



-Jim Ryan

Mrs. Matilda Alexander holding picture of parents.

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Pioneers' Daughter Marks 90th Birthday

By TRUDY KEMP

*Once you hear that cheerful chuckle and see that infectious grin it isn't hard to understand why they call her "Happy Matilda" at the CNIB Village on Humboldt Street.

And yesterday was a very special day for Mrs. Matilda Ada Alexander, a resident at the Village for the past two years. It was her 90th birthday and she enjoyed every minute of it with friends and neighbors dropping in during the day to extend their best wishes.

In the evening the honored guest and her family enjoyed a barbecue supper cooked outside her cottage. Over from Vancouver for the occasion was her only living son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Wally Alexander, Sr. Also at the dinner party, was her only daughter, Mrs. A. M. Mitchell who lives with her mother.

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Mrs. Alexander was one of 10 children—five boys and five girls—born to Mr. and Mrs. James Barnswell, and all in Victoria. Tiny, as she was fondly nicknamed as a child, was born May 14, 1874, in a house not far from the old family home at 1148 Johnson Street. Built by her carpenter father about 10 years after her birth the house stands in the same location today.

Young Tilly received all her schooling at the old-time Central School on School Street. She married Charles Jacob Alexander in December, 1892, and devoted her life to making a happy, comfortable home for her husband and children—five boys and one girl, all born in the city. Mr. Alexander was

with the City Water Works department for about 22 years before his death in February, 1931.

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Although she lost her sight about 35 years ago, it didn't stop Mrs. Alexander from doing her own work and making others happy. At the age of 87 years she was still enjoying her favorite pastime—bowling.

"But the doctor put a stop to that about three years ago. Too much bending," she chuckled.

Mrs. Alexander's family lies stem from the Spanish West Indies on her mother's side and Jamaica on her father's side.

Her mother was born at San Juan, Puerto Rico, Spanish West Indies, on the estate of the late William Latimer Noble, a sugar planter. After her father was killed in the Spanish Rebellion she was adopted by Capt. and Mrs. John Devereaux. She crossed the Isthmus of Panama with the Devereaux family and stopped for a time in California and later sailed up to Victoria in a sailing schooner skippers by Capt. Devereaux.

Shortly after her arrival here, the 16-year-old girl met and married James A. Barnswell, who had come to Victoria by

way of Cape Horn in a sailing schooner. They were married in 1871. Mrs. Alexander's father, who worked as a carpenter, building a number of old-time homes in the city, died in 1919. Mrs. Barnswell lived until she was 83 years of age. She died about 21 years ago.

Mrs. Alexander has four grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. She has two brothers living, Mr. Arthur Barnswell, Victoria, and Mr. William Barnswell, New Westminster; three sisters, Mrs. Louise Alexander, Victoria; Mrs. Henrietta Carter, Vancouver, and Mrs. William Graves, Portland, Ore.