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ROSA Steiner nee Gächter celebrates 100 years...

Contribution for HELVETIA by
Walter Steiner

On Tuesday 9th of May a very special **Centenary-Birthday** was celebrated by family and friends of Rosa Steiner-Gächter at the Assisi Home, near Hamilton.

Here is a profile of a very special Swiss Lady

Rosa was born on the 9th May 1900 in Switzerland to John and Marie Anna Gächter: The third child of five children, her mother Marie Anna died in 1902 when Rosa was only 2 years old.

Rosa was brought up by her Grandfather who lived in the mountains. He loved to garden and grow plants from seeds. As a child Rosa loved to play in the dirt, so Grandfather taught her to grow vegetables, that's where Rosa got her green fingers from, and her love for gardening, growing both beautiful flowers and vegetables.

Rosa became a nurse in Switzerland and Germany, where she nursed sick and handicapped children, before she came to New Zealand in 1924. On April 10th 1924 Rosa married Charlie Steiner at the Catholic church in Kaponga by Father Michael Moore. The priest forgot that he was due to perform the ceremony, a sister from the local convent set off to Hawera to remind him, so the couple could be married. They were finally married about an hour later than intended, at about 11.00 am. The wedding day proved most eventful, the bride sent 10 children off to school. Her husband's previous wife had died leaving five children. Her brother-in-law's wife was very ill, so it fell to the bride, Rosa to take care of the children. The children were in need of clothing, so Rosa cut up hers and made clothing for the children. Whenever there was a need Rosa found a way to solve it. One humorous occasion, which will not be forgotten; wood, had not been chopped for the stove. Rosa laid the table with a white table cloth, and in the center, she placed the axe. The message was loud and clear, and she retells this story with a twinkle in her eye.

Rosa and Charlie had eight more children. They loved and reared all thirteen. Rosa and Charlie farmed in



Taranaki, King Country and Waikato. Rosa helped milk cows for many years until Charlie and herself eventually retired to Morrinsville in June 1958.

Charlie Steiner died on the 5.11.1976, five days before his 90th birthday, and after 52 years of happy marriage to Rosa.

On her 90th Birthday she was still living alone and managing very well. To mark this occasion, there was a large family gathering to celebrate her Birthday with almost 200 people attending. Rosa planted a Kowhai Tree in the churchyard at the Catholic Church Morrinsville to commemorate this great day.

For many years Rosa worked as the Chief Cook of Morrinsville Maternity Hospital, providing excellent meals to patients' delight.

Rosa was a devoted member of the Women's Institute and Catholic Women's League and has become a Life member of both. She enjoyed many years of Care and Craft.

Rosa was very clever with her hands doing sewing, knitting, crocheting, embroidery and painting, which she will always be remembered for by her family. They have received many items of her work for either Birthday or Christmas.

The Hamilton Swiss Club together with the Swiss Society join family and friends in congratulating Rosa Steiner on her 100th Birthday.

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