

Have you met ...

Betty Smalley

Smalley, of Dresden, is the Torrey town historian. On Feb. 26, she marked her 91st birthday which turned into a week-long celebration of cards, flowers and gifts from family and friends. Active and agile, she is very busy with genealogy and historical research. Smalley is a widow and has several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Born: In a large house at the foot of Pulteney Hill on Keuka Lake, the daughter of Lewis and Bertha Gould French. She attended Pulteney Union School, and then Haverling High School in Bath for her last two years of school, and was a member of the Class of 1925. To this day, she still wears her 1925 gold class ring, which her parents bought for her.

Growing up: She helped her father on the family farm in Pulteney, driving the team of farm horses and helping shape the loads of hay or sheaves of grain on the wagon. For fun, she went to square dances in friends' homes and at the local Grange hall. Also played croquet, dominoes and other games.

Married: After high school, to L.L. Schuyler, whom she called Skyke. They eventually moved to Penn Yan and both were employed for many years at Michael Sterns clothing manufacturer on Liberty Street. In 1927, they had a son, Robert, who is now deceased. After Skyke's death, she married Ray Smalley in 1970.

Enjoys: Living by the lake. Born by Keuka Lake, she has spent over 30 years looking out onto Seneca Lake. In warm weather, she fixes up her large porch with padded chairs and a large porch swing.

Became historian: In the early 1970s, and has been busy with it ever since. She has been researching her own family genealogy since the 1950s and now enjoys helping others.

Honored: She received the Arnold James Brown Potter Award by the Yates County Genealogical and Historical Society at its annual dinner in November for recognition of her unselfish work for the preservation and promotion of local history.

Reads: The Bible every day, a practice she began as a 14-year-old after attending an evangelical meeting in Pulteney. "It keeps you close to the Lord ... and you never know enough. There's always something to learn." She attends Bible study at the Good Samaritan Baptist Church in Dresden.

Belongs to: The Dresden United Methodist Church, where she is involved with the Fidelis Class, a group that meets socially and organizes fund-raisers for the church. She also is a member of the JoHos Society of Schuyler County, a group of historians and genealogists.

Hobbies: Knits, crochets and enjoys reading historical novels or stories about people in the Bible. Has very little free time, however, with her research work. Keeps a diary.

On preserving history: "It gives you a feeling of who you are. We weren't just dropped here, we have history behind us. It seems that, if you don't care where you came from, then you don't care about where the future generations are going to go. History brings stability."

Have you met is a weekly feature spotlighting an area resident. If you know someone others would be interested in reading about, call (800) 388-4346 and ask for a news editor.

