

Clara B. Langley receives Wilmot's Boston Post Cane honor



Clara Langley of Cross Hill Road celebrated her 95th birthday on June 21, 2013, and one of her presents was the Wilmot Boston Post Cane certificate recognizing her as the oldest resident living in the town.

The custom of presenting the Boston Post Cane to the oldest citizen in town began in 1909 and was given to men only until the 1930s. It started out as a sales gimmick to increase the former Boston Globe newspaper's circulation. The idea was that

as the oldest citizen departed this earth, the cane would be passed on to the next oldest and so on. 700 African ebony 36-inch canes with 14-carat gold engraved heads were distributed to New England towns to give to their oldest citizens. "Walking sticks were not only an important implement to aid in walking the rough roads, they were an article of fashion, dignity, and luxury" at the time according to an expert on the subject, Barbara Staples.

Honorees were asked to report back to the newspaper about how they managed to live so long. In keeping with that tradition, Clara responded to the question in her light-hearted direct way by saying, "I attribute my longevity to good genes! My mother lived into her nineties and I have a 90-year old sibling still living." Members of Clara's family along with several folks from the Wilmot Historical Society attended the ceremony including three of Clara's great grandchildren, Corban, Eleanor, and Asher Williams. Tanner Chamberlain and Dean Langley were unable to come but sent their good wishes.

Also in attendance were Clara's son Ron Langley, daughter Nancy Langley, and granddaughter Sheri Williams. Congratulations Clara!

When great granddaughter Eleanor comes to Wilmot for a visit, she says she is coming to "Nannaland." Clara has a long history of enjoying the company of children. After teaching in schools from Maine to Maryland, she took a job at the Wilmot Center School. She met and married Frank E. Langley in the early 1950s, taught for two years and raised her family within blocks of that school. Clara and Frank were married for 54 years after being introduced by a friend. The building she taught in now houses the Wilmot Public Library.

The town has entrusted the original Boston Post Cane to the care of the Wilmot Historical Society where it resides in the History Room at the Town Offices for safekeeping.

Lindy Heim, Wilmot, NH