

Chapter Three – Family of George Bennett & Fannie Johnston

The Bennett Connection



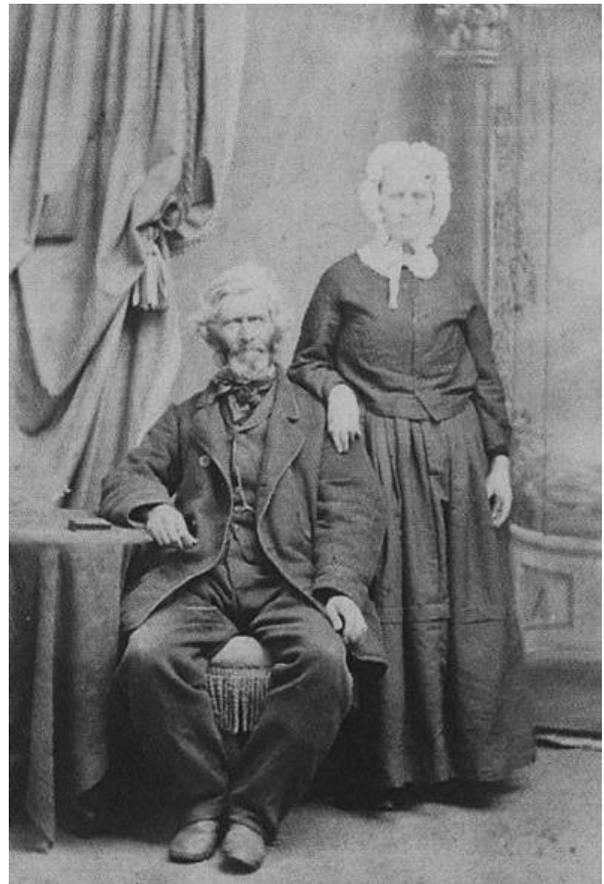
George Bennett, eighth child of **James Bennett** and **Jane Gregor**, was born on 14 Sep 1858 in rural Ross Twp., Ontario.^{27,31} George was a farmer and lived all his life on the farm where he was born on Concession 7, Lot 5.¹⁷ His parents and siblings are covered in **Chapter Two**.

Pic 36: George Bennett with his sister Elizabeth Moxam and his brother Andrew Bennett

The Johnston Connection

At the age of 26, George married a neighbour's daughter on Christmas Eve. **Fannie Johnston** and George married on 24 Dec 1884 in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Beachburg, Ontario.¹⁹¹ The marriage was witnessed by J. McLaren and A. Johnston, both of Ross Twp. Fannie was 20 and the daughter of **John Johnston** and **Mary Brown**. She was of Irish descent and born on 13 Feb 1864 in Ross Twp., Ontario.^{31,192} Fannie was the youngest of a family of 6. Her older sister Jane had married George's brother Thomas Henry, 12 years earlier. Another older sister Mary had married another of George's brothers, Andrew, 2 years earlier. Her older brother John later married George's niece Mary Jane Moxam. The Bennett family and the Johnston family knew each other well.

Fannie's father, **John Johnston** was the son of **Samuel Johnston** and **Ann Patterson**. He was born in 1816 in Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland.^{30,192,193} Very little is known about the Johnston family in Ireland. Family history indicates that John emigrated to Canada in the



Pic 37: John Johnston and Mary Brown

early 1840's with his first wife and four children. Only John and one son survived.^{30, 192, 193} John had married **Ann Patterson** before 1841 in Ireland. Ann was born about 1814 in Co. Antrim, Ireland.^{192, 193} She died about 1842 in Grosse Isle, Quebec aged 28, and was buried in Grosse Isle, Quebec.^{30, 192, 193} Two children are reportedly buried there as well. Children from this marriage were:

- i. **Child Johnston** died about 1842 at Sea.^{192, 193}
- ii. **Child Johnston** died about 1842 in Grosse Isle, Quebec and was buried in Grosse Isle, Quebec.^{192, 193}
- iii. **Child Johnston** died about 1842 in Grosse Isle, Quebec and was buried in Grosse Isle, Quebec.^{192, 193}
- iv. **Samuel James Johnston** was born on 28 Oct 1841 in Belfast, Co. Antrim, Ireland,^{31, 192} died on 20 Dec 1922 in Ross Twp., Ontario¹⁹⁴ age 81, and was buried in Cobden Union Cemetery, Cobden, Ontario.¹⁹⁵ Samuel married **Elizabeth B. McFeeters** on 7 Oct 1863 in Renfrew Co., Ontario.¹⁹⁶ Elizabeth was born on 28 Jan 1845 in Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland,³¹ died on 19 Aug 1916 in Kingston, Frontenac Co., Ontario¹⁹⁷ age 71, and was buried in Cobden Union Cemetery, Cobden, Ontario.¹⁹⁵ They had nine children: **Annie (Mrs. James McLaren), Mary E. (Mrs. David Sutherland), John, Margaret Cowan 'Maggie' (Mrs. William Morley Grant), William McFeeters, Jane Swan (Mrs. James Samuel Dunfield), Elizabeth D. (Mrs. Adam Crozier), Samuel Edgar and Cecilia Florence (Mrs. George Ernest Collins).**

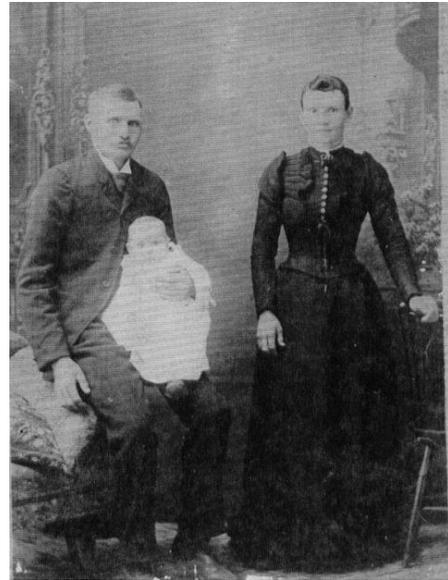
John next married **Mary Brown** about 1850 in Lower Canada.¹⁹ Mary was born in 1826 in Bedford, Ireland.^{21, 22} They settled in Ross Township and farmed. John died on 16 Mar 1884 in Beachburg, Ontario, aged 68, and was buried in Beachburg Union Cemetery, Beachburg, Ontario.²⁷ Mary died on 28 Mar 1899 in Beachburg, Ontario,²⁷ aged 73, and was buried in Beachburg Union Cemetery, Beachburg, Ontario.²⁷ Children from this marriage were:

- i. **Ann Johnston** was born on 11 May 1852 in Ross Twp., Ontario,³¹ died on 26 Dec 1918 in Winnipeg, Manitoba,¹⁹⁸ and was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Ann married **Emanuel Moxam** on 14 Aug 1876 in Beachburg, Ontario,¹⁹⁹ son of **William Patton Moxam** and **Susannah Flood**. Emanuel "Manny" was a brother of Francis who married Mary Bennett, and was born on 18 May 1854 in Ross Twp., Ontario,³¹ died on 7 Oct 1943 in Winnipeg, Manitoba,²⁰⁰ aged 89, and was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Winnipeg, Manitoba.²⁰⁰ They had nine children: **Mary 'Minnie' (Mrs. Arthur Henry McClurg), Susanna Dwire (Mrs. Henry Bromley), John Archibald 'Jack', William D., Francis Xavier, Annie Caroline (Mrs. Gordon Leslie Burnette), Robert Carl, Isabella Florence and Harry Emanuel.**



Pic 38: Ann & Jane Johnston

- ii. **Jane Johnston** was the wife of **Thomas Henry Bennett**, as previously documented – see p. 14.
- iii. **Mary A. Johnston** was the wife of **Andrew Bennett**, as previously documented – see p. 31.
- iv. **John B. Johnston** was previously documented – see p. 25.
- v. **Robert Johnston** was born on 26 Jun 1861 in Ross Twp., Ontario,³¹ died on 6 Mar 1924 in Pembroke, Ontario²⁰⁵ age 62, and was buried in Beachburg Union Cemetery, Beachburg, Ontario.²⁷ Robert married **Sarah Jane Olmstead** on 30 Jul 1884 in Forester's Falls, Ontario,²⁰⁶ daughter of **Albert Kidder Olmstead** and **Sarah Wallace**. Sarah was born on 14 Feb 1866 in Cobden, Ontario,³¹ died on 7 Jan 1955 in Ottawa, Ontario,²⁰⁷ aged 88, and was buried on 9 Jan 1955 in Beachburg Union Cemetery, Beachburg, Ontario.²⁷ They had six children: **Fannie Mabel (Mrs. Thomas Olmsted)**, **Mary Jane (Mrs. David Henry Burrows)**, **Annie Pearl (Mrs. Nathan Dagg)**, **Albert Earl**, **Sarah Edith (Mrs. A. Maxwell)** and **Robert Kenneth Elsmere Johnston**.
- vi. **Fannie Johnston** was the wife of **George Bennett**, and the focus of this chapter.

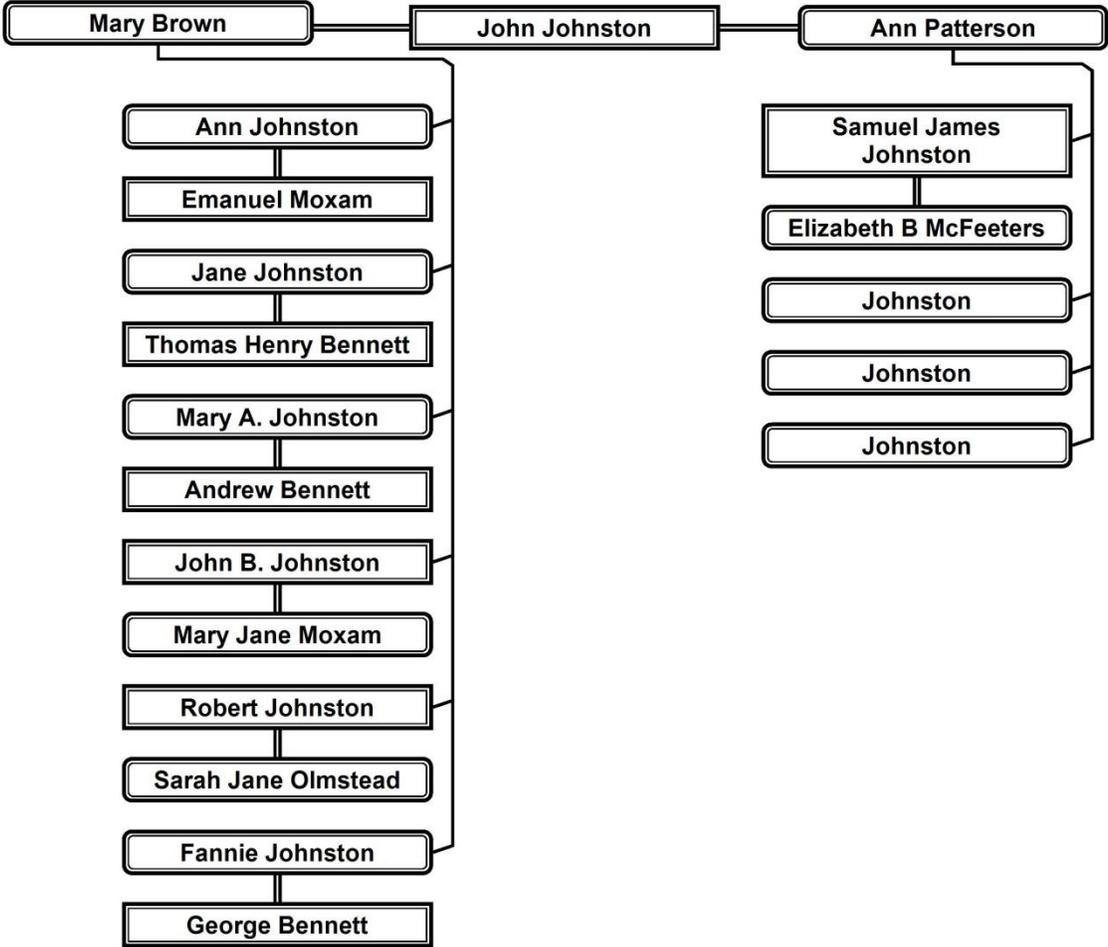


Pic 39: John B. and Mary Jane Johnston



Pic 40: Johnston Sisters
 (Standing)
 Mary (Mrs. Andrew Bennett),
 Jane (Mrs. Thomas Henry Bennett)
 (Sitting)
 Ann (Mrs. Manny Moxam),
 Fannie (Mrs. George Bennett)

Family of John Johnston



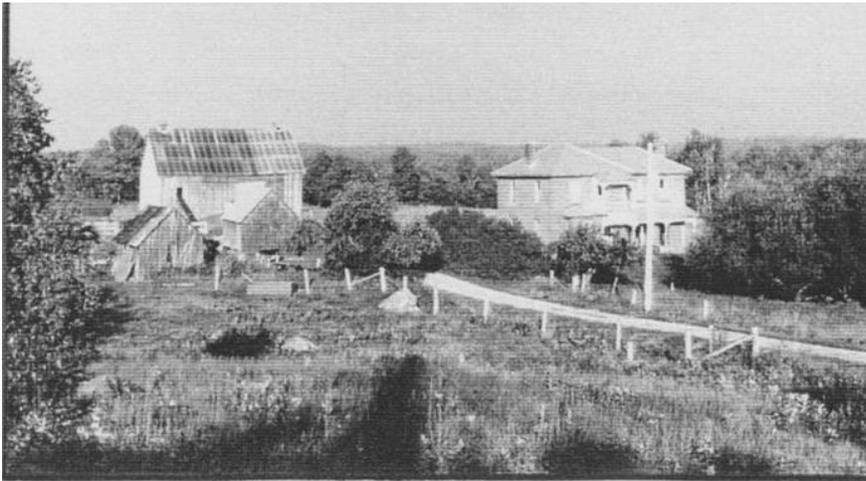
Pic 41: Family of John Johnston

Fannie Johnston (wife of George Bennett) not only had her parents and siblings within her local community. Her father John's four known siblings were younger than John and also immigrated to Canada, settling close by.

John Johnston's siblings:

1. **Samuel Johnston** was born in 1824 in Dramock, Rocavan, Co. Antrim, Ireland,^{30,201} died on 4 Jun 1876 in Westmeath Twp., Ontario^{27,201} age 52 and was buried in Beachburg Union Cemetery, Beachburg, Ontario.²⁷ He married **Agnes Nancy Thompson**.²⁰¹
2. **James Patrick Johnston** was born on 1 Nov 1826 in Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland,²⁰⁸ died on 26 Jan 1905 in Forester's Falls, Ontario²⁰⁸ age 78, and was buried in Howard Cemetery, Forester's Falls, Ontario.²⁷ He married **Nancy Ashel Holt**.²⁰⁸
3. **Ellen Johnston** was born about 1828 in Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland,^{193,209} died on 10 Sep 1890 in Ross Twp., Ontario^{27,193} age 62, and was buried in Howard Cemetery, Forester's Falls, Ontario.²⁷ She married **Robert Ritchie**.
4. **Robert P. Johnston** was born in 1836 in Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland,³⁰ died on 17 Feb 1908 in Ross Twp., Ontario²¹⁰ age 71, and was buried in Beachburg Union Cemetery, Beachburg, Ontario.²⁷ He married **Rebecca Wilson**.

George and Fannie Bennett



The new 2 storey brick house was built in 1906. The carpenter was Emmanuel (Manny) Moxam, who was married to Fannie Bennett's sister, Ann Johnston. The bank-barn was built a few years later

George and Fannie's granddaughter Ruby Bulmer produced a Bennett family history as a project for the Women's Institute. This picture of the Bennett homestead was included in the document. The original home on this property was built by George's parents and was constructed of logs. A picture of the log home

Pic 43: George and Fannie Bennett Homestead

has not been located. George and Fannie's nine children were already born when this house was built.

The nine children of George and Fannie are as follows:

- i. **Baby Bennett** was born in Ross Twp., Ontario, died as an infant¹⁰ in Ross Twp., Ontario, and was buried in Howard Cemetery, Forester's Falls, Ontario.²⁷
- ii. **Charles Bennett** was born in Ross Twp., Ontario, died as an infant¹⁰ in Ross Twp., Ontario, and was buried in Howard Cemetery, Forester's Falls, Ontario.²⁷
- iii. **James Bennett** was born on 10 Oct 1885 in Ross Twp., Ontario,²¹¹ died single at the age of 27, on 16 Aug 1913 in Lot 5, Con 7, Ross Twp., Ontario.²¹² The cause of death was pulmonary tuberculosis. James was buried in Howard Cemetery, Forester's Falls, Ontario.²⁷
- iv. **John Johnston Bennett** was born on 17 Feb 1888 in Ross Twp., Ontario,²¹³ died on 31 Mar 1888 in Ross Twp., Ontario,²¹⁴ at the age of 1 ½ months. He was buried in



Pic 44: Family of George and Fannie Bennett c1898 George, Joseph, James, Fannie, Annie, Minnie
Howard Cemetery, Forester's Falls, Ontario.²⁷

- v. **Joseph Bennett** was born on 3 Mar 1889 in Forester's Falls and will be the focus of **Chapter Four**.
- vi. **Annie Bennett** was born on 2 Aug 1891 in Ross Twp., Ontario. Her family will be documented further in this chapter.
- vii. **Mary Elizabeth 'Minnie' Bennett** was born on 3 Nov 1896 in Forester's Falls, Ontario. Her family will be documented further in this chapter.
- viii. **Frances Gertrude 'Fannie' Bennett** was born on 29 Dec 1899 in Ross Twp., Ontario. Her family will be documented further in this chapter.
- ix. **George Andrew Bennett** was born on 9 Jul 1902 in Ross Twp., Ontario. His family will be documented further in this chapter.



Pic 45: James Bennett



Pic 46: Joseph and Annie Bennett



Pic 47: Annie, Fannie & Minnie Bennett

Pic 48: Descendant Chart of George Bennett and Fanny Johnston

George and Fannie celebrated their 50th Anniversary in 1935. A write-up²¹⁵ in the Renfrew Mercury, Jan 3, 1935 documents this event:

Mr. and Mrs. George Bennett of Foresters Falls celebrated a few days ago their golden wedding. Both are natives of Ross township and both are in good health, Mr. Bennett at 76 and Mrs. Bennett at 71. They were married in Beachburg by Rev. Robert McNabb, who is now living in retirement in Smiths Falls and from whom they received a letter congratulating them on attaining the golden jubilee of their union. Mrs. Bennett before marriage was Miss Fanny Johnston. There are two sons and three daughters, also 18 grandchildren.



Pic 49: George and Fannie Bennett

MR. GEORGE BENNETT

A respected resident of the Forester's Falls section, and last of his generation in a pioneer family, passed away Saturday in the person of Mr. George Bennett, in his 82nd year. He was a well-known farmer there, a good neighbor and homemaker, and a man whose acquaintance was valued.

Surviving are his wife, formerly Miss Fannie Johnston, three daughters and two sons, Mrs. George Black, Mrs. Nelson Bell, Mrs. Harvey Eady, Mr. Joseph Bennett and Mr. Andrew Bennett, all of Forester's Falls. There are also twenty-two grandchildren.

The funeral was held Tuesday afternoon, with service at the house. Rev. J. S. K. Tyrrell, of Beachburg and Forester's Falls Anglican Churches conducted services. Interment took place in Forester's Falls cemetery.

Pall bearers were six nephews, Messrs. Jas. R. Bennett, Jas. A. Bennett, Wm. Bennett, Sr., Wm. Bennett, Jr., John Bennett and Emerson Bennett.

A large number of people attended the funeral, showing high respect in which deceased was held.

Pic 50: Obituary of George Bennett



Pic 51: Fannie Bennett

George died on 23 Dec 1939 in Ross Twp., Ontario,²¹⁶ aged 81, and was buried in Howard Cemetery, Forester's Falls, Ontario.²⁷

Fannie celebrated her 90th birthday with her family present. A number of pictures were taken with her children and grandchildren. For her 95th birthday, a newspaper clipping²¹⁷ indicated that she enjoyed good health, likes knitting and reading, enjoys company and keeps well posted on community affairs.



Pic 52: Fannie Bennett's 90th Birthday

Standing l-r: Joe Bennett, David N. Bell, Andrew Bennett, George Black

Sitting l-r: Maggie Bennett, Fannie Bell, Minnie Eady, Fannie Bennett, Annie Black, Girlie Bennett, Fannie May



Pic 53: Couples L-R

Joseph & Margaret Bennett, Harvey & Minnie Eady, George and Annie Black

Fannie died almost twenty years later, on 26 Nov 1959 in Ross Twp., Ontario,²¹⁸ aged 95, and was buried in Howard Cemetery, Forester's Falls, Ontario.²⁷

Mrs. George Bennett

Forester's Falls community lost one of its oldest and most respected citizens November 26th in the passing of Mrs. George Bennett at the home of her daughter, Mrs. George Black. She was in her 96th year. In indifferent health for some time, her illness became serious only a few weeks ago.

Born February 13th, 1864, she was Fannie Johnston, youngest daughter of the late John Johnston and his wife Mary Brown, both from Ireland. She was the last remaining member of a family of six.

On Dec. 24, 1884, she was married to George Bennett who predeceased her 20 years ago. They lived all their married life on the farm now owned by their son, Andrew.

Left to mourn are two sons, Joseph of Beachburg, and Andrew on the homestead; three daughters, Mrs. Harvey Eady (Mary) of Cornwall, Mrs. George Black (Annie) and Mrs. Nelson Bell (Fannie) of Forester's Falls; twenty-three grandchildren and forty-six great-grandchildren. A son James predeceased her some years ago.

Mrs. Bennett retained all her faculties until her passing. She enjoyed meeting people and visiting and was interested in all

worth-while enterprises.

She was a member of the Anglican Church.

The funeral which was largely attended was held Saturday afternoon, Nov. 28, at the home of her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Bennett. Rev. W. L. Thomas conducted the service assisted by Rev. Howard J. Veals. A solo, "The Gate Ajar For Me," a favorite of the deceased, was sung by Mrs. Irvin Bennett. Interment took place in the Howard Cemetery.

The pall bearers were six grandsons, George, Millar and Arnold Bennett, Owen Black, Archie Eady and Dr. Nelson Bell.

The many floral offerings testified to the high esteem in which she was held. The flower bearers were 14 of her great-grandchildren.

Relatives and friends were in attendance from Niagara Falls, Shawville, Campbellford, Orillia, Ottawa, Renfrew, White Lake, Pembroke, Cobden and Beachburg.

Pic 54: Obituary of Fannie Bennett



Pic 55: Gravestone of George and Fannie Bennett

Fannie's granddaughter, Erma Johnson has given permission to include her reminiscences of her grandmother "A Part of My Pedigree" which follows:

I always viewed my paternal grandmother as being an old, old lady as she was already 75 years of age the year I was born. She was a thin, fine boned lady who always wore black and had her snow white hair tied up in a sort of triple bun. I remember marvelling at how deftly and swiftly she could twist her long fine straight hair into that distinctive style!

My Grandma was definitely the Matriarch of our clan. She was accorded great respect. She didn't seem to be demanding respect; she just somehow had mysteriously earned it. All my aunts phoned Granma every day, and even my Dad was sure to spend some time with her every week – this sometimes irked my mother as at times Dad would be tardy for milking as a result of visiting Grandma...

As I have already stated, at least once a week my dad would visit his mother who he always called "mother". Invariably she would send a dozen or so biscuits home with him to help feed our rather large crew. You would think that we kids would have been grateful for the 'treat', as we all loved tea biscuits with much butter slathered on them and topped off with liberal amounts of brown sugar. But we were not thankful! Our mom made the best tea biscuits I have ever eaten; even to this day (she used real farmer's cream and baking powder – not baking soda). I have never tasted any better. Grandma's biscuits, on the other hand, were very hard and could have been used as lethal projectiles from a sling-shot. But we dared not complain, for if we did, our Dad would scold us severely and tell us how grateful we ought to be that his mother (not young anymore) was trying to help us out and we should appreciate her efforts. Our family dog often was the lucky, or as we thought perhaps unlucky, recipient of Grandma's "leaden cakes" as we sometimes successfully sneaked them under the table.

Grandma was definitely not a religious fanatic, but she adhered to some strict rules about the keeping of the Sabbath. On Christmas morning our Dad and we kids always visited Granma to wish her a Happy Christmas (she never said "Merry Christmas"). Our aunt and uncle, with whom Grandma lived, owned a 'player piano', you know the machine that worked by putting a 'roll' onto a spindle and by pumping pedals like a pump organ, the piano would play the piece. Often the words were printed on the paper roll and one could follow the song as the roll unwound. This particular Christmas morning all the youngsters had gathered in the parlour and were singing with great gusto, "Bye, Bye, Blackbird", when suddenly Grandma's white head appeared in the parlour door and severely reprimanded us for singing such an improper song on Sunday --- we should have been singing hymns. None of us had realized it was Sunday, but we surely



Pic 56: Fannie Bennett

were well reminded! I was pretty young but I distinctly remember thinking that I was mighty glad that Grandma didn't live with us.

Grandma held quite a few superstitions and believed them totally. I have forgotten a lot of them, but I do recall that one was never to kill a pig when the moon was waning as this would cause the side pork to fry away in the frying pan. Also, another was to never ever cut one's finger nails on a Sunday. You would surely be visited with dire bad luck!

Like many folks of her day, Grandma was extremely proud. She refused to apply for the Old Age Pension for many years. She viewed it as charity. When she was finally talked into applying, she had trouble proving her age. Finally, the government accepted that Grandma was indeed 87. The proof was an article from the Cobden Sun which reported Grandma and Grandpa's 50th wedding anniversary.

Grandma was extremely frugal. She told me that you could tell whether a person was prudent or a spend thrift by observing how one peeled a potato. I watched Grandma peel potatoes one day and she most definitely fell into the miserly category. I had never seen such thin potato peelings! When Grandma was married in 1884 her family gave her \$100. When she died in 1959, the \$100 was still in the Bank of Nova Scotia in Cobden! I was the lucky recipient of \$50. Grandma chose one grandchild from every family and she chose me. I was quite pleased about it and thought it meant she cared more for me than my other siblings, but my sisters were quick to point out that it was just because Dad had given me a second name "Frances" which was supposed to be after Grandma's name – Fannie.

Grandma would pass on little gems of wisdom to us. For instance, "Never trust a person who laughs too much; they are sure to be bad-tempered." "Beware of folks who talk too much, they are too vain and would be hard to get along with." She also told us to be wary of people who were ultra-religious. She said, "They're probably hiding some dark secret character flaw." Also if she didn't agree with the boy you were interested in, she would have no qualms about telling you.

My Grandmother lived for 95 years. She witnessed many and miraculous changes. She never complained or felt sorry for herself. Her health was good until a few weeks before her death. The only medicine she ever had was a bottle of pink 'tonic' she got usually in the spring. Dr. Ritchie told my Dad it was just a placebo of sugar water, but she always felt better anyway. She experienced much sadness and heartaches in her life. She lost her first little girl and a son died at age 21 from T.B. But my Grandma was, if nothing else, an optimist. She instilled good values in her children and grandchildren, and expected us to live worthwhile lives. Her last words to me about two weeks before she died were, "Erma, always be a good person", and I have tried to follow her advice to this day.

Erma Bennett Johnson