**Sturgeon County family farm celebrates over a century of memories.**

From war sanctuary to generational homestead

A Sturgeon County farm has been a gathering place for community picnics, card games, and a refuge for military families for over a century.

In July, the Eva Scragg Berg family gathered once again to celebrate the farm’s 103rd anniversary. The family was also honored with the 100-Year Farm Family Award from Sturgeon County, recognizing over a century of continuous family ownership since 1921.

Eva’s father, Ralph Scragg, purchased the 138-acre property after returning from service in the First World War. He had previously owned land near Edgerton and Calahoo but settled on River Lot 62 along the banks of the Sturgeon River, where he believed the land was ideal for raising a family and operating a mixed farm.

The farm became home to his 10 children, including Eva, who was born in the two-story farmhouse in 1936.

Today, Eva, 88, and her husband, Allan, live on just over 11 acres of the original homestead, having purchased it from her parents in the late 1960s. Although the farm is smaller now, it remains a cherished part of the family’s legacy.

“I love the place,” says Eva, recalling her deep connection to the land. Though she lived in Edmonton for 22 years, she returned to the farm in 1974 with Allan and their five daughters. “I thought it was perfect,” she adds, reflecting on the rural life she wanted her children to experience.

Life on the farm during Eva’s childhood was filled with chores like gathering eggs, making butter, and working in the market garden her parents later established.

“Quite frankly, I didn’t realize that we were probably living in poverty because we didn’t have much of anything,” she recalls. “But of course, it was the Dirty Thirties.”

Despite the challenges, the farm was a hub of family activity. Evenings were spent playing cards and crib in the warm kitchen. Her father, Ralph, a former choir singer in England, often brought out his violin for family singalongs.

During the Second World War, the farm offered refuge to families of soldiers stationed at what is now Edmonton Garrison (Namao). Eva’s parents frequently hosted military wives and their children, giving them a break from the tough living conditions in north Edmonton.

“Most of them were destitute,” Eva remembers. Her parents also hosted social gatherings for soldiers, offering home-cooked meals, music, and a sense of comfort far from home. “My dad, being an ex-soldier, understood their loneliness,” Eva says.

 Her parents’ generosity left a lasting impact on her, inspiring her lifelong commitment to helping others. Eva was named Sturgeon County’s Volunteer of the Year in 2020 for her work with Namao United Church, the Namao Museum and Agricultural Society, and the St. Albert Seniors’ Choir.

As for the future of the farm, Eva isn’t sure what lies ahead. However, she has considered turning the land into an ecological reserve or a cemetery, ensuring it remains a place of beauty and peace for others to enjoy.

 “This valley is still beautiful for a lot of people to come and enjoy,” she says.

While the farm’s future remains uncertain, its legacy of family, community, and service endures, much like the land itself.