

Franklin woman marks 103rd birthday

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Edna Lawson, a resident at Morning Pointe assisted-living facility in Franklin, is marking her 103rd birthday today.
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PHOTO BY RYAN TRARES

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Most of Edna Lawson's life has revolved around three things - family, farming and sewing.

And considering that she turns 103 today, that's a lot of each.

For as long as she can remember, the intricate stitching of handmade blankets has made her happy, the Franklin resident said.

"When I was a little girl, my mom started me out, and I've just kept doing it throughout," she said.

Like the 31 quilts she has stitched throughout her life, made up of varied pieces of material and patterns, Lawson's life has come together over more than a century to form a rich tapestry.

Lawson was born in Morgan County in 1907, coming into a farm family that raised livestock and crops. She had three sisters and two brothers.

In the rare down times, Lawson picked up hobbies that stayed with her for life, including quilting and sewing.

Family members each learned to play a different instrument. Lawson chose the banjo.

While farm life was important, so was education. Lawson attended Martinsville High School, and among the lessons that stick out are the Latin classes, memorizing passages by Shakespeare and analyzing poetry.

After graduating in 1925, she enrolled at Central Business College in Indianapolis to learn secretarial work and take classes on other aspects of office work.

"I just wanted to get smart enough to work and get a job," Lawson said.

As part of her education, she was sent out to local businesses to work. Though the various jobs escape her after so many years, one particularly cumbersome responsibility stands out: typing addresses on envelopes all day.

"Now that was a job," she said.

Around this time, she met her future husband, Melvin Lawson. The two became acquaintances at a neighborhood party, and their relationship bloomed. They were married in 1929.

Despite her background at the college, Lawson was a farmer at heart. She and Melvin planted fields in Morgan, Johnson and Hancock counties with the help of their four children.

The family raised dairy cows, cattle and hogs, as well as corn, soybeans and other crops. Lawson kept ducks, geese and chickens for family use.

With all of the work that needed to be done, joviality was a rarity on the Lawson farm.

"Their personality was not of the funny side," said Mary Dougherty, Lawson's daughter. "They were all very serious people, with no time for being silly."

But that isn't to say that Lawson did not have fun. She was active in the Clark Township Home Economics Club, as well as Rocklane Christian Church.

She also was a member of the TNT Sewing Club, based in the Rocklane area. At the mention of the club, Lawson let out a laugh, which Dougherty explained.

"The women just got together and shared the latest news or played bingo," she said. "Nobody ever brought any sewing."

Lawson has lived at Morning Pointe of Franklin, an assisted-living facility, since 2008. Her private apartment is well kept, with blanket nicely folded and nothing seemingly out of place.

She no longer can do the sewing and quilting that she loved so much, as age no longer allows her fingers to move like she wants.

But she's found other hobbies, foremost sitting down for a few rounds of bingo with her fellow residents.

"Oh, they love it. That activity room is full if they're playing," Dougherty said.

Lawson has plans for a simple birthday, with a cake served at Morning Pointe while a piano player provides music.

Anyone wishing to send cards is may send them to Morning Pointe of Franklin, c/o Edna Lawson, 75 S. Milford Drive, Franklin, IN 46131.