


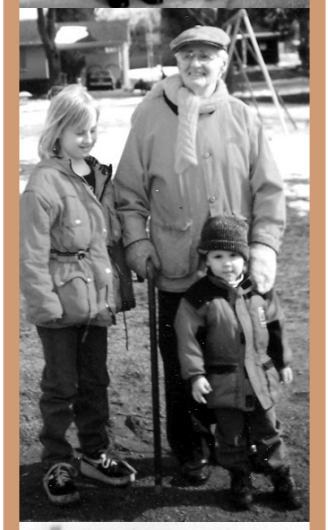





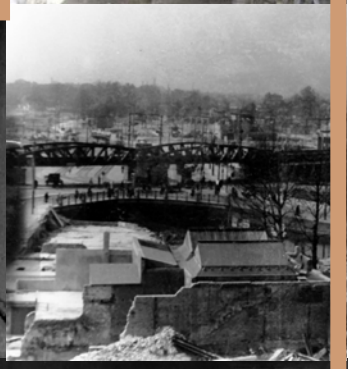


Our Recollection Collection

Lifescapes Writing Group 2008
Brantford Public Library

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This book was written by members of the Lifescapes group, a senior memoir writing program sponsored by the Brantford Public Library.

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Introduction

Lifescapes: Senior Memoir Writing Program is a program of the Brantford Public Library created to help seniors begin to write their life stories. *Lifescapes* provides seniors with an opportunity to honour their memories by writing about them.

Every life is worth writing about. A memoir reminds our children, grandchildren, and future generations of where they came from and gives them a sense of place in their families. There is also value to the author in the telling of a tale. Researching and writing memoirs stimulates the mind and keeps seniors an active and vital part of the community. Sharing their writing validates their lives.

This enthusiastic *Lifescapes* group met from October '07 to April '08 writing and sharing their stories. It was a diverse group that included several native Ontarians as well as others who had emigrated from England, Ireland, Scotland, Australia, Holland, South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Philippines. Their diversity is reflected in the fascinating stories they shared.

During the course of the program several authors and storytellers visited and spoke to the group about the art and craft of telling life stories. We would like to thank authors Cheryl MacDonald and Sylvia Maultash Warsh, and members of the Brant Taleteller's Guild, Michael Rutledge and Tolla Henry for their expert advice.

We hope you will enjoy the first edition of the *Lifescapes* anthology,
Our Recollection Collection.

Joan Faehrmann
Adult Services/Readers' Advisory Librarian
Brantford Public Library
Brantford, Ontario

Try Harder

Andy Woodburn

I decided that I needed a job that would pay me big money when I turned thirteen years of age, so one bright sunny day, with my eight year old brother tagging along I walked the three miles to The Brantford Golf and Country Club. As I walked on the grass beside the road I planned how I would ask for a job carrying golf clubs.

When my brother and I reached the golf course we walked down the long, winding road under the shade of the biggest trees I had ever seen. As I approached the stately building, which to my young eyes appeared so impressive, a car pulled up in front of the entrance. But what a car! It was the longest and most beautiful car I had ever seen. It had huge fins with pencil thin, eight inch long, red brake lights! I stepped forward.

"Please Sir, would you like a caddy?"

The gentleman in slacks and a sport shirt looked at me and smiled as he took his golf clubs out of the car trunk. "Have you caddied here before son?" he asked. "No Sir," I replied, "this is my first time but I will do a good job for you." He laughed and said, "Pick up the clubs boy."

For the next three hours I walked behind him giving him the proper club as he asked for it, putting away his used club and keeping the clubs clean by carefully wiping them down. After four holes he asked me if I minded if he and his friends had a drink. "Of course not sir, you are shooting a great round." The three men had a great time shooting well and drinking even better.

At the end of the eighteenth hole the man thanked me for being such a good caddie and gave me a five dollar bill. I was ecstatic to have such a small fortune in August, 1957. I had also learned one of the great rules of life; to be successful you have to try harder. Unknowingly I had broken all the rules of caddying. Caddies had to be registered and trained in their duties and picked by the golf pro who assigned them by their skills and seniority. At that young age I intuitively knew that good service is rewarded well by people who appreciate it. From that time on trying harder is something

that I have practiced throughout my adolescent and adult years. Even today I try harder, always.

In 1976 I had a massive gall bladder operation. For over a year I had been on a diet to correct the problem I was having. In August I had such a severe attack that I had to be hospitalized for a week. I was sent home to recuperate and to gain some strength before the operation.

The operation in September was a complete success. My gall bladder was removed and I spent ten days in the hospital recovering. On the second day my brother dropped by. He said "Andy, are you running for Council this year?" Barely able to speak, I replied "AAAARG". My brother then said "In that case I am going to run in Ward Three, I hope you can help me". Again I answered "AAAARG".

For over a decade I had been working in federal, provincial, and municipal elections with great success. My wife however had always been opposed to me ever running. She said nothing until my brother left and then she spoke her mind. After she calmed down she said "Andy if you want to run I will organize the campaign." I replied with my usual clarity, "AAAARG".

The day I got home from the hospital the decision was made and my key organizers were informed. Over the next three days the campaign was fleshed out. The organization was simple; I used the closed span of control method.

This meant that every person in the campaign reported directly to me. The polls were divided in half. People were assigned to each half poll for the First Drop, the Canvass and the Final Drop. Three pieces of literature were generated and time lines set for each phase. I was determined to try harder. In Ward Four I was running against the brightest guy on council; an eighty five year old twenty year veteran of City Council; a person who finished third behind the two incumbents; and a very likeable and popular fellow who went on to a great career with the CNIB. I liked all the candidates.

Like my first experience as a caddy at The Brantford Golf and Country Club, I broke a number of rules in my campaign. Usually running in a Ward where there are two strong incumbents and a strong runner up is a "*no-no*." However, I knew I would have to try harder.

Before I announced my candidacy I had gone to the research library of the Brantford Expositor where I reviewed the previous campaign and the current concerns of Ward Four constituents. I determined that there were thirteen issues and I wrote a position paper on each so that I had a clear position of all the issues. I went door-knocking in each sub poll and introduced myself and asked the voters if they had any concerns; their responses were worked into my campaign brochures and the televised debate.

The televised Ward Four debate was interesting. Everybody in the audience was supporting one candidate or another. I was only asked two questions. I read my position statement on those two issues and then made a few comments on what I believed would help Ward Four and the City.

Most of the questions were directed at the brightest guy on Council and they were hostile to two positions he had taken. At the end of the night all the candidates were pleased with their own performances. I was especially pleased that I finally met Charlie Ward, the eighty five year old legend in Brantford Politics.

On Election Night many people had expected the brightest guy on Council to win and were shocked when he dropped to fourth place. That night I remembered my first and only experience as a caddy when I tried harder. Each of the one hundred people who had done something to help me in the campaign had tried harder and I still remember their efforts. My appreciation was also extended to all those who had given me their support by voting for me and then to all those that voted in Ward Four period; and then I began my career in Public Politics that spanned from 1976 to 1997.

Despite my successes in helping to solve the East Ward Creek flooding problem, the Grand River Conservation Authority funding for the Brantford dikes that protect the City, and the Casino Referendum and its subsequent donation to City coffers of about four million dollars annually, the most important lesson I learned was not just to try harder but to enjoy your family life regardless of what position or job you hold; and that is another story.

Andy Woodburn was born in Lurgen, Armagh in Ireland. He came to Brantford in 1957 as a teenager. He graduated from McMaster University with a degree in Political Science in 1971. In 1976 he ran successfully for Brantford City Council. He was re-elected to 6 additional terms. He has been an insurance broker for the last 25 years. Andy and his wife Gladys have two beautiful and talented daughters, Meghan and Stephanie.

My War: The Sticky Bun Episode

Christine Morton

In 1944 I was 6 years old. I lived with my mother, my grandmother, and my mother's three unmarried sisters in two rooms in a tenement building in Glasgow, Scotland. Britain had been at war for 5 long years. My father was one of the first to go overseas as he had been in the Territorials (reserve army) before war broke out and was already trained. He was home on leave only once before going overseas in 1940 and that was the last time we saw him. I was 2 years old, so did not remember him at all. I remember asking my mother why my Dad didn't get home on leave like some of my friend's fathers. She told me he had been taken prisoner in 1941 and was in a P.O.W. camp in Germany. I remember very clearly my 3rd birthday. I had some friends in for a party, when a young boy in uniform came to our door delivering a telegram. I remember my mother crying and my Aunt Chrissie taking over the party games. I learned in later years that the telegram reported my Dad "missing, presumed killed." However, about a year later the Red Cross contacted us and said he had been traced to a P.O.W. camp in Germany called Stalag 383. I remember my mother and my Gran both crying and laughing at the same time. We were all so relieved to know he was alive. The first thing my mother did was take me to town to have my photograph taken. We could send letters, photos and even parcels to him through the Red Cross, although they could not guarantee that everything would reach him. When we got home with our photos, Mum took the little picture of me and wrote the words "Hello Daddy" on it. She said, "Let's send him our love." We both kissed the photo, and then she put it in the envelope with a letter from her. I remember all these events so clearly.

War on the home front was a time of freedom from adult supervision for my pals and me. All the dads were overseas, all the mums were working in factories making

uniforms, parachutes, munitions etc. as well as filling all the jobs the men had left behind. The women in our house worked different shifts, so there was always someone at home to keep an eye on me. On our street the older children were expected to look after the young ones. We had to find our own amusement, playing with a skipping rope or a game called "rounders" played with a ball and stick. We would sometimes be allowed to join the older kids and explore a bombed out building. The boys collected shrapnel and the girls looked for things like a piece of mirror or some beads. The older kids would talk about the things they had before the war: mostly about the food, chocolate and cream cakes. We had never seen such things, but just the thought of them made my mouth water. Whenever we saw American servicemen, we would run after them shouting "any gum, chum" and usually they would reward us. Another game was to wait outside the local pub till closing time when the old men would come out, then we would pester them for a penny. They would throw a couple of pennies to us and we would run to the grocery store, called "The Co-op," and buy a pennyworth of broken biscuits and share them between us.

One Saturday afternoon one of the older kids said he heard of a church where they had a film show and at the end they gave you a sticky bun as you were leaving. Could it possibly be true? To get a sugary, sticky bun just for sitting through a film! There was only one way to find out. The older kids made sure we all held hands and off we went. It seemed like a long walk, but finally we stopped in front of a building with a big banner across the front saying "Band of Hope." As we reached the door, a lady with a nice smile welcomed us in. She wore a type of uniform and a bonnet that tied under her chin. She told us to find seats as the film would be starting very soon. The older kids sat in the row behind us to keep a close watch over us. It was a bit dark and we were a little nervous so we still held hands. Then the film started. We found it difficult to understand. One of the older girls said it was about missionaries in Africa telling the people about God and baby Jesus and teaching them hymns and prayers. The film seemed to last a long time. Of course, we were thinking about the treat at the end. At last it was over. Some men in uniforms and caps played "Onward Christian Soldiers." We enjoyed that because we knew some of the words as we had learned it in school. The lights came on and we followed the crowd towards the exit. Finally I was at the door and there was the lady in the bonnet holding a big basket filled with shiny, sticky buns. They had bits of sugar on top; real sugar! She smiled and said, "Would you like a bun?" I walked outside holding it in my hand and marvelling at my good fortune. My friends and I were dancing about and giggling with excitement. We munched all the way home, relishing every tiny bite and licking every bit of sticky sugar from our fingers. We couldn't wait to tell our mums about out adventure. I burst into the house relaying every detail of my fantastic afternoon to Mum and Gran. They stared at me in silence. My mother was furious. Even Gran was angry. Mum said I had deceived those good people. It was cheating, she said. I was forbidden to go again.

It turned out that all my pals' mums felt the same way. We were never to go again. That night when Gran was tucking me into bed she said, "When the war's over I'll buy you all the sticky buns you can eat, love." When the war's over! Would it ever be over? Of course, eventually, it was. 1945 – Victory in Europe, and slowly the dads came home one by one. Then our big day came too. Mum went to the station to meet Dad's train. Gran and I waited at home. I remember being a bit nervous; maybe I wouldn't recognize him since I had only seen him in photographs. Gran told me to sit quietly and

read a book then the time would pass quickly. I think she was a bit nervous too. I didn't

hear him come in the room. I looked up and saw a man in a suit. This wasn't my dad; my dad would be in uniform. But then I saw the dimple in his chin and those bright sparkling eyes and when he smiled, I knew. Yes, this was my dad, home at last. He took me on his knee and said, "Hello pet." Then, from his pocket he pulled out a small photograph. "Remember this?" he said. "This is what kept me going." It was the picture of me with "Hello Daddy" written on it. The same one Mum and I had kissed and sent off to a camp far away all those years ago. I hugged him tightly. I was the happiest girl in Glasgow. The war was over. My dad was home.

Christine Morton was born in 1938 in Glasgow, Scotland. She has four children, 9 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren. She was a private secretary for 35 years then opened an antique shop when she retired.

A Tropical Voyage Toward Canada

Barry Raymond

We wondered what the hell we were doing, leaving warm, temperate Australia for cold, cold Canada. The year was 1966 and the era of regularly scheduled passenger liners was coming to an end. A young newly-weds, Gloria and I were about to embark on a voyage across the Pacific Ocean aboard the SS Southern Cross. Gloria was a 'fair dinkum' (genuine) Aussie Sheila (girl) keen for a life of adventures unknown. I was a recently graduated physiotherapist with a goal to see the world before settling down to domestic bliss. This was to be a 3 year around the world adventure of a lifetime. As we stood at the ship's railing, a sea of upturned faces shouted last minute messages and tossed hundreds of rainbow-coloured streamers at us to connect ship and shore.

When our ship finally left the port of Melbourne, we watched our passage through Port Philip Bay, past familiar beaches, sandy cliffs, and lighthouses, until we were summoned to the evening meal by a medley of 'gongs'. At our assigned table we were introduced to the meal companions and dining room steward who would be with us throughout the voyage. We really enjoyed our first ship-board meal of curried butter beans, roast beef and veggies, black currant pudding, and tea or coffee.

SS Southern Cross under the Sydney Harbour Bridge

At the tavern that night we noted the diversity of our fellow passengers and their colourful accents—British, Australian, South African, New Zealanders, and Pacific Islanders. Once we reached the open ocean the ship began to rock and roll in the rough sea. It was time to retire to our cabin. Gloria tucked herself into the bottom bunk and I heroically ascended the wobbly ladder to the top bunk where I slept well until 6:00 the next morning when the cabin steward stumbled into the cabin with a pot of English Tea

and biscuits. I was sure his goal was to get us out of bed so he could make up the cabin. From then on we decided to lock our cabin door for the remainder of the trip. The gongs sounded at 8:00 a.m. for what would be a typical on-board breakfast of tea, cereal or porridge, fruit, eggs, herring, black pudding, hot rolls, scones, toast, and more tea or coffee. The black pudding freaked us, 'jellied blood' shivering on a plate to the ship's vibrations. The blood-thirsty Scots loved it! "A taste of heaven my laddie."

Immediately after breakfast, six short bells followed by a long ring signalled a lifeboat drill, which was to be held after leaving each port on our trip. The most interesting part of the drill was watching the gallant young British officers assisting some buxom young females to get their life jackets off without distress. The remainder of the day was spent roaming the decks, watching passing ships and locating all on-board amenities such as lounges, cinema, library, shops, laundry, purser's office, post office, sports and exercise equipment, swimming pools, and the hospital room. Our first port of call was Sydney. It was fascinating watching the early-morning ferries and water taxis scurrying across the harbour, past the almost finished Opera House, and under the famous harbour bridge. After a short stay in Sydney our ship departed for New Zealand across the Tasman Sea.

Soon it was almost impossible to stay on our feet as the deck was heaving up and down as the waves crashed over the bow of the ship. What was really tricky was attempting to sit and stay on the toilet seat which was like being on a combination of a bucking bronco and a roller coaster. I had to grip the bar in front and hold on for dear life—most disconcerting! For the next two nights we literally had to strap ourselves into our bunks. The storm never seemed to end and the dining room remained almost empty. We quickly learned to get out of the way of pale-faced passengers rushing to the rail with their hands cupped over their mouths. A distinctive sickly sweet odour soon engulfed the ship and most passengers looked positively ghastly.

As Sunday fell during this part of the trip, a church service was scheduled. The ship's minister had to be strapped to the pulpit to deliver his sermon. We opted to sit in the lounge and listen to a recorded rendition of Handel's Messiah, the rhythm of which seemed to synchronize with the ship's lurching from stem to stern. Calmness finally prevailed by the time we arrived and disembarked in Wellington, New Zealand. We decided to travel overland by train for several days to see the sights between Wellington and Auckland where we rejoined the ship. As we pulled away from the Auckland wharf, a Maori choir farewelled us with a beautiful rendition of the haunting Maori song 'Now is The Hour When We Must Say Goodbye, Soon You'll be Sailing Far Across the Sea.' The melody and lyrics raised such emotions that left few dry eyes as the ship slowly made its way out to sea and into the Pacific Ocean. We now noticed that new passengers had joined us in Auckland. Many of them were South Sea Islanders returning home. The Islanders loved to get together on the open deck with their ukuleles and guitars and entertain passengers under twinkling star-lit skies. We had many magic evenings listening to their romantic and lilting Polynesian music.

Our next port of call was Suva, Fiji where we noted the population of 'fuzzy haired' Fijians. Once again we were serenaded as we departed by the 'lap lap' uniformed Fijian band playing stirring marches. The following day was 'Antipodes Day.' This was the day we crossed over the 'International Date Line' and gained another day, thereby having two Tuesdays in the same week.

Two days later we approached the island of Raratonga early in the morning and the ship anchored outside the reef. At that time there was no airport on the island and no wharf. Because a limited number of ships were stopping off at the island each year, the natives were most anxious to see visitors. We watched as they left the sandy white beaches beneath the towering green-blue volcanic mountains and paddled their long graceful Polynesian canoes through the surf out to our ship. As we looked down at the approaching canoes from the ship's deck we could see that the Islanders were laden with fresh flower leis which they later gave to each passenger. Once the canoes had been secured to the hull of the ship, the Islanders clambered up the jiggling rope ladders carrying their local island handicrafts. Soon the intoxicating perfume of tropical flowers had wafted into every nook and cranny on the ship. Tables were set up on deck to display and sell the handicrafts, native art, musical instruments, shell displays, island clothing, and LP records they had carried on board. This was followed by a mesmerizing performance of Island dancing and singing. Far too soon it was time for the ship to leave - the bells clanged and the Islanders clambered back down the ropes to their canoes. As the large orange tropical sun set, we reluctantly threw our leis into the sea to ensure that one day we would return and claim what we had left behind at Raratonga.

Two days later we arrived in the French Polynesian paradise of Tahiti. The islands lived up to their reputation—majestic scenery, mystic, romantic places and friendly people. Tahiti would be our last port of call for 10 days during which time we would be sailing with no land in sight until reaching Panama. We managed to fill these idyllic days of continuous sailing by playing deck games, watching flying fish land and porpoises playing in the waves made by the passage of the ship. Off duty seamen knitted socks on deck or organized special lift boat drills. We enjoyed fabulous tropical sunsets, spirited dances, impromptu moonlight sing-songs, typical English fish and chips served wrapped in 'The Times' newspaper and the gourmet buffet and snacks served on deck at midnight. It was during this time that I happened to fall asleep under the intense tropical sun and had to be treated by the ship's doctor for sunstroke.

Of the many on-board activities planned by the ship's staff during this time the most memorable included several fancy dress nights, an original musical review produced by the passengers called "Miss Gullible's Travels" and the Crossing the Line ceremony as we crossed the equator.

South Pacific Night was a fancy dress affair and required that passengers create a South Pacific theme costume from crepe paper supplied by the ship's staff, or whatever was available. I went as a 'Psychedelic Fijian Policeman' in a blue 'lap-lap' and orange cummerbund. Gloria looked great as an island girl dressed in a blue skirt decorated with big paper flowers with a bikini top and leis. The dining room was decorated appropriately with tropical flowers, shells, coconuts, fish nets, etc. After a special Polynesian meal, passengers promenaded around to show off their costumes. The prize winner was a guy whose ample belly flowed over his Bermuda shorts. On his chest and abdomen was painted a fearsome Maori face, his navel being the grotesque mouth holding a cigarette. By puffing out his chest and tightening up his belly, he was able to make an entertaining series of facial expressions, much to everyone's amusement. The other fancy dress event was a children's dress-up parade won by a baby girl in a bikini and sash and named 'Miss World 1986.' An adult fancy dress party produced such costumes as The Wrong Pill, Twin Screws, Man Overboard, Anthony and Cleopatra—a

very sexy Cleopatra in a low cut gold Lurex evening gown. Everybody held their breath in anticipation of certain ample body parts becoming free as the ship rocked up and down.

The "Miss Gullible's Travels" musical review was a parody of life aboard the "SS Suffering Cross" with Gloria as pianist. The show was a smashing hit. Then came the "Crossing the Line" traditional ceremony as we crossed the equator. All the children were gathered around the pool where several officers and crew were appropriately dressed as King Neptune, Queen Aphrodite, Clerk of Court, Surgeon (Dr. Kildare), a barber, several policemen, an official 'dunker,' and of course a colourful Court Jester.

Regal King Neptune declared the Court open by blowing a whistle. The policemen grabbed the struggling and screaming kids and brought them before the King. The Clerk listed the absurd charges, such as using the wrong end of the toothbrush, being noisy, keeping daddy occupied while mommy flirted with the officers, not eating their vegetables, etc. King Neptune stood and pronounced sentences while the Surgeon handed out pain pills (lollies). The barber lathered the faces and heads of the kids with melting ice cream applied with a huge brush. Then the policemen tossed the kids into the pool where the dunker dunked them. Once 'punished and purified' the kids were made to sing Happy Birthday to Queen Aphrodite who just happened to have turned 300 that day. This hilarious and entertaining ceremony concluded with the kids receiving a certificate proclaiming they had crossed the equator.

Finally on day 11 we saw land. We were thrilled to see land birds flying overhead. As we approached land, we encountered several giant sea turtles sunbathing in the warm coastal waters. Before transiting the amazing Panama Canal we were able to disembark for a few hours to explore old Panama, city of pirates, and take a trip into the rain forest. Back on board ship, we sailed through the canal into the Caribbean Sea, by-passing Cuba and eventually berthing at Port Everglades, Miami, Florida.

After one month and 3 days we had made it to North America. Before we would arrive in Canada we were to travel another 10,000 miles throughout the United States and Mexico by Greyhound bus on our 99 days for $99 bus pass. Thus commenced our unexpected but amazing life in Canada, including having a family and traveling to many exotic places around the world. We finally settled in Brantford in 1992 when our kids were finishing university and have made it our permanent home base, returning to Australia for occasional visits.

Barry Raymond was born in 1942 in Australia. He was educated and married in Australia and had 2 boys after moving to Canada. He is a dual citizen of Australia and Canada. A renowned world traveler, he is now retired and living in Brantford, Ontario.

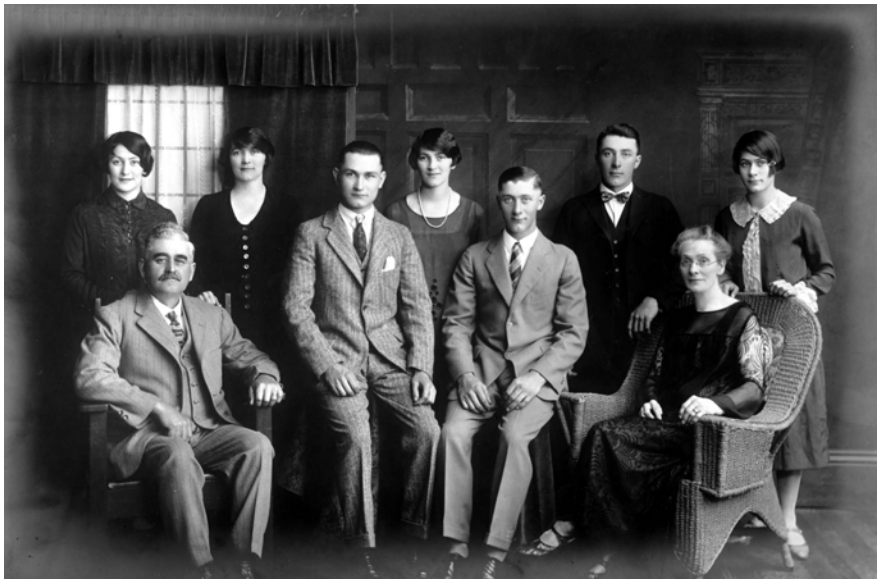
The Buff Orpington Mystery

Betty Jean Clark Cutler

I was very lucky growing up in the early 1930s even though at the time it never crossed my mind, it just was, that both sets of grandparents lived nearby. Next farm to us but across the CN Railway tracks, and therefore in Brantford Township instead of Onondaga, were my maternal grandparents, Thomas and Mary MacDonald, and next to them were my paternal grandparents, John and Emma Clark. I didn't know until much later that the farm behind us belonged to my distant grandfather Martin Deagle who came from Germany. In 2002 my eldest son Gordon, being in the Airforce and stationed in Germany, found the place from where Martin came and Gord was privileged to have a meal with Margrit, a distant cousin, about my age, whose ancestor was Jakob, a brother of my ancestor Martin. Margrit could not speak English but Gord had learned enough German that they had a very enjoyable visit.

Each day while walking home the 3 miles from Cainsville school I'd learn the memory work that was part of the curriculum. Also, after getting off the bus that brought me from BCI & VS to Cainsville, and walking home I may learn some part from a French play that my friend Shirley and I were to present to the class, or I'd try to learn a bit of Latin so that Miss Garnish would know I really was trying. As you may imagine the miles went by quite pleasantly and as a bonus I would pass Grandma Clark's place and then at the bend in the road there would often be Grandma MacDonald waiting at the front gate with a treat—maybe a butter tart, jam-jam (that being two oatmeal cookies put together with date filling) or maybe a slice of jelly roll and always a bit of a chat about my day at school.

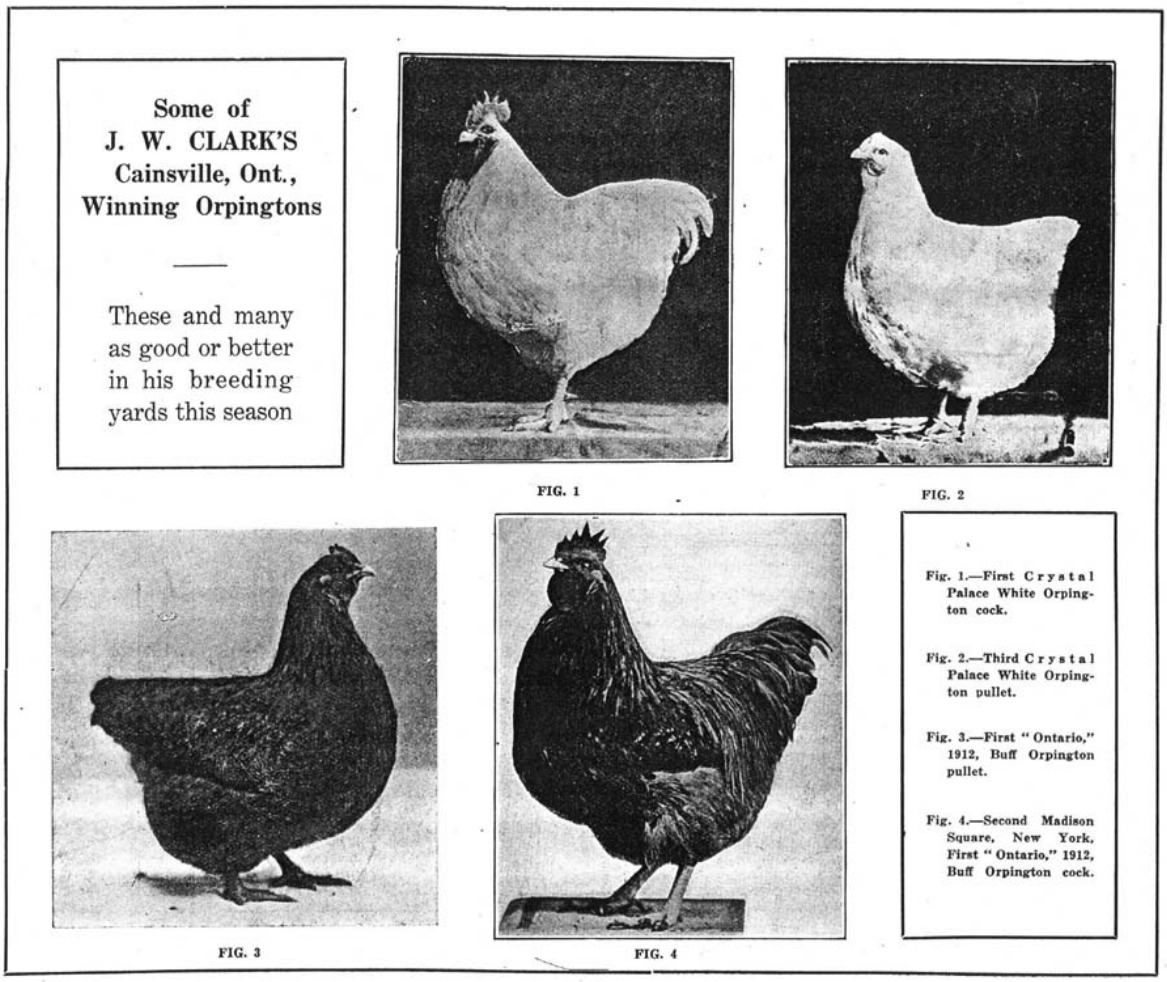
I spent many weekends at Grandma Clark's. Grandpa passed away when I was quite young and now when I think back it may have helped her with the loss by having me stay. She taught me to knit and crochet—things I still enjoy doing today. She spent a lot of time knitting socks for Uncle Garnet. He was my father's eldest brother and had had Infantile Paralysis as a child. Because of that his one leg did not grow as the other and he always walked with a limp. Due to the one leg being so much smaller Grandma had to knit his socks. I remember that he wore leather heel guards so holes didn't get worn in the socks as quickly as otherwise.



John and Emma Clark and family. Garnet is in the back row and my father, Gordon, is in the front row beside Emma.

Grandma and Grandpa Clark had mainly a fruit and vegetable farm selling produce in the area and exporting apples in the Fall. I remember the raspberries, gooseberries, currants (black being my favourite because they made such wonderful jam) and of course row upon row of apples. That's where I learned that apples have distinct flavours one from the other, some much more to my liking. A snow apple was a juicy treat having the whitest of flesh with tracings of red but the large St. Lawrence apple couldn't be beat because it truly was large—some being 5" across. It was a very firm apple, something like a Spy and perfect for taking to munch on while sitting in some private spot to daydream of far off places or making up bits of poetry. There were always a couple of cows to supply the house with milk and butter, a team of horses, and always chickens supplying the eggs and often Sunday dinners.

Grandpa wrote a column in the OAC Review that was put out by the Ontario Agricultural College. In it he answered questions that had been sent dealing mainly with diseases of or the growing of fruits and poultry. He also went on tours giving lectures on crops and such. His brother George co-authored a book on Canadian Weeds. It had a beautiful coloured picture of the weed on the one side and the description of it on the other—quite the book to let a child look at if she became bored! But Grandpa's real passion was for Buff Orpington fowl. He took his best ones to shows such as Madison Square Gardens, New York, and the Ontario Winter Fair where he won many prizes. He was also engaged as special poultry instructor at Pennsylvania State College. He truly did like his Buffs.



Some of Grandpa Clark's White and Buff Orpingtons as shown in *The Canadian Poultry Review* Vol. XXXVIII, No. 5, May, 1915

With Grandpa being away so much, Grandma had to deal with things as they came along big or small. The story I want to share deals with the ability of this wonderful lady, tiny in stature though she may be, to solve any problem. This seemed to be a favourite story because she would tell it to me so often that I believe I could have told it word for word myself. On looking back I wonder if she told it to me so often so that I wouldn't lose my memory of Grandpa and maybe, because of the rather humorous outcome, it gave her pleasant memories also. Grandpa had gone away on one of his speaking engagements AND Grandma was faced with unexpected guests coming for Sunday dinner. Well no problem for dessert, there being lots of fruit put down, and vegetables were never a problem, but what for meat? She had nothing at hand that she thought was good enough for guests. Ever resourceful she didn't hesitate—she'd have chicken and dumplings. Out to the barn she went and what luck, there just inside the door was a cage with a lovely, plump fowl. It had a goodly supply of feed and water and it crossed Grandma's mind that John (Grandpa) had caught it and caged it just in case it was needed. How thoughtful of him she thought. Being the resourceful lady she was she quickly did the necessary chore and at Sunday dinner everyone enjoyed the fellowship

together as well as the delicious chicken and dumplings. Grandpa got back a few days later and as was his custom after being away he went out to check on things, especially his precious Buffs.

At this point in the story Grandma would always stop and impress on me that, "John was always a *very understanding* man and *never* raised his voice." Then she would carry on with the story. Even though I had heard it so many times it still was exciting to anticipate the ending. "John came to the house, letting the door slam and with a raised voice said, "Emma, what happened to the fowl that was in the cage in the barn?" Grandma told him about the guests and no meat suitable for them and how she had been resourceful and made chicken and dumplings for them and how they did so enjoy it. Grandma would lower her voice until I could hardly hear her and she would say to me, "John said in a *very* controlled voice that he hoped the guests truly did enjoy the chicken and dumplings as it was his prize Buff Orpington I had fed them." Then she would say with a chuckle that John NEVER again went on a tour without making absolutely sure that she had meat for any guest, no matter how special, who may drop by.

It's been over 70 years since first hearing this and yet when I think of it, it seems just as though I am back sitting on the chesterfield listening to Grandma relating the story of Grandpa's prize Buff Orpington and the special Sunday guests once again.

Thomas and Mary MacDonald

A bit to add to the story that will make it more understandable as to why Grandpa was upset that his prize fowl was made into a Sunday dinner:
In the May, 1915 issue of *The Canadian Poultry Review* there was a nice article about "J. W. Clark's Winning Orpingtons." In it he states that he purchased breeding stock from Murray Linder, the best breeder in England of Orpington fowl. He said he paid $250.00 for a cock-bird and $50.00 each for 6 pullets. We must remember that the article was dated 1915. I contacted the Reference department of the Brantford Public Library and after consulting the Back of Canada Website Inflation Calculator, they found that $250.00 in 1915 would be worth $4581.97 in 2008. I do not know if the prize fowl that fed the Sunday guests was that specific one but, as Grandpa said, it was a prize winner so it is understandable that this soft-spoken, gentle man was a wee bit upset with Grandma!!!

Betty Jean (Clark) Cutler was born at home on Sunny Spring Farm in Onondaga Township, Brant County on August 26, 1932. She attended Cainsville Public School, Brantford Collegiate Institute, and Georgian College in Owen Sound. Betty Jean worked at the Brantford Welfare Department in the early 1950s

Hannam Family Stories

Fern Scott

The Hannam Farm

In 1811 a boy was born to William Hannam and Catherine Evill at Horsington, Somerset. He was named Henry Hannam. We know very little about his early years except that he had a brother John. When he reached 18 he left England to come to Canada. We haven't been able to find the port at which he entered this country. He moved about a fair bit. We have records of his becoming an assessor, a painter, and a person who arranged juries for court cases. He met a girl named Amelia Laberty. She was born in Quebec but we have been unable to find any knowledge of her family. Henry married her in 1835 at Adolphustown, Ontario and they became the owners of the Hannam farm in Brooklin, Ontario.

The farm began with 25 acres and in later years it became 75 acres. Its living quarters involved only a log cabin and a small stable for livestock. Somehow the receipts and documents for building the home and barn are still legible, even to mortgage and deeds. Even family grocery and hardware bills for those early years are all included in the "package" I fell heir to. Henry and Amelia raised eleven children in the house he built. It contained a kitchen, a parlour, and four bedrooms, in one of which I was born years later. It was and always is interesting to read over how they managed.

The Hannam farmhouse

At Henry's death, the farm ownership was passed down to the older son, William Henry Hannam, with the agreement he would own the farm but give each of his siblings a percentage of what it was valued at. I am unaware of the length of time William Henry

stayed at the farm business, but he and his wife and one child left and went to British Columbia and we lost track of him after that. We're still trying to find him or his family. My grandfather, whose name was Alfred, then lived on the farm but worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway (?). By that time my father had married my mother and we all four of us children, Ralph, me, Jean, and Bruce, lived there—and that was most of our growing up years. My older brother Ralph died of Polio in 1951 and it was very hard for my parents to carry on, as he was the one who wanted to farm and it was their wish that he would be the one to carry on. In a few years my father died of a stroke and my younger brother Bruce inherited the farm. Bruce remained there after he married and produced three great sons, Henry, Gregory and Daniel. None of them was inclined to farm and it soon happened that the whole farm district was being bought up for development. Along with that came complaints from new owners nearby who felt the need to gripe about having to put up with farm machinery and noise etc. So when about the third development company made an offer, Bruce accepted it and moved to another part of Ontario County. 'Twas the end of the Hannam Farm.

Wedding of Fern & Gordon Scott, Jul. 13, 1945
The farmhouse is in the background

On the farm ca. 1925. Aunt Hazel in the car, Fern on the right

Firecracker Fun

It was March of 1923—I was about to arrive on the Hannam family scene. Now, eighty-some years later, I don't remember what kind of day the 12th day was but I'm sure it was a special occasion. I was the second child for my parents, Curtie and Albert, who had lived in this farmhouse since their marriage in 1918. My brother Ralph was 5 and was a great and caring playmate as I grew and became mobile and followed him endlessly.

My father had become the inheritor of the farm—it had been purchased by his grandfather Henry in 1856 and it was shared by my family and our grandparents, Alfred and Mary Anne Hannam.

There came a summer day when Ralph and I were playing outside while our parents were "doing the chores" at the barn. It must have been near the 24th of May (if we were celebrating that holiday then) and we had some tiny little firecrackers that made a lovely popping sound. I cannot remember the source of the matches—but I do vaguely remember the expression on my mom's face as she discovered what we were doing. I

also can't recall my brother's punishment, but my father said I would have to go to bed without my supper! I couldn't believe it!

However, in an hour or so, they came upstairs and said I could have something to eat—and as you can see here, I never forgot that experience!

Fern holding Jean ca. 1926

Left to right: Jean, Fern, Ralph

A Christmas to Remember

There was lots of excitement at school as we all prepared for our parts in the annual concert. We knew our Dad was to be Santa Claus. I think he looked forward to it too. But as the evening wore on, one of our parents' friends came to tell us our Dad had to leave because our Mom wasn't well and they would take us home. We were concerned but caught up in the events before us at the concert. And then we were taken home. Assured Mom would be okay, we went to bed.

I could hardly describe our amazement in the morning on being told we had a new baby brother! Two things became clear to me—my mother's friend often asked me how Mom was feeling and I was puzzled by that and the other thing I had noticed was that Dad often helped with kneading the bread dough our mother always made.

All of this tells me how uninformed we were compared to the knowledge children have today.

It was a Christmas to remember!

The Jigger

There came a time in our young years (almost teens) when we lived for a time in a small house quite near a railway track. This train was nicknamed *Nip & Tuck.* It began very early in the belief that it would make Whitby famous for transporting lumber and farm products to a better marketing part of Ontario. It was popular early but gradually lost some of the interest. The house we were in belonged to the railway. It was at a point where *Nip & Tuck*, which traveled only north and south, crossed another line which rarely had any traffic. The railroad workers had a little two-storey building, the docket, of which the second floor, with many levers, was used for shifting tracks at needed times. It also contained a *Jigger*—an open four wheeled topless car—which was propelled by wide handles pumped up and down (originally by the section men who worked there.) In time it was useable but unused. Our father obtained permission for us to use it on occasion and it turned out to be the toy of our future. If the odd train sounded its whistle a mile or more down the track, we could lift the jigger off until the train passed and then reposition it for the next trip. There was never a problem getting enough help because it was good fun. All through the years, whenever our cousins or neighbours have been together, all that one of us would have to say was, "Remember the jigger rides!" and we would enjoy reminiscing about those times.

Fern Scott was born in a farm house at Brookin, Ontario on March 12, 1923, the second child of Albert and Curtie Hannam. She lived in the Oshawa and Brooklin area most of her young life and worked at Bell Canada. On Friday the 13th of July, 1945 she married Gordon Scott on his return from the war. He studied to become a veterinarian and then discovered that Brantford needed an extra veterinarian. After a wonderful life together with Fern, Gordon sadly died in April, 2001.

Walk, Don’t Run And Winter Days

Frances Gray Currie

Walk, Don’t Run

There is an advertisement or a saying on television, talking about “it takes a whole village to raise a child.” In looking back over my childhood, I feel that was true in my early days. I was a very active child. I was born in 1935 and spent all my growing up years in a little village called Hillsburgh, in Wellington County in Southern Ontario. It was nestled at the bottom of a big hill and sprawled along the Seventh Line, now called Trafalgar Road. There is a six year gap between me and my only sibling, a brother. I’m sure that it was caused by sheer exhaustion on the part of my parents. Our home when I was born was on the second floor of the building housing my Dad’s various businesses. The building was a two story affair of cement block, plastered over with stucco of some kind. It had various uses through the years. Dad and his older brother had been using it for their feed and seed business prior to Mom and Dad’s marriage. It had never been planned for a home. There was no kitchen. I can remember Mom talking about feeding thresher men using a two burner hot plate. I don’t know at what period, they put in a counter and sink in the back room downstairs and made it into a kitchen. Dad was out much of the time making contacts for his newly established general insurance business. Mom had to mind the office. We were right on the Main Street. I needed to be contained. The solution was to make a fenced in section out of chicken wire in the back yard. I didn’t take too kindly to being hemmed in. Seemingly at about eighteen months I took off all my clothes, scrambled under the wire somehow and struck for uptown. The garage mechanic in the next block saw me and brought me back home. One Sunday I got away from them at church and crawled under the pews and surfaced up at the minister’s feet.

I seemed to have a lot of holidays with different people. One holiday was with Mom’s girlfriend and her husband on their farm. They didn’t have any children yet. The husband had a great time kidding me. I can remember asking him why he was putting ‘black seeds’ on his porridge. He told me, it made it really delicious, and urged me to take some. They tasted fine to me so I had a huge helping of them. They turned out to be flax seeds and I spent considerable time in the outhouse, the next day. We had a violent

thunderstorm while I was on that holiday and the house didn't have any lightening rods. A bolt of lightening hit the house and shot out through the telephone on the wall. There was a flame surge across the room. It was very scary. I also had my first experience with wasps on that visit. I was out in their berry patch and didn't realize what this funny thing was, so I poked it. I got out of there in a hurry. They also had something interesting in the back kitchen. Their washing machine was not motorized. It had a handle on the top that you pulled back and forth and that swished the clothes around. I found it fascinating.

My fishing Grandpa Gray lived down the street from us. I was a frequent visitor. Always when I left for home, he would say to me "Walk, Don't Run."

In my childhood, little girls wore dresses with sashes with a big bow on the back. I never had a pair of slacks until my teen days. Most of my clothes were homemade and in some cases made out of the material from discarded adult clothes. I have a picture of me in a coat, hat and leggings outfit that was made out of an old pale blue coat of my Mom's. There was a seamstress in town that did the sewing. Nothing was wasted. I can remember that all the basting threads were carefully pulled out and wound around a piece of cardboard to be used again. I just hated the measuring of the hem. I had to stand on the dining room table at her house and slowly turn around while she pinned it up. Those sashes were the bane of my life. Inevitably, as I was climbing over a fence, the sash got caught on the way down the other side. Of course it always ripped right out of the dress. Mom could never understand why I couldn't get stopped before that happened. I had several kind older women in town, who fixed me up before I went home. All summer long I had a bandage on one knee or the other. I have the scars to this day. A lot of them came from roller skating. We had the kind of skates that fitted onto your shoes with a big key that tightened them up supposedly. Quite often they became loose and down you would go. It took a terrible toll on shoes. The hill going north out of town, gave you a wonderful ride. It was a cement road going up the hill and had cut marks about every eighteen inches across the cement. I imagine they were put there to give the horses a grip in icy conditions climbing the hill. We carried our skates to the top of the hill or as far as bravery would take us. Needless to say, there wasn't a whole lot of traffic on the road and probably we weren't supposed to be on the road at all. We had many exhilarating rides down the hill over all the cut marks. They would slow you, but the vibration would make your whole body tingle. I have no idea how we stopped.

Winter Days

In the early 1940's in Southern Ontario, we had a lot more snow than we do now and conditions for coping with it were quite different. I can remember as a child sitting on top of a snow bank, eating snow and being able to touch the telephone lines. Another time I sat on a snow bank, watching a whole group of men shoveling ahead of the snow plow trying to get the road opened up over the hill leading to the north out of town. They looked like ants from my vantage point. My Dad has since told me, that part of the problem was, not just the snow, but the fact that most of the fences in Southern Ontario in that period were made of split wooden rails lined in a zigzag fashion and the roads weren't raised up enough. The fencing acted as a container. On a blustery day, down came the light snow, the wind blowing across the road caught it up and dumped it over

the rail fences and on to the hollowed out road area. There were a lot of horses and sleighs used by the farmers in that period of time to haul home supplies. In many cases shortcuts were taken across the fields rather than trying to cope with some of the roads. I can remember as a five year old going with my uncle in a horse and cutter to spend a night at their farm. I was bundled up in smelly old blankets, probably the same ones that kept the horse warm in the shed while my uncle was getting supplies and the two of us had a magical ride home to their place with some needed groceries. I can still see the tracks through the fields that we followed to circle round a big hill.

When I was a bit older, probably about eight or ten, bright, sunny, crisp, winter Saturdays were really fun days. The farmers came to town with that week's supply of grain that needed to be ground into feed at one of the mills. I can't remember if the wives were involved in these trips. As kids, usually two of us or maybe three, would bundle ourselves up and walk out to our favourite lateral road into town and play on the snowbanks till we spotted a farmer coming with his team of horses drawing a big sleigh. Then we would run and catch on to the back of the sleigh and ride or slide into town and down to one of the mills. A few of the farmers would snap the whips in the air and we would drop off that one and wait and hope the next one was friendlier. There would usually be a line up at the mills, while the farmers visited and waited their turns. We would catch the next one leaving with its load of feed and ride back up town. If they had more shopping to do, they would pull into the Presbyterian Church's yard, unhook the horses from the sleigh and tie them up in the shed. Again we had a choice, usually some one would be finished with their shopping and we could hook a ride with them back out of town and hopefully find another one just coming to town and ride back in again. We were always optimistic that someone else would be coming in. I can't count the times that we rode one out of town and then discovered that it really was getting late on in the day and no one else was coming in and we would have to trudge back home – but what fun.

Sometimes we would get sidetracked and go tobogganing in an old gravel pit at the edge of town. This was a well to do farmer, and his son had a proper toboggan. He was going to grow up to be as cagey as his father. I always had to make the first trip down the hill. If I survived it, Ed would go down behind me on the toboggan for the next trips. One day we got quite a path worn down the pit, and we slid a lot further than we usually did and a rail fence reared its ugly head. We rolled off, but the front of the toboggan got smashed. My parents were not happy. They felt duty bound to replace the toboggan. We also had another place in a field to which all the kids in town flocked. You got a lovely ride down the hill on the sleds without a long trudge up the hill again, plus it had humungous drifts from a fence at the top and you could dig out whole rooms in the snowbanks. The goal was to see how spacious you could make it and not have the roof fall in. We didn't seem to get that cold. I think that was partly from the fact that you were never really warm in the winter in the house either. Winter boots were just non-insulated rubber type boots with wool socks. You were constantly stepping in snow that went over the tops. Periodically you would pull the boot off and shake out the snow. Coats and snow pants would be of a woollen material. Mitts, scarves and hats would be wool and usually hand knit. There were no dryers. When you arrived back home everything would be stuck with wet snow. Mom would brush you off with a broom outside the back unheated hall and then you would strip. There would be no more going out that day. We only had one set of outdoor clothes. The clothes dried on a clothes horse usually set up in

the middle of the living room. Your hands and feet would be bright red and usually a red ring around your legs from the rubber boots.

As we got older, ten to thirteen, we could venture farther and later. At times we would have a thaw and there would be an overflow down a hollow area winding through a field in town. If conditions were right, we would get a fast freeze and no more snow. We then had an outdoor skating rink. Most of my memories of skating through the field are on moonlit nights. It was so peaceful. All you could hear would be the rasp of the skate blades on the ice. We also skated on the Upper Pond on a moonlit night and it had a big stump in the middle of the pond. The Mom of one of my girlfriends loved to skate too, and she would sneak in and leave on the stump a big plate of Newport Fluffs drizzled with maple syrup made into handy balls to pick up and eat.

Bright sunny Sundays in this period, would find us cross-country skiing to a hill over on the next concession. It was a favourite place of the older teens as well. It had some very scary runs down the hill. I did well, if I managed to get up the hill! Usually on the way down I would lose my courage and try to sit down on my skis because I felt I was going too fast. Twice I sat down on a rock on the same spot on the run down and had a sore tailbone for years. The coming and going through the fields and the anticipation of the camaraderie made the whole trip worthwhile—simple pleasures.

Fran Currie was born in 1935 in the village of Hillsburgh in Ontario. She is the proud Mom of three children and grandmother to four fine grandsons. Since retiring from the accounting field, her passion is her flower beds, friends, and reading.

Finding Nancy

Joan B. Johnson

"Nancy, Nancy who?"

"Your sister."

"My what?" It was 1983 and I was visiting my second cousin, Vera, in Coventry. We had met only once before and that was in September 1939, in Coventry, the very week war broke out. At that time Vera was 15, I was 13. Vera and I had a lot of catching up to do regarding the family, especially since I had moved to Canada in 1946. Vera's mother, my great-aunt Olive, said, "Yes, your mother had a baby."

Returning by bus to Portchester, Hampshire my head felt that it would burst with this newly-found knowledge. Who could I ask? Who would know? Mother was still alive, but I just could not say the words. I had gone to England for four months in order to help my mother and to keep her company, but it had back-fired – she had become very angry, even nasty, and had accused me of only going to England in order to "poke through her stuff." Absolutely untrue! After that dreadful scene I moved to my brother's and I returned to their home with this huge, burning question, but they did not want to know about Nancy.

Soon after returning to Canada I wrote to my mother, "My dear Mum, I think you should know that I now know about Nancy" etc. My letter was not condemning or bitter. The reply was by return mail. As expected, my mother was angry and she guessed who had 'spilled the beans.' Years later I learned that she had sent a vitriolic letter to her aunt, Olive, and daughter, Vera.

Years later my son, Michael, got interested in genealogy and he got a computer. "I'll try and find your sister," he assured me—and so the search began. Michael went to British genealogy meetings, looked up information on his computer and at the library, and also got information at the Mormon Church at the corner of Stone Church and Upper Sherman St., Hamilton. One of the first things he did was to send for a birth certificate. Yes, Mother had a baby on July 22, 1922 and had named her Nancy May!! Father unknown. Many, many letters went back and forth across the ocean, by both mail and E-mail, as, one-by-one, people, who claimed to conduct searches, were hired but all led to dead ends. Nancy had been born in Yorkshire and that is where searches were aimed.

Years passed by- frustration mounted. How long could we justify spending the money when costs were escalating? We wondered if Nancy was still alive. Had she been adopted and her name changed? Was she married and so another change of name? Maybe she doesn't live in England. After all, I grew up there but moved to Canada.

Eventually Michael was put in touch with a lawyer in Bradford, Yorkshire and he seemed to be sympathetic. He took the matter to court twice, after which I had the feeling that Nancy had been found. "We must send something of a personal nature that they can show Nancy," I said to Michael. He assembled a group of photographs – Mum aged fifteen wearing her girl guide uniform; the next holding me (she was 26, I an infant), and subsequent family pictures- and they were sent via E-mail along with my letter, dated August 4, 2000:

> My dear Nancy,
>
> It is to be hoped that this letter will be forwarded to you, for you are my sister whom I have longed to know. Your existence was not known to me until 1983 and, to say the least, came as quite a surprise. I felt that I had been denied the joy of having a sister. Our birth mother died on Sept.1, 1985. Since then I've been to England several times and have thought about you frequently Nancy. Do we look alike? Are we interested in similar things i.e. country walks, handicrafts, reading, Scrabble etc.? I'm four years younger than you, Nancy and was 74 on June 29th.
>
> We wonder if you have a family. I've had eight children (sadly lost my first-born, David, 8 years ago after a short bout with leukemia), 19 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren!! My husband, Jack was a Canadian paratrooper. We married in 1945 in Sheet, near Petersfield and I joined him in Brantford, Ontario in Aug., 1946. Jack died in 1973.
>
> My second son, Michael, has searched diligently for you, Nancy, and we pray that we may know you.
>
> I send my love,
>
> Joan

Isn't it amazing that you can press a button, or whatever, and stuff can instantly *wing* right across the Atlantic?

Soon we were informed that Nancy had been located and had been told that somebody wanted to contact her regarding her early life. A social worker wished to see her, but Nancy was going to Scarborough for a week, so it was postponed. Michael was so shocked; in fact he jumped up and down! "Scarborough! She's *that* close!" He was thinking of Scarborough, Ontario.

"No, it'll be the one in Yorkshire," I assured him. That same week Michael's family and I were going to the Bruce Peninsula for a week, so there was huge apprehension.

On Friday, September 15th 2000 at 1:15p.m., I was sitting in my living room working a cross stitch picture of a mallard duck. My phone rang;

"Hello."

"Joan, it's Nancy." Tears and laughter on both sides of the Atlantic!! Quickly I phoned Michael.

"Nancy—we've found her!" I cried. My sister phoned me the next afternoon and asked if I would like to visit her—I'd already been that very morning and had booked!

And so it was that on October 11th 2000 we met—Nancy and Joan, sisters together at last. It had been seventeen years since I had first known! Nancy's name had been changed twice, first to her adopted name, and again when she was married. She had left Yorkshire during the war years and had worked as a gardener in the Land Army, while I had been gardening through Women's Farm and Gardening Association! After getting married, Nancy and her husband moved to Greater London. Like me she had been widowed for a number of years but the biggest difference was that she had not had children. Nancy had had a good career, whereas most of my adult life had been as a mother. There were similarities, however, e.g. we had both written our life stories, in fact I took my thick binder and each evening we read a few pages aloud from our own book. We both enjoy a game of cards and I was quickly introduced to the game of Canasta. Nan's Methodist Church is very similar to my United Church. We had had very similar education. Both of us enjoy travel, books, gardens, and people. Nan is shorter than me, a little lady who walks with two canes. She looks a lot like our mother and there are some physical similarities between the two of us. Sitting across the table from Nan she pulled a wee handkerchief from her sleeve and passed it across her chin. "Good God," I thought, "it's mother!"

Joan in Sandown, Isle of Wight, on her 9th birthday

Nancy, age 16, in Scarborough, Yorkshire

Our first holiday together was to Scarborough where her family used to have their week by the seaside, then a week in Coventry with cousin, Vera. She and cousin, Joan in Rugby, were visibly startled when they saw Nan. Another week was with brother, Peter and Maureen in Wareham, Dorset. Peter, aged 65, a retired Naval officer, sadly a victim

of Alzheimer's—he could still walk and he spent a lot of time picking up small leaves in their lovely garden, or he'd sit on his easy chair with his pad of paper, pen, and dictionary and play 'games' devised by his wife. Peter seemed to stare directly across at Nan, not at me who had known him since infancy. Was it because she looked like Mum? He said "My mother left me." Nan went to him, put her arm around his shoulder and said "I know you don't know me Peter but I am your sister, Nancy, and our mother left all of us." Even today I could cry when I think about it. Yes, our mother left all of us. Those were the last words I ever heard Peter say. He was aged 70 when he died.

Nan and I were together for five weeks and I've been back five more times ranging from six to eight weeks. Nan came to Brantford for four weeks Sept/Oct 2001. She has met all my Canadian family and I've been able to introduce her to all the British relatives I still know. We have each celebrated our 80th birthdays together. My last visit was in summer of 2006 and we both felt that it was the last time. We both have health problems and travelling becomes more difficult as we grow older. Now we write long letters to each other, and also have half hour chats on the phone each week. It has enriched our lives.

If you should go to Nan's house in Orpington, Kent, the first thing you would see as you open the door is the large framed picture of the mallard duck which I carried over on the plane in 2000. Below that is a plate from Niagara Falls which was a gift to my Mum many years ago. What a wonderful gift to get—my sister, Nancy! My one wish would have been that our mother could have had the courage to tell me. I know that she would have been so proud, had she known her first child, her love-child NANCY.

Finally we meet, Joan (left) & Nancy, Oct. 11, 2000

Nancy comes to Canada

Joan B. Johnson was born June 29, 1926 in Ryde, Isle of Wight. A War bride, she married John (Jack) in 1945 and was widowed in 1973. She is the mother of 8 children with lots of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She trained as a gardener during World War II, but most of her life was being a mother, a keen Brownie, Girl Guide, Ranger and member of Trefoil Guild (she shook hands with Lady Baden Powell).

A Humble Cottage

Josephine Dillon

When my eyes rest on the lovely ivy plant sitting on my kitchen counter, I remember a little cottage nestled in the green rolling hills of County Down. This plant came from the ivy growing around the door of the cottage where I spent three years from 1941 to 1943, when I was a young child. I had long promised to take my daughter on a trip to Ireland and it came to pass in 2005. She took a slip of the ivy and gave it to me on our return to Canada. I have nurtured this plant very carefully since it holds a lot of fond memories, is a living thing, and is part of my homeland. I was delighted to share memories and places of my childhood with my daughter and three grand-daughters. I rented a house in County Donegal as a home base, and we were on our way.

In 1938 I lived in a three story house on Rossmore Avenue, a block away from Holy Rosary Church and a short distance from the primary school. Right across from the Church was the Good Shepherd Convent which stood on a hill, same hill being just grand for flying down on roller skates. I would come down that hill at a fair clip, somehow managing to make a sharp left hand turn into Ardmore Avenue. Looking back it was quite a dangerous hobby and it is a wonder I didn't break a leg or two. We knew everyone on the street and most families who attended the Church, so there was no shortage of friends.

The first memory I have is when I was a child of three and a half years. I awoke, crying and terrified, to the sound of many airplanes droning in the night. My cot was in my parents' bedroom, between their bed and the marble fireplace. The fireplace was never used due to the lack of coal. I remember calling out to my Mother. She bent over the cot and said, "It's alright, love. They're ours."

On looking back, the planes could well have been German because the Belfast blitz occurred on the night of Easter Tuesday, April 15th, 1941. Two hundred German bombers attacked the city of Belfast. Half the houses were destroyed and there were many deaths and casualties. The targets hit were Harland & Wolff, Ship Builders, Short & Harland, Aircraft Factory, the Gas Works, Waterworks and Victoria Barracks where quite a large number of army families were housed. Many women and children were

killed. Perhaps it was after this my parents opted to move to the safety of the cottage in Dromara, about 15 miles outside Belfast.

In our house on Rossmore Avenue there was a "cubby hole" which was right under the stairs leading up to the second floor. My sisters have told me this is where the family went during the air raids. There was a chair for my Mother who was holding the baby (me) on her knee and then my Father and five sisters would cluster around her, packed in like sardines. The door was closed tight and there was no light. Everyone was terrified as they listened to the whistle of the bombs falling. My Father would start the rosary but it would never be completed, as every time a bomb fell he would start the rosary all over again. In later years this was something to reminisce about and laugh over; however, back then it was a deadly serious matter—indeed, a matter of life and death. The sound of the air raid siren filled me with dread. The "all clear" was a welcome relief, and I knew the difference between the two. My Father was an air raid warden and he would check in the aftermath of a raid for any injured people. Men all over the city gave their time and energy in this way or any other way they could.

The House on Rossmore Avenue

There were six of us girls ranging in age from 17 down to 3. My younger sister Angela came along in 1943. As yet she was just a twinkle in the good Lord's eye. Children and those at risk were evacuated to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, but my parents would have none of that and decided to find a safe place for us in our own country.

The cottage we moved to was whitewashed stone with a thatched roof, and the requisite half door, and the front wall was covered in ivy. There was a large common room which comprised kitchen, dining, and living room. On the right hand wall there was an open fireplace. Over the fire was a hook which swung back and forth and held a cast iron pot big enough to hold half a stone of Kerry Blue spuds. My Mother made delicious stew in that pot and she also made soda bread on a griddle placed on the fire. The fire was stoked with turf which not only gave off lots of heat but also the most wonderful aroma. To the right of the front door was the larger of the two bedrooms holding two double beds and a dresser—accommodation for my sisters. To the left and down a step was my parents' bedroom. I most probably slept with them. There was no electric light, no electric stove, and no indoor toilet. A big zinc tub was placed in front of the fire and we had a bath every Saturday night, whether we needed it or not.

The country folk were friendly and fun. My Mother was always singing, mostly Irish songs with a sprinkling of lovely WW 1 songs. One day she was sitting by the half door sewing and singing and an old farmer, Charlie Craney by name, came past. He had his tweed cap pulled down on his head, clay pipe stuck in his mouth and his Wellington boots thick with muck. He shouted in to my Mother as he passed by, "Ah Mrs. Dear, thon's bloody awful". He was letting her know that her singing left a lot to be desired.

My oldest sister and her friends would meet at the crossroads not far from the cottage. It wasn't long before the fiddler showed up and then some of the lads from the

The Cottage

nearby farms and they would have a great ceili. One of the girls who came dancing was Cassie McManus. She is the Mother of the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese.

One Sunday morning my Mother spread a bit of washing on the bushes to dry in the sun. Off we all went to Mass, walking down Dreen Road to St. Michael's. By the time we came home the goats belonging to the farmer in the next field had eaten holes in most of the laundry and polished off a pair of pyjamas entirely.

I think my sisters hated leaving the cottage to go back to Belfast. They had a lot more freedom in the country and the neighbours looked out for one another. There was a better chance to get fresh vegetables, eggs, and sometimes a slab of country butter. I found out from my Mother not long before she died that she was not adverse to calling on the man who dealt in the "black market" in order to purchase sugar, flour and canned fruit so that "her girls" could have a better Christmas dinner.

When we were young

There is something to be said about belonging to a large family. We learned at an early age how to give and take. We were taught by out parents to always look out for each other and to this day we still do so. We made it through that awful war, the bombing, the black outs, the rationing, the scarcity of clothing, powdered milk and eggs, no butter, no sugar, bricks of margarine so hard you could have built houses with them, no fresh fruit or sweets, and ration books with those tiny coupons which would have to be clipped for just about everything. My Mother hoarded these coupons in order to buy a warm fleecy liberty bodice for each of us to ward off the cold.

I think World War Two was the last righteous war. We all pulled together for the common good and made the best of it because the alternative was too dreadful to entertain. I will be forever grateful to the young men and women who gave their lives. I owe them a great debt of gratitude.

The trip to Ireland with my daughter and grand-daughters was an emotional one for me. To be able to take them to all the places that I hold dear was a chance in a million. They loved every bit of Ireland and want to return soon.

My childhood was filled with music – gramophone and records, piano and singing. I recall a beautiful song my Father would often sing. It is called "The Old House" and speaks to me of my homeland and family. It was written by Frederick O'Connor who was from County Meath:

Lonely I wander through scenes of my childhood
They bring back to memory the happy days of yore
Gone are the old folk, the house stands deserted
No light in the window, no welcome at the door.

Here's where the children played games on the heather
Here's where they sailed their wee boats on the burn
Where are they now? Some are dead, some have wandered
No more to their home will the children return.

Lone stands the house now, and lonely the moorland
The children have scattered, the old folk are gone
Why stand I here, like a ghost and a shadow
'Tis time I was moving, 'tis time I passed on.

Later years

Jo Dillon was born in Belfast, Ireland and sailed up the St. Lawrence River to Montreal on May 30, 1957. She lived in that beautiful city for nine years and also lived in Owen Sound, Ohio, Windsor, and Brantford. She has two daughters, a son, and five beautiful and talented grandchildren. She only spoils them a little bit!

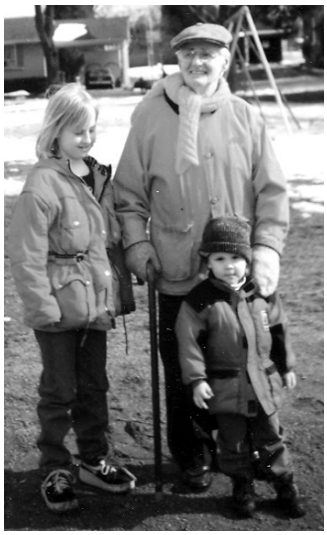
The Valise

Karan Stemmler

Uncle Ned came through the kitchen door and put his valise on the table. We all gathered around him as he opened it because we knew that there was something inside for each of us and we were excited. He handed each child their gift and then sat down. We knew that his sitting was a sign that a story was about to begin. “You know I remember you Karan, giving us all a great laugh. I’d taken you kids to Whiteman’s Creek” … my recollection began also, “Uncle look what I’ve found, lots and lots of shells.” My Uncle Ned came closer to have a look. Suddenly I heard his infectious laughter and was baffled. I looked up at him (and he would appreciate me saying that I looked up to him since he was rather short in stature and he was self-conscious of this fact). Mind you I was only 5 or 6 years old so of course I always looked up to him. “Kids come have a look at what your sister has found.” My brother and two sisters ran towards us and leaned over to look into my held out hands. Everyone began to laugh and not one of them could stop their giggling long enough to tell me what was so funny. I felt myself becoming annoyed. Between his snorts of laughter my uncle told me that I was holding rabbit poop. Rabbit poop, what was wrong with him? I knew that I had found shells, different shells than we had been seeing; but still shells. This story was recited again and again over the years by my uncle and his laughter over this incident was contagious.

“I wish that you didn’t have to go Uncle Ned,” I said as we stood together waiting for the Greyhound bus he was to board for Toronto. I always became anxious when he had to leave, and I knew that I would miss him greatly. Ned was so much fun to be with. He often told anecdotes about his job and the people that he met day to day. My uncle had a love for words and he always carried a hard covered journal with him to record his thoughts, tunes he half-remembered, and many, many quotes he gathered from books. One entry dated January 8, 1984 read: “Lovely day. My 26,645th day of existence. ‘Happy birthday’ from Margaret in Toronto for a start, then Helen.” I seem to have inherited this same quirk since I always have a couple of books on the go at the same time into which I write facts, fiction or funny sayings.

I didn’t like his leaving for another darker reason. I had a persistent feeling that danger was lurking near him. I felt that in Toronto there was trouble. When I was much



Uncle Ned with Brooklyn (left) and Hayden (right)

younger I would actually cry at his leaving, and I felt that way again. We'd had a good visit and had been recalling an incident which gave him another good tale to repeat to his friends. The day before had been Christmas and Uncle Ned had eaten breakfast with us and we were heading out to my parent's house to celebrate the day. I reached into the kitchen cupboard to get candy which I offered to my son who was three years old. He flung his little arms in front of himself palms skyward and said, "But I didn't finish my breakfast!" He was flabbergasted that his Mom was then going to let him have a candy. My uncle found this hilariously funny and in the following years he would retell the tale while thoroughly enjoying the animation of flinging his hands upwards as Aarron had.

I think now is the time to clarify my relationship with my uncle. Ned was my mother's bachelor brother who loved her nine children as his own. He spent part of his summer holidays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas with our family. Sometimes he came to Brantford at Easter time too and we enjoyed his chocolate gifts and country walks. We called our Uncle Ned our "Santa Claus," because he literally came loaded down like Santa every Christmas with gifts for us. I recall a brown and cream coloured, patterned ski jacket he bought for me when I was thirteen, that was so nice I thought I was the luckiest girl alive. A few years later I really, really wanted a Righteous Brothers' L.P. record that had been out for a few years but I had just recently become aware of it. With some difficulty my uncle had found it for me. I have it still.

Christmas with Uncle Ned (right), Karan beside him

Anyway, Ned was now going to get on the bus and he reached out and took my hand and jiggled it around as he shook it up and down very quickly. I laughed at the tickling feeling it caused in my hand. To change my mood was my uncle's intention I'm sure. He had begun that ritual when we were kids and he continued it with our children and grandchildren. It was known to us as the "Uncle Ned Shake," or in later years as the "Knucklehead Shake." That title was coined about 17 years ago and has stuck. I had my nephew Devin, who was a toddler, with me and we were standing at the counter at the Union Gas Company when he pointed at an elderly stranger at the far end of the room and said, "That's him."

"Who?" I asked.

"Him." He pointed at the man again. I was asking for a name to further investigate his excitement, and trying to identify this man. You can only imagine what was going through my mind. Had this fellow done something to my nephew at some time

I wondered. I took Devin outside and squatted down to his height. I had to know who this man was without attracting his attention.

"Devin, who is that man?" I asked once more.

"It's him," he replied.

"I don't know who you mean Devin."

"It's Knucklehead," was his lisped answer.

"Knucklehead?" I queried. What could he be meaning? Suddenly it struck me: "Uncle Ned." Devin's lisp had created this interesting name. When I told my uncle about this he roared with laughter and said "O.K., Knucklehead I'll be."

My uncle was 65 when he decided to move to Brantford from Toronto, although he travelled by train to his job in Toronto three days per week until he was 80 years young. I was very happy to have him in town at last.

When he was turning 80 we held a horse-drawn sleigh party for him. We went out into the bush where we built a fire and roasted wieners and sang songs. It wasn't until we brought out his birthday cake that Uncle Ned realized that it was a party for him. A reporter from the "Reformer" newspaper happened to be there, and he interviewed Ned. Uncle Ned told him that it was "the most eccentric birthday celebration" of his long life and he "thoroughly enjoyed it."

A few years later my eldest sister Charlotte had the wonderful idea of having a special day for Ned. She had a banner made up that read "Happy Uncle's Day." Only our family came to this party because it was really meant to show him what a special uncle he was to us. He loved to be amongst people, and we knew that he would have liked a bigger crowd there although we registered over 30 members back then. We had lots of fun reminiscing.

Uncle's Day, 1999

Brantford didn't have the social opportunities that Toronto offered and we noticed that our uncle was making friends with wild abandon. Once he invited German tourists whom he had just met at the train station, to sleep at his home. I remember my Mom being furious at him and she told him that he was flirting with danger. "Nonsense, I'm safe," he replied. And he was. He went over to town often and at some point he met a couple who owned a store and they shared his last name. They became friendly and after some months their divorced son began to rent the upper apartment in my uncle's house. The two men became good friends and this grew into a father/son relationship. They made some mutual friends and altogether they would go for scenic drives, grocery shopping and have dinner get-togethers.

In March of 2000 Uncle Ned had eye surgery which required drops being put in his eye every six hours. This meant that a 4:00a.m. procedure needed to be done. As I was trying to schedule this time slot with one of my siblings, his friend from upstairs came into the room and he volunteered to come downstairs at this time to do the drops and help us out. He did this favour for us and even recorded it in the chart for Uncle's care. Gradually Ned's eye recovered and we had great hopes for his future with his improved vision. He was 89 and still loved to be on the go.

On April 11, 2000 my younger sister Katie called to tell me that she had been on her way to visit our Mom, and as she drove onto my Uncle's street she noticed police cars blocking the road. She ran from her car and up to an officer and said that her uncle lived in that house. He took her aside and informed her that our Uncle Ned was dead. DEAD. He had been murdered by his friend from upstairs. I couldn't believe this had happened. We had all worried about his safety in Toronto, or here with strangers, but being killed by his friend? This wouldn't compute in my brain. After a couple of weeks of agony, an autopsy, and a funeral we were still so full of questions. I felt such woe and pain for this man's family as well as my own. I could not even imagine how they were coping with this. Believe it or not, I felt sorry for him too. Whenever I watched stories like this situation on television I was willing to kill the murderer myself, but in reality my feelings were much different, even though I loved my uncle very much. Ned was like a second father to me. My Dad had died 22 years prior.

We arranged for our cousin from New Brunswick to come to Brantford to escort our beloved Uncle's ashes back to the family burial plot where his parents, sister, brothers and nephew (our brother Grey) rested. We had a wonderful visit with Lloyd, exchanging stories about Uncle Ned, or Uncle Edmund as Lloyd called him. It was rather melancholy at times because our cousin looked very much like our uncle. When Lloyd said that it was time for him to leave, we all walked through the house to the kitchen with him. I glanced at the table and felt the worst ache and sorrow I'd ever felt in my life. Uncle Ned's ashes were on the table just as our gifts from him had always been. My cousin picked up the precious package and put it in his valise.

Karan M. Stemmler is a 6th generation Brantfordian. She is the 5th child of 9 offspring of Harry and Helen Thomas. Karan has a grown son Aarron, 2 grandchildren, Brooklyn & Hayden, and a daughter-in-law Tanya. She is enjoying her 13th year of marriage with David. Her love of language has been a life-long interest she shared with her uncle.

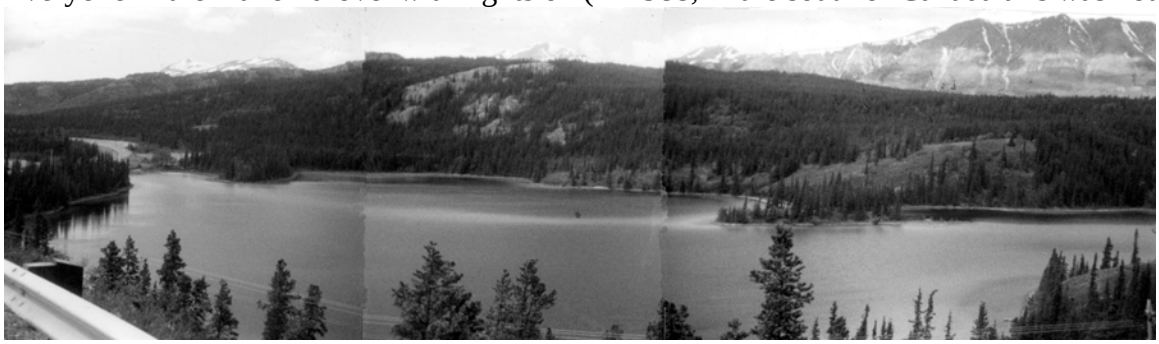
Back Through the Years

Joyce Cromar

Twenty-four Hours in the Yukon and Alaska

The smell of the crackling, sizzling bacon on the Coleman blended with the babble of the mountain brook beside 6' high wild roses behind my pop up tent. June 26, 1988 found me in the Hot Springs Camp Ground north of Whitehorse in the Yukon. The day was cool, but bright and sunny with wisps of clouds floating over the snow topped mountain that overlooked the Hot Springs swimming pool. I had joyously floated in the pool the night before (after a long drive along the narrow gravelled Alaska Highway) - appreciating the stark beauty of the Yukon around and above me. I had left Brantford 23 days earlier in a 1985 Plymouth Horizon - alone - camping most nights, sightseeing, and visiting. This was the day that had brought me to the north. I would be traveling the road I had heard had been built to connect Whitehorse in the Yukon to Skagway, Alaska - the Klondike Hwy. This road was to run over and along parts of White Pass. The pass was used in the goldrush days by those heading for the world's largest gold find - first discovered in 1896 with the resulting City of Dawson at its height at the turn of the 20th Century.

Camping gear packed, I headed the "Horizon" south - past the road sign marking the 60th parallel - onto the still gravelled road heading south-west from White Horse. Everyone in the Yukon drove with lights on (in 1988, in the south of Canada this was not



required) as the road and any traffic that happened to be on it were dwarfed by rolling mountains and rising snow capped peaks. I found I was paying little attention to the road until I happened on a couple standing beside a car - windshield completely shattered by flying stones. The Alaska Highway had left a couple of "dings" in my windshield and I was still thinking of this and how I had been told that these northern roads (in a land unpeopled and still) could destroy tires as well as windshields, when I rolled over the top of a hill and lost my breath. I couldn't believe what I was seeing - in the valley below and stretching along a snow capped mountain range was a large splash of colour ranging from deep green to azure to navy blue and all the colours in between. I stood alone in the total silence - drinking in the still, clean Yukon air - taking in the beauty laid out before me. My reverie was broken by the sound of gravel being moved as I reluctantly got back into the car.

I left Emerald Lake behind and came upon the little town of Carcross (where Caribou crossed) nestled in a valley under the 3000m. Skukum Mt. with its Dall Sheep grazing on the lower meadows. Traveling over increasingly narrow and rough road, I entered British Columbia. A sign reading -"Dead Horse Gulch"- marked the place where - as Robert Service said, "3000 horses died like mosquitoes in the first frost...and rotted in heaps." The gold seekers at the beginning of the 20th century had driven them with their packs up the pass to their deaths. The restoration of the White Pass Yukon narrow gage railroad that had carried would-be miners to the top of the pass was underway on the other side of the gulch.

There were no officials at a border crossing as I entered Alaska, but I had to wait for a pilot car to take me through the construction of a road being carved out of the mountain sides with streams of snow coming down to this work. I descended from the 3,290m. inland height of the Klondike Highway to the lush Skagway valley of plant growth and cascading waterfalls. Skagway, situated at the end of the Alaskan Fiord reaching deep from the Pacific into the upper part of the Alaskan Panhandle, was being restored to look like gold rush days with false fronted old building and horse drawn carriages. There was a large luxury passenger liner at the dock and I was able to get my car on it for the short ride northwest across the end of the Fiord to Haines, Alaska. I had not planned to do this, but it meant that I could drive over new scenic territory back into the Yukon on a road that I assumed would be in better condition.

I arrived in Haines (a small, lush green town to which many artists were drawn because of the mixture of forests, mountains, and water) feeling relaxed after an hour free of driving. Evenings were long this far north at this time of year - the sun just sinking below the horizon for a brief time around midnight, so I headed the car northwest - driving towards the Alaska Highway back in the Yukon. I was not worried about finding a camp site for my road map indicated several along the road I was now traveling. I left the fiord behind and started to climb again through lush green uninhabited forest.

About an hour later I turned from the paved road onto a gravel one at a sign indicating a camp site. The camping ground was completely deserted - the sites cleared from the forest were thick with tall grass and weeds. I quickly backtracked to the main

road. Of course it was still bright daylight and, as I had counted on driving in and out of the setting and rising sun at some time while still in the north, I decided that this would be the night. At the Canadian Border the forest suddenly disappeared along with the paved road. Snow patched bare rock rose high to the left and treeless tundra rolled off to the horizon on the right of a fairly broad dirt road in the process of being graded. On that Saturday night at 10 p.m. the boarder crossing official (a lone young girl - the first person or car I had seen since leaving Haines) greeted me with a cheery "Welcome home." She told me the road was passable, but rough, with the construction machinery left by the workers, who would not be back until Monday morning, standing here and there along it. I was now somewhat concerned and asked if there was a campsite ahead. She assured me that there was and I would see a sign. Gingerly I started out over very rough bumpy road with the sun now shining almost directly into my eyes so that it was difficult to see bumps and rocks and even some of the construction machinery. I did not find a sign signifying a camp ground. No doubt it was down because of the work on the road. Stationary unmanned silent road machinery, my slowly moving car, the rising snow patched mountains, barren tundra and blinding horizon level sun were my only companions. A rock or some like thing struck the bottom of the car with a resounding thud. The car kept running normally, but every now and then a clunking noise occurred which had no relation to the jarring caused by the bumps the car was going over. The gas gauge was nearing empty and I had no idea how far over this rough uninhabited road I would have to travel to reach Haines Junction where it met the Alaska Highway. I kept crawling along - striving to see. After what seemed an eternity a small group of log cabins with a "lodge" sign sitting in the bareness of the landscape came into sight. There were three cars sitting among the cabins. Here would be help if I needed it! It was 11:45 p.m. and of course there was no movement around the cars and office. I pulled up to the sign, got out of the car, took a picture into the sun - just dipping below the horizon, and then turned around and took a picture of the full moon in the twilit sky behind, freed my sleeping bag from the camping gear, got into it, put the seat back in the car, and went to sleep.

I awoke - shivering - at 3 a.m. The sun was high enough in the sky that I could see the rocks, rough areas, and edges of the road. In spite of the gas gauge I put the car heater on as I started up the now visible road. After an hour, with the gauge registering "empty" I came up to the road sign "Haines Junction Esso Gas Station - Mechanic on duty - 1 mile ahead." Before reaching the station I turned into the parking lot of the Kluane National Park's Visitor Centre, climbed back into my sleeping bag, and slept soundly in the car warmed by the sun amid the park's buildings. I awoke at 8 a.m. to see tourists going into the Visitor's Centre. The service station was not far and I turned into it before completely running out of gas. I can remember to this day I paid the most for the gas since the beginning of my trip a month previous....$28.00. (Remember it was

1988, gasoline was expensive in the north, and the car was a 4-cylinder Horizon.) When I asked the man who had filled the tank to have the mechanic check out "the clunking" noise I had been hearing since the car's connection with "whatever" on the invisible road, he (being the mechanic) said "Oh Lady - Everything rattles in this country!" Because I felt unsafe driving - not knowing what it was, he agreed "to look at things" while I was in the office paying for the gas. When I came out of the office, he had driven the car forward with the right side tipped up on a broad board propped up on a stump. "Sound like this?" he called from under the right side of the tipped car. "Your muffler hanger is broken - you can get it fixed in Fairbanks, Alaska." I guess I looked lost and pleading so he fixed it with a bit of rubber from an old tire, which I might add, was still doing a good job when I sold the car some months later.

I was now back in the Yukon - on the Alaska Highway - just a few miles north from where I had started out 24 hrs earlier. My appetite had been whetted to see more of the north. I decided to carry on northward into the Yukon and Alaska, but this day - with all its beauty, surprises, and wonders has remained etched in my mind down through the years.

Beginnings

June was embarrassed and turned as if to leave when she told me that I could be the one to own them. Our mothers, to whom she was referring, had just reappeared in the lobby to see if there wasn't some little thing we might want or had forgotten. They had left seconds before, along with the other parents of 44 girls who were now being ushered into the assembly hall by the Nursing Instruction Staff of the Brantford General Hospital.

Mothers tended to, June and I now joined this new class of nursing students. It was 1947 and the Nurses' Residence was some 3 miles across the city from the only hospital in Brantford. The old nurses' residence was needed for the increasing number of patients since the expansion of the city during the Second World War. We would be the first class that did not have to pay for our uniforms and the second to begin our residency in Winston Hall - a barracks type of building that had been occupied during the Second World War by women from across Canada who had come to Brantford to build Lancaster and Misquote bomber wings, mountings for naval guns, and parts for tanks. They had riveted, welded, and assembled in dungarees with their hair up in bandanas at the two large farm equipment factories (Cockshutt Plow & Massey Ferguson) that were then extended - functioning around the clock - during the war effort. Winston Hall had been their place to rest, wash, eat and party between long working shifts while away from loved ones in the armed forces &/or at home. The assembly hall in which we now found

ourselves had seen many a great party during the war years as the Commonwealth No. 5 Air Force Training Base had been just to the west of Brantford and the No. 20 Basic Army Training Base - just to the east, and there had been a similar residence for men.

We now - most of us just out - of High School from cities Southern Ont. would reside in this building (named - first name - for the great British war-time Prime Minister) for 3 years with hope of leaving in 1950 with the initials Reg. N. behind our names. We were issued uniforms and assigned rooms. We had already bought our very serious looking books filled with long names of illness, procedures, pictures, and diagrams. We were told that a more senior student nurse would be running through the halls around 6 a.m. the following morning - ringing a school bell which would be the signal for us to get up, get washed and into our uniforms, and be assembled with the Intermediate and Senior students in the hall by 6:30 a.m. There - there would be a Bible reading, a hymn would be sung, and inspection of how we were dressed by the nursing director would take place. We would then leave the hall and walk down the two set of steps along the walkway leading to the bus that would transport us to the hospital.

We were given the name of the senior student to be our "Big Sister" who could help us with any questions we might have. It was emphasized that our hair be properly tucked up in a hair net, that our black shoes be kept properly shone (we also wore black stockings), that the starched white bibs and aprons be on neatly (no mean feat at first for we found the bibs had to be crossed at the back and be pinned securely to the blue and white striped under dress at about waist level.) With the five dollars a month we would be receiving, we were expected to be responsible for the completely stiff (done by a Chinese Laundry) collar and cuffs (and later - caps) which completed the uniform and presented - at first - some practice to assemble in the proper style.

On the way up the stairs (for I was to share a room with another student on the second floor), I felt "a dizziness" and before I knew it had lost my lunch up several of the stairs - thankfully managing to miss the uniforms in my hands. Someone introduced me to the broom closet which also contained a bucket, mop, and rags. I remember thinking that I'd better get used to cleaning up this sort of thing if I was going to be a nurse - no more parent to feel sorry for me and clean me and "whatever" up. However, when the instructors heard of my mishap I was told to go home and get a doctor's note before coming back. I was not in the picture of the New Student Nurses at the Brantford General Hospital that was published in the local paper (The Brantford Expositor) the next day. This was important news back in the '40s. However my name was listed as being absent - thankfully not mentioning the reason. On my visit to the family doctor to get my note, the doctor wanted to know what I was doing by "Going into Nursing (doctors knew their families back then) as I'd never make it." I think he was saying it "with his tongue in his cheek."

Some five years later - after I had graduated with a couple of awards and gained nursing experience at Toronto's Women's College Hospital and a Mental Institution - this same doctor told me how grateful he was that I had been the nurse in the ambulance with his seriously ill, unconscious young patient being rushed to a specialist some 60 miles from Brantford. I had signalled this young woman's husband, who was following immediately behind in his car, as to her condition through the rear door window of the ambulance.

It was at this time that I really felt that "I had made it." I went on to have many satisfying and interesting nursing experiences.

Note: the patient in the ambulance did get well.

A Child's Alexander Graham Bell

When talking with our two preschool children about occurrences, we did not use the year or calendar dates to specify when events had taken place, but devised the following way of referring to time:

- when we (their parents) were children their age - there were no TVs
- when their grandmother (my mother) was their age - there were no radios
- when their grandmother Emily (my grandmother and their great grandmother) was their age - there were no cars.

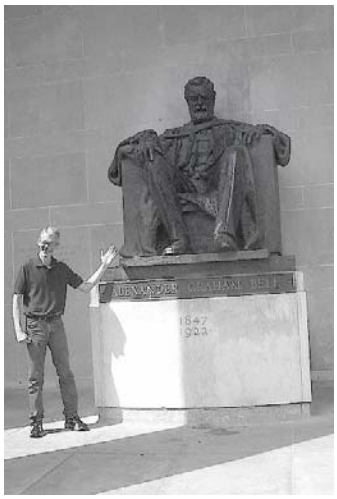
To ourselves, we referred to this way of dealing with time as "The Kids Ancient Modern History Time."

In the late 1950s, when our son and daughter were preschoolers, there was a relatively new Bell Telephone Building at the corner of Wellington and Market Streets in Brantford. In the front of this building were a few steps leading up to a recessed area, where there was a bronze statue, between two columns, of an "older" Alexander Graham Bell sitting in an arm chair - much like Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C. The entrances to the building were to the right and left of this recessed area.

I had parked the car across the street from the front of this Bell Building while my mother was in the building paying her telephone bill. The two children were standing on the floor in the backseat area of the car (there were no children's seats or safety belts at this time) - looking out the window at the statue of Mr. Bell. They wanted to know who that man was. I told them his name was Mr. Bell and that before he had lived there were no telephones for he had been the man to figure out how to make a phone so that we could talk - through it - to people who were far away and could not see or hear us in the ordinary way.

They wanted to know when he had lived and as I was across the street from the statue I could not tell them the exact date, but told them I was pretty sure he had been their age a little bit before their Grandma Emily. I was about to give more information about Mr. Bell, when suddenly a loud child's voice - coming directly into my right ear – exclaimed, "BUT WAS HE *GREEN*?"

This is one story I've been able to tell about the children down through the years without embarrassing them. My son was home from Oregon in 2007 and we took him to see his green Graham Bell.



Joyce Cromar was born in Brantford the same year as Queen Elizabeth, entered nurses' training the year the Queen was married, graduated the year Prince Charles was born, and married the year of the Queen's Coronation. She was the director of an Industrial Medical Department, was a church organist briefly, and enjoyed singing in many choirs. She has two children, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

The War Years

Rita Dingemans

In 1938, the year I was born, there were rumours of war in Europe. A dictator had risen up, born in Austria, and now living in Germany. By May 10, 1940 he declared war on Holland and invaded our country. He met with stiff resistance, but came with heavy artillery. My parents were living in a part of a Bank building in the centre of Rotterdam. My father was employed as the "concierge" (guardian, custodian or caretaker) of this bank. He was in charge of the caretaking staff and of the maintenance of the building. He also served as doorman and in the human resources department.

Early May they were warned by the authorities to evacuate the building and seek shelter outside of the city, as there was a threat of bombardment. My mother had a brother whose father-in-law lived in Schiedam, then a small village just outside of Rotterdam. They invited them to come there until the threat was over. My parents fully expected to return to the house, so took very little with them: jewelry and enough clothing for a day or two. The news soon was out that Rotterdam had been bombarded, but with the absence of TV one could only guess the extent of it. After a few days my dad went home for some much needed supplies and did not return for a long time that day.

As I remember my mother telling it, he returned in the early evening only to sit down and exclaim, "It's all gone, there's nothing left." With that grim reality they had to start a new life.

Thank God that they worked and lived in that Bank, so they were assured that a new place soon would be found again, because business had to go on. But to start from scratch setting up a household with a toddler and small child in tow is no mean task. I don't know how they came through the months that followed.

After the bombardment, where our house used to be

My first recollection of my environment is the building to which we had newly moved and lived until I was twelve years old. We were on the fifth floor and daily looked through the expansive windows upon the rubble left by the bombardment which leveled the centre of the city. There was a very large living room, which was used as the insurance department of our bank. The balance of the rooms on that floor was for our use to live in: a large eat-in kitchen, a four piece bathroom and three bedrooms. The large master bedroom was used as our living room. Our building, a school behind us, and the elevated railroad track in front, were all that remained standing in the centre of Rotterdam. Since I was only two years old when the war started, I remember only some details. The shelters were located everywhere in the centre of the city. These looked like small grassy hills from afar. But on closer view one could see the side entrance, just an open hole that led to space inside where people could sit and huddle when there were bombing raids. I remember on one occasion that my sister and I had to visit the dentist. On our way was one of these shelters. The night before or early on that morning, some Dutch men had been rounded up and lay shot dead against the slanted wall of the shelter. German soldiers were still keeping watch with their guns on their shoulders, marching back and forth. I think I was more nosy than scared at this scene, but I have never forgotten it. In the evenings we had to cover the windows with heavy black curtains so there was no light shining from the windows. This was done so the warplanes, flying over at night, would not detect the buildings and/or whether they were occupied. This I found scary, especially during the winter time as it would be dark earlier. My dad would always tuck the fabric tightly against the wall to make sure no light was visible from the outside. There was not much light to begin with, as we were using carbide lamps at the time. These were large tin cans filled with something that, when lit, would sputter and spit, almost like fire works, through a wick coming out from the top of these cans. I was always afraid that one of these would explode.

View from our window of the bombed out centre of Rotterdam, 1940

The winter of 1944 was the worst with hunger plaguing the population. The occupying army had taken charge of the bridges linking cities and countryside; and travel was severely restricted.

All food was rationed by small paper coupons. We would get a sheet with a certain amount of these each month. There were milk, bread, meat and sugar coupons, each outlining a specified amount which was allotted to each person. But it was barely enough to feed a family properly, especially with young growing children. The cities individually had set up food kitchens where children could go twice a week with a small pot or dish and a spoon, and get soup or “hutspot” which was a concoction of mashed potatoes, mashed carrots, and onions, all together with a small indent in the centre in which some fatty gravy was ladled. Other times it would be some cabbage mixed together with mashed potatoes. The soup was often a thick pea soup or vegetable. It all

tasted wonderful, as we were not picky and choosy, just hungry. I don't remember ever having meat with those meals. We had to eat on long tables something like picnic benches here, pushed together in long rows, mostly set up outside, except when it was very cold, then we'd eat in a school gym. We were never allowed to take food home. This was strictly meant for children only. Some of the children would get sick on the spot after gorging themselves like hungry wolves, throwing up or having diarrhea running down their legs, not being used to having food in their stomachs. The smells were quite horrible sometimes, almost taking away our desire to eat were it not for the nagging hunger we all had.

Children on the way to the food kitchen

During the balance of the week we'd eat sugar beet pulp morning, noon, and evening. Mom would make porridge from it for breakfast, a cake pressed into a flan pan and baked on top of the wood burning stove in the kitchen for lunch, and we had it as a vegetable or simply our entrée at dinnertime. People would also eat flower bulbs, cooked and mashed into pulp. Sometimes a client at the Bank would bring in a tin of sailors' biscuits. These were large square thick cookies very crunchy when the tin was just opened, but they would soon become hard as rocks by being exposed to air. We liked these enough that we'd just suck on these things until they'd soften up enough to chew them. Mom was an expert seamstress, and she had some materials lying around. She'd make a few blouses and gather small towels from the linen closet, buy some combs at the pharmacy, and pack all this in a small suitcase. Then dad, being a short man, would take my sister's child's bike with tires on, and, his knees touching the handlebars, peddle into the country where the farmers lived, and exchange these items for some food. Regular size bike tires were confiscated by the occupying army for the troops who needed the bicycles for transportation. One saw a lot of tireless bicycles on the streets, which would make a rasping noise as they went by. It must have been hard on the bum, riding this way. Dad would get some peas and a few eggs and sometimes a loaf of bread in return for the items he brought.

One such time when he returned with a loaf of bread, my mother just had it in her hand to slice it for our lunch, when the supervisor of the insurance department, which was located on our floor of the building we lived in, walked by our kitchen door which was always open. He looked in to say "hello," when he saw the bread in mom's hands. I never forget the look on that man's face. He was always a bit haughty in his demeanor, but hunger will bring people quickly back to reality. He leaned against the doorpost and said very quietly, "I am so hungry." That was enough for my mother who, without further comment, turned and promptly sliced off a thick piece and handed it to him. He devoured it and with a small voice said, "thank you." War, as bad as it is, brings people closer together.

Dad took his (and our lives) into is own hands by allowing two Jewish men to hide at night in our building behind the safe. There was a hall between the outside wall and the safe wall, probably for security. Gates at each end would be locked at night when

the safe was locked. When the personnel had gone, my dad would let them in and stay for the night. We had a night watch man who we suspected to be an informer and so this was a very risky thing, but, for the short time these people were hiding, no one ever found them out. These men were later caught and transported to the concentration camps. I don't know if they survived.

The hunger in our country was so great that many people had swollen legs and bodies because of malnourishment. One time while we were on our way visiting my grandfather, we saw a woman standing holding on to a lantern pole. Mom asked if she was o.k. and she nodded "yes." So we walked on. A few hours later when we returned along the same route, she had collapsed to the bottom of the pole still holding onto it with her arms. I think she was dead.

Some nights the sirens would sound, warning us of rocket attacks and meaning for us to take refuge in the basement. We were instructed by our parents to take our bankbooks and our jewelry from the drawers above our fold-up wall beds and to run down the stairs or take the elevator to our basement. But my sister and I were usually too sleepy to even think and the only thing we took was our pillows, so we could continue our sleep in the basement. We can only thank God for his protection that we never got attacked again, because our building, standing alone in the centre, must have been a target at some time or other. I don't ever remember being afraid though when the planes came over. I think at that age, a child views it more as excitement. It was just an inconvenience as far as we were concerned. Blessed innocence is what they call that! I'm sure my parents must have thought "Here we go again." We have no idea about their fears and anxieties they surely must have experienced. They simply never talked about it. Some nights we could hear the trucks go by and we very quickly realized what that meant. We'd run to the back window in my parents' bedroom which overlooked in the distance a street with three and four storey buildings where people lived in flats. The trucks would stop there and conduct "raids" on houses to see if young men would live there. If so, they'd round them up and ship them off to Germany to work for the army in camps. My father's oldest nephew was one of these, but, again, thanks to God's protection, he returned when the war was over, much skinnier than before but unharmed otherwise.

One day towards the end of that horrible winter, the Danes sent planes over Holland with food parcels which were dropped over various city centres, of which Rotterdam was one. Living in the centre, we saw them coming and had already heard on the underground radio what they were doing. Dad ran out and, minutes later, returned with a package. It contained a loaf of bread, a package of real butter and a can of Danish bacon. After opening the can (the size of a can of luncheon meat) we extracted a roll of smoked bacon. These were slices rolled up, with fat dripping from it. We all ate like hungry animals and the next day were so sick in our stomachs, because we were not used to this kind of fatty food.

Planes dropping food parcels

The day the Canadians freed our country has never been forgotten in Holland. I remember parades with soldiers sitting on tanks on which people would hang. Everyone was laughing and singing and making noise. There were street dances at night

Freedom Celebration

throughout the city. Women who had been girlfriends of German soldiers were rounded up, their heads were shaved and they were paraded in public. Informers and collaborators were also caught and put in jail for later trials. The Dutch Queen returned from England and her daughter with her children from Canada where they had taken refuge, and there were more festivities and street dances then. Canada has always meant a lot to Holland. Because of the Canadian troops, the war was eventually won. The third daughter of our Queen Juliana was born in Canada's capital city of Ottawa. She had taken refuge there and when her baby was born, the Canadian government graciously declared the space she occupied in the hospital, temporary Dutch territory, in order that her baby would be a Dutch born citizen. As a thank you gesture, the queen has yearly sent thousands of Dutch tulip bulbs to Ottawa to be planted there in public parks and gardens. Even though Queen Juliana has since passed away, her daughter Margriet continues this gesture today. Little did I know as a then seven year old child that only 12 years later Canada would become such a part of my life? I am very grateful to Canada, not only for freeing our former homeland, but also for receiving us and adopting us as one of their own. We have had to work very hard to be where we are today, but Canada has been very good to us and given us lots of opportunities. We are always glad to return home here after traveling. There truly is no place like it.

Rita Dingemans was born in Rotterdam, Holland. Three weeks after her marriage to Ton, they immigrated to Canada in 1957. She is mom to Francis, Karen, and Mark, and grandma to seven beautiful grandchildren. Her first career was in accounting. In her mid-fifties she decided to return to school and earned a certificate in dental office administration, which became her second career she enjoyed for seven plus years. Upon their retirement in 2000, she and her husband moved from busy, rushing, stressful Toronto to more laid-back and peaceful Brantford. Reading, cooking, crazy quilting and travel are just a few of her hobbies. In the early 1960's she had a few articles published in the former Toronto Telegram about, among others, "Life in the Country". Wanting to write her life story became a real desire some ten years ago, but there were always so many other things to attend to. When she read the ad in a community flyer, about the "Lifescapes" program offered by the Brantford Library, she decided to join and is now happily writing her memoirs.

Then and Now

Theresa Mercado Haq

It was spring, 1967, and my cousin Lilian and I were walking on Bloor Street West in Toronto when I asked, "But you're a Phys. Ed. Teacher, what would you be doing in a kitchen?" There were a lot of things I had to learn about my new country. Things like Bloor Street West became Bloor Street East once you crossed Yonge; there is a city called KITCHENer; that contrary to my thought of never eating rice again, there were Chinese restaurants all over the place; that it wasn't "YONG-GE" but "YOUNGE" (what happened to the letter "E"?); and it was SPA-DAI-NA not SPA-DEEN-NA. Ah, but ten years later I found out that the Toronto "DAL-HOUS-SIE" is Brantford's "DA-LOUS-SIE." What impressed me most when I arrived in Canada was that streets were clean and everyone obeyed traffic rules! One stopped at a stop sign even if there were no other cars in sight. Even more impressive was the election process—one could learn the poll results in as little as six hours and there were no "lost" or burned ballot boxes.

After Toronto and its subway, Brantford was a surprise. There were no Sunday buses then and to go from King George to Lynden Mall, one had to take a bus to downtown and take another bus going north. My husband insisted I learn to drive and I did well, passing my first driving test and even drove to Virginia through the Shenandoah Mountains. Recently I tried to park on Colborne Street between two cars and had to ask a stranger to direct my parking. After about five minutes I complained how difficult it was to parallel park properly. She said, "I would have parked across the street," where, sure enough, there were two empty spots.

To attend the wedding of one of my nieces, I recently visited Manila where I found the economy slightly improved and perhaps 70% of the population had a cell phone. In spite of complaining about being poor, shopping malls and restaurants from McDonalds to Japanese Sushi and Korean houses as well as restaurants serving native delicacies were always full. My previous visit to Manila was 12 years ago and to refresh my memory I went downtown. The bank where I used to work was no more! And instead of exclusive shops selling luxury foreign goods, the shops were now selling items from Korea, Thailand, and China, and China, and China. Vendors filled sidewalks

selling fans, pens, and cigarettes, anything portable that could easily be carted away whenever a policeman would appear.

Shopping malls are huge and cater to the whole family with basketball courts, ice skating rinks (yes, it would be 30 degrees Celsius outside), billiard or snooker tables as well as roof gardens with fountains and children's carousels, surrounded by food courts. No wonder the malls are full—the slogan must be "The Family that Malls Together (not necessarily to buy) Stays Together."

The city has spread up and out and traffic is horrendous. To alleviate traffic, car licenses are even coded and drive on alternate days or times—similar to alternate lawn watering in Brantford. It is not unheard of for a family to buy a second car so that one could always be available. Imagine a four lane road, one lane for buses and three for private cars, taxis and Jeepneys, each trying to get ahead of the other. The most popular mode of transportation is the Jeepney. The original Jeepneys were American army Jeeps of World War II, modified and elongated to seat nine passengers on each side facing each other with two passengers in front with the driver for a maximum of 20 passengers. Let's say one would pay the equivalent of twenty-five cents for a distance in Brantford from the downtown public library to Walmart uptown. Payment is made by passing your money courteously to the person next to you until it reaches the driver and, if change is necessary, back the same way.

In another three months one of my nephews will get married and this means another 16 hours of flying time. It is yet another occasion to meet the extended family—from the son who was adopted by his mother's sister when his mother died, to the daughter of my best friend who is getting married, to cousins of my first and second cousins and getting embroiled in one another's problems and joys, giving and getting advice. Frustrating, entertaining, endearing—it will feel right to be "home"—but only to visit, for another "home" is here and there may be snow to shovel but spring and summer will come and surely fall and more snow will follow.

Isn't it wonderful to have two homes?

Maria Theresa Haq, an immigrant from the Philippines, arrived in Canada in 1967 to see the World Exposition in Montreal and Canada's Centennial celebration. She is called Marita by family and friends. Her family moved to Brantford in 1976. She is the widow of Muzaffar-Ul-Haq and the mother of Inaam and Moiz.

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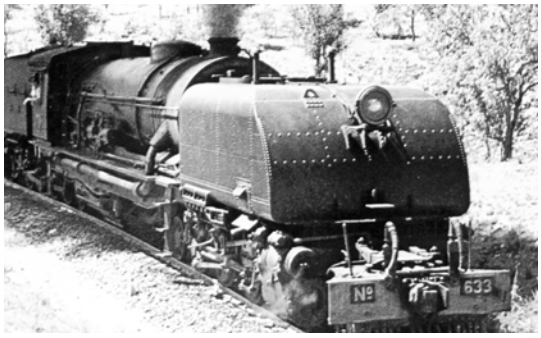
My High School Days

Peter Hardwicke

I was born in Southern Rhodesia in 1937. In my youth living conditions outside the main urban areas were rather primitive. Few farms had electricity or indoor plumbing. Farm roads were made by driving over the same route until two tracks were formed. This was the only way of getting on and off the farms. These roads were very twisting as they wound between the trees, rocky outcrops and any other objects. River crossings were made at the shallowest part. Sometimes small rocks were placed to make a rough roadbed through the water. Many of the main roads were only single lane, meaning that the cars would have to slow down and move to the side when passing. All of these factors made a trip to town quite an undertaking. As a great number of people were farmers, often over a hundred miles from urban centres, a trip into town was usually an all day affair, involving careful planning to make sure that maximum use was made of the time available. This fact effectively ruled out any possibility of getting children to school on a daily basis. The early part of my education was done by correspondence. Lessons would arrive in the mail, collected in the local village about once a week, and there would be a daily radio broadcast so we could follow along. The completed lessons were mailed to a central agency, graded and returned to us for correction and to keep in our records. I attended my first boarding school in grade 2. Most schools catered to boarders. Parents dropped off their children at the start of term and picked them up about 3 months later at the end of that term. There were three terms in a school year with about 3 week vacations between them. The summer break occurred over Christmas when we were at home for 6 weeks. Rhodesia Railways ran special trains to move the large numbers of children heading to school or home. Often students would board carriages, which were sitting at a rural siding and settle down for the night. At some point during the night the school train would pass through and pick up these carriages so that the occupants would wake up well under way. When there were schools in some of the small villages, the train would drop off the necessary carriages during the night, thus allowing the students to sleep on and wake up at their destination. All seating was pre-booked and arranged to enable this to occur.

When I was born Pop had put my name down for Plumtree High School and it was here that I headed in 1950. Plumtree was a boarding school and had excellent academic and athletic reputations. The school was over 300 miles from my home necessitating an overnight train ride at the beginning and end of each term. The journey actually took about 24 hours, as I left home at 4pm one day and arrived at school about 2:30pm the next. These train journeys are among my most cherished childhood memories. There is a special magic travelling overnight on a train drawn by a steam engine. I can never forget that unique smell of the leather seats mingled with the soot from the engine. Each compartment had two bench seats, the back of the seat being lifted up to form the middle bunk at night, the seat becoming the lower bunk, while the top bunk was lowered from the upper part of the compartment wall. Thus six boys slept in each compartment. I always picked the middle bunk, which was level with the window. I can't express the wonderful feeling of lying on a bunk with a steam engine up front and the click-clack of the tracks, watching the African velt at night drift past my window. Every now and then I would see a car on some distant road or a farmhouse light like an oasis in the moonlit darkness. The feeling of complete relaxation and peace is indescribable.



Garrett type 16 engines pulled our school train

High School was probably the most enjoyable time of my life. School in Rhodesia was different than in Canada. High school started in the equivalent of grade 7. I was 12 when I started at Plumtree and left 6 years later at the age of 18. Our school year, divided into 3 terms, ran from the end of January to the middle of December. We usually had a mid-term break of a long weekend, but those of us who lived a long way from the school stayed there and usually went camping or just enjoyed the break with our friends.


12 year old "New Boy"

Plumtree was about 65 miles from Bulawayo, the country's second largest city, and only a couple of miles from the Botswana border. It was the first stop for the trains entering the country from the south. The actual village was very small with no more than 500 permanent inhabitants. The school itself was situated on 500 acres next to the village and consisted of 4 boarding houses, Grey, Gaul, Lloyd, and Milner. I was in Grey House. Inter-house rivalry was very intense. Each House had three dormitories (junior, middle, and senior). The school had 2 swimming pools, 5 large sports fields, and an athletic track. We also had an army cadet corps with our very own armouries and rifle range. Our school colours were red and green. All the boys were required to participate in all sports and in the cadet corps. We were required at all times during the school term, when off the school grounds, to wear our green blazers and grey hat with the school hat-band and crest. We were all very proud of our school and took great pains not to do anything that would bring discredit to the school. When I started at Plumtree there were no indoor toilet facilities. We did have

indoor plumbing but no sewers. The facilities consisted of seats over buckets, which would be emptied each night by the "Honey Brigade."

Original buildings still used for classes

A typical school day during the spring and summer terms started at 6:15. The school bell would wake us and we had a half hour to get washed, shaved (if necessary), make sure our shoes were cleaned and beds made, and be down on the veranda for roll call at 6:45. While the roll, to which we each had to respond to our name by saying "Adsum" (Latin for "I am present") was being called, we would be inspected for clean shoes, clean fingernails, and good haircuts by a member of the staff. After we were dismissed from the early morning roll call we would grab our books and head to class for our first period of the day. We would then go to breakfast and be back for daily assembly at 8:30. This was held in the main assembly hall and consisted of a hymn, some prayers, and another roll call. There would also be any announcements. Following assembly we would go to class until 1:15 pm, apart from a short recess, when we would break for lunch. After lunch we were required to rest until 2:15pm, at which time we either went back to an afternoon class or went to do our homework in the prep room or, in the case of the seniors, in our study. The only exception to this was on Wednesday when there was no afternoon homework time. At 3:30pm we finished the homework and went to play sports (Monday and Friday) or parade with cadets (Tuesday and Thursday). On Wednesday sports started after the rest period at 2:15pm. Our afternoon activities continued until 5:00pm, at which time we returned to our houses to clean up, shower and do our housekeeping chores. After supper we were free until 7:30pm when the evening homework session started with the final roll call of the day. The junior boys went to bed at 8:00pm, the middle boys at 8:30pm and the seniors at 9:00pm. A senior monitored all of the homework sessions. If you had completed your homework and wished to read a book or write a letter home, you needed to ask permission. It was also not permitted to talk during these sessions. If you needed to ask a question you would once again need permission and if you took too long to get your answer, you would probably get a visit from the monitor.

There was an old and traditional system of "Fagging" at Plumtree. It was inherited from the British system. The New and Second Year Boys were required to "Fag" for the senior boys. This entailed making the senior's bed in the morning, cleaning his shoes, taking his dirty clothes to the laundry, and any other odd jobs that he might assign you. When the hot water ran out during the evening bath time, fags were required to fetch a bucket of hot water from an outside boiler. The senior in the bath would yell "FAG!!" and all unoccupied fags would race to line up outside the bathroom door, where the last 2 or 3 in line would be detailed to fetch the water. If the "Fag Masters" shoes or study area were not up to scratch, the fag would be the one in trouble. There were many safeguards in place to prevent the abuse of power by the fag masters. If one was caught abusing his authority he lost his fag and, if the abuse was severe, could even be expelled. Expulsion, at this time, carried a stigma that followed you long after you left school. It was as bad as a dishonourable discharge from the army or having a criminal record.

After your second year you became a middle boy and had no further fagging duties. You now took care of your own bed, shoes etc. Fourth, Fifth and Sixth year boys were Seniors. It was now that you were assigned a Fag. Generally the Fourth year boys had to share a fag between 2 or 3 boys, but after that you generally had your own fag, sometimes even two, depending on the number of Juniors available. Selected Seniors were made Prefects. In each house there were 3 Prefects (one for each dorm) and a Head of House. In addition there were a Head and Deputy Head of School. Prefects were given additional privileges, which included having your fag carry your books to school and they also had the authority to hand out punishments for infractions. This included additional duties, restrictions, or, in the more serious cases, caning. The most serious cases were referred to the House Master. Other seniors received the designation of House Senior. These were a step below a Prefect. I was a House Senior for my final two years at Plumtree. Many people criticize this system, but it served the very important role of, firstly, teaching the younger boys to respect authority and to learn to follow orders, as well as to do the tasks assigned to them to the best of their ability. When you became a Senior, you were given authority and had to learn to handle it, and not abuse it. I found later in life that this taught me to become, firstly a follower and then a leader. I failed to see any boys who were compromised by this system, and the fact that Plumtree produced more Rhodes Scholars than any other school of its size is testament to the success of it's academic, social and athletic programs. I look upon my years at High School as some of the happiest of my life.

Some amusing anecdotes from my days at school will show that, while we boys were mischievous, it was not in a spiteful way. One of greatest ways to show our respect for a teacher was to play a prank on him. I say him because we only had one female teacher that we accepted and that was our music teacher. There was one other lady who decided that she would cross the gender gap that existed in our schools at the time and teach at a boy's school. She arrived with the attitude that she was superior to the male teachers, who were far too lenient with us and she was going to show all of us how it should be done. Her mistake was to declare war on 400 teenage boys. Before the end of the first term she admitted her mistakes and asked us to meet her halfway, but by now the damage had been done. The next morning we all met her by the swimming pool, which was halfway between her residence and the classrooms. Later that day she applied for a transfer to a girl's school.

On another occasion we were being given a lecture on botany. The Master decided to make it a practical one as the gardeners were busy digging up the spring bulbs and he wanted to show us the difference between bulbs, tubers etc. We formed a circle as he picked up a bulb and described its attributes. He then passed it to the boy standing next to him and it proceeded around the circle. When it arrived at the last boy he had no idea what to do with it, so he dropped it into the teacher's coat pocket. This process was repeated with all the samples and by the time we left to return to the classroom, the poor man's pockets were filled with a variety of plant roots. On another occasion we were in the science lab watching a demonstration. My cousin, who was in the same class as me, had found a cicada beetle. This type of beetle is around in the summer and emits a very loud high-pitched sound. It will do this if you hold it in your hand and shake it gently. My cousin did this during the class and the instructor kept looking around for the source of the sound. All he encountered was twenty-odd innocent faces hanging on his every word.

Tiring of the game, my cousin decided to liberate the cicada beetle and tossed it towards the blackboard. As it approached the blackboard the beetle spotted the open windows and changed course for them, flying directly across the nose of the instructor, causing a startled pause in the lecture and much hilarity among the class.

We were always looking for ways to supplement our meagre pocket money and I discovered one way to get exercise while being reimbursed. Because the school was a self contained entity we even had our own small hospital, for which the school employed 2 nurses and had a doctor on call. At that time rabies was prevalent in our area and there was a byelaw in force that all dogs must be tied up or walked on a leash. This presented a problem for some of the staff that had dogs but not the time to exercise them properly. This was the case for one of the nurses at the hospital I volunteered my services to take her Doberman for his daily walk. After the first time I realized that the dog was not trained to the leash and I would need help in order to avoid being taken for a cross country run by the dog and thus enlisted a friend to add his weight to the leash. This worked very well and we were handsomely rewarded by the nurse, who appreciated our dedication to the well being of her pet.

Girl's Chorus in "Patience." I am front row on the right

The Sports Weekend was the time of the year when we held our sports competition and all the parents came down to watch their sons compete. In order to accommodate the parents, the boys were required to move out of the Senior Dormitory, which would be turned over to the fathers, and also their study rooms, which would become female accommodation. During this time we prayed for good weather as most of us slept out on the tennis court. This was also a good time to make some extra cash by being a waiter in the dining hall where the parents ate. The boys ate outside and thoroughly enjoyed the change.

One tradition at the school was to produce a Gilbert and Sullivan opera each year at this time. Being an all boys school presented a problem in filling the female positions on the cast. This was solved by getting all those with unbroken voices to try out for the female parts. My first year I was one of the lovesick maidens in "Patience" and the next

year one of the Admiral's daughters in "Pirates of Penzance." The following year my voice broke and I was no use to the producers. For a number of weeks before the show the "girls" were not allowed to cut their bangs. Before the show the teachers' wives all came down to curl these and to make us up. Very realistic ringlets were sown into the bonnets that we wore. The ladies did such a good job that many of the parents enquired where the girls came from. My mother had a hard time convincing one woman that I was indeed her son and she had to meet me personally before believing.

Expanding on the Sports Weekend activities: we were let out of school on the Friday and immediately cleared our things out of the senior dorm and studies. After lunch the parents started arriving and some boys were detailed to direct them to their lodgings for the weekend. If you were expecting your parents to attend then you usually made sure that you were at the gate to meet them. After settling their parents into their accommodations, the boys were expected to escort them to the athletic field, where the activities usually got underway at about 2 o'clock and continued to about 4:30. At this time everyone returned to the boarding houses. The boys cleaned up, changed, and headed for the dining hall. After a quick shower or bath the parents gathered for a cocktail party with the housemaster. Friday night was the opera, so all the cast were forbidden to cheer for their fellow competitors so as not to strain their voices. Saturday was a full day of sports followed by a dance in the evening. This was always a much-anticipated event as dances were a rare occurrence. The final day of the weekend started with a memorial church service, after which the boys were free to spend time with their parents, providing that they were back before dinner, allowing enough time to put everything back to its pre-weekend configuration.

Main Assembly Hall

Grey House

School Chapel

Religion was highly regarded at our school. Every morning there was an assembly, roll call and prayers prior to the start of classes. Attendance was mandatory, as was attendance at church on Sunday. Most of the school body was Anglican and we worshiped in the school chapel. The Jewish members met in the school library on Saturdays for their worship service and were thus excused from attending classes on Saturday morning. On Sundays the library was given over to the Catholics. Both of these religious groups were only required to attend one service on the weekend. The Anglicans, however, were expected to attend both the communion service in the morning and vespers in the evening. There was a choice of 2 services in the morning, but everyone except Jews and Catholics, was expected at the evening service. Friday morning assembly was held in the chapel so that we could practise the hymns for that weekend. There was no choir but all the boys were warned to sing at the tops of their voices, as it

was a matter of honour for a particular house to be singled out for singing loudly. There was much competition for this honour and the rafters of the chapel vibrated with this joyful enthusiasm. One unpardonable sin was to nod off during the sermon!

Cars were forbidden for all except teachers at school and so most boys owned a bicycle. We used to ship these with our trunks in the baggage car on the train. Not only was the bike an essential mode of transport, but also it enabled us to take advantage of a weekend privilege known as an “exeat.” The word exeat is Latin and means to leave. This was a system by which we were allowed to take off for the day on Sunday (after church and breakfast) and spend the day off school property. It was our favourite activity and we had permission to fish in the dams and rivers on the farms in the area provided we didn’t leave a mess. We were very careful not to do anything that would cause us to lose this privilege. We were required to submit a list of not less than 4 names on Friday evening when we drew our weekly pocket money, which was sent to the dining hall and after breakfast on Sunday we picked up a packed lunch for the number in your party. If we had a successful day fishing we would clean the fish and take them to the dining hall on Sunday evening. They would cook them and we would have fresh fish for breakfast on Monday. Only the ones who caught the fish would enjoy them, while everyone else at your table had to be content with the usual fare.

The reasoning behind having 4 people in a group was that if one was hurt, then 2 could stay with him and the fourth person would go for help. I only had to take advantage of this once when one of the boys in my group fell of his bike and was severely cut by the glass water bottle he was carrying in his shirt. Fortunately we were not too far from the school and managed to get him to the hospital at about the same time the doctor, who had been alerted by the boy who went for help. There was an unfortunate ending to the story of this particular boy in the aftermath of his accident. About six months later he went missing and we all thought he had run away, an occurrence that happened about once a year on average, but was found a couple of weeks later behind the stage where he had committed suicide by hanging himself. This was particularly disturbing to me, as we knew his family rather well. This was the only case of suicide in the six years I was at Plumtree. The only other death that occurred was when one of the boys was fooling around on his horse and fell off. He was kicked in the head by the horse and died shortly afterwards.

We always looked forward to the mid-winter campout on the long weekend holiday that occurred during the second term for all the boys who did not go home for the weekend. We put together a pack of clothes and blankets that were taken out to the camp area in a 1920’s vintage truck belonging to one of the teachers. We would then ride our bikes the 20 odd miles to the campground. I call it a campground, but it was not one like those found in Canada. It was nothing more than a clearing near a stream on somebody’s farm. There were a couple of “kopjes” nearby. These are large rocky outcroppings that occur throughout the African plains. They are often over a hundred feet high and can cover several acres. We always loved climbing them and exploring the many caves in them, a number of which contained interesting and well-preserved petroglyphs, known locally as “Bushman Paintings.” There were no tents or other luxuries. We would form groups and make up a fire pit, around which we would place our bedding rolls. Fresh supplies were brought in daily and we would draw rations for our group. We were required to do all our own cooking and to maintain our area. At night we bedded down

under the stars. Being winter there was very little chance of rain. I remember waking up one night and seeing my cousin, who was sleeping on the opposite side of the fire from me, looking very intently at the kopje behind me. I was curious to see what had captured his attention and very slowly rolled over in time to see a leopard, which had been observing our campsite, turn and amble back into his cave. After this we gave that particular kopje a wide berth.

One of our more illegal past times was making wine from the fruit of the Marula tree. This tree grows to an impressive size and during the summer it is covered with plum-sized fruit. It is the Marula tree which gave the village and school their name, as the early settlers mistook it for a plum tree and thus named the settlement Plumtree. There were a large number of these trees on the school property. When the fruit is green it is very hard and made an excellent missile for the many "war games" we played amongst ourselves. There were seldom days when no boys were showing bruises from marula berry hits! Towards the end of summer the fruit would ripen to a rich golden colour and fall off the tree. The quantities lying on the ground would be so great that often it would be 6 to 12 inches deep. This caused the fruit to ferment at an accelerated pace. (In the wild animals have been known to gorge on the fallen fruit and become extremely intoxicated as a result.) We would pick up the partially fermented fruit and squeeze the juice out of it into a bottle. The fermentation process was well underway and required no additional help as the fruit tended to be pleasantly sweet. The lids on the bottles had to be well secured and bottles placed in our footlockers in a safe place where they would not be jolted. If the wine was jolted, particularly after the first two weeks, it would often explode in a most spectacular fashion. This would bring the wrath of the staff upon us and result in severe and extended punishment. If all went well you would be able to smuggle your wine out at the end of term and enjoy it on the train ride home. It sure helped to pass the time and often led to some very interesting encounters, which shall remain veiled for now.

Generally the highlight of the week was the Saturday evening movie. We had a projection booth set up above the assembly hall and every Saturday, for the cost of 10 cents, we would have a movie, complete with newsreel, cartoon and an adventure short. Some of the seniors augmented their pocket money by volunteering to operate the projectors. This event was always well attended, with a stop at the Tuck Shop on the way to stock up on munchies and pop! Another treat was caramel made from condensed milk. The idea was to take a can of condensed milk, tie a string around it and lower it into the hot water tank. This tank consisted of a 44 gallon drum set on its side above a fireplace, where the water inside it was heated by a wood fire. Its primary purpose was to provide hot water for the baths and showers. After a number of hours in the tank the condensed milk turned into caramel, which could be eaten straight out of the can.

The day inevitably arrived when it was time to bid farewell to Plumtree. As I looked back I realized that in 6 years I had grown from a terrified pre-teen arriving at a distant school and was now leaving a confident young man, well prepared by my experiences under the dedicated guidance of the finest staff to face the world of reality. My final day at school was spent doing the rounds of the teachers' homes to personally thank them for all their help, guidance and support during the previous six years. At each home we were treated as adults and offered tea or something stronger. It took a considerable amount of courage to accept a proffered beer, but by the time we left to join

the train that evening we were all feeling more than a little light headed. This was one of the proudest, yet saddest days of my life. It was the day I let my youth go and welcomed adulthood.

Born in Southern Rhodesia in 1937. The early part of my life was spent on a farm. I started boarding school in 1947 and continued until I left high school in 1955. After 3 years in the Royal Rhodesian Air Force I left Rhodesia in 1959 and traveled extensively for 15 years, living in the United Kingdom, Australia and The United States. In 1974 I married Margaret, who is Canadian and in 1977 we emigrated to Canada. I worked as an Undergraduate Computer Lab Supervisor until my retirement in 2000. I live in Brantford with my wife Margaret. We have a daughter, Karen, who is married and lives with her husband, Dave. We have 2 lovely grandchildren, Gavin (4) and Cate (2).

Genesis and Exodus

Martin du Preez

The Arrival: expected and UNEXpected

Between Table Mountain and the Indian Ocean in the south, lies the beautiful Cape Town – South Africa's "Mother City." It is a sunny Saturday morning in mid-December, 1927. Milling crowds of shoppers in casual dress are shuffling from store to store lugging red and green shopping bags. Visitors and tourists in shirt-sleeves and shorts move along slowly and gawk at faux "hand-crafted" wooden elephants, crocodiles and eagles. "Frres feesh! Straight frrom thu osin! Kabbeljo, Wite-feesh! Snoek!" sing-songs a hawker from his fish cart on the street corner. "Sweet bununus! Ten for a sixpence! Duleeshis Cape grapes! Two bunshes for a sheeling!" shout venders from their side-walk stalls. "Dankie, marram!" "Tankyou, mister!" Nobody hurries!

Peter du Preez, 27, of medium build, about 5-foot-four, *is* in a hurry! His light-olive skin, sharp features and black wavy hair are shiny-wet as he switches his suitcase from one hand to the other and snakes through the crowd and asks a man across the street, "Ekskuus, meneergh, waargh is Bokant Strghaat?"

"Vyf strate so-af, dan links." (Five streets this way, then left.) "Dankie, meneergh." He "up-ends" his suitcase and sits on it while he wipes his face and neck. He looks worried. He whispers, "How can I tell her? And when? I can't tell her TODAY! Or next week or ... or maybe a month or so *after* she's pregnant – *if* she ever gets pregnant!

Why did I even *consider* Papa and Mama's request – let alone *promise* them, "Yes! I do honour my parents, but ...! I'll pray for guidance," he sighs.

Peter quickens his pace down Bokant Street. At number 20 he knocks then enters the home of Martin Ehrenreich, his best man at his wedding later this afternoon.

In the suburb, Gleemore, Katrina (Kate) Jansen a light-skinned, medium-built 19 year old girl with long, wavy black hair, is sitting in front of a large oval mirror having her hair "done" by her youngest sister, Sabina (Bina). "I'm going to do your favourite style – a rolled "bun" over each ear and a "roll" at the back – okay? "Yeah, but no smelly motor oil on my hair," she jokes. "Massage net daai hair pomade wat so lekker ruik in my kopvel!" (Just massage that fragrant pomade into my scalp!) After the hairdo, Bina excuses herself: "I'm needed in the kitchen! You, get done!"

Katrina on her wedding day

Katie turns pensive. "What is this 'important promise' Peter said he was going to tell me about? *When*?"

Early afternoon, a black Ford decorated with pink and white ribbons takes Kate and Bina to the church.

Reverend Johannes conducts a simple, dignified service. "Do you, Katrina ...? Do you, Peter ...? ... till death ...?" "I do!" "I do!" The best man reads Corinthians 13 "... and now abideth hope, faith and charity (love) ... the greatest is love!"

The family and a few friends return to the house.

White, starched table-cloths cover the large oval table with settings for twelve, plus two small tables with four place-settings each. It is hard to resist the appetite-teasing aromas of the steaming, sliced roast beef, leg-of-mutton, and spicy Indian curried chicken-"stew" with yellow rice. All these dishes *and* the cake and desserts: "melktert", "koeksisters" pears, fruit-salad are all covered with white nets like the bride's veil. Peter and Kate look radiantly happy.

"Welcome all! For what we are about to receive ... Amen. Dig in!" says Rev. Johannes. After the main dinner, groups take their chairs and talk and laugh and point and whisper. In one corner an older woman says: "Yeah, where is *his* parents, eh? *Her* mother iss yere!" "Yah they wassent in church neither!" retorts a plumpish short-legged woman. Yet another one adds, "Djy wiet mos die Joeburg people, hulle dink mos hulle is bieter dan ons Kaypies, ne'!" (You know those Joh'burg people think they're better than us "Cape-ees".)

"Ag, niewat, Clara, sherrup! Gossip! You never know, you know! Forget it, man! Djy show af!" (You're showing off!)

That night the couple stay over at Kate's mother's house. Tomorrow they will take the train to Johannesburg, then find their way to the house Peter had rented on Pollack Avenue, Newclare – a mainly "coloured" suburb of Johannesburg.

They are reticent through most of the more than 20-hour journey! No real conversation; short questions, shoulder-shrugging, gasps, eyes rolling! "Feeling okay?" "Uh ... so-so ... An' you?" "Oh, so-so! Can't think straight."

Next morning, warm sunshine welcomes them to the concourse of Johannesburg Station. And, as a surprise bonus: “Hullo Peter! And welcome Missus du Preez!” from Peter’s parents and his three brothers! From Benoni! Cecil, the youngest, drives them and his parents home to 134 Pollack Avenue. Introductions! Congratulations! Welcomes! The smiling, curious neighbours. All is well.

After spending Christmas Day in Benoni, nothing is heard from, or about, Peter and Kate for a while. Mid-January, Kate experiences her first typically high-altitude-thunderstorm! A very warm, sunny day, swelling dark clouds; and then streaks of lightning with booming, rolling thunder! Buckets of rain! Minutes later, sunshine. Window blinds and curtains are drawn back. Bare-foot children slap their feet in muddy pools in the street. Finches chirp, and peck at the ripe yellow peaches and apricots under the trees. What foreboding weather!

That night Peter tells Kate about his promise! Kate goes pale then flush! Between sobs she shouts, “You coward! Your cruel, selfish parents! I’ll never do it! No, I won’t have ANY children!”

Come late February there is important news! Peter runs next door to their Chinese neighbour’s store to use the phone. (Hardly anybody has a home phone.) Peter excitedly cranks the handle, drops two “tickeys” (3-penny coins) in the slit and gives the operator a number for the police-station in Benoni. They have a very good relationship with the police so Peter asks the police to call his mother to the phone. A minute later, he bellows over the phone: “Mamma, my Katie is swanger!” (pregnant!) We will have a child in late November – God willing!

O, dankie! Prys die Heer! Goeie nuus! Ons hoop dis ‘n seun! (“Oh, thank you! Praise the Lord! Good news! We hope it’s a boy!” she says and hangs up.

During the next eight months Peter and Katie have regular visits from his parents and his brothers. The Harris’ and Hoffmans across the road and, of course, Mr Charlie next door, have all become very helpful friends.

Katie’s ever-changing moods are noticed by the friends – especially after her in-laws have visited. Is it normal during the first pregnancy, some mused. Peter too is worried, but he keeps on saying to his wife not to “worghy” (his “r” with a light burr – like the French r? – just like his mother’s. “Don’t worghy, it happened to me too. It worked out fine. Please trghust me!”

Then things cool down. Refreshing spring arrives. Katie is visibly pregnant and there is expectant joy showing in her smiles. Peter has taken a teaching position at the local elementary school. He boasts about his coming ‘fatherhood!’ And his parents seem pleased! But, instead of “in November”, the midwife Mrs. Dayes *and* Dr. Adler are called UNEXpectedly in October! (Mrs Dayes *had* to come because, as all children know, *she* brings babies in that black bag – not the aeroplanes or storks.)

On the 28th day of “the prettiest, prettiest month”, October, a child is born! His name, from the Bible, is Nathaniel.

The thrill, joy and pride of the couple are shared by many. A new bright dawn in their lives!

Five months later the two are back in Gleemore, Cape Town, to show-off their son, Nathaniel, but because of his premature, *unex*pected arrival, his uncle Cecil had nicknamed him UNEX. And up to this day, some friends and relatives still call that old man UNEX!

During the whole journey back to Johannesburg there is hardly any conversation, only the klickety-klack of the train then the woeful, warning "woo-woo" from the locomotive's whistle to alert the passengers to close their windows. They are approaching a long, dark tunnel, and the belching locomotive would blow black, sooty smoke into the compartments. Katie's face is reflected from the half-lit window.

Suddenly Katie stutters, "Your parents … are … cruel … unfair! Selfish!" Then she wipes her eyes just as the train approaches Johannesburg station. The Harrises meet them and drive them home. Unex, a thumb-sucking baby, is 6 months old.

"Why *MY* child? What a cruel, weird tradition Peter's parents have!" she mulls as dark thoughts pass through her mind. "What did I get myself into?"

For many harrowing months, both of them are almost afraid to be happy; and, at best, they are ambivalent about the compromise they had reluctantly reached after their marriage. Lately, Peter is showing stress too. "I can't trghust myself to go thrghough with it."

The "cruel, selfish, unfair, weird" tradition that Peter's people had, was that the eldest grandson must be "given over" to the grandparents at the tender age of eighteen months! What made Katie's thoughts and feelings so somber, sometimes bitter, was Peter's apparently ready acceptance of his parents' "self-serving request." "Did you marry me to be a surrogate mother? To provide care and comfort for your parents? Must MY child, *OUR* child, become *their* "old age pension"? Their pension is not my responsibility – nor yours, Peter!" she sobs. He places his hands gently on her shoulders. "Alles sal rghegkom!" (Everything will be all right.)

It is with this "hand-over" in mind that they consider having another baby before they reach that ominous day, just months away. Sixteen months after "Unex", on February 12, brother Kenneth James is born! Both parents smile … and cry..

Two months after that, Nathaniel (Unex) is brought to his grandparents in Benoni, which, people say, means "Son of Sorrows".

When his dad, Peter du Preez, was 18 months old *he too* was "given" to *his* grandparents! Nathaniel Marthinus (Martin) ("Unex") du Preez became virtually an "only child" – a rather spoilt one! It wasn't bad at all!

ALTER EGO: When did Unex become conscient about his "SELF"? Let him tell that himself.

Unex: I knew no "past," I, Me, Unex, began at age 5. There were two wondrous and one traumatic event that began my "memory."

My Uncle Cecil (who first and always called me "Unex") and I were sitting at the kitchen table at Oupa and Ouma du Preez's home in Benoni. (Uncle "Cee" was still single.) He was teaching me to "read." He "drew" a little vertical line and said: "This is a man." Then he said that the wind was blowing and it blew the man's hat off! So he put a dot above the man's "head." And the man said "uh" (like in bit, sit, you know) Uncle Cee did many other letters – all phonically, and each with an associated story. r the rrroar of a motorcycle …

The second event – again we were at the kitchen table – happened I don't know how soon or how long after the first. Some little white leaves or downy feathers like those we had stuffed into my grandparents' mattress, kept coming "from … there, out of the sky"! "Dit is sneeu!" (it is snow) said my uncle. We made a giant snowman.

The next time I saw snow, I was at college!

AE: So you became aware then of Anex's existence!

ME: Absolutely! That snowfall "awakening" has been "internalized" by a poem I learnt in Grade 5 – Uncle "C" was the teacher! With every first snow-fall *here*, I recite some of the stanzas. (I did this time too – to my wife!)

Sneeu, sneeu, lieflike sneeu,	Snow, snow, lovable snow,
Daal op die aarde neer.	Descending on Earth below.
Dit val en dit swewe,	It falls and it swerves,
Dit sterf en dit lewe,	It dies and it lives,
O, kyk tog hoe kom dit alweer.	Oh! Look at it coming again!
Sneeu, sneeu, heerlike(?)-sneeu,	Snow, snow, beauteous snow,
Moeder, kom kyk tog hoe fraai.	Mother, come see how sublime.
Miljeene klein vlokkies,	Millions of flakelets
In stukkies en brokkies,	In fragments and "freezies"
Word wyd oor die wêreld gesaai!	Are sown all over the world!

I don't really care if the words above are "correct" but the elation I feel right now will always be there when we have our first snowfall! Trillions of pieces …!

AE: And your traumatic experience?

ME: I am about 6 years old, ready or not, Grade 1, here I come! There is no "pre-school." Armed with the requisite wood-framed slab of slate and slate pencil, I nervously walk to school – just next door – in the church hall, and I'm seated in a long desk with three other kids. Ms Hogan writes many letters on a square slate blackboard supported by an easel. I recognize many of the letters. Ms Hogan turns to the dead quiet class and says sternly: Skryf! (Write!) I hear many shrill, grating sounds of late pencil on slate! I try to write, but …! Then I burst into tears! I wonder now if others did too. Did any of them see me? Then …? I don't recall *anything* about school until days or weeks afterwards when Ms Hogan collapses at the front of the room! Was it a day or a week, or longer, after that we are told she died! Although we had two "replacement" teachers after that – Ms Merkel then Mrs Goodman – I do not remember a single "lesson" being taught but that "Write!" one!

From Grade 4 (when Miss Abrahams whipped Jackie Brink and then prayed for him!) and onward, I remember every teacher up to Gr. 10. There was only one in Grade 7 I did not like. He was an artist; and he had a "perfect" handwriting. But he was lazy! In grade 8 my favourite teacher was Alfred Hoskins who taught us "English". He required us to memorize all the poems in our Nelsons English Reader. If you failed to memorize a poem, you would get one or two "cuts"/strikes with the cane on your open hand! It is not my love of poetry that made me learn poems by heart but my dread of "Hossie's" cane! Except once – almost!

"Hossie" steps into the room. "Good morning, class!" "Good morning, Mr. Hoskins," we chorus. Then he dramatically raises his arms and cane as if he were to conduct a choir. Silence! Mr Hoskins then intones: "All those who do not know the poem, please rise." Almost all of us stand – I included! Just then the V.P. walks in and talked with Mr Hoskins for about 3? 5 minutes? In any case, fear forced me to memorize

that poem in time. I sat down! The poem's opening lines are "Never mind the brambles or the nettles by the way" and it ends: "Always keep a happy heart, and be glad."

If I had not grown up in Benoni I would not have had the opportunity to attend this great Junior High for "us", staffed by "our people" – the only one in the whole province! But for Grades 11 and 12 we had to go to Johannesburg to the only high school in Transvaal Province for "our people!" The head was an Afrikaner racist as were most of the staff. Our teacher-training was also in the same building with the same racists. But let me end this on a lighter and revealing note about the "competency" of that racist staff! "Yes, to do that, you can use a *teeth* brush," says our science teacher, Mr. Joeste. The art teacher, Johan Hansen – thank goodness, no relation! – has just returned from England after a year of "teacher exchange." Ranting about "two long pencils short!" he fumes: "... you know, the white children in England ...!" We explode into derisive laughter and volumes of non-complimentary adjectives, verbs, and nouns! He responds angrily: Who do you think you *is* or *am* or *are*?" (Probably the beginning exercise in his "English Grammar Book"!) But the best malapropism was by the Physiology "teacher". "Well, if you haf to suptrek your tooth ..." (Burst of laughter!) Doolie, one of us, says: "Not *sub*tract ... *ex*tract!" So-called educator: "Subtrek, extrek, it`s all immemorial to me!" They sure learned us good, eh?

"Our" Junior High in Benoni later became Wm. Hills High. I felt honoured, proud, and fortunate to teach there along with a dedicated staff, including some of my former teachers and three "old" school mates! Later, four staff members became university professors overseas: two in Canada, one in U.K., and one in North Africa. Two have since returned to the "New" South Africa.

The Exodus – Final Departures

What saddens me most about the deaths of family members or of friends is that I am not there to bury them, or to hug the ones weeping, to commiserate and mourn with the loved-ones. We have just arrived in this country and have no close friends yet. I am working part-time at Simpson-Sears and "supply-teaching at the Adult Retraining Centre (now George Brown College). One morning we receive a telegram: my favourite Uncle "C" has passed away! I refuse to think or wish or speculate: What if …? I just cry! About two years later I'm teaching in Downsview, Toronto. The phone rings at school. "Daddy died – on the operating table," Beryl, my wife sobs over the phone. Days later, his brother Daniel passes on. I feel my heart is "ready to burst." After a few years respite, when I had asked for a more challenging school, I transferred to Firgrove School at Jane and Finch. My best years ever! I am just leaving home at about 8 a.m. when the phone rings. "Hello," says Gavin, my cousin. "Bad news," he says. (I "know" it must be my sickly brother Kenneth! But Gavin continues, "O', Kenny wants to talk to you!" I am relieved, pleasantly stunned! "Brother," Ken stutters, "our Vince, our beloved youngest brother has died!" I put the phone down and drive to school. Just after 10 o'clock, as I am writing on the board, I say to myself: What are you doing here? I ask the class to excuse me, walk to the office and, crying like a child, I tell what has happened! I first get words of comfort and then a scolding: Why did you come to work at all! I am "given" a week off! I'm having a bad year!

Two years later my brother Kenny passes away! Gavin, more brother than cousin, died about four years ago. And when my cousin Lynsen Jansen in England, died two years ago, his brother Alfred, in Scotland, became the eldest of all our cousins, leaving me with the frightening thought: I am now the second eldest!

1949-1950 Back to Benoni – "Son of Sorrows"

One morning, when I am teaching at the Benoni Indian School, the principal calls me to the office and tells me that two passenger trains collided. Dozens of students travelling to school were killed – my cousin Andrew among them. He was about 14 years old. At the cemetery the following Saturday, the still air is filled with sobs, shrieks, screams and deep-voice emotional singing around some graves, loud prayers and "amens!" from others. Tears flow freely. Our Reverend Mullineux wipes his spectacles, blows his nose and ends with a quivering voice: "…ashes to ashes, dust to dust … in the true belief …!" And we sing, as the lumps of soil hits Andrew's and others' coffins – like soldiers carry their comrades' coffins, marching solemnly with the drum-beat: left (tap tap) right ... left (tap tap) right ... in lock-step. And those of us who can, sing: God be with you till we meet again ... till we meet ...! Amen!

The Final Exodus, 1951

My Ouma du Preez is still in bed when I leave for work. She is an early riser. This has never happened before!

About 10 o'clock my principal takes over my class and tells me Ouma is seriously ill! When I get home, 5 or 6 neighbours – including Oupa's brother, Oom Dawid – are standing in silence around her bed. "I was waiting for you," she whispers. Then, immediately after that, Oon Dawid asks: "Sister, is daar iets wat jy wil hê ek moet doen?" (Sister, is there anything you want me to do?) "Yes," she says, "pray for me." When he says Amen, she says "Dankie, Dawid," turns her head ... and was gone! A clear head at 86. I feel sad but strangely relieved. My mission accomplished! At a young 23, I will begin a new life!

Genesis II

A week later I move to my parents' home in Protea where, together with my unmarried brothers – Joe and Vincent – I spend the best five years of my bachelor-life! At last I feel "free", an adult, not duty-bound. The bond I have with Mom and Dad is unconditional love.

I joined the Church choir – conducted by my brother, Joe. There was also a group – a concert group, "The Proteas" – also led by Joe. I joined that too. We performed in Benoni, Protea and Johannesburg raising funds for our Church and other "charities." Many of the group have passed away – Wallace Smith our pianist, his sister Beaty, Louis and Mabel Begbie, my brother Vincent and one of the Radcliffes. I really enjoyed the singing, dancing and the hilarious "sketches" we performed.

Under the direction of Victor Johnson, a local deacon, I started a "discussion group". For our first meeting, all the "Proteas" and a few other young folk turned up. We explained what we "are about" and then agreed our topic for discussion "next week" will be euthanasia. "Next week" fewer than half turned up; those present decided it wasn't really for them! We "euthanized" us!

Ever since arriving in Protea I played tennis. In the local championships my friend Louis Poulton, thrashed me in the finals!

Late one night, after a "few" too many, I struggled home through the roadless, lightless grass field. When I got there I took off my shoes, then opened the back door and with shoes in hand, I tip-toed towards the kerosine lamp, blew it out and "off to bed"! Next morning my dear Mommy smiled and said, "You came in late, carrying your shoes in your hand. Then you saw me, put your index finder across your lips and whispered: 'Sh...ssh…shush' and went to bed!" I knew nothing about that! I said, "Thank you, Mommy" and kissed her. No more "too manys"!

After the five happy years in Protea, I got married to beautiful 19-year-old Beryl Dunn from Durban. She is a descendant of the famous, or infamous, John Dunn from Inverness, Scotland – King Ceteswayo's "ambassador" to the British Governor in Natal, South Africa. The king had given Dunn – who had become a "White Zulu Chief" many wives, one of whom, Catherine Pierce, became my wife's family's great-great grandma!

In June 2007 Beryl and I celebrated our 50th anniversary! Our wonderful children had arranged a celebratory dinner for all of us: the nephews and nieces and their children and a cousin of Beryl! That was at a restaurant and then, "party two" at our daughter Cathy's and Viktor her husband's home. Cake, cards, congratulatory messages from overseas from our son Melvin and his family.

My brother Joe, the singer, had sent us a DVD to wish us God-speed and on which he sang the song he had sung 50 years before in the Protea Church: This is my lovely day today. It is the day I will remember …

Exodus III

Our children, Cathy, 6 and Melvin, 5 are ready to attend school. So we move to Johannesburg because from east of Benoni right to Johannesburg every school has Afrikaans as the language of instruction. I, too, got a transfer to a Johannesburg high school –the principal ? … my Junior High science teacher Mr. Hobbs!

During the preceding years the Nationalist government had introduced "Bantu Education". The Prime Minister, Verwoerd, said that Bantu ("Black") children must not get educated to a level that would "raise their expectations." When his government introduces "Indian Education" and "Coloured Education" we know it's time for us to join the exodus to Canada. We have high expectations for our children. And that includes Eric, who was born in Toronto.

It's April 6, 1965, we're at Customs in Montreal.

Customs Official: Passports, please! Nationality?

Me: South African. (I thought I had left South Africa!)

C.O.: That's not a nationality! That name, "Du Preez", what is it? … French? Italian? Portuguese? Or D …

Me: French!

C.O.: Then you're French! And your wife's … Dunn?
Me: Scottish.
C.O. (He writes) Scottish. "Just statistics."
Me: Now what are my children?
Official: welcome to Canada!
Thank you!

Our son Melvin has returned to the New South Africa. He is teaching English to newcomers at an *Afrikaans* university!

Alles sal regkom! Everything will be all right.

God be with you till we meet again …!

Nathaniel Martin du Preez was born on October 28, 1928 in Newclare, a suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa. He grew up with his paternal grandparents in Benoni and was schooled in Benoni. High school and teacher training were in Johannesburg. He taught elementary and high school in Benoni before immigrating to Canada in 1965. In Canada he worked at Simpsons-Sears, the Adult Retaining Centre, Toronto, and at public schools in Etobicoke and North York (Firgrove at Jane and Finch). He retired in 1988 and now enjoys <u>some</u> reading, writing letters and playing tennis.

India From The Inside

Olive Fowler

Have you ever hated your spouse? I mean *really* hated? My time came when we had been in Canada for less than four years and my husband was working for an international chicken breeding company in the Galt area of Ontario. We had already moved four times in almost four years.

He came home one day and said that the boss had asked if he would like to go to India. The foreman and his wife said that they did not want to go. So Chris being the next in line was asked and said "Yes" with great alacrity, without even discussing it with the family. "No, I don't want to move again; and certainly not to India. No! No! No!"

Chris said yes because he thought that getting away from the home farm and traveling would be a huge promotion and would certainly be much more interesting than staying in the barns in Galt. He would be more or less running his own his show, a great challenge, and utilizing his college degree and practical knowledge of breeding "pedigree" chickens; besides which there seemed to be too many bosses telling him what to do in Galt.

Here was his wife also telling him what not to do. I had just started to have a new career as a house mother in a nearby training school for delinquent girls and really loved that job. I believed that I was making a difference to some of the girls and now the possibility that I would be leaving and having to move again. I was sure that I didn't want to do that and with two young children in India—"Uh. Uh."

Well that problem was easily solved. *The children and I would not be going*; not because of my decision but because the President of the company along with Chris' acquiescence thought that he should go alone for the time being. Chris was gone 11 months and I continued with my career for awhile until a carrot was dangled before my nose. If I learnt how to sex chickens, then the children and I could join Chris in India. What did I know about chickens? I started my career as a school teacher.

I was given two boxes of day old chicks. I was told to make sure that they *ALL* came back with me because the chicks' special DNA might be stolen by the Company who would be teaching me how to sex these poor wee mites, and they could reproduce similar or even better breeds. High tech had come to even the lowly chickens.

The process of sexing is done with a machine about the size and shape of a hand gun equipped with a glass rod which has magnification at the furthest end, and when plugged into the electricity this end is lit up, inserted into the chicks who have been divested of the waste products from the body cavity, the reproductive organs are noted and the chicks segregated into separate boxes for the different sexes. Ugh! What a gruesome job some people have to do for a living. Now that I learned the process, we were to leave as soon as possible. I felt overwhelmed and overwrought at times.

The house was placed in the hands of the real estate agent who sold it to us. The ladies from the company came and packed up all our worldly goods. The main furniture was disposed of at the auction sale—rooms including a beautiful cherry wood bedroom suite, which was my prize possession and had been bought at the same auction rooms for $90.00. Homeless again.

A quick stop in England where my parents and my in-laws were living; all sorts of advice all sorts of good wishes and many tears were shed. My sister-in-law and brother-in-law drove us to Southhampton where we boarded the P and O liner Himalayan. It was a hectic time but now we could relax. The ship was all luxury as far as I could see and would be our home for the next little while. The trip through the Bay of Biscay was horrendous with black skies, thunderous waves crashing over the decks, and with just-let-me-die-sea sickness, I was ready to get off. Not Kelvin, who was nearly 7 1/2 years old nor Andrew, not quite 5 years—they were looked after in the nursery while their sorry-for-herself-Mother was ill all by herself. After the Bay it was beautiful, calm, sunny days, and on deck it was warm and fresh air was abundant again. The voyage was really very pleasant from then on.

Passing from the Atlantic Ocean through to the Mediterranean Sea we watched the most breathtaking sunrise over the Atlas Mountains; the sky was saturated with pinks, golds, and purples. We stopped at Malta, which seemed to be just a large rock. With a five year old and an eight year old it was advised not to go ashore on the very short stop. Our next stop was Port Said at the top of the Suez Canal and we were warned to lock our doors if we should leave our cabins even for a short time and keep hold of our children at all times. This seemed a bit harsh but then there was a great commotion with a lot of shouting and running when a man came back to his cabin only to find that “porters” were packing his bags ready to flee the ship. There was much whistle blowing, excited voices and scuffles so it was better to stay on board than go ashore, although I think it would have been fascinating.

Passing through the Suez Canal the children were full of excitement at seeing desert people on camels and horseback so close that we could hear them talking. We were convinced that they were all princes. They were magnificent and rode their animals as if they were all moulded from one piece. The Canal was amazingly narrow; we could look down from either side and wonder if we would scrape the containing walls. It certainly made a colourful scene after so many rolling grey waves.

Aden, our next port of call was not so much colourful as colourless reminding one of the giant grey slag heaps of England. We were not stopping there for long so spent time playing games in the lounge. It was also Ramadan so we were advised not to leave the ship again. I wish that I could go back again and see what I missed.

We could actually smell India and hear the thrumming of people long before we arrived in Bombay. Slowly cruising through the enervating heat and cloying humidity we

passed by many small conical shaped islands breathing in the many aromas of spices, animals and people. Excitement mixed with the anxiety of docking and meetings made us all strangers to each other after so many days of living together in such a confined space and vowing to keep in touch with each other as quickly as possible. So many promises but mostly lost in the re-housing in our new lands. Some of the people were sailing on to Australia.

By the time we were finished with immigration and customs we were very thankful to put our sea rolling legs on terra firma again. We made our way to a waiting and anxious Chris and then to the hotel for the night. So many sights, sounds, and smells—far too many to be absorbed all at once. Heinrich Schliemann, archaeologist and the finder of the Gold of Troy, once wrote that the heat and noise of India frightened him so he left quickly. I must say that the children reacted cooler than he or I. I presumed that we ate at the hotel but can't remember. That night from our balcony several floors above the ground, unable to sleep because of the humidity and with the low babble of the "biddy" smoking street people, I watched silhouettes thrown by kerosene lamp-light on the sidewalks, the roaming cows lowing and shuffling about in the garbage. The pariah dogs fighting or being chased by man and other beasts—so different from home. I had great anxieties with this entire welter of newness. It had been more than a strenuous time with packing up a job, house, and not knowing what to expect. My husband also felt the strain of having been alone for 11 months and now having to cope with a family again—some big adjustments had to be made.

The next morning, poor adults and children, some with obvious birth defects, ran behind us begging for "buckshees." It was hard not to want to give everything away, they all seemed so pitiful. Chris having been immured to all this for the last 11 months told us to keep moving and don't look back. It was so hard but I didn't have any money to give anyway. We made our way to the railway station to catch the Delhi train. Being white people had its compensations however as we had a compartment to ourselves and were not boxed up together with all the other people, some of whom had crates of live stock with them. *We* were the ones on show. They had an innate curiosity for these pale skins and the funny clothes they wore. One or two would feel your material as you went by. The worst ordeal was the toilet. One had to go down through the stifling press of people, some perching on the outside window frames for a little fresh air, and into a very dingy cabin. No toilet, just two foot shaped pads in the train base with a hole between them and all this on a moving train. Uh uh! No toilet paper either. I later learned that the Indian people carry a small brass pot with them and fill it with water with which they wash after each visit.

We passed many varieties of landscape during our three day journey to Delhi. Housing types varied from the opulent to the grass huts of the poor. The faces that were turned our way ranged from very pale to almost blue black. Facial structures were many, from the very fine features to the more flattened noses and crinkly hair but all with large brown eyes, a few piercing green ones too, and smiles of pure white. There were some very gappy mouths too, sporting maybe just one or two teeth, but as most Indian foods are cut into small pieces or they are vegetarian, they have no trouble eating. They carry there own "tiffen" lunch pails that fit into each other, maybe as high as four cans fit neatly and not take up too much room. They don't use utensils but break off pieces of "chapiti" (unleavened flat breads) and deftly pick up their meat, rice and "dal" gathered

into a neat ball, and pop it into the mouth. Holding the dish close to the mouth prevents food from falling to the clothing or ground. Nothing is wasted. The languages or dialects are also varied; there are 14 national languages and over 70 dialects but all beggars knew how to say, "Dollar or buckshees memsahib".

We finally made the 1000 mile train journey to Delhi, a little shaken by the ordeal but in one piece. The awful thing is that the Indians are so curious that they stare and make comments and then giggle and it makes for an uncomfortable experience. Remember that this was in the early sixties and not too many white families were available for scrutiny. We were just as fascinated by them but had been taught that it is rude to stare. In Delhi, Chris was master of our fates again and much more confident. He hired one of the thousands of three wheeled scooters and arrived "home" to a downstairs apartment—2 bedrooms, a living room and glory be, a bathroom of walk-in proportions with a European toilet. We were to take all our meals in the owner's home across the street. Ujay and Mae Malik kept their home for visiting foreigners on short or long term assignments. There were WHO, FAO, and minor diplomatic visitors who had all been there some time and the repartee was just pure fun listening to with their various careers and the problems they posed.

Our 8 year old daughter Kelvin Ann and 5 year old son Andrew seemed to adjust quite quickly and were enrolled in the Anglo Indian school close by. Very quickly, because they were so much bigger than the local children, they were made "prefects" being allowed to tell tales and even bully the locals. They told me that they hated it and didn't like being bullies. They also hated the sandwiches that Mae had her cook prepare for them. By the time it was lunch time the dry and crispy Indian cheese sandwiches were good only for feeding the kites (large hawk type birds) who would swoop down and eat them out of their hands. With the oppressive heat the children weren't very hungry anyway.

After school we would sit in the artificial, comparative "cool" of the living room and read or listen to records on the green leather covered record player we had brought with us. Andrew said that he can still remember the story of the little mouse along with a very large elephant that got into the story when the music went faster. Other animals joined us as we played a piece of classical music but the tune they remember more than any other was of Sophia Loren and Peter Sellars singing "Eat yer vermicelli Joe. It's coming out me ears. Give me a bash of the bangers and mash, me Muvver used to make." This one I didn't have to invent a story for. The actors told it all including going into a fit of giggles at the end.

Our first apartment

After a little while we were able to get both the children enrolled in a British High Commission school that they liked much better. Not that they disliked the Indian children, they still played with them after school. Madame Rodda, an Anglo Indian who lived and had a dance school upstairs, liked the children to go up and visit with her sometimes and tell them about their lives in Canada. Andrew really liked visiting with people and could keep a conversation going

for a long time; he still can.

When we realised that we would be staying, we managed to rent a downstairs apartment with an open concept living, dining room, two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. We had some furniture made, nothing fancy, a round table, which we could remove the top for easy shipping, six chairs, and a side board. We also ordered the beds from the same company. A settee and two armchairs covered in heavy dark blue silk were added as we became a little more affluent and we were able to leave the beds in the bedroom and not make them do double duty as sitting accommodation. Due to the central heating, which had a very drying effect on the wood, and the termites that managed to immigrate with us, the three-piece suite slowly disintegrated when we brought it back to Canada.

We then went about hiring a cook. An extremely good looking young man came and applied for the post "having been sent by one of the neighbours." He told me "he could start right away," and asked "what would you like to eat for dinner?" Not quite knowing what there was in the way of stores or how to get there I gave him a 10 rupee note and asked, "will that be enough?"

Back row: Karli and Cook
Front row: Andrew (5 yrs.)
Kelvin Ann (7 yrs.)

"As you don't have a fridge I think that it would be a good idea not to buy too much at once." Off he went. I waited, and waited. We never did see him again nor the 10 rupee note. What a greenhorn I was—a learning experience, one of many, muttering cuss words and then a word with Mae. She sent an older man over. Dalu proved to be a reasonable cook, could cope with the money I handed him, and told me about a wonderful dessert on the market.

"Would you like to have some this evening?

"Oh! Certainly, if it is not too much trouble."

The dessert proved to be a jello powder and he had never seen one before. We feigned surprise, "That was very good Dalu." He was most impressed and said, "All I do is add water. It's like magic Memsahib." Dalu informed me that "I don't do cleaning but that there is a young man who works for Col. and Mrs Kurana upstairs who could work for you." Karli Charan was a small, neat, clean young man, not at all bold. He was always polite, if a little fearful of Dalu and Fowler Sahib but he liked being with us. His own family lived up in the hills two days journey away while he worked down in Delhi, going home only once a year. This was normal as far as domestic servants were concerned. He used very little money and each month he sent most of his pay home to his family. His English was quite poor but no more than my Hindi. We really liked Karli and his very honest ways. By Indian standards he was of the "untouchable caste." If Col. or Mrs Khurana were in their room his head must be below theirs at all times, even if they were sitting down. He was not allowed to touch their dishes or even empty their teapot.

Since there were very few televisions, they were reserved for the rich or those with pull. If they had a refrigerator however it was the show piece and kept in the living room

Every day there was always something to go and see Every day there were surprises to discover. I sometimes walked down to see English friends whom I met on the ship. We realised that we would be only 3 blocks away from each other. Anne, British, was married to Deep, an Indian, very tall and good looking. His brother was a film director and I'm surprised that he didn't choose Deep for his leading roles. We went to see one of his films and by that time we were able to sing their National Anthem that the children had learnt at school and taught me. The Khoslas were lovely people and we still keep in touch with each other even though they now live in Devon, England.

We felt very fortunate that we met so many people from all sorts of nations as well as indigenous people. We invited people that we liked to our home regardless of what the high Indians or some of the more conservative "white men" thought. This way we had some interesting, kind people who became very good friends. There were some Canadian Peace Corps, Jim Gilmore, the Donovans, folk living in much poorer circumstances than us but they were completely devoted to their charges and enjoyed an occasional evening away from their own lives. Some of the folks that lived at Mae and Ujay's home eventually resided in homes of their own, their families joined them, and we visited together. Roland and Ila Heath had been there a long time and would take the children so that I could rest a while. Jagdit Singh was a sergeant in the Indian Air force and had something to do with the generators at the airport. He was extremely knowledgeable with a very practical bent, interested in the incubators and made a special solenoid for an incubator of his own. He, his wife, and three teenaged children, a girl and two boys lived in a 2 roomed flat in a multiple housing unit. When we went there the children would sit in the bedroom and peep through the dividing curtain. Mrs Singh would come in to cook the delicious curried goat meat with mint chutney on a small two burner stove on the floor but would disappear after we started to eat. They had no bathroom but shared one with all the other families on their floor—about 20 flats on each floor. I knew of nobody that cleaned these vile smelling places but they were infinitely better than the poorer people living closer to where we lived. Before the sun had time to burn the swirling slightly, cooler misty air away, the women would congregate down on the grassy squares by the open drains, called "nullahs," with their little brass pots close by. They would chatter away while they did their ablutions in a most decorous manner without any indiscreet showing of limbs. The men, I believe, went before the ladies did as they were never seen.

The bazaar was a glorious cacophony of noisy shouting of wares, scooters beeping, pye dogs yipping, live birds squawking prior to being slaughtered as fresh meat, a riotous mixture of colours of exotic fruits and vegetables, glorious saris, handicrafts, plaited plastic woven placemats in every colour were the vogue of the day. Homemade goodies such as samosas or pakoras sizzled in the cooking oil, oh! the tantalising scents, glassy-eyed fish lying on huge blocks of ice covered with straw to keep the flies and hands off, lying in a dirty wooden box, everything assaulting *all* your senses. The meat man came to the house on his bicycle with meats in a similar but smaller box, on his luggage bar. "More hygienic," so said Dalu. Not for the faint hearted or fastidious. I usually felt like a rag doll at the end of my trip but thoroughly enjoyed all the flowery banter and hassling of the merchants and knowing they were getting more out of me than I was out of them made it all the more fun and intriguing.

After getting settled it was time to go to the farm to start my chick sexing job.

Cars were extremely expensive if you could get hold of one. Ordering one was a waiting game for many months but fortunately General Nehra, the collaborating partner, was in charge of all Army stores. So after being driven by the General's batman to the farm for the first while, we were given a Vesper Scooter. One day, in true Indian fashion, we travelled home with Chris, the two children, I, and a box of chicks all on that Vesper. Nobody took any noticed as this was the way everybody travelled. We had to pass through a border crossing to get from Delhi to Gurgaon where the farm was. Sometimes the guards were very friendly and other times others were very officious. These were mainly those who did not meet up with white folks very often and they would make you wait in the scorching sun while they made a lot of noise and unnecessary reading of documents even when they had no knowledge of the English. Of course you could pass through quickly if you paid some buckshees. The journey passed through many different farmlands with camels walking endlessly round and round on a tethering rope pumping water for a poor harvest of dry and scrawny crops. Ladies and children tending their cattle walked all over the road and you had to be patient or else those cattle didn't seem to go to the edge of the road until they were ready. The incessantly chattering monkeys and weird catlike calls of the peacocks in the thickly leafed neem trees made a disconcerting din as one drove through the roads and villages.

By now the General had commandeered a Fiat car for us. Passing by one would see the very fine boned peasant women carrying huge bales of twigs for their evening fires. I once saw a very old one carrying this type of bundle and she seemed absolutely sinking under her load. I stopped the car and with more gestures than spoken words indicated that she should put the bundle in the back and I would give her a ride. She seemed very nervous at first but as we drew nearer to the village she began to relish the other women and children looking at her. She began smiling and waving as we went by each group like the Queen. She touched me on the arm to stop when we were at her destination. We had a bit of a struggle to get the bundle out and the other people had to examine the inside of the car so it took a wee while before I could say my "namasties" ("hellos or goodbyes") and go on my way. It became clear that I was in great favour after that incident as at a much later date when I was pregnant the officious border guards would not let my taxi cab cross the border and these people helped me out. I paid off the taxi wallah, the country folk walked me through the barrier, got a donkey, and placed him in the shafts of a rickety, wooden cart. A rickety wooden chair was brought from one of the houses and carpets were fetched to cover the chair. Memsahib was escorted up to the chair, helped to sit down and covered with another cloth despite the already 100 or more degrees. I don't think Queen Elizabeth has felt more worthy than I did that day (or so silly either.) My husband was amazed but I felt cherished and one good deed was amply rewarded by the other one.

Our other good friend close to the farm was the Chai or char wallah (this is the tea wallah.) He has a little mud hut with straw roof and somewhere he has a supply of water "pani." It sat in a bucket and waited until passers-by needed tea or chai and then it was heated over a small portable fire. Chris had made friends with him before I came and said, "Don't offend him by saying "no" to his tea. It is not a cup of tea as your English Mother would make but he is very kind and helpful." So we sat on rather ancient rattan stools covered with cloths while he washed his hands in a bucket of only slightly muddy water then he doled water from the same bucket into a tin pan, which he put on the small

fire, added some tea leaves, coarser than the tea we are used to, some buffalo milk and some small round seeds which I think were cardamoms and some sugar. No germs, obviously, as the pot was allowed to boil vigorously. It was so hot that it would kill the germs on the china cups as well, all washed in the same bucket of water. It obviously did us no harm, it tasted very refreshing actually, and it cemented our friendship for as long as we were in India.

Coming home from the farm once I saw what I thought was a man in distress. He was moving very slowly on his belly along the gravel side. His clothing was an ochre colour and he was making sweeping motions with his arm. I didn't stop although I was most disturbed thinking that he was having a fit. I mentioned the incident and was told that this was a Holy man from the Jain Sect. They wear cloths over their mouths so that they do not inhale even an insect. Vegetarians, they will not even harm vegetables but wait until someone else cooks them and then beg for the leftovers.

At the High Commission School both of the children were doing well and mixing with other "white children." When they were home they played with the local Indian children and some of the other mixed diplomatic children. One of their most annoying problems was when the two of them would go and pick pomegranates from a neighbour's tree that hung over the curb side. They just loved them but their school uniforms didn't. They were washed and dried bleach white in the sun and picked up the purpley-black juice from the pomegranates which just wouldn't come off. The *dobhi wallah*, (the washer man) had many words with me but because I didn't understand a word he said other than "many more rupees, Memsahib." I was able to ignore him but chastise the children a little more. The banana tree they didn't pick upon at all but the monkeys did. They were most prolific and vociferous too. Quite often they climbed through the windows of the homes and there would be clanging of gongs or pots, shouts from the householders and answering swearing from the monkeys. Anything glittering too would be stolen if left where the monkeys could really reach it. Andrew got most upset when one of the crazy "robbers" took off with his toy leaving him vacillating between crying and shouting at the rogues.

I think that about this time we were given a small dog which we named Tipsy. This was a dumb thing to do in India but the children really loved him, so did we too. Most Indians have no love for dogs. They are counted among the lowest of the low. You might come back as a dog if you are wicked enough and have to rebuild your points up to become human again, so someone told us. The other point was that with so many people with so little food, why feed a dog? A good dog keeps both the monkeys at bay and the thieves too who have a nasty habit of invading your home when you are sleeping. A *Chowkidah* (a night watchman) paraded round the block during the night banging a large stick, whether to frighten the burglars or keep the sleepers awake, I am not sure. He was sometimes in league with the thieves and got a "cut" until caught and then there would be a new *Chowkidah*. The majority of the time we fared very well and would enjoy our new experiences.

Old Delhi with its teeming humanity was a bit scary when I had to pick up medications for the chickens. One had to pick one's way very carefully through the very narrow, winding alley. Not another white person, let alone a woman seemed to be there but nor did I ever have any frightening experiences, many glares but no harassment. New Delhi was an utterly different place. As the name suggests there are many newer

buildings. The hotel where most foreigners stayed, The Ashoka, was a magnificent building with beautiful swimming pools and dining rooms with serving waiters in crisp white traditional clothing and white headwear. We felt very privileged and dare I say smug to sit there cool and slim drinking our *nimbo panis* (iced lime juice) in the air conditioned lounges watching the influx of mainly American visitors come panting through the main doors. Many were very fat, middle aged ladies with many rings, necklaces, and jangling bangles on their wrists and over-fat, hot feet crammed into tight shoes. Their wide brimmed straw hats shaded their very red, flustered faces but still bossed their rather smaller husbands; "Watch those suitcases; you can't trust those boys to take them to the right room." "Don't you take your eyes off them for one minute. Which is our room?" We were rather ashamed of some of these loud speaking females with their poor, long-suffering husbands but people watching has always been a favourite pastime; we try and deduce where the people come from and what they may do for a living.

It wasn't all hard work. We visited the many wonderful ancient public buildings the most beautiful being the Taj Mahal, built by the Emperor Shah Jahan for his beloved consort Mumtaz Mahal. It took 20,000 men 22 years to build it and the chief architect was thrown from one of the towers so that he could never build another like it. Chris and I were spellbound but the two children were more interested in watching the buffaloes being washed upstream while the people were washing themselves downstream and on the banks a funeral pyre was set alight, burning a body; interests for all.

Kelvin also learned to swim at a hotel pool while we watched, cooled and refreshed with *Nimbo pani* (gin and lime) in the evenings. While the children would have preferred to go to swimming pools all the time, we did several memorable trips, the first being to visit an army regiment. The Kuamon Regiment had bought the Shaver chickens and needed a service call so we piled into the Fiat and drove up to the foothills getting refreshingly cooler as the landscape grew greener. Breath-taking, panoramic views came at each "S" bend in the well maintained mountain roads. Once we saw water at the side of the road running uphill but never found out what caused it. The children were kept very busy "hunting for wild animals" as we climbed even higher. We were sure that we saw "lions and elephants" around each new bend. Finally we arrived at our destination, a large acreage with a field cuddled around with dense trees. Accommodation? Not a house or even a roof could be seen. A square trench about 18" deep and many, many metres in circumference had been dug and we were assured that this would keep us safe from any dangerous snakes as they cannot climb down and then up again. We are still not convinced about that after the snake wallah came to the house and showed us how he could control the cobra with his pipe. A frisky one escaped momentarily. Fortunately we only looked out of the open window. Dalu had warned us that if we didn't allow the snake wallah to perform then a snake would be allowed to escape into the house and we would have to pay double the price for its recapture. It

The snake wallah

wasn't until we were driven around the jungle in jeeps that we saw huge elephant wallows but no real animals. By this time monkeys were very common place for us.

Chris had service calls to make from time to time in the Northern Punjab. The cooling hill weather was as good as a cool shower, such a relief after the suffocating Delhi heat. One call was to the Maharajah of Patiala's palace where his Major Domo took us around to see parts of an extremely large and opulent abode—one to be compared with the Palace in England. We were not so much open-mouthed as dumb struck. The riches were in direct opposition to the poor hovels that we had been passing on the journey. It was a land where wherever one went was a new adventure. Never had we seen such a land so full of contrasts, a land of riches and poverty, goodness and evils, scenery so green and land so blown away that nothing could grow. A land where one man could have many wives all in their own mud huts but he could choose to live with any one of them at a time. When a wife was "unclean" she must not have relations with the husband or even wash his pots or dishes but must stay in her own home. One such man was an enterprising Muslim who had devised a "gasometer" to produce heating and gas lighting from the chicken manure even in 1962.

Another trip was to Ludhiana where we stayed with the Farm Manager, Paul Sood. The potato paratas that the cook made along with the curry were the lightest and best tasting that we had in India. The toilet arrangement was out of the ordinary. I, apprehensively, asked if I might use the facilities. "Yes, of course." So Paul Sood went ahead followed by Chris and the two children, I being pregnant slowly brought up the rear. We admired the skyline, the streetscape, the many people visiting each other, the usual cacophony of barking dogs, people yelling, the street vendors describing their delicacies while the air was heavy with the pungent oil and spices. Not able to find anything I finally had to ask where it was and Paul Sood pointed out the inevitable two concrete foot pads with the open hole running into a drain pipe that emptied down the side of the house and seeped into a road side drain. Oh horrors! But when in Rome (or India!!!!!) do as the natives. So we all used the facilities while the rest chatted on.

During the night we were awakened by horrible shouting and screaming; two voices seemed to be haranguing each other. Morning comes early in India so that one can be alert before the sun burns into the streets. The noise had abated quite a bit but it still continued. Looking out of our bedroom windows we saw a young man maybe 20 years old with lots of unkempt black facial and head hair. He was clutching the iron bars of his attic window, banging his head and alternately groaning and yelling. Such a pitiful sight. It was explained to me that this was a demented child of an elderly couple and this was the only way to treat him as there was no other place to put him. It was most disturbing and the picture of him upset me for quite some time. One bauble of the Maraharajah's gems could have softened that life immensely.

We next travelled on to Nanital, a small holiday town on the banks of a lake 6,000 ft above sea level. It was raining heavily when we got there but cleared up enough later for us to go and walk beside the water. As usual the children found something extraordinary that they remember until this day rather than the beauty of the lake. It was a dead body that somebody was hauling out of the lake. It was said that it was a star-crossed lover who had been jilted. We never did find out if that was so as Indian people can be very obtuse when they don't want you to know. The children enjoyed the lake and didn't worry about bodies. The weather was not the nicest; rainy season was fast

approaching and we had many showers. Not a lot to do when it is wet just like any seaside town. No televisions, no videos, however we did find a cinema close by. We didn't dare leave our little puppy, Tipsy, with the servants so we had to smuggle him into the cinema too. He was very good, better than the children who became very bored with the over dramatic Indian film but at least it was dry in the building, which was mainly tin sheets on the roof which killed most of the dialogue. Kelvin Ann acquired a leach on her leg while we were in the cinema and the only way to remove it was by having a cigarette lighter to burn it off—a land of adventure.

Back at home we saw that Kali Charan was quite ill and I had to take him to the local hospital to be treated for malaria. The hospital was where I would be going to have the baby so this gave me an opportunity to test the facilities. It looked very nice from the outside with white washed open sided walkways for perambulating patients and their visitors but also easy access for the wild dogs, the monkeys and even snakes couldn't be banned. Indian people have many religions each with their own eating habits. Muslims don't eat pork, Hindus don't eat beef and there are those who only eat vegetarian. To cope with cooking meals for so many different ethnic groups would be chaotic so visitors bring their small cooking stoves, kongrees, and cook right at the patients' beds. While Karli and I picked our way to the admittance room the hovering smoke from these stoves wreathed its way to the ceilings and clung there like a spectres, smelling of whatever food had been cooked. We walked around the open walkways and came to the operating room door with its fly screen netting panel to let in air and light. As we walked past the door great clouds of flies flew off the panel. I was just getting over that when I saw an abandoned dead body lying in its burial clothes on a bench outside the door. That was when I decided that I would not be having my baby at Lodi Hospital. Karli, however, was not so lucky. He was spotted and treated and then I took him home again.

Ranikhet was another hill station with the beautiful drive through the Punjab and up into the cool hills this time really dripping with rain. After the long ride we were only too glad to settle in the Dahk Bungalow and eat and play board games. I nestled the children into their beds after reading them their bedtime stories. Tipsy snuggled on his blanket on the floor but I knew that he would be on the bed by the time I was back in the living room. Tipsy, after his long ride was feeling a bit queasy so I took him outside on his lead. With snakes, scorpions around I was not letting him roam alone. We went to bed quite early after the long ride. Tipsy was still queasy at 4 am so I thought it better to take him out again. I went out through the bathroom door with a reluctant Tipsy, opened the outer door only to be confronted by two large green eyes glaring at me from the treed lawn. Twice the thing coughed deeply down in his throat. I needed no other message. I yanked Tipsy's lead as hard as I could and hastily retreated into the safety of the bathroom again. The hipbone received a wonderfully coloured bruise later that day. Chris slept right through the whole incident. Next morning I related to Chris what I had seen. "Yeah, right." At breakfast I asked the children if they had heard anything. "No, Mummy." The *konsarma* brought in the breakfast the next morning and asked if we had heard anything. "No." "No" from all but I said that I heard coughs and had seen two green eyes. "Memsahib, a panther killed the cow outside your door." "Nar, nar nar nah!" I thought I wasn't dreaming. It didn't have us going home or hiding; we still went on day trips and had a glorious time seeing the Himalayan Mountains in all their glory before going off to Delhi again.

Our new baby was supposed to be born in January according to the doctors. Each day visitors came to see if I had gone yet. January came and I was still not having any problems. We were invited to an Indian wedding up in Meerut. This was an extravagance outdoing anything that Hollywood ever thought of. The guests were housed in a gigantic marquee. Each little family group had a small space with beds and clothes cupboard – so very friendly, you had to be familiar. Several groupings had a "bearer" a servant, who would wait upon their every whim. "Thunderboxes," small portable potties in a chair, were dealt with by these servants along with portable shower stalls. It was a tremendous undertaking for the bride's parents, both mentally and moneywise. The bride's father was extremely rich, fortunately.

The day of the wedding was an all day event with the girls of the party appearing and disappearing and coming back wearing different clothing. Finally they seemed to settle down and sat in a long line. It was night fall when the Groom and his retinue arrived on horse back. (This was an arranged marriage so that the bride had not seen the groom before. No pre-sex in this group, everything pre-arranged by the parents, astrologers and the holy men.) The Groom was on a white horse, which reared as it drew close to the awaiting crowds. There were hurried gasps as he was nearly thrown off the horse but he managed to right himself, which was supposedly an auspicious happening. As he got closer we could see that he was extremely handsome. Unfortunately, although his bride was a very personable person she was not in the least bit pretty but was large and quite mannish. It was quite a surprise for him when the veil was lifted but as far as we know they are still together. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Quite some time after we came back from the wedding we had invited some friends over for dinner. This was March 25th at 11:15pm and we had just finished a last drink before they would be leaving when No. 3 child decided it was time to join the world. We hurriedly went to The Holy Family Hospital which had been arranged by a friend in the W.H.O. Dr. Schlesinger made me welcome, we went straight to the labour room and three hours later, in a power cut and with only a large flash light, Simon Christopher was born. He was born in a hurry and he hasn't stopped hurrying yet.

Simon became very sick with a blood disorder and being very fair skinned and a redhead Dr. Schlesinger said we must get to the cooler air in the hills or we would loose him. Anxious to get to the hills meant going back to the Foothills of the Himalayas again. This time we went through long, narrow, dusty, winding, dry roads clinging to the inner side of the mountains with sheer drops on the left side. After many long hours driving we came to a huge mountain where we had to wait until the signal was given to drive through. A long dark tunnel had been cut through the mountain. Coming out through the other side was as if we had reached Shangri-la. This was Kashmir. The same sun was shining but there was coolness to the air, grass was green, mountains shimmered in the sun. Paddy fields of rice were being tended by bare legged girls singing as they worked. The oppressive heat lifted and glory be, we were nearly at the end of our journey. Our destination was a houseboat moored along the Little Dal Lake. We were to stay two weeks. It was sheer heaven. The furniture was of finely carved wood, a living room with dining end, two bedrooms and a bathroom. Through the dining room you could go out through a door onto a small deck where Chris and Andrew would fish and catch good-sized edible fish. The flower merchant would come and sell you flowers fresh daily. Or should I say fresh daily to you but he would be changing yours for the

persons next door. We were amazed one day to see the vegetable garden that separated our houseboat from the next row of house boats suddenly disappearing. It appears that they were portable gardens which they had built up over the years and just towed them to another area when needed. We visited around looking at the quaint, wooden multi-storied homes over shops. We went by meat shops wondering what the black lumps that they were selling could possibly be until we saw one butcher aim his horse hair swatter at the black items. The flies flew off and it was a raw leg of goat meat. No wonder there are so many vegetarians. We heard that the people were gathered in the mosque so we went to see what was happening. Chris wanted to get a photo of the gathering and managed to get himself in the women's section but nobody paid him any attention as they were being spurred on by a rebel rousing mullah (a holy man) Somebody had stolen the hair of the Prophet and they were being harangued to fight and get it back again

The idyllic land was too wonderful to last; rabble fighting broke out in the streets. Mr. Shaver arrived in Delhi and needed Chris back there. So I was to stay with the children in the houseboat with a sword stick at my side. Saalama Doona, the owner, would look after us. I was awakened some time in the night to yelling and screaming and a big splash. Then silence. I didn't let go of the sword stick all night. The two other children slept as good as gold in their bedroom. The next day, Saalama Doona said that a man had been murdered in the next house boat and then rolled in his carpet and thrown in the lake. He was quite put out that they had used his carpet. Chris came back and we did finish our wonderful holiday in Kashmir but we were to return to Canada once again. I have always felt that Kashmir must be a bit like heaven.

We returned to Delhi to pack up our home, say farewell to friends and to Karli who was still with us and to Shandra, our pretty ayah. We did hear from Karli once to say that he now had a job with the Bombay cleaners and would not be doing house cleaning anymore. Chris was forgiven, thanked, and loved again. So ended another era and back to new beginnings in Canada.

Olive Fowler was born in England and married Christopher Fowler in 1953. They came to Canada in 1957 and have 1 daughter, 3 sons, 5 granddaughters, and 5 great-grandchildren. Her first career was in teaching, followed by chicken breeding in Canada and India. Moving back to Canada she became a real estate agent and for the last 15 years has been teaching china painting to seniors in Cambridge, Ontario.

Patricia's Opus

Patricia Woodburn

My first collection of fond memories and the musical interludes woven through my life: I hope that my family will enjoy these words; I have just begun to write!

My earliest recollection of *hearing and feeling music* was when I was a little, little girl sitting on my potty in front of a huge crackling open hearth fireplace where Granny Hogan hung her big black pots in which she cooked healthy meals for her large family and some farm animals. My shameless and comfortable position was warmed by the heat of the fireside and protected from the wild winds blowing from the River Shannon whipping against Granny's farm house; our fortress in the West of Ireland. My little feet were *tapping along to the lively music* coming from violin strings being played in another part of that very large kitchen. *Feeling the music was a happy and carefree experience*. Now in my late sixties I can confirm that many types of music both listening and playing have been a stirring and enriching accompaniment in my life.

Granny Hogan's large country kitchen saw area neighbours dropping in for short visits during the day time. "Welcome, how are ya today?" "Great! All the better for seeing ya looking so well and how's yourself?" "God Bless you, aren't you a fine looking young lass?" There was a genuine appreciation of each other in their give and take of conversation and they knew that they could and did depend upon one another in times of need and in times of celebration. They shared a big helping of fun and laughter. Musical interludes of Irish country toe tapping music were frequent, especially if Aunt Lena or Aunty Kit were to ask, "Will you give us song today, Sean or Margaret?" or whoever it was that happened to be dropping in for a 'tip of the hat.' Sometimes there was a little bit of step dancing that contributed to 'a really good feeling' felt by everyone, the dancer, those that joined in and those just watching and smiling.

My maternal Granny Ellen Hogan was about five feet four, a silver haired lady that had worn black clothing since she was widowed suddenly in the middle of June, 1914. My mammy was just two and half years of age and the second youngest of eleven children when her daddy died. A father's absence from a home for whatever reason is

huge! Granny Hogan was aware that at the same time that she was burying her husband that one thousand and fourteen people drowned in Canada's St. Lawrence River as the service ocean liner The Express of Ireland was hit by the Norwegian Storstad in dense fog and sank within fourteen minutes in the icy waters. She understood the pain of those grieving families reeling from their shocking, sudden loss of family and that many of them were unable to physically bury their dead. Granny was a prayerful woman and she prayed her rosary for those families that they would be given the strength to carry on. She worked hard inside and outside of her home; family and friends enjoyed her marvellous sense of humour and she kept her faith in the goodness of God. Throughout her long life time she took pleasure in the visits from her thirty-four grandchildren. Her first grandson, Sean Ronan, stayed closely connected to her even though his diplomatic responsibilities took him around the world including England, Belgium, The United States of America, Greece, Japan, and South Korea. She was his loving Granny Hogan who was able to tell him stories about his mother May who had died after giving birth to his little sister. May was Mammy's oldest sister.

All of us grandchildren loved to visit this rural hamlet called Derrahiney located about an hour and half's walk along a country paved road with no sidewalks and seven feet high bushes on either side of the road, from the thriving little town of Portumna in County Galway where we would be greeted with laughter and tears and blurts of, "Oh Thank God I can't believe you're really here." "What a wonderful sight ya are for these ole eyes!" They spoke with a lilt in their voices that sounded almost as though they were singing. She and Aunty Lena made you feel that it was your home too.

Widowed Granny Hogan had nurtured her four sons and seven daughters with the emotional and physical support from her Kenny family. In late spring 1940, Granny welcomed back to Derrahiney her second youngest daughter Eileen with her husband John (Jack) and me at about four or five months old to share her home for as long as Mum needed it while the War was on.

Mum and me as a baby

Dad did not stay there long, he was a journeyman carpenter and he always found employment. My mammy had been the third of granny's eleven children to leave Ireland so there was rejoicing upon her return with her own family in tow. About fifteen years prior my mother's second oldest brother Martin had immigrated to Canada and he eventually settled in a picturesque small town in South Western Ontario named Paris. He married Margaret Barlow and they began their family of five children.

My mother and father left Dublin, Ireland to seek opportunities in London, England and in 1937 they purchased a three storey brick home on Isledon Road, a residential street in the Borough of Islington. I was three months old when our house was destroyed during World War II's bombing of London along with most homes in the immediate area. Throughout London the devastation and evacuation of children and

families had begun. There were no deaths in our household although my parents had lost their financial footing as had many others. As soon as the Irish Sea was calm enough to sail across it safely, I was taken to a peaceful place in the countryside with Granny Hogan. During the next few years I have memories of seeing and hearing adults whistling tunes, laughter and step dancing across the kitchen floor, and chickens clucking around the backyard. *Happy music is what I remember from that time period.*

My sister Eileen Ann was born in the summer of 1941. This must have been a very special moment for Granny Hogan to have a grandchild born under her roof and I am certain it was celebrated by everyone that visited.

When I was a four years of age and living with my parents in Lurgan, County Armagh in Northern Ireland I recall standing in a one storey building with a rounded ceiling. I remember learning how to Step dance with a line of children and I vividly recall wearing a pair of black patent dancing shoes with silver buckles on them and I was *counting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 and 1 2 3 and 1 2 3* repeatedly and *I was feeling the uplifting music again and it made me smile and dance*. The shoes were also very special and never forgotten!

We were living in Northern Ireland while my father worked for an American company in their shipyards. His mother Ellen Bowes was born in Belfast, the capital city of Northern Ireland, and when she married Andrew Woodbyrne of Dublin she moved to the capital city of Ireland and they began their family of nine boys and two girls. Both of them loved city living and when they felt the need of country air they took their family south to the Wexford/Wicklow area to visit Grandad's paternal relatives.

It was on April 4, 1944 that I was given a baby brother named Andrew John after our paternal grandfather and our own dad. Andy was a quiet baby and the first grandson on my father's side of the family. His arrival was celebrated too, perhaps with a pint or two. I don't recall seeing anyone drinking beer perhaps because it wasn't done at home.

While spending some time with my paternal grandparents in the Irish metropolis of Dublin City during my third and fourth years of age I enjoyed the sight and the sounds of piano tunes being played on their piano in Granny and Grandad Woodbyrne's small home where they raised seven surviving sons and two daughters. They were a gregarious spirited city family. I remember their laughter, ready conversations and spontaneous harmonizing when they were together. It seems as though all of them sang songs with deeply felt meanings and each of them had individually treasured music. It was during this time that I was taken to Musical Variety Shows at The Gaiety Theatre. *Musical Theatre was enormously entertaining, joyful and memorable*! I learned later that these grandparents used to perform in light Operettas in Dublin in their younger years and their whole family's enjoyment of music came by it naturally.

With some reflection I do realize how difficult and very dangerous it must have been child rearing in Dublin between 1908 and 1930 with wars and strife in their midst daily; World War I, the Irish Rebellion in 1916 and the burning of the General Post Office and the ruin of some of Dublin's finest architectural buildings were within ten or fifteen minutes walk from where the family lived.

The war and turmoil in Dublin did affect the Irish people for generations but the extent of the emotional toll was acutely distressing for those that lived in the middle of it every day. I am sure that the songs they sang and the instruments that they shared and played gave them some solace, hope and courage for another day. With sureness the

music changed when I, at age 5, along with my two younger siblings carried by my parents, returned to London England in 1945 and we stayed for a short while with Dad's older brother Dennis and his family. Mammy and daddy found a place for us to call our own on Riversdale Road, which was within walking distance of Clissold Park. Mammy made certain that we were all fed, clothed, and warm, and that we said our prayers and went to church every Sunday. She made our abode a home no matter where it was located. She was a happy and kind lady with a generous spirit and old and young people loved her for the way she cared about everyone.

It was an adventure every single time we walked across the main road called Green Lanes to magnificent Clissold Park. The fifty four acre park opened to the public in 1889 and had many beautiful floral gardens that smelled exquisitely, multi shades of lilac bushes, lots of ancient trees, oak and chestnut trees that provided us with acorns and conkers to play with. The park had wide pathways and a boating pond where you could rent a row boat or a canoe for a short while; it even had foot paddle boats. There was another small lake and a river that ran through the park, which was home to the swans. The swans were so majestic as they lifted their beaks from the water and stretched their necks very high from one side to the other and glided gracefully wherever they pleased. The ducks delighted us children with their "quack, quack, quaacking." The enclosed, secure children's play area had some swings and see saws that were sure to thrill us children every time – the '*maypoles*' with their long ropes that you could loop one arm into and hold on to the upper part of the rope with your other hand while running around the maypole and then daringly lift your feet off the ground and fly as high as you wished "wheeeeeeeeee" I felt as though I was flying; on the *merry-go-round* it was necessary to hold on to one of several handles that were anchored across the top of this piece of wooden and metal equipment about eight or nine feet in circumference and peddle with one foot while standing on a low foot-ledge with the other to make it move in a circle. When you thought it was going fast enough, you would jump up on top of the roundabout and relax and enjoy the ride yourself along with the smaller children that were seated in the middle and holding on to the anchors and squealing with delight to the swirling speeding motion.

Clissold Park Café

For refreshments there was a pavilion nearby on a small hill that looked like a very large stately white home that sold delicious baked goods. It was a place to inhale the smells of raspberry jam tarts and almond iced biscuits and occasionally we got to buy some of them. It has been more than fifty years since I visited the park and last week I made a few clicks on the Internet and to my surprise the Clissold Park Café is still an inviting place, even more beautiful than I remembered. What a pleasant Internet adventure that was!

There was a bandstand area located between the Children's Playground and the Café where we could watch live entertainment shows on summer afternoons made especially for children that included hand puppets, marionettes, comedians, and marching

bands. In the evening, brass and dance bands played on the bandstand for the entertainment of all. People were entertained, consoled, and appreciated as music played for them. Only a few years had passed since World War II had stopped and families all over the world had suffered the pain of losing loved ones as over sixty-two million lives were killed in the deadliest conflict in human history. Now people could sit for awhile in a heavenly park and be quiet and comforted or they could get up and dance in a sectioned-off area of the bandstand grounds. *Oh yes the music was alive and well*!

There were lots of grassy areas in the park where families used to play and picnic. In late afternoon or early evening for a week or two during the summertime, I believe it was the touring division of the Royal Ballet Company that provided special entertainment on one of those grassy areas close to the water where the swans held court. It seemed to take an eternity for the privacy dividers used for the dancers to be erected. I can't remember whether we had to pay an entrance fee or not but it was priceless. The show started with the sounds of symphonic, light, elegant music almost fairy like and the Ballet began – it was Swan Lake! The thoughtful music and the graceful movements of the dancers expressing various emotions told stories summer after summer. *The music and the dancing were enchanting!*

During that same five year period of 1945 to 1950 while living in Highbury, London my father purchased a piano which he loved to play. The piano had to be hauled up by a pulley on the outside of our house and brought in through to our second floor living room window. I was entranced watching Daddy's long fingers move quickly over the black and white keys. My son John's fingers remind me of his. Jack as his brothers called Daddy was about six feet tall with dark wavy hair and a handsome smile. He was a cabinet maker/carpenter by trade and he loved listening to opera on the radio or winding up the gramophone to play a recording; he knew how to play several string, wind and brass musical instruments. I remember all of us children sitting on my parent's bed and Dad reading Cheaper by the Dozen to us. I often heard him discussing world and current affairs with his siblings and friends. Sometimes he accompanied singers on the piano at the local pubs, although I wasn't old enough to see him play in those venues.

Mammy took very good care of all the people that came into her life, it seemed as though after people had a chat with her and a cup of tea they would leave uplifted and not feel so burdened and they found a smile on the inside of themselves. During those early years back in London she helped some single mothers by caring for their child for a few months until they could get on their feet. Some of them were beautiful Irish girls that had just arrived in England fleeing from their 'predicament' and their home towns. My mammy was the most patient person I have ever known. She never hit anyone but when necessary she could give you a look that was *enough* to tell you that you had reached her limit. A frequent saying of hers was, "be kind to one another." If only most of us would practice those five words our world would be a gentler place and perhaps we would have fewer troubled people.

My piano lessons began and I was a willing seven year old student. I also discovered our neighbourhood library and that was exciting to walk amidst the shelves of books and be allowed to take two books home with me. Daddy used to teach my sister Eileen Anne and I how to dance by standing on his feet and he would say, right left right together and we would slowly learn how to count the dance and then Anne and I could

practice with each other. It was great fun. Anne loved taking tap dancing lessons and she has enjoyed dancing all her life.

I was about eight years of age when our class *sang 'Panis Angelicus'* at our teacher Miss Pauline O'Rourke's wedding to another teacher Mr. Cullinane. It was an honour to share their High Mass wedding ceremony with lots of church music and *it was glorious!* That piece of music has been a favourite of mine all my life.

Those were happy memories of the post World War II era! People spoke kindly to each other and the considerate acts of helpfulness were all around. I particularly remember on a dark cold evening about eight o'clock my mother cooking up bacon, eggs, toast and a pot of tea and taking it out to a night watchman that was guarding street work taking place on our road. He had a canvas type shelter that was about three times the size of him for his protection. Being the eldest child meant having some privileges and I was allowed to accompany Mammy as she brought him an unexpected hot meal. "Thank you Missus" I heard him say appreciatively. He was wearing a patch over his eye area to cover the space of the one he had lost. I remember seeing many wounded survivors of war, one of them on crutches walking with one leg and a rolled up trouser leg pinned to his pants where his other leg used to be. They were the less fortunate people that had returned from war but luckier than those who did not return. My mother's act of kindness that evening is etched in my memory. She continued throughout her life caring for family and strangers with love and humility. Her example of caring for the good of others has guided me and my siblings throughout our lives.

Some of the war survivors used to gather in The White House pub at the corner of Riversdale Road for a beer, play darts or cards and talk. I was just a child and not allowed into this adult place but children were allowed to enter the Off License area of the pub and purchase crisps and lemonade, which I got to do only a few times in the five years that we lived near Clissold Park, accompanied by a cousin of course.

In contrast to our Clissold Park wonderland across the street, there were many unsafe, partially destroyed buildings, bombed out ruins, and air raid shelters being dismantled in London and children were warned not to go exploring or else. London was rebuilding and children and adults were part of the rebuilding of the spirit and well as the buildings.

During this same five year period my mother's sister Aunty Kit (the fourth and the last of Mum's ten siblings to leave Ireland) lived near us and visited Mammy often and when they sat drinking a cup of tea by the fireside they talked about their home place and people far away in Ireland and laughed at some of things they used to do when they were young women, like riding on the handle bars of some young lad's bicycle unbeknownst to their older siblings who kept a watchful eye on them. They were great company for each other in London and I was fascinated listening to their conversations and I learned about people that I would meet later in my life. Aunt Kit would take time to sing us some old Irish ballads; one in particular appealed to me:

The Beggarman Song

"As *I was passing by a churchyard in the city,*
and I saw a beggar old and grey,
with his hands outstretched he asked the folks for pity,
and it made me sad to hear him say,

Oh, I wonder yes I wonder, will the Angels way up yonder,
Will the Angels play their harps for me?
Oh a million miles I have travelled and a million sites I've seen
And I'm waiting for the Glory soon to be
Oh, I wonder yes I wonder, will the Angels way up yonder,
Will the Angels play their harps for me?"

She would have Anne and I sing the refrain. Andy was still a toddler then and Aunty Kit had other songs for him like,

"Little Sir Echo, how do you do, Hello" ("hello")
"I know by yourself you're a dear little fellow" ("fellow"),
"but you're ever so far away" ("away")

Andy would do the echo's voice. One thing I can't forget is when I was about six, I was invited to a six year old boys' birthday party (Johnny something) with a number of area children. I didn't notice then that they all had English accents. Everyone was invited to sing a song individually for 'thruppence' (a three penny bit – similar to our nickel), so my choice of song to sing was the 'Beggarman Song' and sing it I did with all the sincerity of a child and I received my thruppence. I can only imagine the snickering that might have gone on in another room but I never heard a disparaging comment made about my choice of song that I sung in my natural Irish accented voice at a child's birthday party. Why I didn't choose something that I would have learned at the local St. Joan of Arc's school I don't know! I still have a soft spot for '*The Beggarman.'* However, that memory is fondly etched in my mind! For several years I didn't realize that my family spoke with a different accent to some of the people on our street. I was about ten when I noticed my accent changing.

During these five years on Riversdale Road we got a beautiful baby sister named Catherine Gertrude after Aunty Kit and Mammy's youngest sister Aunty Gert and a baby brother named Michael Paul after Mammy's brother Mick Hogan. Mick was recognized with The George Medal of Honour for his bravery, rescuing people as a civilian during World War II in Portsmouth, England.

My family moved away from London when I was ten years old to a rural community called Debden, a new housing development by the London County Council just outside of Loughton, Essex County where our youngest brother Patrick Francis Allan was born. We called him Allan to start with; he had blond hair like Anne's and blue eyes like Mammy and he had five protective siblings.

I can recall tinkering on the piano (the lessons long stopped) and by this time I had five treasured siblings to play with, to tell stories to and to perform for along with helping around the home with duties that included ironing *everything*! During the two and half years that we lived there, Daddy and Uncle Dennis were away for ten months working for the British Colonial Development Corporation in The Falkland Islands, in British Antarctic Territory near Argentina, a long, long way from home. "Why would Daddy have to go so far away to work?" I wondered. I would learn the answer a few years later. As I reflect now, Dad's musicality and his laughter and his guidance were

Dad in the Falkland Islands

missing from our lives during the time he was away even though we received letters and parcels from him.

Debden was a very quiet residential neighbourhood and a safe environment for us to live, which was the reason my parents decided to move the family there while Dad and Uncle Dennis were working out of England. I did learn things about people, how some people like to keep to themselves and while others like to talk a lot and interact with each other and get things going to make a closer knit community, such as offering suggestions on having a neighbourhood picnic in the huge field behind us and then making it happen. I learned also about helping family just by listening and about respecting neighbours. I didn't meet anyone there that played an instrument or even sang. *There were a few garden parties but no musicals.*

My school, St. Georges School in Walthamstow, offered a learn how to swim program in the morning before regular classes began so I eagerly left home at 6 in the morning to journey on public transportation for fifty minutes with one bus transfer. I must have been a determined eleven year old. What an incredible feeling it was to be able to lay on your back in a pool of water and not sink! Being able to swim was terrific while floating on my back was relaxing and peaceful and sometimes now when I close my eyes and *listen to some peaceful pieces of music I am taken back to that memory*!

Sometime in early 1953, Dad signed an agreement with The Delaney family in Newington Green in the London Borough of Islington, to exchange our two storey home in Debden for their four bedroom apartment on Matthias Road and that being accomplished we returned to the Capital city. The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place soon after on June 2nd 1953. The buildings were draped with red, white, and blue decorations and the streets were covered in flags; there were organized street parties everywhere and the festivities seemed to go on for weeks. It was about this time that I spoke with a British accent at school and an Irish accent while I was at home.

My mother had many friends that would drop in for short visits on Matthias Road, one of them was Tessi. Irish Tessi may have been five feet tall, fortyish and she seemed to wear layered clothing long before it was popular. She wore a big floppy hat and false teeth that appeared to chatter even if she wasn't talking. When Tessi arrived we knew we were in for a treat! She would sit at the piano and play jigs and reels and she would laugh out loud and move her hatted head from side to side rhythmically. *She was a musical treasure who enriched my childhood.*

I did not realize that my parents were seriously considering emigrating at this time; however in 1954/1955 two of Dad's brothers, Dermot (wife Peggy) and Bobby (wife Jean) immigrated to California with their children. A few years previous Mum and Dad had discussed moving to Australia and now they were chatting about Canada. Their dream was to take their family to a peaceful country where they could work and provide their children with a peaceful environment, have an opportunity for a good education and where they could grow and be useful members of society. They had begun their goal a number of years back when Dad worked in The Falkland Islands and they were able to

put a financial lump into that savings fund. Now I had the answer to why he worked a long long way from home. It would take a few more years to reach their objective.

Uncle Bobby was the youngest of Dad's siblings. He was tall, slender, blue eyes, blond and he had one of the best voices of all the brothers. When Bobby was living at home in Dublin he played The Prince in the musical production of 'The Student Prince.' Bobby lived with our family when he left Ireland to seek a life in England. When Bobby sang around the house he could imitate the smooth velvety voice of Nat King Cole who was very popular then; my fourteen year old girlfriends would sit under the kitchen window sill outside and listen to him sing and giggle. Dad and Mum welcomed many family members to our home while they were trying to establish their lives.

I loved going to school every day! Whether it was Arithmetic, Geography, History, Religion, Physiology, Reading, or Composition I was right into it. I was captain of the Girls Netball team and we captured Bronze in the Regional competition. One of the exercises we had to do in physical training (our PT) class was English and Scottish Country Set dancing. 'Petronella' was great fun danced in a set of eight having four girls dance the four boys' parts. (It was pleasurable to return to this form of dancing for a year in my late forties when I lived for a time in London, Ontario.) All too soon my formal schooling on a daily basis was over and I had graduated at the ripe old age of 15. I was unhappy that day as I knew that there was so much more to learn and that I didn't know very much even though I finished at the top of my graduating class.

1955 and 1956 brought lots of musical adventures on 78 rpm recordings of Bill Haley and his Comets, Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Alma Coogan's 'Birds and the Bees' Lonnie Donegan's skiffle sound, Guy Mitchell, Frankie Laine, Johnny Ray and David Whitfield. They were all part of the explosion of exciting, current music that was very different from the music of the 40s. It was around this time that I heard the amazing live captivating sounds of traditional and dixieland jazz being played in a public house while I waited at Manor House intersection for Bus 641 to take me home after evening classes. There were other types of music that I enjoyed as well. Some Sunday evenings I would sit in the living room and listen to a "Bronte Play" on the radio or listen to opera sung by Enrico Caruso, John MacCormack, and Benjamino Gigli with my Dad. I enjoyed their tenor voices singing Pagliacci, Kathleen Mavourneen and Rigoletto to name a few.

I didn't understand the words of the Italian arias but I felt and enjoyed the passion and sentiment of the music. It moved me deeply.

On Saturday evenings our whole family enjoyed a musical variety television show live from 'The London Palladium' beamed from London's Crystal Palace on ITV (Independent Television), which was launched in September, 1955 following the passage of The Independent Television Act 1954. The 'Palladium' gave us the best variety from the world of entertainment with headlining performers of the day.

Before I leave the musical memories of London Town I must share our lunch break activities during the time I worked as a confidential typist at Her Majesty's Stationery Offices and attended North London Day College once a week. The twelve stencil typists in our pool were typing volumes of recent World War II history - all now declassified; the other typing pools had about thirty typists in each and they made government forms that were used throughout the United Kingdom. After purchasing a really good cooked meal from their excellent cafeteria we had lots of time to play table tennis, read or dance as we had a seventy five minutes recreation period. One of our

favourite things to do was dance or I should say jive! Ballroom dancing was traditionally done with a male partner in a calm manner or using proper etiquette but jiving could be done with girl friends. About twenty of us would jive to 'Teddy Bear,' 'Rock around the Clock', Shake, Rattle and Roll, and all those great gyration tunes. Some of the bigger girls could whirl the smaller girls around their neck and under their legs and still keep the beat. When it was time to head back to our typewriters we would be smiling and feeling more alive than before we had lunch. *The lunch time music was amazingly alive*.

When I received my weekly pay, paid in cash in a brown envelope it went in to the family pot and I received a small amount to purchase personal items. I did get to keep my two weeks vacation pay money, which I used to buy my first camera.

During the summer of 1956, much like the present time, the Middle East was an extremely tense place to live with the Egyptians and Israelis fighting and simultaneously talking peace. The one hundred and six mile long Suez Canal issue was heightened with the fact that Egypt was reminding the British that their agreement to allow them to keep soldiers at the Suez was expiring in 1956. The Soviets, Americans, French, and British were making their issues known and around that time my father must have decided that now was the time to take his family to Canada. The contact had been made with Uncle Martin Hogan and his wife Margaret of Paris Ontario; the immigration papers completed and approved, passports obtained, and fees paid, and our family was moving to Canada in the spring of 1957. The thought of leaving the life I knew behind me at seventeen was acceptable to me with the knowledge that my family would all be together. My adventurous streak was looking forward to experiencing a new land. In retrospect I think I had been prepared in some way that there would be many adventures of changing scenery and abodes for me. *And there would always be music to enjoy and also music to calm any troubled waters ahead.*

March 9 1957 my father and I departed from London Airport and our flight was delayed in Shannon, Ireland while plane loads of Hungarian refuges, still homeless following their country's turbulent revolution against the domination of the powerful Soviet Union's army just five months before. The people, young and old were being deplaned and their documents processed to enable them to travel to various destinations. As I watched them I thought about how those people had been forced to find another homeland while my parents had chosen to make Canada our family's new homeland. After about fourteen hours, Dad and I continued to Idlewild (now JFK airport) in New York and finally arrived at our destination Malton, Toronto on March 11, 1957. My parents decided that I should accompany my father on this journey and that I could be of help as he set about getting and preparing a home for the whole family.

My mother's brother Martin Hogan met us at Malton and welcomed us most genuinely even though it was our first time to meet one another. Uncle Martin had a wonderful smile and bright blue eyes that were covered with glasses, exactly the same as my mother's. He was very happy to welcome the first two of his young sister Eileen's family to live near his Canadian born family.

I was thrilled with the eye opening experience of wide roadways (highways) that went on for miles and miles. While driving us to his home in Paris, Uncle Martin stopped at the Greystone Inn restaurant in Hamilton and we enjoyed our first Canadian dinner. My Aunt Margaret welcomed us when we arrived at the Hogan's in Paris and settled me in fairly quickly and comfortably after a very long journey. Next morning I met four of

my Canadian cousins Kevin, Maureen, Michael, and Brian who were all getting ready go to their elementary and high school classes. They were very nice looking and spoke with a North American accent! I noticed that they were studious, laughed a lot, and were very interesting to talk to. The oldest cousin, Sheila, was away in Toronto attending St. Michael's Nursing School and I happily accepted the home space that she had vacated. I stayed with the Hogan's for about five weeks and fell in love with the friendliness of the people of Paris. I loved the little clothing shops, Palms restaurant, watching the two rivers join each other, and the movie theatre close by. Aunt Margaret took me to live theatre in Paris and also to watch Maureen play basketball for PDHS. It was a peaceful and refreshing change from bustling and smoggy London, England. Paris was my entry into Canadian living and I felt that it was a lovely place to live.

Within two days of our arrival in Paris, Dad had secured his own accommodation on William Street in Brantford and started working for the Usher Brothers on his third day in our new country. He made good friends soon; one of them was the late George McDonald, a gentleman with a warm Scottish accent that remained in touch with our family through the past fifty years. George was a fellow tradesman and also affiliated with the Canadian Order of Foresters and introduced Dad to them. A year later that fraternity of men were extremely helpful to my mother and family during a time of disbelief and sadness that my father did not have very long to live.

On April 18 1957, only five and half weeks after our arrival in Canada, Dad drove to Malton to pick up Mum and my five siblings in the 1949 Plymouth he had purchased and brought them home to a cottage that he rented at 156 William Street from Mrs. Virtue of Cathcart, Ontario. I could hardly contain my excitement while I waited for them all to arrive home. Dad, with some help from friends, had prepared the cottage with beds and bedding, a kitchen set and utensils and enough household things for Mum to get started. "What courage Mum and Dad had," I thought! It was their dream of giving their family a brighter future that kept them moving forward.

There were adjustments to make in a new community and a new country, most of them pleasant ones: we now had a telephone in our living room instead of having to walk across the street; the three youngest siblings were being called by their first names at St. Basil's school by their teachers and the children like it that way, so the rest of the family learned to do likewise. It took a little while for us to change to bulk buying of groceries as we were accustomed to buying food on a daily basis probably because we did not have the same type of refrigeration in our homes in England as we did here in Brantford. That first summer we experienced very hot weather unlike anything we had felt before and I bought Dad a cool Hawaiian shirt for his 47th birthday on June 16th, I had never seen him dressed in something so casual and colourful, he did enjoy wearing it.

Our new neighbours were friendly and my three youngest siblings had friends visiting our home quickly. Reverend Father Gira from St. Joseph's Polish Church around the corner from us sometimes came over in the evening and watched Richard Boone play the role of Paladin in 'Have Gun will Travel' on television with Dad. Mum's face would go very still when Dad used occasional expletives such as "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, will you look at that?" Father Gira didn't flinch; I suppose it may have been that Dad's words were said in amazement and not in anger or profanity. Father Gira, a Roman Catholic priest spoke many languages, was a kind Polish man from Chicago that had spent a

number of years studying in Rome. He liked immigrants and he felt comfortable sitting around our place.

My sister Anne and I found a teenage soda bar called Durham's two blocks from where we lived and we met Canadian girls and boys our own age. The teenagers used to dance to music played on the jukebox that we fed with nickels. Our jiving was a bit different from the local way of dancing but at that time there seemed to be new dances like 'The Stroll' etc. being dreamed up pretty quickly. Anne and I wore nylons and high heels whereas white socks and bucks were in style here at that time. Yes, we did get dressed up to go for a walk! We weren't totally removed (fashionably) from London. We were dressing 'normal' to us and we felt comfortable. Brantford's Mohawk Park or the bandstand in Port Dover were the places that teenagers went to dance to live music; it was appealing but very different from the dance halls in London that would have a revolving stage so that bands could be rotated and the dancing didn't have to stop while the musicians took a needed rest. On one evening while we were dancing at The Royal in Tottenham, London, film crews were busy filming 'Blackboard Jungle' while we were jiving and the film actors were doing their part closer to the front of the stage. Meanwhile the professional jive dancers would mingle around the dance hall and this would create a bit of excitement and chatter for the next week or two.

During our first summer in Brantford, Dad was bitten on his forearm and he had approximately an inch and a half wound that didn't want to heal. Months later he had surgery on his kidney and he became very weak. He did not recover and he died the following June, may he rest in peace. In the afternoon of the day that Dad was buried his brother Dermott arrived from Escondido, California accompanied by his wife Peggy and two of their four children, all of whom we knew when they lived in England. They had been travelling for about four days to visit with Dad. I was outside the front of our house when their 1956 Buick Roadmaster pulled up at the curb. As I told Uncle Dermott what had taken place during the past several days he could only grasp at the front door as his legs weakened beneath him in shock and he staggered inside. For quite a long time Dermott, Peggy and my mother talked, cried, laughed and ate. Dad's brother stayed several days to ensure that Mum was going to be all right. Dermott and his family returned several years later to visit our family as they cared deeply for Mum and Jack's children. *I don't recall much music around our home for a little while. On Sunday mornings I did like to listen to the men in the congregation raising their voices poignantly in songs of praise at the Polish church around the corner from us.*

My youngest brother, Patrick was seven years old when we lost our father and now Patrick has just turned fifty seven, Michael was ten, Cathy was eleven, Andy was fourteen and Anne and I were teenagers. I believe that in the past fifty years my siblings realized and fulfilled the dream of our parents to "take their family to a peaceful country where they could work and provide their children with a peaceful environment, have an opportunity for a good education and where they could grow and be useful members of society."

Andy and me

In the autumn of 1958 some of my siblings began taking guitar lessons at the Ontario Conservatory

on Dalhousie Street and sounds of music were being made in our living room. I began taking alto saxophone lessons and although progress was slow, I remembered that incredible Traditional and Dixieland jazz music that I had heard on the way home from evening classes back in London and made an attempt to '*tongue'* some sounds from my instrument. We had great fun with our musical exploration as shown in the photograph of Andy and me with our instruments on top of our roof at the back of our house.

In late summer 1959, Mum had moved our family across town to be close to St. Joseph's Hospital where she worked as a nursing assistant on paediatrics and then the medical floor both located on the third level. I was the hospital's cashier and also relieved Anne who was the full time switchboard operator for her lunch breaks. Sister Kathleen was the Office Manager and later became the hospital's Administrator. We had good friends in the office and you could count on them for things shared in confidence. I think my three brothers were happy to have part time employment at the hospital through their high school years as it gave them an opportunity to learn skills and earn an income, the ability to contribute to the family's financial resources and the choice to save for items that would not have been possible without their own income. However let's not forget the financial independence to make those trips to the variety store around the corner on Second Avenue for treats of potato chips, pop, candies to enjoy while watching a favourite show on television which made having one's own spending money advisable.

From 1960 to 1985 some of the most wonderful human happenings occurred as well as some of life's painfully sad events. The birth of my four children was extraordinarily magnificent to me and they have been my main reason for giving the very best of me that I could give. *There was music in the way they smiled and laughed and also in their tears.*

The 6 of us at my daughter Angeline's wedding in 1996

Seeing my four youngest siblings graduate from High School and then from University and beyond was very satisfying. Seeing all of my siblings own the responsibility for the welfare and education of their children has been gratifying; I am well pleased with their efforts. I think that the contribution all of my five siblings have made to their communities would have made my parents very thankful to the land and society that accepted them half a century ago.

I have been most fortunate to have been a part of my four children's early development and to have seen their individual interests unfold and grow with practice. They have varied interests now in their adult lives and music, pottery, athletics and sports are each a part of it. Perhaps I may attempt to write a piece about the forty five years that I have observed them. I think that the five grandchildren might enjoy it.

My youngest daughter Eileen left home in 1985 to attend Brock University in St. Catharines and lived with her sister Patsy who had just graduated from the University of Western Ontario and was continuing her education at Brock's teachers college. Having my youngest brother Patrick teaching High School in St. Catharines and coaching the women's basketball team at Brock, I knew that he would keep a watchful eye on my girls

and my son John as he was studying, as well as playing for the Soccer Team. I took an opportunity to transfer to London, Ontario with my company Sears to supervise the Personnel Office as we prepared to open a new store at Maisonville Place.

My single life in London, Ontario from 1985 to 1996

Personnel work is always interesting and fulfilling. Taking care of people's needs is what I was born to do; and getting paid for it meant that I could be happy at work all day, respond to employees concerns, and earn a living! Didn't I have it great?

The evening times were now my own, to do with as I chose! During my eleven years in London I took a variety of courses and classes, joined clubs and grew up a little. VonKuster Hall at Western University invited the public to attend their recitals when their students and faculty performed; there were some remarkable performances given! London's jazz club was always thrilling on some Sunday afternoons, one saw whoever showed up to play with the musicians enjoying just jamming with each other. The singers were really marvellous. London venues brought in, to name a few, the likes of Tom Jones, Englebert Humperdinck, Rosemary Clooney, Della Reese, Randy Travis, Roger Whittaker and Frank Mills who introduced John McDermott to London audiences one evening approximately thirteen or so years ago. London also produced the polished Gerald Fagan Singers and also The Canadian Celtic Choir which was founded in 1996. With London's Opera Guild I went to the Metropolitan Opera in New York one weekend to see Verdi's Othella on Friday evening and Wagner's Tristan and Isolde on Saturday. It was the best! Of course I remembered being introduced to this music sitting with my Dad in our living room in London England listening to the radio many, many moons ago.

The Gourmet Cooking class at Fanshawe was delicious but eating those dinners with rich sauces at the end of the evening were hard on one's digestive system. Cooking was something that I did all my life, for my siblings and for my children and I was having as little to do with cooking from now on, I resolved. That thought was OK for a while until I put on the pounds from eating out.

My children and I in Mohawk Park, Brantford

The Royal Highland Country Dance class was elegant, polite and respectful and I am glad that I revisited that type of dancing from my early teenage years.

My youngest sister Cathy and her family lived in the South side of London and her daughter Aimee vanWynsberghe was a talented musical child. I had the pleasure of watching many of her piano, cello, and harp performances and her many musical theatre productions with Original Kids while she was growing up in London. Aimee is now

working on a Master's degree in Medical Ethics in Europe and has accepted a PhD program that will start in mid August, 2008 at Enscheke University, Holland.

By 1996 my four adult children had all returned to Brantford after completing their university studies, had started a business, were getting married and beginning their families. I wanted to be near them and the rest of my siblings so I returned home.

The past eleven years have been rewarding in my adopted hometown of Brantford; being able to volunteer with a number of organizations (including our community jewel The Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts) and returning to fulfill an unfinished venture of my teenage years, to learn how to play the saxophone has been thrilling. The Brantford School of Instrumental Music on Marlborough Street had very talented instructors; Chris Walton, Michele Bohemier, and Al Queen taught our group how to play and then took us out to perform in public. They welcomed students from age nine to ninety.

Loraine Winterbon Poole of the Telephone City Musical Society matured our junior band group and arranged for us to play at Nursing Homes and entertain the residents where we were received enthusiastically. Loraine had asked me to play a solo, '*Somewhere over the Rainbow'* the next time we went to the John Noble Home. I was practiced and delighted to perform and realized a magical moment had just happened for me and for my sister Anne who had come to hear the concert.

I have a very enthusiastic concert buddy in my ten year old grand daughter Kaitlin Vandertuin. She is an effervescent and creative child that is learning to play the violin. I look quite admiringly at her mother Angeline (my first born) as they practice their violin pieces together.

Patsy's two daughters Krystan and Kaileigh Wicha played the clarinet and flute when they were grade school age. Their number one focus now is their academic pursuit in high school with horseback riding a close second.

Eileen's son Justin enjoys playing the piano, computer games and is a very good cook, a skill he has been allowed to practice since he was a preschooler. His younger sister Kori Elliott will be starting high school in September and has been a hockey goalie for about six years. Kori enjoys *listening* to music.

Today I work in a place where I am supposed to be: engaged in my administrative office duties and enjoying the sounds of various types of music wafting from the hallways of Braemar House School classrooms. The recorders being played in Miss Epp's room are coached by Mrs. Bowen and Mr. Spaxman; they introduce the students to other instruments as well. Mrs. Speakman's class is being taught classical guitar by Mr. Patrick Feely; the little Montessori's learning their first song from Ms. Whittaker and Mrs. Allwood; the piano and guitar being played adeptly in the Prep One classroom by Mr. Griffin; the grade one's being encouraged to raise their voices in song in Ms. Volchoff's class; Mrs. Chato and Mrs. Hunter's grade two and three classes are the furthest away from my office and I get to hear them when they rehearse their singing in the gymnasium. Mrs. Krason's grade four classroom shares a door with my office and I get to hear the songs that change with every season, in English and in French, taught by Madame Hanna. What a treat for me! I call it the *'best perk in the business'*.

As I write the whole school is practicing their parts for next month's Spring Musical, 'Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory' produced by Pam Krason and the

excitement is mounting. *"Music helps the world go 'round and around and around and makes humankind taste good."*

Thank you to all those that play and teach music!
There is much to enjoy in Brantford and lots of music groups to explore and support.

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D E D I C A T I O N

I would like to dedicate this recollection in memory of my parents
Eileen Frances Hogan Woodburn September 11, 1912 – January 26, 1976
John Alphonsus Woodburn June 16, 1910 – June 29, 1958 and
In loving appreciation of their parental lives

Patricia Philomena Woodburn born on December 29 1939 of Irish parents. She has five younger siblings and four adult children that live close by in Brantford, Ontario along with their five adorable children. Patricia loves her family and enjoys being an Office Manager at Braemar House School.