

Sunderland was Bon-Air resident's lifelong home

by Louise Middleton

On Jan 27, 1891, a baby girl was born in the Sunderland area; and, up until six years ago she continued to live right in the area.

Ruby Miller now resides in the Bon-Air Nursing Home as their oldest resident where she continues to enjoy life to its fullest.

What does she attribute to her present happiness?

"I made up my mind when I came here that I was going to accept the fact that I couldn't live on my own anymore," said Mrs. Miller.

Mrs. Miller lived right in Sunderland until she married at age 26. After the wedding, she and her new husband moved to Valentyne. They continued to live there for 35 years. In 1952, Mrs. Miller returned to Sunderland to live in the home in which she was born.

The family roots in Sunderland actually stretch back further. Her mother was born in Mariposa Township near Salem. From there, her roots branch out into English and Irish ancestry on her father's side and Irish and Scottish on her mother's side.

During her marriage, she and her husband raised three boys. One of her sons was to later be tragically lost in war. He is now buried in Italy. The other two live in Sunderland and Whitby.

When asked about what changes she's noticed to the Sunderland area over the years, Mrs. Miller stated that she's seen "wonderful changes."

"Sunderland was a small place when I was born. Now it's growing and there are new developments. For industry in Sunderland there used to be a grist mill and lumber yard. Now, there is nothing like that," she said.

As a little child growing up in Sunderland she said that she loved to go ice skating and dancing.

"Some of us used to call the skating rink the washtub. It was located in the old Agricultural Society building. It was not very big but we had lots of fun," said Mrs. Miller.

Later her interests changed to the game of euchre. She attended the 60 plus euchre games down at the Senior Citizens' Room in Cannington on a regular basis. Still, this was not the activity she considers as "the main part of my life".

"The main part of my life was the Anglican church. I've done a lot of church work. When there was anything going on at the church, I was there. I belonged to Sunday school as a child and later the W.A., now the

U.C.W. I acted as envelope secretary for 25 years. This meant that I looked after the collection envelopes. I also took the donations to the bank because our first treasurer was not able to go to the bank due to illness and our next was not free during regular banking hours.”

Her present hobbies involve crafts. She has made 60 dozen covered hangers for craft sales at Bon-Air. She has also taken first prize at the Sunderland Fair two years in a row for placemats. This year’s set were a white and peach floral pattern. She also placed first with that particular set at the Beaverton Fair this year this year.

Another area where she has noticed change is with the appliances she used back in her younger years and the ones she sees now.

“I couldn’t explain. We done with nothing. We did our wash with a tub and board. Then we got the hand washing machine; and, for women, that was better. We used to iron with a heavy iron with an iron handle so you had to use a cloth to pick it up. Then came an iron with a detachable handle. Then came the electric iron. Then came the steam iron,”

When asked if she believed that our society was growing lazier with all these new appliances they have, she replied, “Well I don’t know how I did it! We had a big house but never had a hired girl. I also used to make my own buns and bread. Way back, Mom used to make all of our bread; and, it was good right down to the last crust.”

She is really enjoying living in Bon-Air.

“It’s a wonderful place to be if you can’t look after yourself at home. It’s like a home away from home. It’s kept so fresh and clean here. We are well fed and well cared for in a very friendly way. It’s pleasant here and there is no discord among the staff. It’s a wonderful living environment. They also do nice things for us like taking us on trips that don’t cost much.” She concluded.

YOU ARE
CORDIALLY invited
to join Mrs. Ruby
Miller and her family
to celebrate Ruby’s
100th birthday on
January 27, 1991 at
Bon Air Nursing
Home from 2-4 p.m.
Best wishes only
please.