

Fuller family celebrates Canada Day

The table was decorated with red and white flags, candles and napkins, and a red and white cake, for a multi-generation Canada Day party and Toast held at the home of Zelma and Tom Fuller, Jr. The Guests of Honor were Mae and Bill Fuller.

Bill, now 91, came to Canada at the age of 12, with his younger brother Walter, as Dr. Barnardo Boys. They left England in 1914, just days after the start of World War I, and for the next four years worked on Sam McCann's farm.

In 1918, the family moved to town, to open a dairy on Simcoe Street, pasturing the cows on the land that now houses the Bradford arena. The cows were milked twice a day, and after each milking, the wagons would go around town, selling the fresh milk in glass bottles.

"We used to peddle the milk, night and day, ten cents a quart, 5

cents a pint. It wasn't pasteurized or homogenized or anything," remembers Bill. "It was just plain milk... and good milk, too."

Fuller was one of the pioneers on the Holland Marsh. In 1931, he purchased the first 15 acres of drained marshland on Simcoe Street. He and wife Mae (nee Mullis), whom he had married in 1923, planted and weeded the boggy acres by hand, at times standing knee-deep in water to get the job done.

The Fullers had three sons, Wallace, Tom, and Ronald. Ronald died at the age of 12 days, at Sick Children's hospital in Toronto. During the depression, the Fullers also opened their home to expectant mothers and their babies. Mae Fuller assisted Doctors Sinclair, Todd, Judge and Bailey in delivering over 100 infants, between the years of 1938 and 1947.

In the 1940's, Fuller and his son

Tom began one of Bradford's first Produce businesses, buying and selling for Loblaws. In 1948, they joined International Fruit Distributing, then the largest fruit and vegetable company in North America. Bill travelled extensively on purchasing trips for the company, and Mae kept the books, for 75 cents an hour.

After 11 years, Fuller started his own produce company, W.A. Fuller and Son. Tom made all the machinery, from conveyor belts to waxers, for the turnips they grew themselves. Says Bill, "We had a big business there. I used to ship to Newfoundland, and some to the States."

They gave up the business in 1974, when Tom went to work for Office Specialty, and Bill retired. He and Mae were very involved in Bradford's 125th anniversary, ten years ago, but this year celebrated quietly with family and friends.



Cheers! Celebrating Canada Day with a toast is the Fuller Family. Centre, Guests of Honor Bill and Mae Fuller .