

INVERNESS SPELLS “DEDICATION, ROMANCE AND LONGEVITY”

Mountain Memory Number 103 by Robert Williamson

In a tight-knit Concession Street community like Mount Hamilton, one can expect to find a storied past of dedication. Naturally that may be found in association with a former neighborhood school like Inverness just as we have seen more recently in the struggle to save Sherwood Secondary School.



*Teacher Miss Blossom Patton is shown inset in one of 44 yearly Inverness class pictures that span from 1919, upper left, to her retirement **44 years later in 1963**, lower right. The montage includes some of her former students; Margaret Finlay lower left corner and Glenn Simpson upper right corner. Glenn and Margaret shown in 1959 on the right will celebrate **60 years of marriage** this May. Photo source Simpson album*

Glenn Simpson, a retired Otis Elevator Supervisor and his wife Margaret Finlay, Life Insurance retiree, are lifetime Mountain residents. They served on the executive of the Inverness School Community Committee of dedicated parents to prevent the closure of the school in 1977. Their Operation SOS (Save Our School) extended the life of one of the Mountain's oldest and storied schools by ten years. Margaret gave up her Life Insurance job to become an Educational Assistant at Inverness from 1979 to 1982.

But Glenn and Margaret's story started long before that. They began school at Inverness in 1944 and their teacher was Miss Blossom Patton. Glenn will be the first to tell you that his early childhood had a sad beginning and that Simpson is his Foster family name. He was adopted after the breakup of his biological parents and he was separated from his siblings. When he started school, he was a lonely and troubled five-year old, very unsure of relationships and school discipline. However two people came into his life that changed all that.

The first was his Grade one teacher, Miss Blossom Patton who saw a child in need. At the end of the school year, Glenn was thrilled with his excellent report card and gained a lot of confidence and self-worth. It isn't any wonder that upon retirement Miss Patton's portrait was hung in the school foyer and that her retirement party had to be held in the spacious Mountain Drive Park. There were many memories of her terrific classroom Halloween displays, her talent for dealing with special needs children and her effective discipline as acting Vice Principal for unruly students.

As for the second person who entered his life, it would become a more protracted affair. His kindergarten class contained over 40 children and he did not interact well at that stage of his life. However, he took note of a cute blond haired girl. He saw her mostly in the hallway or at recess, but they became friends when they were in the same grade six class and she only sat a few seats away. However, it was much later that he bumped into her at the Mountain Theatre and walked her home. On the way, he asked her to go out on a date and she replied in a positive, firm voice "You know I would". That reply cemented their future relationship now approaching their 60th wedding anniversary.

Mountain Memories by award winning writer Robert Williamson appears monthly for the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society.