has always been I pass this way but once, therefore if there's any good thing I can say or do for my fellow man, let me do it now, for I won't pass this way again."

She paused, letting the lesson sink in. "You don't get any second chances."

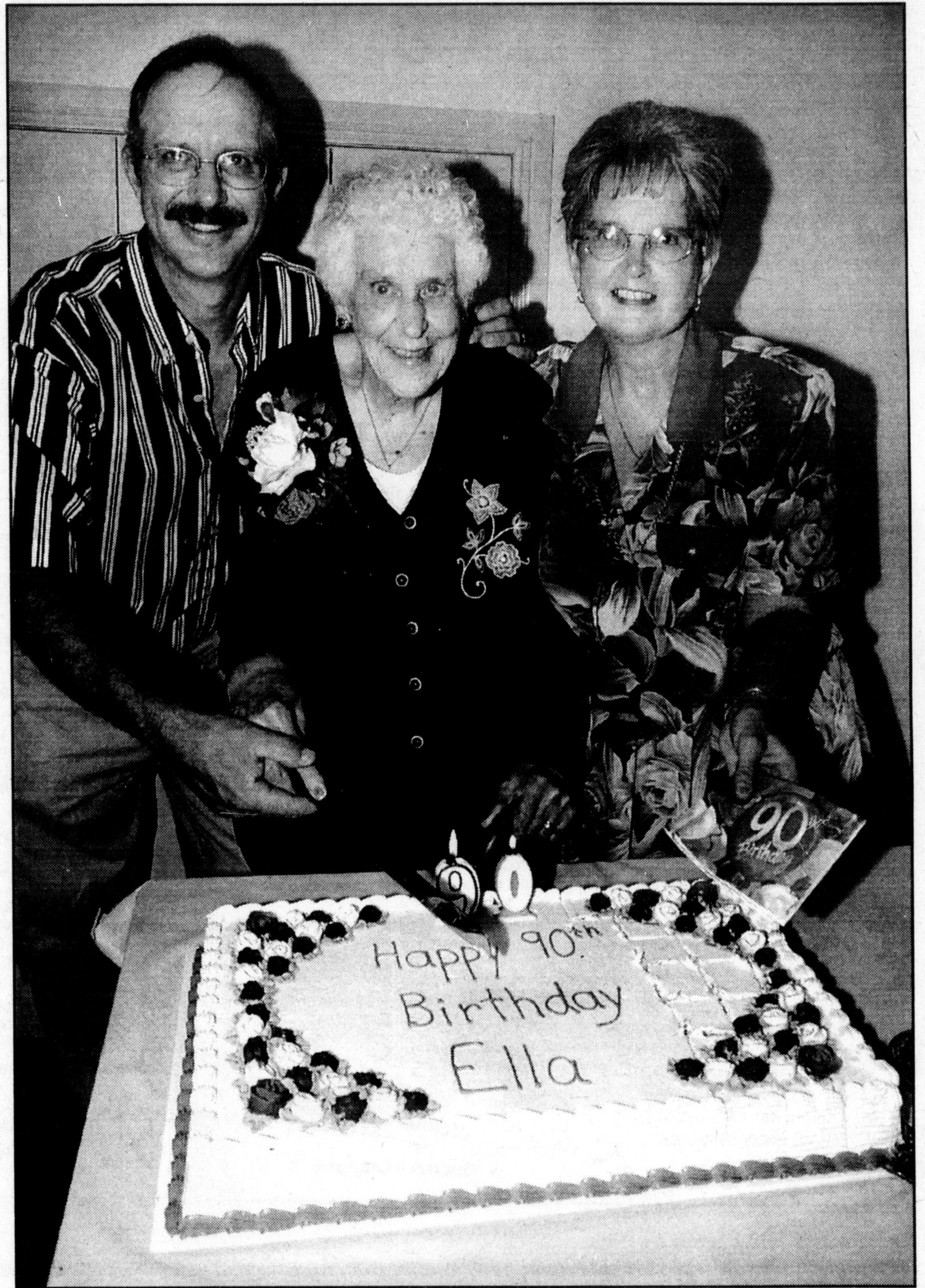


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Flanked by son Cecil Patterson (left) and daughter Joanne Bauman (right), Milton's Ella Patterson celebrated her 90th birthday with 100 of her closest friends and family at the Boyne Community Centre recently.

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COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — August 29th, 2000 - September 4th, 2000

Tuesday, August 29th

10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Encore
5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm	Plugged In!
6:00pm	Hands up Puppeteers
7:00pm	War Amps: Nakiska +10
8:00pm	Fergus Highland Games Tattoo

Wednesday, August 24th

10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Encore
5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm	Plugged In!
6:00pm	Cable in the Classroom
7:00pm	Down To Earth
8:00pm	Milton Council, August 28th

Thursday, August 31st

10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Encore
5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm	Plugged In!
6:00pm	Watercolour Workshop
7:00pm	Money Week
8:00pm	Fred Metcalf: Pioneer Cable Builder

Monday, September 4th

Labour Day - No Programming

Feature this week: Fergus Highland Games Tattoo - Tuesday, 8pm.