

Canadian Gothic



A Life in Four Movements

The Letters of Samuel B. Allen
Compiled and Edited by
Reinhard Filter

About These Letters

Thirty-seven years ago, as I was researching the history of a small generating station in the Credit River valley just outside Georgetown, Ontario, I came across a Letter to the Editor written by an old timer in a local newspaper. This remarkable letter provided details about how the flood of 1911 affected the small generating station I was exploring. I thought that I had struck pay-dirt. Here was someone who had actually seen the place shortly before it stopped its operations in 1913. I had, in effect, found a living witness to the history I was exploring.

Although it was newspaper policy not to divulge the addresses of its correspondents, I begged, pleaded, and stopped just short of bribery to finally acquire the address of the letter's author, Samuel B. Allen. Of course I wrote to him and asked him all kinds of questions about the flood and the generating station to support the work I was doing in preparing a book about that facility. More importantly though, Sam and I slowly began to develop a friendship which blossomed into him agreeing to tell me his life story.

At the time we began our correspondence Sam was 76 and a very sick man, and it was clear he would not be with us much longer, so he and I corresponded frequently and regularly. It turned out that Sam had lead a remarkable life. Not only had he lived during times when a great many technical and political developments were occurring, but Sam had travelled over a remarkably large part of Canada and been a witness to this country's evolution. He had worked, for example, in the war industries in Trenton, Ontario, making high explosives for shells and bombs during the first world war. He had worked in several paper mills of the day, then as a

farm hand and cowboy in British Columbia and Alberta. He was a homesteader during the worst of times, the Hungry Thirties, in northern Ontario's isolated Rainy River District, culminating in a twenty year stint as a Security Guard in Thunder Bay's Great Lakes Paper mill. Throughout all this, Sam managed to raise a family of seven children, while surviving some of the hardest times this country has ever seen.

As I read the letters I began to feel overwhelmed by what he was telling me about the society in which he lived. Everything was so different from the Canada I knew. It was almost as though I had been plunged into a vast sea where there were few touchstones, and where it was a day's work just staying afloat. Indeed, as the letters he wrote to me illustrated, the contrast between the culture Sam lived in during the early part of the 20th century and the one I was living in during the late 1970s could not have been more stark. Now, in the early part of the 21st century, that contrast has substantially darkened, and I suspect that today Sam would not recognize the people and the country he loved.

In his letters, Sam always maintained that his lack of formal education limited his ability to communicate his ideas and observations. But I found him to be an eloquent writer, a keen observer, and his letters and photographs were fascinating and held me transfixed.

We continued to write one another for nearly three years, until he died at the age of 78. By the time our correspondence came to an end early in 1979, Sam had written well over 900 carefully typed pages detailing his life and times.

It was a remarkable testament of a Survivor, a Canadian epistle.

There was only one problem. I was 29 at the time and preoccupied, as most people are when they are starting out in life, with making ends meet. So while I knew that I was in

possession of a culturally significant document, I had neither the time, nor the resources, to do much with it. Furthermore, Sam's letters were not written with any order in mind, rather he wrote down his memories as they came to him. It was clear that if I intended to put together a coherent document detailing his life's story, I would have to take all 900 pages and put them into chronological order. In 1979, this Herculean task was quite beyond me, so I bundled the letters and filed them away to await the day when I would have the resources to attempt it.

By 1995 computers, scanners and mass data storage technologies had reached the point where I felt I could start dealing with Sam's letters. To that end, I had the letters scanned and loaded into a single enormous file. Unfortunately, my professional life still occupied much of my time, so having scanned Sam's letters onto disk, I filed that disk away to await a time when I could properly deal with it.

That time has now arrived, 34 years after I received the last of Sam's letters.

In the following, you will find an edited compilation of Sam's letters presenting not only the details of his life and times through-out much of the 20th century, but also an insight into the workings of a clever mind struggling with the challenges the times presented. You will find heart rending descriptions of what it means to age and weaken, from the point of view of a self-reliant, rugged individual who never thought he would.

My job as compiler and editor was to do as little as possible to the letters, aside from putting them into chronological order. I strove to retain the personality that comes through in the letters by not adding my own voice. Of course, there were times when I had to intervene in the interests of clarity and continuity, and too, I had to confront many typographical, spelling, and grammatical errors. I soon realized, however, that some of these errors added character to the

narrative, so as long as they did not detract from the story or deflect the reader, I left these errors intact.

Most interesting of all, I think, Sam's letters paint the portrait of a country that many of us would not recognize today. In his time, Canada was culturally homogenous, drawing its immigrants largely from central and northern Europe. Even by the time he died, in 1979, multiculturalism had not yet reached the point where it was a dominant player in Canadian society. With few exceptions, during the times Sam describes, we were all white, mostly Christian, and to a great extent, of British extraction.

As you read these letters, I would urge you to keep in mind that, in the strictest sense, this is not a historical document. These are the reflections of a man who saw the world as it was in his time, and as such, they are coloured by his belief system and by the influences of the society in which he lived. That said, I hope you will think of these letters and the country they describe as a personal photograph of a time now long gone, and perhaps as one buoy among many in an ever changing sea.

RF, 2014

Georgetown, ON

Overture

August 18, 1976

Dear Mr. Filter:

I received your letter of August 12, 1976 and was surprised and pleased to hear that you are interested in a place and time that most people have forgotten.

I would like to tell you, before I go any further, that I cannot see out of my right eye, and the vision in my left eye is very dim. I make a lot of mistakes in my typing, some I find when I read it over after it is finished, and I guess there are a lot that I do not find. I had to learn typing by myself the hard way as after doing so much work with axe and swede saw when we tried to make a living on the homestead in the Rainy River District in the 1930s, my hands got so very badly crippled they would not make a pen or pencil go where I wanted it to. Just when I was starting to get pretty good with one finger at typing, the sight in my right eye started to go, and now it is just about gone, with the left eye getting pretty dim, but if you will overlook all those typing mistakes I do not find, I will do my best to answer your questions.

You were saying in your letter that you would like to know more about me.

Well there is not much to know I guess. I am a Canadian born Irishman, one of a family of 9 children. I was born in 1901. There are 7 of us still living. I graduated from public school

in 1912, past my entrance to high school but could not attend due to lack of money. I went to work in the woolen mill in Glen Williams at the age of twelve and have worked at many other places ever since, until I was pensioned off from the Great Lakes Paper Mill here in Thunder Bay in 1966.

I used to trap and hunt when I was a young man, then did a stint as a cowboy out west, then as a homesteader in the 1930s with my wife and children, and then, in the 1940s, I worked at several rough jobs until I got on at the paper mill here in Thunder Bay, where I stayed for 20 years.

If you'd care to hear about my travels and experiences, I will write and tell you about them.

I have traveled over a lot of the northern and western parts of Ontario and some of eastern Ontario around Trenton. Also I have traveled to Vancouver and Merritt BC, spent about four years or so in and around Calgary, then south to the Bar U Ranch where I worked for several months. I was up to the Pekisko Ranch, and over to the Prince of Wales Ranch where, along with others, I met the Prince Of Wales.

I have had lots of adventures on my travels that you might be interested in reading about.

I am 75 years old, will be 76 Feb. 8th, 1977. My wife and I celebrated our 50 years of married life together last February 8th on my birthday when I was 75 years old.

I enjoyed my youth and I get a lot of fun out of remembering things now in my old age.

I just wish my legs were as good as they were then in those golden days. My legs are not much good now, my heart is giving me a lot of trouble, I am almost blind, my hearing is very bad and I am a diabetic. I had none of these troubles except the diabetic bit when I went to the

hospital for an operation on both hips for Osteoarthritis in 1970. They took out both hip joints and put in artificial metal joints and I came out a cripple.

I have a stereo, T.V. and radio in my room, and lots of books. I write poetry when the bug bites to put in the time. I like receiving letters, and I answer them all.

I have one regret, in fact I think I can say it is my only regret, and that is that I was unable to get a fuller education than I did. That is the penalty of poverty when I was attending school. However I did get a very good education in the school of hard knocks and I have had experiences that I would not have had otherwise. There are benefits to being poor that I would otherwise not even have known about and I think this has shaped my personality and my life a good deal.

You mentioned that you wanted me to tell you what life was like when I was younger. Well, I have attached some of my memories to this letter for you. I hope you will find them interesting.

If there is anything else you would like me to tell you, do not hesitate to ask. I am an old man, confined to the house, and rather crippled. I just have my books and typewriter and stereo set with records and tapes to keep me company. Soon my books and typewriter will be denied me if my doctors are correct, so I will just have my music to pass the time.

I am aiming at reaching 100 years, quite a long way to go yet, but it is fun trying.

Good-bye and good luck with your project.

Yours truly,

Samuel B. Allen

Thunder Bay

First Movement

Songs of Unfurling Leaves

vistaVision Memories

The Summer Seat

I think I should begin writing about my experiences by going back as far as I can remember, to 1905, shortly before I turned four years old, when my family were living in Glen Williams, Ontario. If you had ask me 30 years ago to remember that far back, I doubt very much if I could have obliged. Now it seems like if I put my mind to it, I could remember the very day I was born. My memory is so clear and fresh that it seems like memories are just pushing and shoving to get out and stretch themselves.

The earliest memory I have is of a little two roomed house in the side of a hill with a flat place out in front, then a drop straight down a bank for about five or six feet with a long narrow field full of weeds. People in Glen Williams used to call this place *The Summer Seat*, and pretty near all the poorer families in the Glen lived there at one time or another.

To the south, along a little valley about a hundred feet or so, was a beautiful cold spring where we got all our water. We had an outdoor toilet about a hundred yards to the west of the

house along the bottom of the hill in among the brush, and that was a long, cold walk in the snow in winter, especially if you were in a hurry.

Dad had a job for awhile at Sykes woolen mill in Glen Williams at a dollar a ten hour day, but we seldom saw any of the money as he could never get very much of it past the bar on his way home on Saturday afternoons, which was always a half day holiday at the mill.

My dad lost that job after only a short time due to his drinking habit.

Well back of the house, the hill had been cut away so that there was a bank about four or five feet high. In time, rain washed this bank down until about three feet or more of soil was piled up against the back wall of the house. Because of that weight of soil, the back wall of *The Summer Seat* had been pushed towards the inside of the house so that it bulged in.

On top of the bank, about ten feet away from the back wall of the house, was a wonderful big spreading apple tree that grew Russet apples and it completely covered the house like an old umbrella. In the fall when the apples were ripening, I remember I used to lay awake at night to try and count the apples that would hit the roof.

Of course, I could not count very far at that time, only to eleven.

Inside the house there were only two rooms. One room was a combined kitchen, living room and dining room. The other was a bedroom in which my father and mother slept in the only bed our family had. My oldest sister, Mae, who was about a year old at the time, slept in a cradle beside the bed, and my older brother Tom and I slept on the floor at the foot of the bed, between it and the back wall that was bulging in.

Inside the bedroom, there were two wide planks. One end of these planks braced the wall and was nailed there, the other end braced against the floor at the foot of the bed and was nailed

to there. This was to keep the wall from collapsing in. Every day, my brother and I had to crawl on our hands and knees under these two planks to get in or out of our beds. Dad always told us to be careful and not touch those planks or they might come loose and the wall would fall in on us and smother us. So we went to bed every night with that threat in our minds.

It was much worse when it rained, then water would seep in and our beds would get soaked. I would wake those nights screaming that the wall was falling in, that we were going to be crushed and killed, and usually got a good spanking for my trouble.

After my sister Mae was born when I was four years old, dad was not working again, so mother got socks from both Sykes woolen mill and Beaumont's mill in Glen Williams to seam up, and with that money she was able to buy a cookstove from a hardware store in Georgetown for \$25.00, ten dollars down and three dollars a month. I remember it was a fine stove with lots of bright nickel trimming on it, and it gave out a lot of heat, which was fine in the winter but hell in the summer. That stove just about filled the small kitchen we had.

As for furniture, the stove, a table built on the wall with two legs holding it up, and two chairs and some wooden boxes was all we had, along with a small oil lamp for when it got dark. Those wooden boxes were nailed to the wall and held all our food supplies, of which quite often there were none.

Mother had made some curtains for the two windows in the place out of a sugar sack she got at the store, and the floor was bare wood and rotten in some places, so you had to watch where you stepped.

I remember the winter of 1905, when my second sister, Annie, was born.

My dad had gone to get help at a neighbour's and there was quite a blizzard on that night.

My mother was in bed, and my oldest sister had been put into bed on the floor with Tom and I so that the cradle could be moved out to the kitchen and out of the way until Annie arrived. The fire had gone out in the stove as we only had scrap wood to burn and the house was cold, awful cold that night.

My sister Mae lay between Tom and I, and I was on the outside of our bed on the floor next to the bulging wall and I could hear it creaking and shaking with the wind.

All of a sudden the wind blew harder and blew one of the panes of glass out of the little window at the head of mother's bed. Snow blew in in a cloud and mother screamed at us to get coats or something to plug up the window.

I started to scramble out of the bed in a hurry and bumped my head on one of the planks that braced the wall up, and then I started to howl and hold my head where I had bumped it.

There was a lamp left burning, turned low, on the table in the kitchen. I crawled over to it and turned it up a bit and then I gathered up some old clothes and run into the bedroom and started putting them in the window. I finally got the hole plugged and found I was standing in about two or three inches of snow on the floor. I had on only a little shirt that hardly covered my privates, no underwear or pajamas, and I was cold and crying and some blood had run down my face from where I had hit my head on the plank.

Mother's bed had a lot of snow on it and it was a good thing dad came in with a neighbor woman then or I do not know what might have happened. He ask me what the hell I was doing out of bed and told me to get back into bed before he warmed my bottom.

I think that I grew up about ten years that night, and it helped to turn me into the kind of a person I am today. I do not think my dad really meant to be mean to me or swear at me for he had been drinking, which was what he did best, and when he was ruffled about anything, especially if he was half cut, he usually tried to take it out on someone else at home.

Mother always stood up to him at times like that, and while he never struck one of us, we were all scared silly of him when he had a few drinks in him.

Dad belonged to several sports teams in the Glen, to the Glen Williams Citizen's Band, and for a time to the local volunteer army, and he was always staying out drinking with a group of his friends in the village, and that made things so interesting that people always had something to talk about when it came to him and his drinking. Between his friends and his many hours spent drinking in the hotel, he was never home much to help out with raising his family. Over the years I came to understand that dad did not care much about his family, except to regularly increase it's size.

I remember him telling some men down at the Barber Bros. paper mill about one time when him and the boys went over to Bob MacAllister's farm and raided his chicken coop. They



Dad (behind drum), circa 1910

took the chickens down into the bush back of Bob's barn along the river, killed and dressed them, then rolled them in thick wet clay and buried them below a fire and cooked them. Then two of them went over to Bob's house and told him if he would supply the hard cider that he was welcome to come

to their chicken supper. Bob came and brought five gallons of hard cider. They must have had some supper that night. When Bob found some of his chickens gone next day he ask them if they were his chickens they had for supper the night before. They told him they were, then he ask them why they had not told him before. They said he had never ask where the chickens came from, and what he did not know would not hurt him.

I remember the summer dad was going to camp at Niagara Falls with the volunteer army. Dad was a Sergeant Major at that time. The night before he was to go, he said he would take my brother Tom and I to Niagara Falls with him, and that night I could hardly sleep I was so excited.

I woke up two hours earlier than usual next morning, but it was too late. Tom and my dad were gone. I ask my mother why she did not wake me in time to go, as she knew how much I was looking forward to that trip.

She said she did not want to stay alone in the house with no man to protect her and look after things around the place.

I did not believe that was the reason and went and climbed as high as I could in that big apple tree beside *The Summer Seat*. I remember we had had a good summer that year and it was an early harvest, and the apples were ripe on the south side of the tree, and I stayed up in that tree until it got cold and dark that night. My mother came out several times throughout the day and tried to get me to come down, but I never came down.

I did not realize then how much I was hurting her or I would never have taken out my resentment on her and punished her for something that she had no control over.

Over the years I have always regretted that stupid mistake.

I know that she loved me, even when she told visitors that Tom was her favorite son because he was her first born. That always ate away at my mind.

My mother had a very hard life, what with dad's drinking and neglect and the inability to hold a steady job, and with her always being pregnant. Eventually, there were ten children in our big family, but one, Elmier, died as a baby with meningitis. Mother died next, years later, when the family was all married, then a few years after that it was my dad's turn. Shortly after that, my older brother Tom died, then my oldest sister, Mae.

I have lived the most years of any of them.

I still have memories of other things that happened to me while we lived there in that little shack on the side of a hill. I think that we lived there for over a year, maybe two.

Old Pa Wheeler that owned the general store in Glen Williams was the owner of *The Summer Seat*, at least that was the man who collected the monthly rent of \$1.00. No money was ever spent by him on repairs, I can tell you that. If the roof leaked, you fixed it yourself or got wet. If a window glass got broken, you put a piece of cardboard in it or some old rags.

I remember once when old Pa Wheeler came to collect the rent and my mother did not have the dollar for him. He said he would come back with Mr. Penson, the village policeman, to throw us all off the property.

My mother told him he would need the policeman and ten more like him, so he had better bring along lots of help to throw out a woman and her small children.

Pa Wheeler knew my mother was a fighter, she did not have fiery red hair for just to look at, and he never showed up with his help.

My mother had my brother and I gather up stones that would be easy to throw, and pile them in the kitchen near the door, also to go and find her a good solid white pine dead limb that she could make a handy club out of.

When Pa Wheeler did not come and my mother had the money to pay him, she sent me up to the store to pay the rent and get a receipt. But we piled the stones just outside the door for future use, if we ever needed them. And mother, she worked on her club, whittling at it until she got it shaped to suit her, and that club was still in the family when I left home many years later to go out west.

It was a good thing that she did keep it handy.

One day a bum from off the freight train that stopped each day just over the hill from our shack tried to push his way into our home. Mother grabbed up her club and went for him and she

was lucky that the blow she aimed at his head missed and instead hit him on the shoulder. I believe had it hit his head it might have killed him, because at that time my mother was still young and a very strong woman. She chased him very near all the way down to the road, with all of us kids that could walk coming along behind crying.

Late in 1906 dad finally got his job back in Sykes woolen mill down in the Glen, and we moved to a little house up on a hill on what was called the 9th line then but is now called Mountainview Road, alongside of Dan Reid's home which was a great long two story building. It had been a glove factory long before I was born.

Dan Reid and his wife lived there alone and were a very old couple.

Dan was trying to do a little farming which had mostly to be done by hand, such as seeding his grain crops and putting them in by hand, also cutting his hay with a scythe by hand. They did not have grain binders, hay mowers, or hay rakes around there when I was a small boy, so all the work had to be done by hand.

The mowing of the grain was done with a big scythe and was gathered up into bundles by hand and tied with two handfuls of the grain twisted together to form a sort of band to hold the sheaf of grain together until it was threshed. The hay was raked into long windrows with homemade wooden rakes with long wooden teeth, and then built into what was called haycocks to dry and mature, and then hauled into the hayloft in the barn in a hayrack.

All the ploughing was done with a walking plough, and the harrowing was done with the team pulling a harrow over the ploughed land with the driver walking along behind guiding the horses. You had to do all your farming in those days by walking and by using your whole body. There was no such thing as having anything to ride on, such as what I saw when farming was being done out west, years later. You walked behind your plough when first breaking your land for seeding, and you walked to harvest it.

You also milked your cows by hand and strained the milk into shallow cans through a piece of cheese cloth and set the can on a cool basement floor or in a cool milk house near a spring of cold water for the cream to rise to the top of the can.

Each day you skimmed off the cream into your churn until you had enough cream to churn a batch of butter. Then you churned it by hand for quite a long time sometimes, if the cream was a bit on the warm side, before you finally had butter floating on the top of the butter milk. After you had all the butter out of the churn and into a wooden butter bowl, you would have to work all the milk out of it with a wooden butter spoon, then add salt to suit your taste and form it into butter patties. Next you put your buttermilk in a cool place covered with a clean cloth, and started in to clean up the mess.

The buttermilk, if kept cold, could be used for making pancakes, for different kinds of baking and it made a real nice drink on a hot day when it had been well chilled, or it was fed to the pigs. Then the churn had to be well washed and scalded with boiling water and set out in the sun to dry, also the same had to be done with the butter bowl and spoon. This all had to be done at least once a week, depending on how many cows you had, and what breed they were that you were milking.

Dad's parents were living in a house about five hundred yards down the road from us. They owned this little house with about two acres of land. They had an orchard of apples, pears and cherries, also some plum trees. They had plenty of raspberry and strawberry plants too, along with black and red currant bushes. They had a barn where they kept a Jersey cow and a nice horse and buggy. My grandmother took in washing and kept three, sometimes four, boarders. She made a pretty good living for herself and her husband, and the one boy that was still at home at the time.

My grandfather, well, he was a lot like my father, not much of a worker. He liked to go up to Wheeler's store in the Glen and sit out on the front porch on nice days with the other old boys and tell windys. I liked my grandfather very much until we went to live next to him when I was about six years old, and then I soon learned to dislike him and have never changed my mind about him since. All because of some chickens.

The house we were now living in on the 9th line was built into the side of a hill too. The side opposite the slope of the hill was sitting on posts about four feet off the ground. My mother got some old lumber and closed this space in so that we could keep four or five hens there. We had fresh eggs every day in the summer, but when the cold weather came, they stopped laying and we thought maybe they were sick.

One day my grandfather came up and brought several bags of popcorn that had a prize in each bag. I remember the popcorn cost 11 cents a bag.

There was a knothole in the floor over the chickens and I put some of my popcorn down to the chickens. My grandfather ask me why I did that and I said it was to make the chickens better so they would lay eggs again for us.

He got quite a laugh out of that, and from then on he always called me “Hen Doctor” and he went around and told everyone who would listen in the Glen about that name.

I was so embarest.

I was only six years old in 1907 when I got the name of “Hen Doctor,” and I have never forgotten it and how embarest I was over it. I had more fights over that name, swore at people more, and avoided them whenever I could. For a long time I hated my grandfather because of it, until I grew older, then along with other things I found out about him, I just disliked him even more and talked to him very little.

One day that year, I was very curious about going to school. My brother Tom had been going to school for about a year at the time and I followed him to the school in the Glen and went into the classroom where he was.

Miss Harrison was the teacher at the time, and as she had never seen me in her class before, she ask me several questions, mostly about who I was and what I was doing in her class.

Being very shy I would not answer any questions she ask me. And, of course, my brother Tom did not volunteer anything about me either.

Having very red hair, she had very little patience and she took hold of my right ear and dragged me to the front of the class, gave two straps on each hand, and then put me out the door and told me to go home and not come back until I was a little older.

I was very embarrest by being sent out of my brother's classroom and I ran all the way home.

November 16, 1976

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter yesterday and have now read it over several times.

Do not worry about your handwriting, my friend. I can read your writing fine. I wish that I had the same clear handwriting like you.

You ask about health care when I was very young. Well, I knew three doctors when I was small. Old Doctor Nixon, Young Doctor Rick Nixon, his son, and Doctor MacAllister. All lived in Georgetown, all were country doctors on call any time, day or night. Whichever one was available was called in when we needed him, and he came as soon as he hitched up his horse to his buggy or sleigh.

We had no phone back then, and being the second oldest, I usually had to run for the doctor. For some reason, my brother Tom, who was older than me by two years, was spared that

job. It was not so bad when we lived in Georgetown, but when we lived in Glen Williams I had to go about two miles to get him, running most of the way there and back.

About my family at that time. We were a family who were very poor. My dad never held a job very long due to a drinking habit he had, and he argued a lot with my mother over how he was treating us. Still, mother used to manage the best she could.

I made up my mind years before I married that when I did marry, there would be no drinking in my house, or fighting, or squabbling. I have lived up to that, and when my wife is upset and wants to argue and it starts to get out of hand, I just listen and say nothing. When things cool down again and it is time to go to bed, we neither of us have any hard feelings or hard words to say to one another. I have tried to provide a good home for my children, to feed and clothe them as good as possible, and to give them as good an education as they wanted, and set an example for them that I would have liked to have had set for me.

I think you will see what I mean as I continue to write to you about my life, that is if you still want me to write about my life after you have read this first try of mine to explain how life was in my time.

Of course all families were not like mine, or as large. And mine was not a happy family. My father bothered with us very little, and my mother was too busy feeding and clothing us and keeping a roof over our heads, as well as bearing more mouths to feed every year, to pay much attention to any one of us.

Except my older brother Tom. It seemed like she always found time for him.

What did I find out about my grandfather that made me dislike him even more? Well it was several things that added up. For example, I figured out why he always liked to sit at a little

table in the shade in front of the only store in Glen Williams at that time. He would always try to be there at a certain time in the morning and I began to wonder why, and so I used to be hidden nearby when he arrived.

The floor of the veranda of that store was about six or seven feet up off the ground. To get to the store, you had to go up several steps, walk across the floor about eight or ten feet before you went through a door into the store and post office.

At the time, there were twin sisters about eleven or twelve years old that lived in the Glen, and they used to come down to get the mail every day at noon. They were girls big for their age but were dressed like girls much younger, with dresses that barely came to their knees.

When they climbed the steps to the porch, they bent forward somewhat, and of course their dresses rose up at the back and showed quite a bit of bare thigh.

Grandfather Allen used to sit there with his eyes hanging out on his cheeks with a funny look on his face long after they had come out of the store and gone home.

I could not figure it out for a long time, for as far as I was concerned, legs were legs, everybody was born with two, so what. Then one day I heard some young men up at where we were all swimming talking about these girls, and my grandfather watching them, and about what he must be thinking of them.

I got sick at my stomach when I heard that and I got dressed and went down to my favorite spot in the bush to think things out.

The more I thought about it, the more I came to hate grandfather Allen, for now I knew other people had been watching him and had their own ideas why he was there watching those girls, and people were talking about him and those girls all over the Glen. How he could do such

a thing to grandmother Allen, for the gossips would be sure to let her know, I do not know.

While grandmother was working her life away to keep her husband and herself clothed and fed in their home, her husband put in his time ogling children and getting himself talked about.

There were other things too I found out about him in later years that did not help to make me change my mind.

His son Joe, for example, got him a job as a sweeper in the Provincial Coated Paper mill, as it is called now, in Georgetown. He had to keep the floor clean around the tables where a lot of girls worked inspecting finished paper. He used drop paper on the floor near where a girl was working, bend over to pick it up, and give the girl's legs a good looking over.

He got caught doing this by the girls and they complained to the boss about it but nothing was done. Finally, it got so bad that all the girls threatened to quit if grandfather Allen was not let go, so the boss finally had to let my grandfather go. He never did work after that.

Now he may not have meant any harm to the girls, but I was very embarest for them as he was such an old man then, 73 years old.

You ask about why I call my memories in my letters to you *vistaVisions*. Well it is no coincidence. VistaVision was what they made movies sharp and clear with in the 1950s. You probably have never heard of it as it was stopped being used shortly after it was invented. I never had the money or the time to go to the movies back then because I was busy raising a large family. But one time I did manage to see "White Christmas" in vistaVision, when where I was working at the time, Great Lakes Paper up in Thunder Bay, ordered a copy in to show their employees and their families one Christmas, and boy was it ever crisp and clear, just like the way my memories are now when I think back on them.

Well, I will close now and get busy on the rest of my vistaVision bits. Write whenever you get the time and let me know if what I am writing is of any use to you as material for your next book.

Good luck in your venture.

Your friend,

Sam

vistaVision Memories

Peach Stone Squirrels

We left the second place we lived in after *The Summer Seat* late in the summer of 1906 to live on an abandoned farm which had a big house and a real huge barn. We never stayed long in one place because sooner or later mother would have trouble finding the rent money, and dad sure did not help with that. We had some hens mother kept under the porch to take along, which

was all the livestock we had when we moved into the abandoned farm house. Later, grandmother Allen gave me a turkey egg to take home and put under a hen we had setting. When it hatched out it was a Tom turkey, and that turkey lived with my family for years.

My mother was able to get enough money together that summer to buy a pair of young pigs for \$5.00. By then, my mother had been seaming socks for the Beaumont Woolen mill and sewing gloves together for the glove factory, both of which were in Glen Williams at that time.

Dad worked at the Sykes woolen mill on and off that summer, when he felt like working, which was not all that often, otherwise mother supported the family.

I was first introduced to the Jack-in-the-Pulpit flower that summer, thanks to my older brother, Tom. This flower grows in damp places in the bush, and as I am color blind, I cannot tell you exactly what color it is. I have found some growing in damp shady places along the roads in the country. The flower is a kind of lily, and I would say it starts off green then turns a dark orange color with some dark spots inside the flower. The flower starts up in a sort of tube, then splits open on the front and continues upward for a short way, then bends over to form a hood over the flower. If you dig the flower out by the roots, you will find a white ball like growth on the roots. This used to be called wild onion.

Do not ever put this in the mouth or let it touch an open sore. If you touch this to your tongue, you will suffer agony like you never believe existed. Then there are the berries on top of the plant. They are in a tight bunch shaped like a pyramid, and they cause just as much agony as the ball at the root does.

I have good reason to remember that plant. When I was five years old my brother Tom and I and a bunch of older boys went down in the bush along the Credit river where we used to

swim. We found some of those Jack-in-the-Pulpit flowers. My brother pulled one up and took the skin off the bulb at the bottom and handed it to me and told me it was a wild onion and was



Jack-in-the-Pulpit

good to eat. I had often found wild onions, we called them Peels, and I liked them. I told my brother that it did not look like any wild onion that I had ever seen. He said of course not. He said the ones I had been eating were the ones that grew on the high dry ground, that was why they were so small. He said these however got lots of moisture from the springs down there, so grew much bigger. Like a fool I believed him and bit a small piece off this bulb.

The shock of the pain in my mouth made me swallow the small piece and the fire and pain was from my mouth right down into my stomach. I tried drinking ice cold water from the spring, but it seemed to make it worse. I was about a mile and a half from home and I run as fast as I could all the way home. As I came in the door my mother had just turned a gingerbread cake out on piece of paper on the table to cool. I broke off a big piece and started stuffing it in my mouth.

My mother turned and saw what I was doing and slapped me across my face and knocked me into a corner of the room. Then she came over and picked me up. I was still stuffing cake into my mouth with tears of pain running down my cheeks. I guess mother must have realized then there was something very much wrong because I never did anything like that before.

She ask me some questions, but I just shook my head and went on stuffing cake in my mouth.

After awhile the sharpness of the pain was gone and I could use my voice a bit again. I managed to tell her what happened, and she gave me some ice cold milk to drink and told me to keep drinking until I could drink no more.

After I was full of milk, my stomach felt a lot better and I went outside to play.

Tom came home about an hour or so before my dad came home from the woolen mill that day. My mother had been down to see a neighbour who lived near the small creek, Silver Creek, that runs through Georgetown. She got home just before Tom did. She ask him if he was hungry and he said he was and she said she would make him a sandwich to hold him over until supper was ready. She said it would be a radish sandwich which was all she had until she went to the store.

Radish Sandwich

Ingredients:

<i>2 tsp. unsalted butter</i>	<i>¼ tsp. salt</i>
<i>2 slices homemade bread</i>	<i>Fresh ground black pepper</i>
<i>2 large radishes, sliced into ⅛" rounds</i>	

Directions:

In a small bowl, blend together butter and salt using a small spatula until butter is soft and airy. Spread bread slices with butter, arrange radish slices on top, and finish with a grind or two of pepper.

Tom liked radish sandwiches very much and mother knew it.

She brought him out a real thick sandwich that looked like it had lots of radishes and homemade butter inbetween the slices of homemade bread.

Tom took a big bite out of it, chewed it a bit and swallowed it. Tom bit right into the centre of the sandwich for a second big bite, then mother took it away from him.

She said if he was going to eat it like a pig, he could not have it.

Just then Tom got a funny look on his face and started to howl that his mouth was on fire.

Mother said, "so was Sam's not long ago and you were the one that set the fire, now how do you like the one I set." She said, "I went down to Mrs. Levitt's and found a wild onion root like the one you gave to Sam for you to see if you would like how it tasted." She said, "your brother is pretty well over his feed of the wild onion you gave him, how do you like the one I gave you?"

Tom cried like a baby and went upstairs to bed without eating any supper that night.

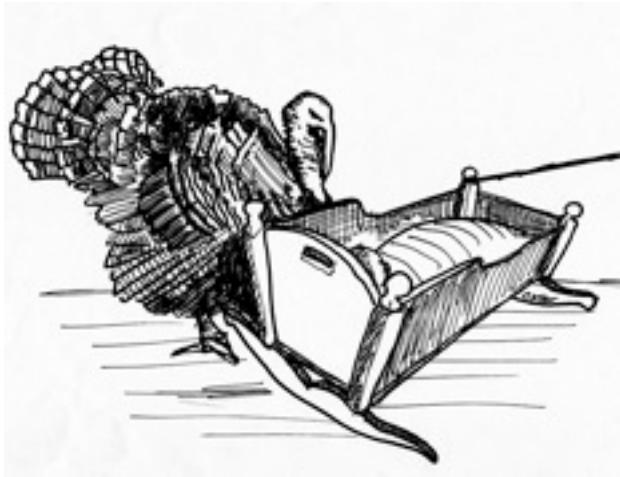
I guess he never forgot mother turning on him like that, as she had always favored Tom over me, and it must have been quite a shock to him.

The first winter we were in this farm house my dad took sick with typhoid fever, and doctor's bills took most of mother's money that winter, so we had to burn wood for heat, when we could find any. That was in the winter of 1907. There were lots of rail fences around there then, so mother used to go out at night, and by taking a rail here and one there, she would get enough to keep the fire going all that night and all the next day. She had to spend part of each night cutting to stove length the fence rails she had brought home that night.

My sister Annie was a baby then and dad had the cradle alongside his bed in the living room where he slept when he was sick. He had a rope attached to it, and by pulling on that rope he could rock the cradle and keep Annie quiet while my mother was away getting wood for the next day.

At the time, my mother was still a young woman of only 31, but all that hard work to feed

and clothe her family without my father helping in any way had already started to turn her dark red hair white.



The owner of the hotel in Glen Williams at that time, Tom Hill, sent us down a load of coal for a Christmas gift when dad was sick, and we sure were very happy to get it. The

weather got so cold that winter we had to bring the turkey that hatched from the egg my grandmother gave us in the house to keep his feet from freezing. We had a place all fixed up for him in the lean-to kitchen that we used in the summer, and when we opened the door of the room where the cooking was done and where dad's bed was, the turkey would come in and sit on the foot of the cradle and rock to and fro when dad rocked the cradle. That turkey would close his eyes as if he were sleeping.

I have often wondered since if he really was sleeping. He never did make any mess while he was in the house. He was a perfect gentleman.

We were living there when, one day the next spring, my brother Tom and I went around the old farm we were living on looking for scrap to sell to the junk man when he came around. I

went over along the bank of the Credit river that run past the place, and the flood waters had gone down by then, so I thought I might find something washed up on the bank to sell.

I did find something, but not what I had expected.

I saw an old rubber boot sticking out of some sand and I thought it might be worth a few cents. I tried to pull it out but it would not come, so I got a sharp stick and started to dig the sand away from the boot. When I got to the top of the boot I found out there was a leg in the boot, so I called my brother over and ask him what we should do.

He said he did not know and ask me whose leg was in the boot, as if I would know.

I said, "it must be Charley Williams who fell in the river last winter while cutting ice above the dam on the Sykes mill pond. They had never found his body so this must be it."

It was.

That spring, after he got better, dad was back at Sykes woolen mill, and to try to get him off the liquor, mother had him on what they called at that time, the Gold Cure for drinking. After a few weeks of this Gold Cure, my mother had him just about cured and he had not had a drink for well over a month. He was working steady at the time, and he brought his pay envelope home each week without opening it.

Then mother made the biggest mistake of her life. She told dad's mother how she had been giving him this Gold Cure for over a month in his tea.

Of course grandmother Allen told dad about it right away.

Dad never said anything to mother, and he did not do anything different than he had been doing for the past several weeks, until pay day came around again, then he disappeared.

When he did not show up for work the next Monday, the owner of the woolen mill came



to our home and ask my mother where he was. Mother told him she had not seen dad since Saturday morning when he left for work, and she was very worried about him. That night after work, all his friends started looking for him, but never found him until the next Wednesday, just before noon.

They found him and a bum he had picked up down in the paper mill bush by the springs, with the remains of an eight gallon barrel of whiskey, and some food.

*The Gold Cure for
Drunkenness*

They brought dad home and run the bum out of town.

Dad was an awful mess. He had the DTs and was awful sick for days. He lost his job at Sykes woolen mill again and mother nursed him back to sanity. While he was delerious, mother found out her mistake about telling dad's mother what she had been doing.

Mother never forgave grandmother Allen for that. When dad was over that binge, he tried to get his job back in the woolen mill, but the owner never did give him a job again.

Mother had to support the family from then on by taking in washing, mending and seaming socks for both mills, and sewing gloves for the glove factory. There was no other money coming in until my brother Tom was sixteen, years later, when he got a job as winder boy in the Barber Bros. paper mill.

Another thing I remember from that time was over in the railway yard in Georgetown, just up the big hill from the Glen, which we used to call Cut Hill at the time. There was a triangle shaped piece of ground of about ten acres, with a few bushes and trees on a little hill in the centre. It had tracks on all three sides. The railway stored ties and telegraph poles there.

One day I was over there when a Knight of the Road was eating his lunch. He was also carving a little squirrel out of a peach stone. He told me he sold them in the barrooms for twenty-five cents. He said the one he was carving was the last peach stone he had.

I ask him if he would carve one for me if I got him a lot of peach stones.

He said he would carve a beauty for me.

I was gone like a flash for I knew where there was a whole basket of dry peach stones I had gotten from a neighbor lady and I had intended to plant them and grow my own peaches.

When I got back over to the railway yard, he had his knife sharpened and was ready to go to work. He got busy right away and in about twenty minutes he had the nicest little squirrel you ever saw.

He ask me if my mother had a loaf of bread she would trade for one of his carvings.

I told him that she was baking a batch of bread that morning, so we should go and see.

My mother was quite shocked when she saw that big young man with me, but she listened to him and looked at his carvings. I knew mother loved beauty, but she was having a hard time to decide between a carved basket of flowers and a beautiful carved figure of a girl. The fellow

could see how bad she wanted them both, so he said if she would give him a loaf of bread and a pinch of tea she could have them both.

She had them, I think, until the day she died.

I carried my little squirrel with me on a watch chain and had it stolen in Vancouver, years later when I travelled out west.

I remember the man who was the village constable in Glen Williams when I was a boy, Mr. Penson. He was a big fat Englishman, not long over from the old country. He lived on one side of the road in a big house on the hill going up into the upper part of Glen Williams, and across the road, in a barn, he had several big sows and some little pigs.

I was going past there one day when he was feeding the pigs, and one of the baby pigs slipped out before he could close the gate to the pen. He dropped the pail of food onto the ground and tried to grab the little pig as it went past, but missed it and fell on his big fat bottom.

The little pig run out into the field by the barn and the mother pig and the rest of the pigs ran after her squealing and making a great noise.

Mr. Penson managed to catch the last little pig as it was going past by the hind leg. It started to squeal like it was in pain and the mother pig turned around and charged Mr. Penson, so he had to let go of it and try to get up on his feet.

It was rather funny to watch him as he was very fat, with a very large stomach, and he would get up on his knees and start to raise up onto his feet when the mother pig would charge

him and knock him over. The little pigs were all around squealing as hard as they could, just as if they were cheering their mother on.

Finally Mrs. Penson came out of the house and run across the road with a broom in her hand and started to poke the mother pig in the face with the bristle end of the broom. The mother pig backed off and Mr. Penson was finally able to get to his feet with the help of his wife.

They then started to try and get the pigs back into the yard, but did not have very much luck until the wife of Mr. Penson went over to the house and got her two daughters that were a bit older than I was at the time. Then I went with them, and with us all working together we got all the pigs back into the pig yard.

It had been a very exciting morning for me and I guess it was for the Penson family too, because I do not think something like that happened every day. Pigs are a very hard thing to catch in the first place, and are very difficult to hold on to after you do catch them. But if you know where to take ahold of them, then they are quite easy to hold.

Always hold them by a hind leg with the leg well up off the ground so that the other hind foot barely touches the ground along with the two front feet. By doing this you can make the pig walk in any direction very easy.

One time, a year or so after we moved into the old farm house, the family that owned the stone quarry up the road from us, the Logan Bros., gave my grandfather several trees of winter

apples, if he wanted to come and pick them. This was in 1908, the year I was seven. He came and asked me to help him pick them.

I said I would help with the apples, so I took four barrels up there to the orchard early before the sun was up in the wagon, along with our lunch. When we got up there the trees were still wet with dew, so we had to wait until the sun dried them off.

My grandfather went down in the quarry where the men were working and stayed there the whole day and had lunch with them.

When the trees were dried off I picked the whole four barrels of apples myself, climbing up and down the long ladder with every basket full of apples. Grandfather Allen was never there to pick an apple or empty the basket when I lowered it with a rope. Finally, when I had the barrels full, I started filling in around them in the wagon. I guess I got about another two barrels or so in there. When I had all I could get in the wagon, I went down to the quarry and told grandfather we were ready to go.

He made fun of me and said I was soft, like all kids, and did not know what a real day's work was like, and that he guessed he would have to go and pick the apples himself or I would be telling grandmother Allen that he never picked any. And when he finally saw how much I had in the wagon, he did not give me any praise that a boy my age would expect when he had done a good job. He said nothing, just hooked up the horse and started for home.

We spoke very little on the way home, at least I didn't.

He told me how sick and weak he had been all day and how he had to rest and be quiet the whole day so that he would be able to drive the horse home.

I guess he did not know that I was able to see him from the top of the apple trees, sitting out in the sun talking to the men, or hear him laughing most all of the day.

When we got home he drove the wagon around back by the cellar door, then put the horse in the stable. When he came into the house, he looked at grandmother in a funny sort of a way, like he had been hard at work all day to get those apples in and needed a rest.

Grandmother started in fussing over him, saying must be very hungry and tired after picking all those apples, and for him to just take it easy. She said she had milked the cow and fixed up the feeding of the horse and cow and would take water to the horse after she had our supper ready. She ask him if I had been any help to him.

He said yes, some.

I never told on him. In fact this is the first time I have ever told anyone.

There was also another man, a half-breed Indian by the name of Shammy Marchment, who old Mr. Penson was always after. I do not know if Shammy ever worked, but he always had money for whiskey and was usually drunk. The town council put him on the Indian List, which meant that anyone who sold or gave him hard drink could go to jail or get a very heavy fine for the first offense.

Mr. Penson was always trying to catch Shammy when he was drunk, and Shammy would always run down to the iron bridge that crossed the Credit river to lower Glen Williams, climb up on top of the bridge, and sit there and drink out of his bottle while Mr. Penson was trying to

climb up after him. But he was so fat that he never made it up that bridge that I ever heard of, and so he was never able to catch Shammy.

Shammy enlisted in the army, years later, when the first world war was on, and came back with a chest covered with ribbons and medals. Instead of being the town's drunk then, he was their hero. But right from when he got back he went back to living the way he had before he joined the army. He never talked about the war, and several years later he was found frozen to death in bed in the old shack by the river where he had lived for years.

After he died twelve Indians came down from a reserve on Georgian Bay and took Shammy back with them for burial.

I believe Shammy was a good man and that drink was his worst enemy.

All the few friends that he had trusted him as far as I ever heard. Some people said he was a lazy bum but he seemed a lot happier than the people who called him a lazy bum. I never heard anyone say that he ever hurt or wronged anyone, just that they never saw him at work anywhere. No one seemed to know how he made a living and I think that it bothered a lot of people to not know this, and it made some of them suspicious of him. He played on the Glen hockey team, lacrosse and baseball teams, and I do not know of anyone ever beating him in a foot race.

I think he was a good man, no matter what anyone else had to say. He laid his life on the line for the rest of us in the first war and we should be thankful to him, as well as all the other men and boys who did the same.

Old Mr. Penson died of a heart attack about two years before Shammy died.

My father once told me about a man that used to beat his wife and little kids every time he got drunk. This was when my father was well oiled and when he felt like talking. The married men got together one night and went up to his house when he was beating his wife and family. They took him down to the bush, melted some tar, stripped him naked, and coated him with tar, then added some feathers for good measure and road him out of town on a fence rail.



They let him go with the warning to never come back.

Justice was very cruel back then, but very effective.

Then there was one man I knew quite well who tried to hang himself because he thought his wife was two timing him. He tried it three times, and the same neighbor cut him down all three times. The fourth time when his wife came to tell this neighbor that he was hanging again, the neighbor said let him hang if he wants to go that bad. The man succeeded that time and his wife tried to have the neighbor arrested, but the law said he was not guilty of any crime so he could not be arrested.

In those days, things were very seldom fair. When it came to Tom, my older brother, for instance, I was the one who usually got a tanning for fighting with him, as he always told mother that I started it, but usually he would taunt me into it where mother could not see. I tried only

once to explain why I fought with him, and I was trying to explain to her why I had to lick Tom for his bullying a friend of mine, but it did no good.

Like all the other times, she took his side.

So after complaining the first time, I never complained or gave any excuse again. I knew I would lick him some day, so I exercised in every way I could until I grew older and stronger.

Then one Saturday, mother made the time with the two oldest girls to go shopping uptown, leaving Tom and I at the house with three small children that were not walking yet or able to do much talking that one could understand.

Things went along fine for a short time, until Tom came in and saw me changing the youngest baby in the cradle who had messed his pants. Then he started in to tell me how wonderful I looked changing the baby and washing it off, drying it and powdering its bottom and putting on a clean soft diaper. He said that I would be doing that all my life as I did not have the strength or the guts to ever do a man's work.

He knew alright how to get me mad and he kept at it until I was finished with the baby and had given him his little soother to suck on and rocked him until he went to sleep.

I then went out into the kitchen where I had a bucket of water and soap and started to wash out the dirty diaper I had taken off the baby. I had an old arm band of dad's on my left arm and Tom came over and got his fingers under it and pulled it away from my arm, then let it snap back hard.

It really hurt.

Then I exploded. I swung around and straightened up, and that was when I found out for the first time that in a real fight which came unexpectedly, that I hit out hard and true, without

any previous thought, with my left hand, just like my Grandfather Belgrove, who was a left handed professional boxer when he was younger.

I caught Tom right on the point of the jaw and he skidded across the kitchen floor.

He was not knocked out and started to get up on his feet. When he did, I give it to him again and down he went. He was much slower getting up this time. I swung at him with my right hand and missed, but my left hand came up all by itself and cracked him right on the button.

That time he did not get up right away, he just lay there for awhile and looked at me.

He ask me finally if I was trying to kill him.

I said no that was not my intention. I simply had got fed up with his bullying and calling me kid, and from now on he was going to do different. I said I had to show him that I could lick him when I put my mind to it, and every time he called me kid, or in any way made fun of me, he was going to get the same thing, right in front of all his cowardly friends. If any of them tried any more of their tricks, he had better warn them what would happen, because I meant every word of it, and could back it up.

Another thing, I told him, if he went whining to mother when she came home, or he mentioned this fight to her or dad, then I would really clean up on him the first time I got him alone.

He was very careful after that for years, until he came home after the first world war was over.

In 1908, the next house we lived in when we left the abandoned farm house and barn and moved into the lower Glen was only a few feet from the bank of the tailrace of the dynamo that supplied electric light power to Georgetown, just up the hill. This house, the old Lawson farm house, was just across the bridge over the Credit, on the south side, next to the river. The little dynamo was right next door and it did not operate in the daylight hours, but as soon as the sun went down they opened the turbine and were in business. The water used to rush down the tailrace about two or three feet deep, and very fast back into the Credit.

My oldest sister Mae and I were playing in some small pools where the tailrace would run early one evening, and we forgot about them opening the turbine up, and about the water coming down the tailrace when they did. I heard a noise and looked up the tailrace and saw this two or three foot wall of water about fifteen or twenty feet away coming at us fast.

I yelled at my sister to get up on the bank, and I jumped for the bank and made it. I turned around to see where my sister was, and she had slipped and fell just as she reached the bank. I do not remember grabbing her by her long curls of blonde hair, or yelling for help, but our mother heard Mae screaming because I was hurting her by pulling on her hair to get her up on the bank, and she came running around the house.

Well when she saw me pulling my sister on the grass by her hair she lit into me pretty hard for hurting my little sister and called me a bully and told me I would go to bed without any supper for punishment.

Mother had an awful quick temper, quick to flare up and just as quick to die down.

I tried to tell her what happened, but it was no use while she was mad, so I shut up. When she cooled down Mae finally told her about the water nearly washing her away, and then mother brought me up a nice supper and said I was a very brave boy for saving my sister.

I ate the supper and felt real wonderful that mother was not mad at me anymore.

When dad came home that night loaded, as usual, mother had a full head of steam up ready for him. They really went at it. I laid up at the head of the stairs and listened until I fell asleep. That night dad went out again after his fight with mother and ended up sleeping in the barn back of the house on some hay with an old horse blanket over him. Tom woke me up from sleeping at the head of the stairs when mother sent him to bed, and of course he had to tell her in the morning about me listening to her fighting with dad.

I think my mother must have loved dad very much to continue to live with him and bear him more children, year after year, and suffer the way she did. I think a lot of it was pride, that somehow she thought that she would be a failure if she left him, and according to what I have heard her say, a Belgrove always stuck to a bargain, they never welched on their word, no matter what.

Then there was the butchering of our two pigs that winter before Christmas. Dad got his cousin, Jim Norton and his son Bill over to butcher the pigs. Dad had everything ready when the Nortons arrived, and after a good drink of whiskey they started out to work, with me trailing along to watch how it was done.

They got the first pig out and flipped over on it's back, with dad holding it's hind legs and Bill holding the front legs, leaving Jim to do the sticking. Well, Jim made the first cut through the fat in the neck and he must have nicked the artery that was to be cut with the second deeper cut. Anyway, blood spurted out and dad never could stand the sight of blood, and as the blood squirted towards him, he let go of the hind legs and in a flash that pig was up and away headed for the swamp alongside the Credit river.

Well they got two lanterns we had and tracked the pig through the snow on the ground and caught it about a quarter of a mile away, finished the job there, and had to carry that 200 or more pounds of pork all the way back to where it had started from.

Dad was so sick at the stomach that he was through for the night when they laid that pig down on the scraping board. Jim and Bill scalded it, hung it up and dressed it out, then did the same for the other one all by themselves and came in for a final drink and their pay, which was \$4.00, when they were done.

I had one other experience that I think I should tell you about before my family moved again and left there.

There was a set of gates by the Credit where the water entered the big flume that was a means of getting the water to the little streetlight dynamo in Glen Williams. This was on the upstream side of the dynamo, not the tailrace where the water went back into the Credit after it

had gone through the dynamo turbine. When they wanted to look over the turbine for any damage, these gates would be closed and the flume or ditch would drain out nearly dry.

One time when they closed those gates to drain the flume, my brother Tom and I were there watching the water drain out. When all the water was out that could run out, we saw some big eels and suckers splashing around in pools of water and mud.

We decided we would get some.

I do not know if you ever tried to hang on to a 35 or 40 pound eel when it was coated with wet mud, but it is an experience that I do not believe an adult would ever forget. Small kids like my brother and I had no chance of hanging onto one of them squirming devils at all. Not until Old Mr. Williams came over with a five foot length of spindle band cord that was used instead of belts on the spinning machines in the mill. He tied a loop in each end, one loop was a sliding loop and one was a solid loop. He told us to grab an eel by the head and watch out for its big teeth, slip the sliding loop down over its head behind the gills and pull it tight, then drag it out on the bank and hit it on the head with a rock.

We did that and we got three of them, each about 30 or forty pounds. We gave Mr. Williams one and put the other two in our homemade cart and took them home.

I do not think our mother recognized us when she first saw the two lumps of mud come into the yard. Then she got a big cloth and a towel and took us down to the tailrace where there was a pool of water, had us take off our clothes and gave us a good scrubbing. She then rinsed out most of the mud from our clothes and we walked back naked to the house and put on clean clothes.

I think she was really proud of us for catching those big eels.

We never told her how we caught them, or that Mr. Williams told us how.

Before I forget, maybe I should tell you how close I came to not being here today in that same flume.

My brother and I were up there one day late in the evening when the Glen dynamo was in operation. There was quite a bit of driftwood in front of the screened intake to the dynamo turbine. I saw a good sized football amongst the rubbish floating on the water. I got down on this driftwood, got the ball and threw it out on the ground, then started to scramble up out of there.

The little log I had been standing on turned over under my foot, and I went down through the driftwood into the water. The suction of the water going into the dynamo turbine pulled me up tight to the screen.

I managed to pull my head up above the water and started to yell for help. I do not know where my brother was, as he did not come to help me, but Mr. John Wheeler, who owned the general store just down the street from us, had been painting a fence across the road and was just going home when he heard me. He came over and saw my head sticking up above the rubbish and was able to reach down and get hold of my arms and pull me out.

I owe my life to him as I was getting pretty tired and scared.

November 29, 1976

Dear Friend:

I received your letter today, and after reading it I must say that I cannot see why you should worry that I would be offended at any personal questions you may ask. I was beginning to consider you as a good friend who was interested in what I might know about things that you were interested in, and to my way of thinking, there can be no offense in questions between friends. Ask anything you wish, if I can answer it, I will and not consider it offensive. You want to know about life before you were born, and the way you go about getting the answers is quite proper, so do not hesitate to ask. Writing things down like this is the only way I have to relieve the pressure in my mind that I have not had the education to properly express, so I am happy to answer all your questions.

You are the first person that has ever been the least bit interested in what I have had to say, and I am very grateful. Thank you very much.

I thought when I got to be able to type a bit that I would be able to express myself better through the medium of the printed word. But it did not seem to get any better. Maybe I am lacking what the old people call book learning. I did not get very much of it in my few years at school and it is so long ago now that I left school, perhaps I have forgotten.

You ask about the sheets of vistaVision memories. I do not type these sheets out when I write the letter answering your questions. I try to have a few sheets typed out before I receive a letter from you so that you will not have to wait too long for a reply. I am an awful slow typer and make a lot of mistakes and have to correct them while focusing enough to be able to see them, so I work on them while I wait for your letters. This helps keep me busy.

Now I will try and answer your latest questions to the best of my ability.

What do I think about tarring and feathering someone? When I hear of a man beating up his wife or daughter, I don't just get troubled, I get darn good and mad and disgusted. I have always believed that a man that would beat up a female person is not a man at all and should he taken and given a real good beating up himself to let him know what it feels like. There is no excuse for beating up your own children or wife. I do not know how a man can look at himself in the mirror when he shaves without cutting his throat when he does a thing like that to someone that trusts him and perhaps loves him too.

I have always believed a woman was to be respected and protected at all times. From when I was a very small boy, I thought they were something special and could do no wrong. As I grew older I began to see that they were human like myself and could make mistakes in judgements and behaviour just as I could or any other male. Of course I still respected them and would protect them whenever possible.

What were the main businesses in Glen Williams at the time? Well, around 1910 there was one grocery store owned by John Wheeler, one butcher shop owned by Bill Kullen and an ice cream parlor owned by Jimmy Norton. The hotel was owned by Tom Hill, the father of the present Mayor of Georgetown. There were two woolen mills in the Glen, one glove factory and

of course the electric power plant that supplied Georgetown with streetlighting power at that time. There were the two stone quarries about three miles west of the Glen that gave work to quite a few men when they had orders for stone. One was owned by Hugh Logan on one side of the road, and the other was owned by a Mr. Bell who lived just across the road from the Logan residence.

You ask about the role of religion in my family. Mother never went to church when we were young as she never had suitable clothes. The same applies to my father. Mother made all us kids go to Sunday school every Sunday and attend services in the church afterwards. When I was through with school I refused to go to Sunday school or church and I have never went since. I do not believe in the sort of things they preach about in church, or in any religion as it is preached today.

I have a religion of my own as I see it, and I do not try to convert anyone to it, nor do I deny them the right to believe in what they think is right.

A lady in the Rainy River District, when I was on the homestead there in the Hungry Thirties, long after I left Glen Williams, had a poem she wrote about her idea of what God was like, and she managed to get it published in the Rainy River Record. Her God was cruel and mean, and you had to be afraid of Him, according to her.

It made me so mad I sat down and wrote an answer to it which was published in the same paper.

I did not object to her believing what she wrote, but to have it printed in the local paper and try to scare other people into believing what God was like, that just got my mad boiling, and I let her know, or anyone else who tried the same thing, that it was not so. I do not mind if

someone says they do not believe in God, but when they say he is cruel and it is your job to fear him, then I blow up. All one has got to do is look around to see who the monster is, and it is not God. He gave us this earth, so beautiful, clean and fresh, for to take care of and pass on to our children undamaged, the way we had received it. What did we do with it? We started right in to destroy everything, and we are making a very good mess of it today.

It is not God we should be fearing, it is us.

We had a little Indian baby girl that we got from the Children's Aid when she was four days old for to look after. This was around 1953. We had that little girl until she was close to her thirteenth birthday, when she was drowned in the Little Grassy River when we were up in the Rainy River District for the second time, after I got pensioned off. A few days after that little girl, our Sheila, drowned, the lady who wrote the poem for the paper about her religion came over to our place and said it was God's punishment on her for not going to church regular.

I ordered her out of our house and told her never to come back.

God did not punish her at all. Our Sheila just tried to swim across that little river, and got her feet in a tangle of weeds, at least that was where she was found two days later.

I think God has no need to punish us for any sins, we punish ourselves plenty.

What is the Gold Cure? It is a liquid, tasteless and colorless that can be put in tea, coffee, milk or water. About three drops a day in a cup of tea or coffee will, in about a month, take away all craving for any kind of alcohol drink. According to the label on the bottle, which my mother read out loud to herself, even the smell of drink in any form will be avoided.

I have never seen it advertised since I was able to read.

What happened to Tom the turkey? When Christmas came around and it was time to start getting the turkey ready for the oven, no one would volunteer to kill it. We sent for dad's father to come over and do the job, but he refused. It ended up the turkey was never killed for eating. He died of old age and was given a proper funeral and mourned by the whole family.

The man who succeeded in hanging himself was Charley Evenson of Glen Williams. I would not want this again to be brought up in public, but now that most people that knew about it are, I suppose, dead, it really doesn't matter much, so I will tell you what I know about it.

It was quite a scandal at the time and was talked about for a long time.

Apparently he thought his wife was having an affair with another man, at least she used to be seen a lot with this other man, and of course the gossips in the village made the most of it. When it got back to Charley he went besserk and tried to hang himself several times. Jim Norton cut him down, I think it was on three occasions, but did not think he should do it on the fourth, so Charley succeeded.

Charley was a good sober man, a good husband and a good father to his daughter, there only child. He worked steady in Logan's stone quarry, never missing a day's work and spending his time at home in his garden in the summer, and tinkering around his home in the winter. He was a very quiet man, and I never heard of him being in any kind of trouble. He was very much in love with his wife, who had some Indian blood in her and was a very beautiful woman and knew it.

The Wheeler Store. It was a general store that sold most everything that the people of a small community would need. Some of the farm people bartered eggs and butter for store goods.

Back in the back of the store was the post office, the eldest Wheeler, John Wheeler, looked after that. His son, John Wheeler Jr. looked after the store.

After he retired, his son, John Wheeler Jr., took over the whole store. I do not know who had the store after the last Wheeler.

They sold harness, nails, shoes, all kinds of clothes and dry goods, groceries, gas and oil after the cars started coming out, sporting goods and numerous other things. If there was someone in the family working steady, they could get credit, if not it was cash.

What about Shammy Marchment? Dad was working in the quarry when he found Shammy dead one evening. Dad went into his small shack to see him and to ask if he needed anything from town, as he was going up to town, and found him dead. Shammy had two sisters living in the Glen. Both were married to two white brothers that owned homes in the Glen.

You ask about the poem I sent you in my last letter [*Editor's Note: for a selection of Sam's poetry, see Appendix B*]. I did not write many poems until I started to work at the Great Lakes Paper Mill in the late forties. I was too busy working in the war industries and building a log home on a 100 acres I bought about 12 miles out in the country from Fort William, as it was called then. After I got on the Security Force at the paper mill, I had more time to think and write. Then was when I really started to write poetry about most everything I saw or thought about. I continued to do so until my eyes started to go bad in 1970, from then on I have not done very many poems. I do not know just how many I have written, I have several folders of them. I even had a few published in papers, but nothing much to brag about.

You ask if I could put together little sketches of my family in your last letter. I have done so, starting with my parents and attached it to this letter.

Well, I better get this in the mail. Please write again soon as I enjoy these letters very much.

Best wishes til next time,

Sam.

Family Portrait: Parents

My mother, Elizabeth Lavina Belgrove, was born in 1875, in Ballinafad, Ontario. Her father had a blacksmith shop and a carriage shop there, and her mother was the owner of a general store. Mother was born in their house there. Her father died when she was about twelve. In mother's family there were four girls and one boy.

Mother was about 5 ft. 6 tall. She was very proud and sentimental, with great sympathetic feelings for unfortunate people and always willing to share what little she had with people less fortunate than her. My mother was a very beautiful woman when I was about four or five. Her beautiful red hair was so long she could sit on it. She had lovely blue eyes, a very

white skin and was small and very neat. It was sad to see how she changed over the years. Her beautiful dark red hair was white before she was forty and was falling out very fast. And she really loved my father and forgave him times without number for his drinking and neglect of her and his children.

She met my father at the annual Fireman's Ball in Georgetown. I believe they still hold that annual ball. About the length of there courtship, I am a little bit hazy about that, but I believe it was somewhere about a year, more or less.

My mother and father were married on July 5, 1898, when mother was 23 and dad was 24. She was a hardworking and determined woman and never gave up trying to get a home of her own. She loved music and singing and dancing, of which she got very little after she was married to dad, until her family started to earn some money, then things improved gradually.

When she married my father and started having a family, she was very gentle with us first ones and cried a lot over dad and his problem with drinking and our poverty. When she was younger she was quite strong and healthy, but hard work and continual child bearing, along with lack of food and warm clothing, made her shrink up into a little old woman long before her time. Later, as we grew older, she got more strict and sort of determined.

My mother died at the age of 68, in 1943, my father at the age of 77, in 1951.

Mother and dad's family both came from Ireland, so I was told.

I am sorry I cannot give my father as good a write up as my mother. Dad was born in Norval, in 1874, although I am not quite clear on that. He was the second child in the family, his sister Jane is the oldest. I think there were seven children, two girls and five boys.

Dad had a drinking problem.

Before, and for a time after he was married, he was a Sergeant Major in the volunteer army. He was a great man in sports before he married, and a member of the Glen Williams Citizen's band, and a great favorite with the young single men, both in sports and in drinking. He had several trophies for shooting, skating and running and jumping. He was on the Lacrosse team, hockey team, football team and baseball team. He was a good dancer and caller-off at square dances. But he was a awful husband and father and had no interest at all in supporting the large family he had.

I think that he was restricted, or felt he was, by the responsibility of caring for a family and so he avoided that responsibility whenever he could. Also he never helped or supported my mother in any way, including holding back his pay when he was working for himself to drink away most of the time. It was my mother, not my father, who worked very hard to feed and clothes us kids. I do not believe that mother knew the right way to handle his drinking problem, and his parents were no help at all, as they just adored him and everything he did.

Dad cut a very handsome figure when he was young, straight and husky and strong. Very quiet when he was sober, very loud and jolly when he got a few drinks in him. He never struck mother or any of us kids, but we were all very much afraid of our dad.

My dad joined the 164th Battalion in the fall of 1916 and was in England until the first war ended. When the 164th was embarking for France, Colonel Ballantyne, an old friend of dad's, spotted him and had him turned back because of his age, which was 42 at that time. Him and the Colonel's brother, Jack Ballantyne, were about the same age and they had both enlisted the same time. The Colonel had his brother kept in England at the same time as dad. They were given a shop and repaired shoes for the army as they were both pretty good at that.

My dad did not get to see any fighting, but the training brought him back into shape again. We were all quite proud to meet him at the station when he came home, he stood up so straight and neat looking. It was too bad it did not last very long. As soon as he could after he got back from the army he went back to drinking.

My parents could not understand why I would not practice racism like they did, or why I could marry what they called a foreigner, as they called my wife who was born in Switzerland. I have no borders or boundaries, which is one thing they never did believe in. Religion was another hang up that they had, and they sure let me know about it when I married a Catholic. I never had any real religion to live by before I was married, except what I believed in myself, and of course they never understood that either.

vistaVision Memories

Paper Mill Row

After less than a year there, we left the old Lawson place and went over to the other side of the road in the lower part of Glen Williams to live in a house belonging to one of my uncles,

George Dennis, who had moved to Guelph that year with his family. I think we lived there for nearly two years before we moved up the hill to Georgetown to live in the north end of the old Academy owned by Mrs. Fraser, up on College street.

When we lived in the Dennis house, mother got a little Jersey cow from H.P. Lawson in Georgetown for \$15.00 that had just had her first calf. After she did that we had lots of milk to drink and butter to put on our bread and biscuits. We had pancakes every time we had the buttermilk to make them and they sure tasted good with homemade butter and syrup or jam.

Mother made a milk can about half full of ice cream mixture one summer evening, the first I had ever tasted or seen. She gave dad sixty cents to go up to the Exchange Hotel by the railway station and get a block of ice so that she could freeze it, and sixty cents was a lot of money back then.

We all took turns stirring it in the cold basement of the house while waiting for dad to come home with the ice.

He never did bring home any ice, but he did bring home a good belly full of booze.

He was really loaded that night and was my mother ever boiling. She let all us kids drink as much of that mixture as we could hold, and then we went to bed.

I woke up when dad came home after midnight and listened to mother go after him. Finally dad got mad and started swearing at her and went out and slept in the barn on the old hay that I had put over the coal I had collected for the winter. I don't imagine he had a very comfortable sleep that night on that hay that was just a few inches above those big lumps of coal.

I do not remember my mother ever trying to make ice cream again.

Homemade Buttermilk Pancakes

Ingredients:

<i>4 cups flour</i>	<i>1 stick (1/2 cup) butter, melted and cooled slightly</i>
<i>1 tsp salt</i>	<i>4 medium eggs</i>
<i>1 tsp baking soda</i>	<i>4 cups fresh buttermilk</i>
<i>4 tsp baking powder</i>	<i>dash of vanilla (optional)</i>
<i>1/2 cup sugar</i>	<i>dash of cinnamon (optional)</i>

Directions:

Blend the dry ingredients together in a bowl. Beat the eggs in another bowl, add 1 cup of buttermilk and blend. Add the egg mixture and the remaining buttermilk to the dry mixture and blend with a wooden spoon until just incorporated. Add melted butter and beat softly with wooden spoon until mixture is a little lumpy and fairly thick. Drop 1/3 cup of buttermilk batter on a hot 350 degree F. buttered griddle and cook on both sides. Have a hard stick of butter handy to swipe on griddle between batches. Leftover batter can be saved in the fridge for a day or two.

While living in the Dennis house, I made friends with one or two people my mother or father did not approve of.

For example, there was an old man who had a boy and girl about my own age to look after. I liked the boy and liked being with him, and as they had no mother living and the father was a town drunk, the girl was always with the brother, so I got to like her too. They were squatting in the old abandoned farm house where we had lived before we lived in the Lawson place beside the Glen dynamo.

That summer, the boy and girl lived there most of the time alone, sometimes the father would be there, but only when he was sober enough to find the place. They were both dirty and ragged and their hair was full of lice.

After I got to know them, I ask them why they did not wash.

They said they had no soap.

I got a piece of soap from home and I took them to the Credit river, to a nice place about two feet deep that I knew of, and told them to have a good cleaning of their hair and their whole body, and I would watch the road for anyone coming through the bush.

They were so long getting cleaned up that I went to see what was keeping them.

They were still in the water having the time of their life. They did not want to come out at first, until I told them we would come there every day that we could for them to have a good bath. They did come out then and they ask me to learn them to swim, so I jumped in and we had lots of fun.

I was not shy about us all being naked, in fact I do not remember even thinking about it.

It lasted like that most of the summer until Rob MacMaster was across the river one time, up on a hill in his hayfield. He could look down on the river and saw us in the river. He yelled at us or we would never have known he was there. We soon got out of there and into the bush and got our clothes on in a hurry and left that part of the bush.

About a week or so afterwards, two men and a woman came to our house and said they were from the Home in Milton, and that they had come to take the Carey boy and girl to the Home.

Mother told them where the children lived, so they went up to get them.

They did not get them that day or for more than a week. They were as wild as young deer and could run about as fast. I do not think they would have caught them until the snow came if the people in Glen Williams had not helped so that the children would get the care and education they needed so much.

I saw the girl once more after that, years later, when she was about 25 or 26, and I could not believe that it was the same girl.

She was a lovely girl, and when I asked her if her name was Carey, she said it had been but she was married now. I ask her if she remembered me, and she said I did not look at all like the little dwarf that her and her brother had gone bathing with. She said she had got a good education and was married to a man that she really loved, and had one little girl nearly a year old.

She did not know where her brother was and had not seen him for years.

She thanked me for being their friend when they were young, but did not want to remember the past, and would I please not try to find out who she had married or where she was living, and do her a favor and forget all about her and her father and brother.

I said I could not forget them, but I would never cause them any pain or sorrow as they had enough of that when they were young.

I have kept that promise, and by the way, their name was not Carey.

When I was young and we were living in the Dennis house, getting enough coal for to keep the house warm in the winter was real hard on my mother, so I always tried to help. One day, I got an idea just how to help out.

There was a train which carried a load of coal for the steel mills in Hamilton which ran through Georgetown up at the railway station. While the coal train went to the station to get a load of water, a lot of big lumps of coal would fall off along the tracks. When Tom and I heard the engine coming we would hide in the bush until the train had gone by, then we would look in the ditches and pick up the coal that had fallen off the train and load a two wheeled cart we had and take it home and hide it in the barn that was on our place at the back. That way we were able to mostly get enough coal during the summer to keep warm all winter long without too much trouble, and have a bit of coal left over in the spring.

Sometimes, if there was not much coal in the ditches, we would go up to the coal cars that had been sitting parked while the train engine went for water and steal a little coal off them.

Mother and dad knew where the coal was coming from. Dad was never sober long enough to care that we were stealing it off the railway cars, but mother told us it was wrong to steal but that she thought God would forgive us for He knew we were not stealing it only for ourselves, but to keep us all warm, especially the babies who could not help themselves.

I was only seven and Tom was nine at the time, and we thought we were doing a wonderful thing as we thought the railways had lots of coal when they could bring it past there every day in the summer and winter by the train load. We did not know at that time that it was not their coal at all, but was instead coal that the steel mills in Hamilton had bought in Alberta and had paid the railways to haul to Hamilton.

I guess even if we had known, it would have made no difference to us at that time, as I think we both had a single track mind, we were cold in the winter and had no way to keep warm, there was trainloads of coal sitting there for two hours or more each day in warm weather, and with no one to ask if we could have some for the winter, we just helped ourselves.

They must have caught on to what we were doing the last year we were living there, for they never stopped and parked coal cars there again. Instead, when it came time to haul coal the next spring, they took the train right down into the yards before they took the engine for water. That meant we could get no coal.

Well, I had an idea.

Tom and I got a big piece of board and two pieces of 2 x 4s, and nailed them together. We took it down to Bill Forgraves' workshop and ask him to print in big letters on it,

Try and hit this if you can. *We dare You!*

He did it for us with black paint in big letters, just like the way we wanted it, and we took it up and fastened it to the fence wire a hundred or so yards out from the railway yard with good strong cord right on the fence along the railway track.

When the coal train was going past slowly, as it was slowing down for the switch to the yard, the brakemen were on top of the coal car to set the brake as there was some downgrade in the yard at that time, and when they saw the sign they started to throw coal at it. We did not get very much coal the first day, but every day after that it used to keep us busy to get it all away before every night and the next day's train.

Rain or shine we got our coal thrown over the fence to us.

The brakeman would be ready at the front of the train and start throwing before they got to the target and then keep working to the back end of the train until it was past. I think that the engineer got in on the fun to, because I noticed that the train was going a lot slower when it reached the target.

My dad came home one night, after taking a good load aboard and going to the barber shop and getting a haircut and a shave. Dad always had a mustache, but for some reason he got it shaved off that night, or was so drunk that he did not know that the barber was shaving it off.

Dad was very proud of that big military mustache, so I think the barber did it as a joke.

Dad never grew a mustache again as long as he lived. He came home rather late that night and just walked in the door and said nothing about his mustache being gone.

My sister Mae had come downstairs for a drink of water and when she saw dad without his mustache she gave a scream and ran out the back door. We were all out of bed looking for her for well over an hour before I found her squeezed inbetween the back of our place and the wall of the one next to us which was built right up against our fence.

We got her back and took her into the house, but as soon as she saw dad she started screaming again.

Mother had to take her into her bed the rest of the night, and dad had to sleep in an old rocking chair.

Mae would not go near dad for weeks after that scare.

Every spring in those days there would be a train wreck just about a mile from where we lived. It always happened when the frost was coming out of the ground. It took the railway company years to figure out what was the cause of those wrecks, but they finally found it.

At the time, Georgetown was a junction town. The train from the south would come down into the yard and station, and when they were ready to go on up north, the train would have to back up the grade to the west, switch over to the north line, then come down the grade as fast as possible going around this long curve at the bottom of the grade just to make it up the grade going north. The train usually left the tracks on this curve when there was a wreck.

They found out, after years of wrecks, that the soil under this curve was sand that would hold water in the fall, freeze in the winter, and thaw out late in the spring as the strip of sand was on the south side of the tracks.

When people from Glen Williams went over to see these wrecks they would usually come back past where we were living. There was a wreck of a food and supply train one time, and when the people came past our place I was along side the road watching them go past. They gave me small cans of sweetened condensed milk, boxes of Grape Nuts, candy, nuts, bags of popcorn, and one man gave me a small mouth organ.

If there was very much goods stolen, the next day there would be railway police and insurance detectives searching houses and buildings rear of where the wreck occurred.

My family never stayed in one place very long as sooner or later, because dad was usually drunk and out of work, mother could not come up with the rent. So late in 1908 we moved from my uncle's house in Glen Williams up the hill into Georgetown, into the old Academy building on College street, and from there I eventually started to attended the public school in Glen Williams. We only lived in the Academy for about a year, and one or two things stand out in my memory quite clearly from that time.

When we moved into the old Academy there were three other families living in different parts of that building next to us. On the south end was Bill Ward, his wife, two daughters, and a son. Next to them on the south was an English family by the name of Brandon. There was the father and mother, a son in his late infancy, a daughter about eighteen or perhaps a bit older, another son, Albert, about fifteen and another son about six or seven.

Next and last in the south end of the Academy, was a family of four by the name of Buehler. The father's first name was also his son's name too. His son was in his mid twenties, I would say, and his sister, Mabel, was not far behind him. The Buehlers had the same amount of rooms as we did, but had access up a wide stairway to the other two stories of classrooms and dormitories for the student boarders to sleep in when the old academy was still running as a school, and across the bottom of this wide stairway they had hung a big tapestry curtain and they never used the two upstairs floors.

They used to have the front door of their part of the building open on nice summer days, and when everyone but Mrs. Buehler was away at work, I would slip in quietly and go upstairs for hours and explore all the empty classrooms and pretend that I was going to school there.

When we first moved there, I still had not started regular school, but I learned to read quite a bit and to write some from a lot of books that were scattered about in those rooms under beds and some that I found in the desks in the school rooms. Of course I could not read the big long words or understand what they meant, but I did get enough knowledge to surprise the teacher very much that fall when I went to school in the primer class, both with how I could write simple words, and read them off and tell her what they meant.

One Saturday night when it was just getting dark, the oldest son of the Buehlers came home drunk and started swearing at my mother who was sitting out on the front porch waiting for dad to come home. He came right over to the bottom step calling my mother some awful names and swearing at her.

I do not know why, except that he was very drunk.

Our front door was held open by an old fashioned flat iron for ironing clothes. Mother turned around in her chair, reached in, got the flat iron and threw it at the man. It would weigh about two pounds or more. It hit him right across the forehead and part of his nose.

He went down like he had been shot.

In the meantime, mother had run into the house, grabbed dad's shotgun, and came back out. By that time the whole Buehler family and some friends of the man were out there, twelve of them in all. My mother ask them if there was any of them that wanted to take it from there and she would oblige them by laying some more of them on the ground.

Two other young men picked up the man and took him into his family's apartment.

Mother told us to say nothing to dad about this or he would go after that family with the shotgun and maybe kill some of them, then he would be hung.

We never mentioned it to dad or even talked about it when he was around.

Mother left the gun just inside the door and I broke it open to see if it was loaded. It wasn't. I told mother about it not being loaded, and she said she knew that because dad had no shells for months.

In the fall of that year was when I started going to school. My first teacher was surprised at how I could already read a few words because I had learned how from snooping in the rooms upstairs at the old Academy, and she did not really believe me when I told her I had only gone to school one day in my life before coming to this school, and had been sent back home because I was only five years old. When I told her how I had learned to read and how long it had taken, and how I had figured out each letter of the alphabet, and learned to add small sums of figures, she was amazed.

I said that I liked going to school and I wanted to learn everything that I could.

She said as I was a little older than most of the others who were just starting school, she would do all she could for me to catch up, and would brief the other teachers about my ambition.

I ask her what *brief* and *ambition* meant, and after she had explained that, I ask her how to spell it, and she spelt it out for me and I told her that I would never forget those two words and thanked her for telling me. That teacher's name was Miss Young and when I passed with honors from her classroom to the second reader in Miss Bradley's room it was because of the special attention that Miss Young gave me.

Miss Bradley was English right from the old country and it was very hard for me to understand the way she talked. I tried to get along with her and understand her way of saying things but it was pretty tough for everyone. I think that some of the parents complained to the trustees about her, anyway she did not come back the next year after the summer holidays were over.

We had a new teacher by the name of Miss Roberts, and was she ever a good one. My marks picked up right away. She spoke clearly and slowly and you could hear every word, no matter where she was in the room. She had one drawback however, she was too beautiful and easy to get along with to last very long in the teaching business, and two years after she came there to teach she got married to a Georgetown man and quit teaching.

However that year I past into Miss Harrison's classroom, the same Miss Harrison that pulled me up in front of the class in the little school in Glen Williams when I first followed my older brother Tom there at the age of five. She spotted me right away and ask me if she had not seen me before.

I said yes she had and that she had also pulled my ear and sent me home.

Miss Harrison was a very beautiful woman, about five foot four or five, with bright red hair, green eyes, a very white skin with a few freckles across her nose near her eyes. She had a very neat compact figure and I seem to be able to smell her perfume right now. She was a good teacher and would always come and sit on part of the seat next to you to explain something a pupil did not understand.

At the end of the term in Miss Harrison's room, I past into Miss Ryan's room.

Miss Ryan was a tall woman, about six feet 1 or two inches. She had grey hair and I would say she was about 35 or 40 years old when I entered her classes. She was very strict and very seldom smiled. She had lovely blue eyes and a clear complexion. When she was displeased with a pupil, her eyes looked like bits of cold blue steel.

After I got to know her better, I trusted and admired her very much.

At first I was scared stiff of her and tried very hard to win her approval by having my work neat and correct. I was very good in most all subjects, except anything about England, which I disliked very much because of the way they treated the Irish. I am wholly Irish from parents on both sides, even if I was born in Canada. I support the Irish in every way against the way that the English have always treated them. I did not realize for a long time that Miss Ryan was Irish too and was born in Ireland.

I remember the first class I had in English history in her class. We were to write a short essay on English history. I did not want to do that so I got my drawing book out and was very interested in drawing a winter scene on a farm at night.

I was using just three crayons, no pencil, and had a very good start on the picture. I did not know that Miss Ryan was standing back of me until I smelled her perfume. I looked back and started to sweat. I was sure I was going to get the strap. She told me to slide over a bit on the seat and then she sat down, and just said, "Tell me about it, Sam." and we talked for a few minutes, with me doing most of the talking.

Then she told me if I wished I could stay in at recess and we could talk some more.

I had a lot more I wanted to tell her, as she was the first person in my life that ever seemed to be interested in anything I had to say. My mother never had time to sit down and

listen, and my father was not the least bit interested in anything any of his children had to say. Most other people I tried to talk to were not interested either and ended up just calling me a gabby brat if I tried to talk to them, so I learned early on to keep to myself.

In the winter of 1909, there was very nice man, Mr. J. MacBean, who had a general store on the southeast side of Main street in Georgetown, right next to the Bank of Hamilton, which was right on the southeast corner of Main street. I was in his store one cold day in winter, just before Christmas to get some thread for my mother. I was eight or so at the time. I was cold and shivering when I got in there, but it was nice and warm in the store.

I had an old summer jacket on over my shirt and no underwear at all.

Mr. MacBean saw me shivering and came over to where I was standing, and I told him what my mother wanted, and he gave it to me and I paid him for it. I turned to go out and he called me back and said he had a late Christmas present for me in the back of the store.

He took me back where the clothing was, and after looking under several piles of things, he came up with this beautiful sweater. It had a white pullover collar with dark blue down to under my arms, then about a four inch band of white, then blue for the rest of the length. It was pure wool, and when he got me into it, I sure felt nice and warm.

I thanked him for it, and he said to be sure and come in again when I next came to town.

The strange thing about the whole affair was that I had never been in his store before, and I was a bit afraid of him. When he spoke, I could hardly make out what he was saying. I did not

know at that time that he was Scotch and spoke the language most all the time of the old country.

After I got to know him better and talked to him several times after that first encounter, I found that he was a very nice man to know, and was very kind to those less fortunate than himself.

When I went home and my mother ask me where I got the sweater and I told her, she started to cry.

I did not know then why she was crying, but I began to understand better in later years that my mother was a very proud woman from a very proud family, and it near killed her to have to accept charity from other people.

I wore that sweater until it got too small for me, then my younger brothers wore it.

My mother made them take good care of it, and when it started to wear out she would mend it very neatly so it would look like new again. One of my younger brothers was still wearing it the winter I came home after I was married, and that was nearly twenty years later.

That year, after I got the sweater, I decided to chum around with Mr. MacBean's only son a lot at school. He was about my age, but was very delicate and nervous all the time. The kids at school used to tease him quite a lot about how he talked, but I never interfered with that because he was not getting hurt, but when they started to rough him up, that was altogether different.

I liked to fight, especially if it was with a bigger boy than me, because I was tough but small, and when I had a fight with another boy, everything went as far as I was concerned. I went into the fight with the intention of getting it over as quickly as possible.

Soon the kids stopped tormenting Jim MacBean's boy after that, and he always looked to me for protection.

When a new boy came to school and started to bully the kids around, it always meant that I would have to fight him, for he was sure to get around to try and bully me. I did not always lick him on the first try, but we would go at it again later on, when I had figured out just how to beat him, and I always came out the winner, although sometimes I would carry the marks of the fight for many days. I think that is why, when I fought with bigger boys, I learned that their weak spot was their stomach, and I always went for that right at the start of the fight. If I could land two or three good punches in their stomach, I knew that I had them licked from then on, and they would soon holler uncle, and I would have no more fuss out of them.

I never went looking for fights, except the times that I took Jim MacBean's part when he was being bullied, but I did not run away from a fight either, as that would have been the end for me. I would much rather take a licking than run away, for I knew there would always be another day when I could do better.

Some of our fights were stopped by the teachers, who would be looking out the windows and see what was going on, then they would come out and stop the fight and make us shake hands. That meant nothing to us, and we would get in the old drive shed at the English church near the school the next day, and find out who was going to win the fight. Then we would go down in the basement of the school and clean each other up and usually walk away more or less as friends.

One thing I could never understand was why my brother Tom would just stand there and watch this bigger guy beat me up, and never make a move to help me out. I think that was what

made me more determined than ever to lick these bigger fellows and show my brother that I did not need his help. I think these school yard scraps were good for me, in a way, as it learned me that just because he was a big fellow, that was no reason for thinking he could not be licked, if I was to really put my mind on it.

I soon found out when I got older and began to travel that it was the smaller fellows that you had to watch out for when you got into a fight. They can move faster, and usually have some tricks to make up for what they lack in size, and some of them are pretty good. I know that I have learned where the places are on a person's body where a good punch will hurt the most, and just how to get that punch to that tender spot.

I have often thought that it would be a wonderful thing if children could look ahead and see what the future held for them, especially when they had a good home and parents that loved them and cared enough to encourage them to do well in school, so that they would come out of school with the best education that could be given to them, if they would put their mind to it and really tried to learn all that was being taught to them.

I have in mind one boy I went to school with, Pete Hunter. He is a good example of what I mean. He was the only son of Mr. Hunter, one of the town's best blacksmiths. Mr. Hunter owned, or I always thought he owned, his own shop. When Pete went to school he was a lazy, indifferent student who the teachers were always scolding for his poor attention to what they were trying to teach the class.

One day at recess, after he had got a severe talking to in the morning from Miss Harrison, I ask him why she was always going after him.

He told me she had to pick on someone and she had chosen him because he was good natured and did not mind. He said he did not have to worry whether he got a good education or not, as his father would always take care of him as he had a good business and lots of money.

I ask him how did he manage to pass his examinations to get ahead in classes.

He said he had a smart sister who figured them all out for him at home, and as he had a good memory, exams were no problem for him.

Well one day, before I left school, Pete's father died. It turned out that he had a big mortgage on his shop and the man with the mortgage took over the shop. Mrs. Hunter hung onto their home for awhile, as long as the small life insurance she got lasted, then Pete had to quit school at the legal age of sixteen and go to work. He got several different jobs, one after the other, but did not seem to be able to hold onto a job for any length of time.

The Hunter girl went on through high school and graduated and got a good job in an office in Toronto. Her mother had to eventually sell the house, and Pete was living off friends of the family, because the family had been highly respected in Georgetown. But friendship can only take so much I guess, so it was not long before Pete was out on the side of the road, on his own.

It was his laziness that kept him from holding a steady job, and his dependence on someone else to look after him. He hung around town for a few years, then disappeared, and I never saw him again while I lived there.

It was too bad in a way, as his mother was an awfully nice woman, and so was his sister, Marjorie.

There was another man who was quite a businessman in Georgetown when I was a boy. That was Mr. Arnold who owned the glove factory on the corner of hwy 7, where you take the first turn on the left to go up to main street in Georgetown. He had quite a few people, especially women, working in his glove factory. I think the factory was at its peak during the first world war, because before it was over, they started laying off the workers in the factory.

Mr. Arnold lived in the big brick house at the end of Queen street, at the end next to the Exchange hotel. I believe, he had four sons and one daughter, Elva. She married Percy Blackburn, the son of one of Georgetown's tailors.

Mr. Arnold was quite put out about his only daughter marrying Percy, the son of a common tailor. He had planned on her doing better than that, so Elva said, but I guess he had to live with it, at least he did while I was living there.

When the Arnold family lived in Georgetown while the first war was on, one of their older sons got a commission in the army through his father's influence, and served his time in the war behind the lines, so his younger brother Jack told me.

Years later, while I was away in the west, the Arnold family moved to Toronto. I do not know who took over their home in Georgetown, or if they still kept it in the family. The factory had been completely closed down when I returned after I was married, and as far as I know has never been opened by another businessman in town, until many years later, after the second war, when it became a Canadian Tire store for a while.

It was in the spring of 1909 that we left the old Academy and moved into a house on paper mill row my mother rented.

I had just past my eighth birthday in February of that year.

We lived in a single house just east of the double house that my mother bought later on, when the first world war started. Downstairs on the main floor there was a kitchen tacked onto the back of the house, also a main floor dining room and living room combined, and a small bedroom with a little pantry along side it. There was a very steep curving stairs with 9 steps, counting the one in the living room, going upstairs. There were two bedrooms up there, each one much larger than the one beside the living room where my mother, father, and the baby slept. There were no closets for clothing in any of the bedrooms and no lights, only what came in the small window in each room. There was only one bed in each room upstairs at first.

The two girls had the farthest room from the stairs with the door on it for privacy.

Our room, my brother Tom and my room, had no door. When you came to the top of the stairs you were in our room and you had to walk through it to get to my sisters room.

I had the best room for the winter, as the stove pipe came up through the floor in our room before it entered the chimney. The girls would have to leave their door open all day in winter so their room would be warm at night. Some nights, when it was real cold, they would leave it open at night.

I could never understand why they had to have their door closed at night, but that was mother's orders. Annie, the youngest at the time, was a little over four years and her sister Mae was going on six.

In the summertime the cookstove was moved out to the lean-to kitchen, but it still was awfully hot up in those upstairs bedrooms as we were next to the roof, and in those days they did not have or know what insulation was.

On the west side of the kitchen there was a framework of narrow boards about between three and four feet apart, with crosspieces of boards about two feet apart, from the ground up to the top, on about half of each side and the full length of the top. Wild grape vines had been growing over this frame for years. You could enter from either side and walk right through.

One end was the wall of the kitchen, and there was a window that could be raised up to pass out the dishes and the food when we wanted to eat out there on a hot day. It was always cool there as the sun did not shine on it until late in the afternoon, and very little sun came in through the vines. Also, all around the front veranda on the side, except for a narrow doorway in the vines for to enter the front door of the house, the whole veranda was covered with these wild grape vines.

The front bedroom that mother and dad used must have been very cool those hot summer nights when we were sweating in the upstairs rooms.

At the time we moved into that house there was a road at the back that everyone used, except when they were going to Georgetown, then they used the front road which is still there, and is today called River Drive.

When Mr. John Willoughby bought those houses from the Barber Bros. paper mill, he had lots surveyed so that each house would have a piece of land, and the land extended out to the front road, what is now called River Drive. He had each lot fenced with wire, and the back road was closed forever, as each lot ran back to within a few yards of the mill pond. The baker, grocery man, and the butcher who used to come down about three times a week when the back road was open, very seldom ever came down again after it was closed. After being used to going into every house on the row and only having to travel about a quarter of a mile on a fairly level road to get in and back out to the main road, the 9th line, they did not feel like having to go two miles in, then out two miles with one pretty steep hill at the west end where the last house was at the bottom.

When I was a boy of about eight, Mr. Gillar, one of the tailors in Georgetown at that time, had two lovely daughters and him and his wife guarded them day and night. I never noticed it very much when I was small, but as the girls and I grew older, I began to notice that the girls were never allowed out alone after dark, either the mother or the father would always be with them, sometimes both. When they used to come home from school, I never saw them out with other girls or boys on the streets, unless one of their parents were with them, and they were always back inside before dark.

As I grew older there was a lot of talk about this amongst the young fellows, and they would go into Mr. Gillar's store, pretending they were going to buy something just to see if they

could catch a glimpse of the girls. I guess this must have worried Mr. Gillar and got him upset in time, as he used to order them out of his store as soon as they entered his door.

I know, because years later, when I was working at the Barber Bros. paper mill, I went in there one time to give him an order for a new suit of clothes. When I tried to tell him what I wanted, he came around from behind the counter and tried to walk me to the door and shove me outside.

I told him if he did not want my business, that was all right with me, but to take his hands off me or I would knock him down.

He let go of me and told me he did not want my business and to never come into his store again.

I tried to get him to tell me why I was not welcome in his store, as that was the first time that I had ever been in it, but he just kept telling me to get out and not come back, that his daughters did not want anything to do with me. I then thought he was crazy, as his daughters were several years older than me and I had never spoken to them in my life.

I finally left and I never did go back into his store.

Years later, when I was back from working in the war industries in Trenton, I ask my mother what had happened to the Gillars and she said she did not know for sure, but the gossip had it that Mr. Gillar had been put away in a Sanitarium, and the rest of the family had left town shortly after, and she had heard no more about them.

I thought that he was near the breaking point when him and I had our argument in his store, so it did not surprise me very much to hear that he had finally gone over the edge.

I felt sorry for his wife and the two girls, as I think they had known for a long time that he was not quite right. The girls were lovely looking girls, like their mother, but they all looked scared and worried all the time.

I do not think that I will ever forget the first time I made turtle soup the first summer we lived on paper mill row. I had just turned eight that February, and I did not know how to go about it, but I was going to give it a try.

I had caught a turtle that weighed about fifteen or twenty pounds, shell and all, in the mill pond back behind our place. First I had to figure out a way to kill it. I decided the best way was to cut off its head, which I did after a long fight to get its head out from under its shell. Then the problem was to get the body out of the shell, which took a lot of doing. I finally got that done after a lot of hard, slippery work. Then I got at the job of separating the meat from the rest of the carcass and was well on to the way for some turtle soup.

I cut the meat up into small pieces and put them into a pot of water, along with salt and vegetables such as carrots, onions, peas, potatoes, some beans and two slices of turnips.

Then I put the kettle on the fire and hoped for the best. I cooked it until the meat started to fall apart, then I took the kettle off the fire and got things ready for a feast. I had some homemade bread and butter and a slab of fresh apple pie mother had made that day, along with a pot of tea with sugar and milk from our own Jersey cow. I dipped out a bowl of this soup and it needed a little more salt and a dash of pepper, which I put into the bowl of soup.

Oh boy, did it ever taste good.

I had two bowls of that soup and then dunked my bread in it and ate my apple pie along with two cups of tea and I was near to splitting open. I still had a bit in my kettle so I decided to have it for breakfast next morning as it tasted so good.

I sure was glad that I had tried the turtle soup I had heard so much about.

Turtle Soup

Ingredients:

1 turtle, 4 to 6 lbs.	2 carrots, sliced	1 quart vegetable stock
1 large onion, chopped	1/2 shredded lemon rind	2 egg whites
salt and pepper	bay leaf	1/4 cup sherry
2 cloves	other vegetables, cooked (optional)	

Preparing the Turtle:

Chop off the head and put the turtle into a pan of cold water to bleed out, then cut along the groove on each side of the shell between the front and back legs to separate the shell. Remove the legs from the body and take the meat from the shell. Remove all fat before cooking and place the turtle meat in unsalted boiling water and boil about three-quarters of an hour. Set the turtle meat aside to cool, then remove meat from bones and cut into bite sized pieces. Add the liver to the meat and sprinkle with salt and coarse black pepper and place meat into a kettle, add carrots and onions, bay leaf and two whole cloves, cover with cold salted water and simmer for 20 minutes, then transfer to an oven at 350 degrees F. for an additional 30 to 40 minutes, or until meat is very tender. Set meat aside.

Making the Soup:

Combine the stock, egg whites and lemon rind and bring to a boil, beating continuously with a wire whisk. Simmer 5 minutes. Leave 15 minutes to settle, then strain through a doubled cheesecloth. Just before serving, add the turtle meat and any other cooked vegetables, as desired, and reheat without boiling. Season and stir in the wine the moment before serving.

December 16, 1976

Dear Friend:

I got your welcome letter yesterday and have been having a grand time reading it over and over to make sure I got everything in it. I suppose that you will be wondering why I am sending you some of my old photographs in a separate envelope. Well I came to the conclusion that when I got the sheets of writing into the envelope, there was very little room for pictures and it made the letter very bulky. So I thought that I would send the pictures in an envelope by themselves.

Some of those pictures are a rather scruffy lot, but you must remember that they were taken going on sixty-seven years ago. I lost most all of my negatives when we moved down here from Rainy River to my daughter Pat's place, and so will not be able to send you some of the pictures that I took of places and people in Glen Williams. I may not have long to live, as you know, so sending you a few of my pictures gives me great pleasure in being of help to someone who is interested in the same thing as I am, no matter how small my help is.

I think I'm ready now to answer your many questions.

You ask about names. The “B” in my name is for my middle name, Benjamin. I was named after both my grandfathers, Benjamin after Benjamin Belgrove, my mother’s father, and Samuel, after my father’s father, Samuel Allen.

About my mother being the dynamo of the family, you are right. When my father was working and supporting his family, him and mother got along fine. When he was out of work and drinking, which was most of the time, they fought all the time. They both had very hot tempers, especially my mother, who had very dark red hair when she was young. When dad came home after drinking with no money in his pockets after spending his full week’s pay, well, it was something to listen to. Dad would be in a good humor when he came home and always tried to explain to mother that he earned the money, and because of that, he had a right to spend it the way he pleased. Of course mother would try to explain to him that he had a duty to his family that came first, that she gave birth to his children, and that he should feed and clothe and shelter them.

He could not see it that way though, so they would end up shouting at one another, and finally dad would go and spend the rest of the night on the sofa in another room, or out back in the barn on some hay, and mother would go to bed and cry herself to sleep. This would go on for two or three days, with each speaking to the other through one of us kids, then mother would be sorry for dad sleeping rough and they would be back together again in the same bed.

Some nights dad did not come home until the next day, and mother would stay up worrying and crying the whole night. When my mother would be crying, I used to hate my dad for making her cry. I used to tell her when I was small that when I grew up I would bring her barrels of money and she was not to give dad any of it. She would scold me very hard for saying

things like that and told me that it was not his fault that he drank so much, and that grandfather Allen used to drink a lot too when dad was young and did not stop drinking until grandmother Allen nearly killed him with a barrel stave. Then he never drank any more since.

I ask her why she did not cure dad with a barrel stave, and she said she loved dad and could not hurt him.

An average day for my mother would be to get up about five in the morning and start the fire in the cookstove, then wash and dress. There was mostly always a baby to change, bath, and feed before anyone else got up. The water would usually be on the stove in a clothes boiler. It was my job the night before to fill that boiler right to the top.

Before we got town water I used to carry two twelve quart milk pails full of water each trip from the pump, and it took two trips to fill the boiler and two trips to fill the rinsing tub with water. That would be about twelve gallons to start with the next morning.

Next, mother would start to prepare breakfast for the family.

We all had breakfast at six in the morning if dad was working, as he had to start at seven. The water in the boiler would be hot by then, the dirty breakfast dishes would be washed by mother, and four beds would then be made up by mother.

Next on the list would be lunches made for those going to school, usually about four, and two girls had to have there hair combed and braided after they had washed their face and hands and cleaned their shoes.

Then my oldest brother and I would be inspected and we would be sent off to school.

Our lunch would be two slices of bread with butter and brown sugar between, or sometimes homemade jam. It would be wrapped in newspaper or some white paper from the mill. We would walk about two miles to school down in the Glen.

Mother would start the washing after we had left and take care of three, sometimes four, smaller children. She had to wash the clothes by rubbing them on a washboard in a tub of hot water, then take and ring the water out by hand and put them in the boiler on the stove to sterilize them. Mother was very particular about this sterilizing business after dad had the typhoid fever when I was a small boy. Everything she washed, especially her children's clothes, was done this way as she never knew where we had been or who we were playing with, and she was just trying to protect her family the best way she knew how.

She would boil them clothes for about an hour while she did other work.

I fed the hens morning and night and usually did most of the work in the garden in the evenings. My oldest brother Tom was suppose to help, but if he could sneak away after supper or on a Saturday, he would be gone, and I would be the one stuck with picking potatoe bugs, or hoeing in the garden.

When we had a cow mother would milk it morning and night until I was able to milk it, then that was my job. I had to churn the cream into butter and for doing that I could drink all the buttermilk I wanted, and I sure wanted a lot of that fresh buttermilk.

When we had two pigs, it was my job to feed and look after them. We butchered them in early winter, and I switched over to taking care of the cow and calf then. I also had to see that the chickens were kept clean and comfortable with fresh warm water in the winter time.

I am wandering again so I will come back to your questions.

Back to mother and her washing, which she was doing about every other day.

Mother used to take in washing from some of the families that had the money to hire it done. She would go up to the Arnold home, the Arnold that owned the glove factory, and do a whole week's washing in a day for that family for \$1.00, all hand washing and ironing. Then she had washing from the Fleck family and from Doctor Nixon's home. It kept her pretty busy all the time, what with making new clothes for the younger ones in the family out of the older one's cast offs, and mending and patching everyone's clothes as well as her own.

It is no wonder that she worked me so hard, I was nearly always willing to help out, and I did want to please her as I thought she was so beautiful when she was younger.

About my experiences living by the paper mill ponds and right next to the bush on paper mill row. Well, one of the reasons that I have experienced so many interesting things that most people do not is that when I was a young boy I was always alone in the bush or by the ponds, and I moved very slowly and quietly when I was in it, so that I could hear and see everything that was going on. There is no one along to talk or make extra noise and break my concentration on my listening to the sounds in the bush, or my concentration on using my eyes. If I see something that I want to look at, I can freeze in whatever position I am in, but with a companion, that cannot be done so easily. Then I have the patience to sit perfectly still for long periods of time and never move, no matter how much the insects bite.

That was how, for example, I managed to catch that turtle for to make turtle soup.

It took me a long time as a boy to learn how to control myself to do this, but it was well worth the effort, and I have enjoyed what I have seen immensely.

Another example would be watching a ground squirrel. Ground squirrels are very shy and very nervous. If you move quietly in the bush and see one of them, he will right away dive down a hole in the ground. Do not rush over to where he disappeared, but instead freeze right where you are, and above all do not lift your feet up and set them down on the ground. That squirrel can feel those vibrations in the ground and he will not come out again until he feels them going away from the vicinity of his home. However if you have not moved and have remained with your feet on the ground and have patience, you will soon see the squirrel come up to satisfy his curiosity. Keep perfectly still and he will come over to investigate what he thinks is a strange stub of a tree that has somehow appeared in his domain.

I have had them climb all over me until they had satisfied their curiosity when I was a boy, then they would go about their business of scratching around in the leaves.

I seem to have got off the track again, so I will see if I can find my way back to what I started out to tell you. I get off on something I remember and it is just as if I were going through the experience all over again. It is rather a strange feeling, and I get quite mixed up as to whether I am a crippled old man in his late seventies, or a young boy down in the Credit river valley.

My wife has often said it would be nice to be old first and then young so that you would appreciate your youth much more.

I often wonder if it would be so good that way. I think it is much more wonderful to be able to remember only the way things were when I was young without pain or responsibilities, than to remember my older years with all the troubles and pain and disappointments that I have had. I think that things have been organized pretty good for the human race, if they would only come down to earth and live like we were supposed to live.

About my health. I have started doing exercises that I hope will be beneficial to me. I have given this matter a lot of thought and after checking what I can do and what I must not do, I think I have come up with some answers, and I am having some small success, although I have only been doing these exercises for a short time.

The things I must not do are as follows: strenuous exercises, extensive exercises.

I have been having a lot of trouble with my neck lately too. When I have an anginal attack, quite a large sized lump forms on each side of my neck, along the big cord on each side. These lumps are quite painful when they come on, and they try to cut off my breathing. I have started exercising my neck to try to fight them off.

I started off turning my head from side to side 25 five times, then to 50 times, now it is 100 times each night before I go to bed. Then I nod my head up and down 100 times. Next I sit on the side of the bed and, putting my feet flat on the floor, I raise my toes as high as possible, keeping my heels on the floor, then raise my heels keeping my toes on the floor. I do this 100 times now as well. I then lay on my back on the bed and try to raise my legs as high as possible. My left goes up quite easy, but I have to give my right leg a bit of help to get it started. I put my hand under my thigh and lift a bit and then my right leg will go up. So far I have only been able to raise each of them fifteen times.

When I started out I could only raise each one three times, so I think I am making progress. There is another sign that those muscles are beginning to wake up in my thighs: they hurt like the devil, and sometimes it makes it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep. And I think maybe this sometimes affects my dreams.

Last night, for example, I started dreaming that I was cornered in a bombed out old farm house where the enemy were throwing hand grenades in at me. I woke up to what I thought were the sounds of explosions from heavy artillery shells falling around me, and flashes from the explosions. I admit that I was pretty scared for a few seconds, until I realized it was just a terrific thunderstorm.

I sure felt very relieved when I woke up and found that I was in my own warm dry bed and could look over the foot of my bed out the window and watch the flashes of lightning come in and light up my room. I have never been in a war or under fire from one, and I sure would like to know why the experience seemed so real to me. I could even see the pieces of stone walls fly through the air when the shells hit the wrecked building where I was at bay from the grenades.

I will try and send more sheets telling of my travels and experiences in each letter, my vistaVision memories, as I have a feeling I am not going to last much longer. I may be wrong about this feeling, as I am not sick or feel any worse than I usually do, but it is just a feeling I have.

I thought you should know if sometime your letter is not answered by me.

Oh well, I am still all in one piece and feeling fine so I think I will get on to mailing this letter out to you now.

All the best,

and write back soon,

Sam

vistaVision Memories

The Norton Dog

One time, when I was about nine years old, I thought the world was not a fair place to live in, at least, the part where my home was was not a very nice place to live. I had been over to visit my grandmother Allen in Glen Williams and bring her a basket of watercress, which she liked very much. I cut her small lawn for her that day, and done some work in her garden, and when I started home in the late afternoon, she told me to stop in at Jim Norton's house, as he had a little present for me.

I did so, and he gave me a little puppy hound dog.

I could hardly believe it, for I had always wanted a dog of my very own. To me it was the most beautiful puppy in the world, and it came from a very good strain of hunting dogs.

When I got home with it, my mother was quite pleased with it, until I told her where I had got it, then she said I would have to take it back in the morning as she wanted nothing around her house that had belonged to any Norton. She would not tell me why she did not want anything that had belonged to a Norton, but just said it had to go back.

I was so shocked and hurt, I did not know just what to do.

That night I took the puppy upstairs and kept it in my bed with me all night. It was a good little puppy and did not make a noise or wet the bed.

I was up early before anyone else was awake next morning, and I had made up my mind what I was going to do. I decided to leave home and go on my own, and here is the part that I am ashamed of now - all I can say in defense of it is that I was just about crazy about having to take my puppy and give it back, after Jim Norton had been kind and generous enough to give me a male puppy for my very own - I decided to kill it and leave it in my bed and leave home and never come back.

I did choke that little puppy to death, and cried all the time I was doing it.

My brother Tom had two different pups at two different times, and mother even took care of them when he was to lazy to do it himself, which was most of the time, but of course he did not get them from a Norton, like I did.

After I had taken care of my puppy, I packed what things I thought I needed to start on my own in a little haversack that I always used when I was going to cook a meal in the bush, and I went downstairs.

Mother ask me if I was going to take the pup back that morning, and I said it would all be taken care of. She then ask me what I wanted to take my haversack along for, and I told her to put things in of course.

I went down the back way to the bush, and when I got out of sight, I hurried back out of the bush and got on the railroad tracks and headed south.

I got down about fourteen miles or so to Milton, and was just passing the station about noon, when a man that was sitting on a bench stood up and started walking towards me. I started to walk faster when he yelled at me and said to stop, that he was the law. Then I sure got out of there in a hurry, running back up the tracks the way I had come down there. The man had kept yelling at me to stop, but I kept on running as fast as I could, until I was all out of breath and he had stopped chasing me a long way back.

I kept on walking until I felt better and had got my breath back, then I began to get ready to run again whenever I came to a road that crossed the tracks. I did not know if the policeman was smart enough to phone ahead and have someone waiting to catch me at a road crossing or not, but I was taking no chances.

I got back to Georgetown about nine that night, and I hurried through town towards home. When I got to the top of the hill near our place, I got off the path along the road and climbed through a fence and I lay on the ground under some thick chokecherry bushes to rest up and be out of sight.

I was there quite a long time when I heard someone coming along the cinder path from the direction of town. I kept quite still, and as they were staggering along and talking, I recognized my dad and George Waite. Both of them were very drunk. They would walk a little ways, then stop and talk and argue and near fall over from the drink. They were talking about me and wondering where I had gone too and if I was still alive.

Dad was telling George what he was going to do to me when I came home, and George was trying to cool him down by telling him what a wonderful son he had, and that he thought that

I knew how to take care of myself. Dad said he could not understand why the puppy was found dead in my bed, that maybe it was a warning of what had happened to me.

Then him and George started to cry, and that was the first and last time that I ever heard my dad cry.

I backed out of the bushes, and as they were so busy trying to comfort each other, they never heard me.

I made a big circle around them and came up to our house from the back. I looked in the window and dad had not got home yet, so I walked into the house.

Mother started to yell at me and ask me where I had been all day, and I told her, for a long walk, and that was all I would say. She said she would get me some supper ready, but I told her I did not want any and then went to bed.

My puppy was gone, and I found out afterwards that mother made Tom take it out and bury it down back of the house in the little garden I had there.

I would not answer any questions about where I had been or what I had been doing. When anyone ask me where I had been, I just said for a long walk, and told them no more.

It took me a long time to get over my killing of that little innocent pup that had never hurt anyone, least of all me. My mother must of been able to tell why I was so silent with everyone, and why I wanted to always to be out of the house, the farther away I could get in the bush, the better.

When I would sit in a favorite spot of mine in the bush and remember how that little dog's eyes looked at me while I was choking him to death, I just lay on my stomach and cried into the grass under my face until I was all cried out. I usually felt a little better and would go off into a

deep sleep and sleep most of the day. I would then get up and go home, but after that day I got back from Milton, I was never ask where I had been or what I had been doing.

One day when I came home rather late after dad had been home from work for several hours, my mother was very red in the face, and all the kids were looking at me, and when I would look at them at the supper table they would look down at their plate. I could not understand what it was all about, but I knew that something was going on that I did not know about. After supper I went out to hoe in the garden, and I was only out there for a little while when I heard dad say behind me, "this is yours."

I turned around, and there was dad with a little spotted puppy in one arm. I just looked at him, and when he held out the puppy to me, I put my hands behind my back and would not take it.

He started to walk over to me holding out the puppy, and I said no and run around him and away down into the bush. I stayed down there for a long time, and I heard dad calling for me in the bush and did not answer him and kept myself hidden.

It was after eleven when I came back home, all the kids and dad were in bed and asleep. Mother was waiting up for me, and ask me if I felt better now, and I said I did. Then she started to talk to me very quietly and told me that everyone had their sorrows and I was having mine and would no doubt have more as the years went on. She said she understood what I felt about the puppy, and when I got older and could understand, she would tell me why she did not want me to have a puppy, or anything else from that Norton family, but for now, I would just have to trust her and believe that she did the right thing in not letting me have it.

She said if the puppy had come from any other family in the world, it would have been as welcome in her home as I was, but not anything from the Norton family would ever be welcome in her house at any time as long as she was alive and able to prevent it coming into her home.

In the spring of 1911, when I was ten years old the Barber paper mill dam was washed out and completely flooded the Barber Bros. paper mill. The day before it was washed out, I had spent most all the day down at the dam watching the water rise higher as it went over the dam.

There was an English lady there most of the time, that lived in the house next to where my family lived. She was very excited about the water getting so high under the bridge which was right over the top of the dam where the water broke over the dam. Her name was Mrs. Blythe, and she spoke a certain kind of English that I could not understand when she was excited. The ice on the pond above the dam had not started to break up that day and did not break up until late that night, when the two dams upstream in Glen Williams let go and both washed out.

Beaumont's dam went first, then when the ice and water hit Syke's dam further down the river, it went out too. When all this ice and water arrived at the Barber dam, it took the bridge and the dam both out with it and then went down to the Barber dynamo dam and took that dam out too.

I heard afterwards that the flood took out the Norval dam but I do not know if this was so.

I heard a great noise in the night that woke me up and I could hear a great crashing noise down at the river. I woke up my brother Tom and told him the dam was being washed out and ask him to come along and we would go down and have a look at it.

He said nothing doing, he was safe where he was and that was where he was going to stay, and if I started to leave he would wake mother and dad and tell them where I was going.

Well I was pretty mad at Tom for that, but I knew he would do what he said, and I would get a good tanning for causing them to have their sleep interrupted, so I settled down and hoped that Tom would go back to sleep real quick.

The funny thing about it was that Tom was a very sound sleeper and usually was very hard to waken after he was asleep, but that night he woke up twice when I tried to slip out of our bed and go down to the river to watch and listen to the flood. He caught me twice when I tried to get out of the bed, but he finally went to sleep just before daylight and I did get down to the river and found the dam and bridge were gone by the afternoon, but there was not much to see except that the pond was empty and there was lots of big pieces of ice all along the river banks, and smashed lumber and logs and trees piled up against the trees along the shore of the river and pond.

It was Saturday, the morning after the dam went out, when I saw all that wood and lumber laying all over the place. I got a rope and got busy and worked all that day and Sunday hauling a lot of it up into our yard. I had quite a high bank to climb each time that I brought a load to the bottom of the bank, and I would go up to the top with the rope and pull it up and take it across the old road back of our place and into our yard and just leave it there. I would then take my rope off and go down along the bank of the river and get another load.



Spring Flood, 1911 at the Barber Bros. Paper Mill

I was gathering up all the wood and lumber that was the closest to where the dam had been, for I knew if I could get all of it away while the neighbours were looking around the place where the bridge and the dam had been, they would not think of looking up in the bush on the other side of the river. I was leaving that for the coming winter when the river would be frozen over.

I hauled big loads on my sleigh that next winter, and there sure was a lot of wood hung up in the bush. After I had got all the wood out of the bush and everything above where the dam had been, I started hauling what I could find below the dam.

I was coming up along the road one morning with a good load when I met old Mr. Bingham with his team and sleigh going to town. Mr. Bingham owned the farm just across the river from our place at the time. He ask me where I was getting all the wood that I had piled up in my yard.

I told him and he said, "was there any more?"

I told him there was quite a lot still down there in the bush.

He told me to be there on the road at one in the afternoon and he would bring his team and sleigh and we would go down and get it.

He came as he had promised and brought one of his big sons, and we went down and gathered up two loads, that being all the wood there was left there. We took it up to my home and I was very glad of his help because it was an awful lot of work for just myself hauling all that wood.

When we were all through I told him that I was grateful for his help and that I would keep the road up the hill to his place free of rocks for him all summer without pay.

He said that we would settle that when summer came around.

He paid ten cents every time I cleared the rocks off the hill that summer and said if I did not stop working so hard, I would end up being a dwarf. I guess he knew what he was talking about, because I am only 5 foot 4 tall today.

I had another experience when I was about ten, down in the bush back of where we lived near the Barber Bros. paper mill that I have not forgotten. I did not know what it was all about then, but of course I do now.

I was going up a path through the bush one afternoon to where there were a lot of wild grapes growing, and they were ripe and ready to pick. I had with me a twelve quart milk pail,

and mother said she was going to make us some grape jam if I could get this pail full of ripe grapes.

Up near the place where the mill collected their pure clean water from several of the springs along that side of the river for washing the fine writing papers the mill made, I saw a big man sitting on a box. I was just going to walk past him when he started talking to me, asking me all kinds of questions, some of which I did not understand then, but I do now.

I answered him the best I could, and I think he could see that I was pretty green and did not know just what he was talking about.

He ask me to come down into a part of the bush where it was very thick and said he would show me what he wanted me to do.

I told him I could not go right then, as I had to fill my pail with wild grapes, and that my mother was waiting for me to come back.

He said it would only take a minute to show me what he wanted me to do, and he reached out to take a hold of me.

I had been expecting something like that and jumped back and started to run, with him chasing after me. He was a very foolish man to think that he could run me down. I was barefooted and knew that bush so well because I had spent many a dark night in it and could find my way around in the dark quite easily.

I got away from him in a few minutes and went up on the high bank along the path through the bush. In a minute or two I spotted him going back up towards where we had been talking, and where he had left his bundle. I filled my pockets with rocks about the size of eggs and waited for him just about fifteen feet away from the path he would come out of the bush on.

When he stepped out into the open by the box he had been sitting on, I let a rock go straight for his head, but it hit him in the side of the neck instead. He sort of staggered a bit and by that time I had another rock on the way. This one hit him up on the chest, just under the chin.

He was looking around to see where they were coming from but could not see me.

He went over to pick up his bundle and I got him in the left ribs that time. He let out a sort of groan, got hold of his bundle, and started walking up the hill towards the road, the 9th line.

I followed along the top of the bank throwing rocks whenever I came to an opening in the trees. I hit him several times, but my supply of rocks were getting low.

He stopped to rest about half way up the bank near the road and I had a clear shot at him. It was rather a small rock and very near perfectly round. I took careful aim at the back of his head, and wonders of wonders he fell like he had been shot.

He rolled back down the hill and then lay still for a long time and I was beginning to think I had killed him when he stirred, and in a few minutes, sat up.

I did not think he had a gun because no matter how often I had hit him he had not once put a hand near a pocket. I asked him if he was alright and he said he was, no thanks to me. He ask me if I was trying to kill him and I said no, but I wanted him to know that this was my bush and my river, and I wanted him to know that he would be hit every time that I caught him in here.

I said that I could have killed him by using a bigger rock, which I would do if I ever found him in here again. I told him he could believe me or not, the one sure way to find out if what I said was true was to just come in here once more.

I watched him get up and go out to the road and turn to the left towards the road going to Brampton, later called hwy 7. I followed along behind him until he went down what is now called No. 7 highway towards Norval. I then went back and got my pail and went and filled it with wild grapes and took them home and got scolded good by my mother for taking so long to fill the pail.

I never told her or anyone else about what happened down in the bush that day.

But this was not the end of it.

When my dad was up at the Exchange Hotel that night, everyone in the bar was talking about a man who had raped a small girl in Acton and was thought to be headed towards Georgetown. Dad told mother about it the next morning before going to work and gave her a very good description of the man.

When we came down for breakfast, mother warned us all to stay close to home until the man was caught. She told us what the man looked like and right away I knew it was the man that had been after me in the bush. Now I had to figure out a way to let them know where I had seen him, but still not tell them what had happened in the bush or I would never be allowed in that bush again.

Finally I came up with a story that I thought would pass, if they did not look at it too close. I told mother that I had seen a man that looked like that go past when I was away up near the top of a tree picking grapes when I was down in the bush. I said he was going towards the road that went towards Norval.

Mother took me uptown right away to Sandy McDonald, the Georgetown policeman at the time. He then alerted the police in the surrounding country to be on the watch for him.

He was picked up on the road between Norval and Brampton and was taken back to Acton, later he was tried and got two years in jail.

And I still had the freedom of my bush and river.

One day when I was twelve and my sister Mae was just about ten, and we were living down near the paper mill on paper mill row, we started out to walk about five miles up to the mountains above the Glen on the 9th line to pick raspberries. We had a twelve quart pail with our lunch in it, also a small ten pound lard pail with a lid to get water in it when we got to a spring near the mountains.

These were the mountains where the stone quarries were on both sides of the road. On the north side was the Bell quarries and on the south side were the Logan quarries. Dad was working there at the time and he had said that the berries were quite plentiful on the Bell side of the mountain, so that was where we were headed.

He did not tell us that the Bell family were pasturing their cows in the place where the quarry was located, or that there was a cranky bull with the cows there.

Anyway, when we got up there and filled our drinking water pail with nice cold spring water and had a good drink from the spring, we went up to where the berries were. I wondered at the time why there were no other berry pickers to be seen anywhere, just the men working down in the quarry.

Mae and I went looking for a good patch of berries and soon found one. They were black capped raspberries and the bushes were loaded with nice ripe berries. We picked for about two hours and had our twelve quart pail over half full before we had a visitor. We were right out in the open amongst a lot of big pine stumps that the trees had been cut off many years before.

I happened to look up and saw the bull looking at us from about thirty or forty feet away. I whispered to Mae, who was only a few feet away from me, to keep perfectly still and to not move in any way at all or not to make a sound.

She looked at me and saw the direction that I was looking, then eased her head around very slowly to see what I was so interested in. When she saw the bull looking at us, she was smart enough to recognize the danger at once, and kept perfectly still.

I knew bulls did not have very good eyesight, but they did have wonderful hearing and sense of smell. He was standing up wind from us so we were in no danger and as long as we were quiet and did not move, we were just another pair of stumps to him. If he was not curious about these strange looking stumps, we would have a very good chance of getting away without any trouble, but if he took a notion to check us over, we were lost.

He just stood there, it seemed like for ages, just chewing his cud, for which I was very glad, as it showed that he was not upset about anything or he would not be chewing his cud. I guess he got tired after awhile of just looking at two strange stumps, for he finally wandered down the side of the hill to where the cows were starting to lay down, and after he had laid down we again started to pick more berries.

We were both quite relieved after the cows had all settled down for a sleep.

Mae wanted to leave right away, but I told her there were enough berries in this patch to fill all our pails, and we were in a good position to keep our eyes on the bull and cows. If we moved around slow and got all our pails full while they were sleeping we could gradually work our way around behind part of a rock wall out of their sight and so get out on the road and go home. We would not have to walk around on the mountain looking for berries, not knowing when the bull was going to come charging out of the bush at us. If we had to run for our lives we would lose all the berries we had picked and we still might not get away from the bull.

Mae said OK, we would stay where we were and pick more berries and see what happened.

I told her not to move around with quick movements and I thought we would be alright. Well, we went on picking real fast but moving very slowly when we had to move to some new bushes. It was a good thing for us that the bushes were very thick and really loaded with berries, or we would have not been able to fill our pails in that one spot where the bull could see us at all times if he cared to look. We finally got all our pails and picking cans full, even our water pail. We left it until the last as we needed the water in it as the sun was very hot. When we emptied the last of the water out of the pail, after having a last drink, we filled it with black capped raspberries, and also our picking cans which we had tied to our waist with a belt.

Now came the job of getting those berries out of there without the bull getting up and chasing us, as we would not be able to go very fast as the twelve quarts of berries in the big pail was quite heavy. I cut a small sapling about four or five feet long and about three inches thick and we hung the big pail on that, and each of us took ahold of an end and carried a small pail in

our other hand. We started to make our way slowly up the hill to get a big wall of rock between us and the bull and cows.

It was hard work for us two kids, as we could not go fast as the ground was very rough with rocks and we had to push through a lot of berry bushes which made us bleed.

We finally got around the end of the rock wall out of the sight of the cows and bull, and the walking was a little more easy as we were now walking between good sized trees instead of brambles. We got to the fence along the road and I held the fence wires apart while Mae climbed through, then I handed the pails of berries through, and the stick, and was just going to get through myself, with Mae holding the wires apart for me, when everything changed for the worse.

As I had my right leg through between the wires and was starting to pull my left leg through, I looked up back towards the way we had come. There standing on a little rise in the ground, about ten feet or so from where I was getting through the fence was the bull looking right at us. At first I thought we were done for because he had spotted us and would soon charge. But he had his head up high in the air sniffing, and when I saw that I started to breathe again because I knew I still had time to get through the fence if I moved slowly and careful and without making any noise.

Mae had not seen the the bull, or so I thought, so there was no danger of her letting go of the wires and trapping me in the fence.

I got my leg through the wires and we let the wires back into place very carefully so they would not make a noise and start the bull moving towards the fence.

I got quite a shock when Mae said to me, “was that ever close.”

I did not know until then that she had seen that the bull was there all the time, and she had not panicked and let the wires go and trapped me in the fence.

We got our pails organized again on the stick and in our hands, and when we got back down where the spring was along the road at the bottom of the hill, we set everything on the ground and each got a piece of hollow reed stem and had a nice cold drink of water.

We sure needed it that day.

I then said we would rest for awhile. I ask Mae if she saw the bull when she was holding the fence for me and was she not scared.

She said she had seen him come up and stand there and was scared silly, but she knew if she let go of the wires that I would be trapped and perhaps the bull would charge at me and maybe kill me, so she hung onto the wires. She said I had helped her through the fence first so that she would be safe from the bull, now it was her turn to get me through safe from the bull.

Up until then I had never thought about my sister having that kind of courage and common sense, or that she would be so cool in an emergency, but I have never forgotten that lesson in how wrong you can be about other people.

My sister Mae and I became very close to each other after that experience, and we covered up for each other a lot of times.

In the years when I was a small boy, the winters were not real cold like they are now. Ten below zero was not often reached, and when it was, that was considered real cold. However we

did have a lot more snow then, sometimes as deep as four feet in the bush around where I lived at that time. It did not drift much, except in the places where the timber had been cut.

Most all the farms had fences that were made out of the big pine stumps that the farmers had dug out of the ground and dragged over to the edge of their field where they built them into long fences by turning the stumps on their side. Some of those fences would be ten to twelve feet high and they certainly protected the crops from the farm animals. When the fences were along a road, the snow would drift through the fences onto the road, and of course the traffic over the road would knock it down until the road was in some places high enough to drive right over the fence.

In those days the roads were never plowed out, and I have seen snow on the road in June where the road went through a thick bush.

When there was a thaw in February, and the snow would get a crust of ice on it, that was when us kids could have a lot of fun. We would watch as soon as winter started, for grocery stores to throw out their big round boxes that their cheese would come in, then we would get them home and make a homemade toboggan out of them.

Another thing we would do when we were children was to get two strong sleds and make a bobsled. We would get planks about a foot wide and two inches thick and about twelve or fourteen feet long. We would couple them together, the back sled being fasten to the plank real rigid, and the front sled on a swivel bolt so that we could steer the sleigh by turning one way or the other. We would get ten or twelve kids on the sleigh and go up the road on a big hill like the cemetery hill in Glen Williams, or Cut hill going to Georgetown, and come down that hill going fifty or sixty miles per hour by the time we reached the bottom.

There were no cars then to worry about and we had all the riders on the sleigh let people on the road know we were coming by yelling out.

The children were not dressed like they are now when they went out to play in the snow. As an example, I wore no underwear at all until I was 10 or so. I wore a cotton shirt and pants, called bloomer pants, that came to my knees and were buckled around my leg above my knee with a strap. I wore cotton stockings that came well above my knees, under my pant legs. I wore leather shoes held together on the soles with nails that came through the shoes on the inside and were clinched over to hold the soles and the upper part of the shoe together. Almost every boy I knew wore the same kind of shoes or winter wear.

They were very cold and I suffered a lot from chilblains when I went outside.

I had a sort of coat that did not quite reach my hips, and a cloth cap with ear flaps. For my hands I usually had a pair of woolen mittens that my grandmother knitted for me for Christmas.

My sisters were dressed about the same except they wore cotton dresses that came to their knees and cotton panties.

It was years before we ever had such a thing as a sweater or rubbers or goloshes.

At night we would place our wet shoes around the kitchen stove to have them dry for morning, and come morning they would be dry and hard as rock and make lots of blisters on our heels and toes before they again got wet enough to soften up so they did not scrape on our feet when we walked. Our shoes hurt our feet a lot in winter, but we soon got used to that. The blisters and the scurf, as it was called, that formed around where the top of our shoes rubbed our

legs above our ankles hurt the most and were quite painful until we were walking in the snow again. The pain seemed to get dulled a bit then by the cold snow which spilled into the shoes.

Our cook stove did not heat our rooms very much where we slept, as I often lay in that cold bed and watched my breath form steam when I breathed. We used to sleep two in a bed in order to keep warm, and we would curl up close to each other until one side got warm, then each would turn over and warm the other side. When we went to bed, we would cover our heads with the bed clothes and let our breath help to warm up our bed, and when it was warm enough for us to stretch out at night, we would go to sleep.

In the morning, when we were called to get up and get ready for school, that is when it took courage to get out on the cold bare floor, and we sure got our pants on in a hurry and got downstairs around the kitchen stove and got our stockings and shoes on in a hurry. We then washed and combed our hair and sat down to the table to a hot bowl of porridge and a cup of hot milk with homemade bread and butter on the side.

We were always glad to see spring come again so that we could go barefoot when we came home from school and over the weekend. We went barefoot all summer, but we paid for it in the fall when we had to put on our shoes to go back to school.

In the summer, Mr. John Bingham Sr., the man that owned the farm across the river from us, used to hire me to clean the stones off the road on the big hill across the river. The first time he hired me he said he would pay me ten cents for picking the biggest stones off the road and

Homemade Bread

Ingredients:

<i>3/4 cup warm water</i>	<i>1 package active dry yeast</i>
<i>1 tsp salt</i>	<i>1-1/2 tbsp sugar</i>
<i>1 tbsp vegetable shortening</i>	<i>1/2 cup milk</i>
<i>3 cups all-purpose flour</i>	<i>butter</i>

Preparation:

In large bowl, add the warm water, then slowly stir in dry yeast until the yeast is dissolved. Add salt, sugar, shortening, and milk. Stir. Mix in the first 2 cups of flour. If needed, begin adding more flour, one tablespoon at a time, until the dough chases the spoon around the bowl. Turn dough out onto floured board and knead, adding small spoonfuls of flour as needed, until the dough is soft and smooth, not sticky to the touch. Put dough in buttered bowl, then turn dough over so that the top of dough is greased. Cover with clean cloth and let rise in warm spot for 1 hour, then punch down dough. Turn out onto floured board again and knead briefly. Preheat oven at 375 degrees F. Form dough into loaf and set in buttered bread pan. Cover and let rise for about 30 minutes. Score dough by cutting three slashes across the top with a sharp knife. Bake for about 45 minutes or until golden brown. Turn out bread and let it cool on a rack or clean dishtowel.

throwing them in the ditch on both sides of the road. The hill was near a quarter of a mile long, so I took a garden rake with me and raked all the rocks off the road into the ditches on both sides of the road. I worked up one half the road and down the other half.

I do not know if Mr. Bingham had been watching from the bush on his place, but I was just finishing up at the bottom of the hill, when he came down the road. He said I had done a fine job and wanted me to take 20 cents instead of the ten that we had agreed on.

I reminded him our agreement was for ten cents, not twenty.

He said the last man who had been taking the rocks off would have had to go over it twice to get it as clean as I had done by going over it once, so since he had to pay the other man twenty

cents for getting it that clean, he thought it was only fair that he pay me twenty cents, even if it only takes me one day to get it as clean as the other fellow did in two days.

I accepted the twenty cents.

I was down fishing one morning in the Credit river, up near what we called, the Deep Hole, where we went bathing. From there you could look across the pond to the other side, to the hardwood bush, that belonged to old Mr. Bingham. His cows pastured in this bush most of the summer, along with his purebred shorthorn bull.

This one morning where I was sitting fishing I was watching muskrats swimming back and forth from a patch of bulrushes on the main land and over to the island where they had their homes in the banks of the island. They would get a load of bulrushes in their mouth, then go over to the island and dive under water and take the bulrushes into their dens in the bank. I was sitting on a log in dense weeds so that the muskrats or anyone else could not see me if someone happened to come along the path that passed there about fifty or sixty feet away.

Then two boys came down the path and I knew the both of them as they went to the same class in school that I did. One of them had a .22 rifle that his father had given him for Xmas the year before.

Just then, Mr. Bingham's prize bull came out of the bush and down to the water to drink.

The boys saw it and started shooting at it, each taking a turn at it.

I do not know if the bull was hit the first time or not, for it just stood there and looked around.

When the second shot was fired, I knew he was hit, for he jumped around and started licking his side. Two more shots were fired and both of them hit the bull. He took off through the bush.

By this time I had got over my surprise at seeing these boys shooting at the bull, and I made the mistake of yelling at them before I got close enough to catch them.

They turned and saw me coming out of the bush on the run, so they took off.

They were so scared and had such a long head start that I was not able to catch up with them before they reached their bikes at the edge of the bush on the ninth line.

I knew who each of them were and I went over about two miles through the bush to Mr. Bingham's farm. I told him what had happened to his prize bull and we went down in the bush looking for him. Before we went down there, he told one of his daughters to call the vet and the police from Georgetown to come at once to his farm, then we went looking for his bull.

We found him not far from the water, standing in the shade of some trees with his head hanging down and a froth of blood around his nostrils. We tried to get him to walk up to the barn but he would not walk, so Mr. Bingham's son, who had come down with us, went home and got a team of horses and a long stone boat and came down to where the bull was standing.

They moved the stone boat over so the bull could step up onto it and they put a halter and a rope on him and tied his head to the front of the stone boat.

Mr. Bingham walked along one side of the stone boat and his son drove the horses and walked along the other side. The team went along very slow and careful and the men had no trouble about keeping the bull on the stone boat. He seemed to know that they were trying to help him.

When we got to the farm, the vet and the town's only policeman, Sandy MacDonald, was there also. They got the bull into a nice big clean box stall, and the vet tried to do something for to relieve his pain.

Sandy McDonald took me outside and had me go over my story several times, but I always told it the same. I may have been off on the time the boys were doing the shooting, as I had no watch, but I think he believed what I said.

The vet said the bull was bleeding internally and there was nothing he could do to stop it.

The bull died that night and when the vet opened him up the next day, his whole chest was full of blood. The vet found four twenty-two calibre bullets in his body.

The two boys fathers had to pay for the bull and all the costs. The two boys were put on suspended sentences, until they were eighteen, and the law took away their rifle, and neither of them was allowed to own a firearm until after they had passed the eighteenth birthday.

What bothers me sometimes is, did I do the right thing reporting what I saw, or should I have kept my mouth shut and not reported it. After all, the boys were both around twelve years old, and I do not think the father gave his boy the rifle so that he could go out and shoot the neighbor's expensive bull.

Was the punishment too severe for the boys and their fathers? I think not.

That was just a dumb animal they killed on his own land, bothering no one just enjoying life as he saw it. Then there was Mr. Bingham to consider, who was very good friend of mine, and was considered a very fine man by everyone. He was out one prize bull.

In a field on one side of his land where the road that came up the big hill at the old paper mill dam, there used to be an orchard of about twenty trees or so. There were two trees of snow apples that I liked very much in the winter. I ask old Mr. Bingham if I could pick some of them to take home to eat in the winter. I thought it was a shame for them to just drop off the trees for to freeze on the ground.

He ask me if my family liked apples, and I said that we were a very large family and very poor and we all liked anything that could be eaten.

He said "I will tell you what I will do, I will give you that orchard that used to be my father's orchard when I was a boy for your own, and we were poor then too and lived in a log cabin over near the orchard. I used to eat apples off those trees when I was a young man, but now I have a big orchard near my house, so I am giving you that orchard to use all the apples you wish, and if anyone ever questions your right to pick them, just send them to me."

I picked apples off those trees for years and hauled them home in my two wheeled cart.

Years later, when I got married and came back to Georgetown to live, one of the first things I did after I got settled, was to go over and see how my orchard had been doing while I was away.

It was gone.

I felt terrible about it, but I should have know it would not last forever.

In the next spring after the bull shooting, when the ice had gone off the river and the ground had dried up, I used to spend every Saturday and Sunday in the bush along the river. I would take my fishing tackle, some matches, several homemade biscuits and butter, salt and pepper. I had a six inch frying pan hid in the bush where I had a bush hut. I would go to a favorite clay bank on the north side of the Credit river and when I had a nice warm flat stone to sit on, I would start fishing.



The Credit River Behind Paper Mill Row

I was not very anxious to catch any fish, I just wanted to sit there and lay back against the clay bank and watch the clouds in the sky drift by, and think. I did a lot of thinking about most everything in the hours I spent there, and a lot of dreaming about traveling in other parts of the world. In these dreams I was always

alone and I saw many strange things and went to many strange places. I was learning a lot of different things about living in these strange dreams when I had with my eyes half closed, but with my ears wide open.

I would hear the least faint sound that happened near me, and would keep perfectly still. Often I would be rewarded by having a muskrat or mink swim past right under my fishing rod. It was a pleasure to watch them with their soft wet fur so slick and rich looking, and how fast they could swim. I looked on them as friends.

To get back to my days of fishing, I usually caught some suckers, chub and quite a few rock sunfish, or shiners as we called them. I liked the shiners best because they were a sort of flat fish, about half an inch thick from one side to the other, about four to five inches long and about three to four inches deep from top to bottom.

They were a very nice tasting fish when fried in butter.

I caught half a dozen or so of them this one day I was there, and I kept them alive and fresh on a string in the water. Any suckers or chub I caught I let go as I did not want them that day. Then I built a small fire by the water's edge and got my small fry pan, put a gob of butter with salt and pepper for seasoning into the pan, and dressed out several of my shiners and laid them on a flat rock that I had washed clean in the river.

When the butter was melted in the pan, I put as many of the fish in the pan as it would hold and moved the pan over onto the hot coals. While the fish were cooking, I buttered my biscuit and was ready as soon as the fish were cooked.

It did not take long and in a few minutes I was enjoying a meal good enough for anyone. I cooked and ate until I could eat no more, then I cleaned up everything and went up to a spring a short distance away and had a nice long drink of cold spring water.

I used to have this kind of a day many times when I was young, always alone by myself, although there was once that I had old Mr. Bingham for company. He told me that he was coming down there to fish and would I mind if he joined me.



We caught a lot of shiners that day and I cooked them up. That time, I had brought a whole loaf of homemade bread and butter along, which he said was about the best that he had ever eaten. We ate a lot of shiners that day and he said he had never eaten such a good meal before, or enjoyed himself more, and that we would have to do that more often.

About two weeks after that, he was dead and buried, at the age of eighty-eight. I lost all appetite for those fish fries for a long time after and could not forget that gentle old man that enjoyed a fish fry with me that day at the river.

January 12, 1977

Dear Friend:

I hope that you and your wife enjoyed the holidays and had a good visit from Santa.

All our other children, except Lorne who lives in Oregon in the States, were over to see us and bring us presents and seasons greetings. My wife and my daughter Pat and her son and I had Xmas dinner together. Then Pat left her son Danny here with us over the rest of the holidays when she went back to work at her job in Geralton.

I was pleased to hear that you and your wife are now looking for a house of your own. There is nothing like having a place you can call your own home, and I am sure that when your first child arrives you will be even more pleased than you are now. I have not rented a home for many years and I can tell you that I have always thought that paying rent was money out the window. With rent, at the end of the day, you have nothing.

You said you were a little nervous about buying a place of your own as you don't know much about what makes a place a good buy. Well, it is like anything else my friend. You have to start somewhere, and in the end, once you buy a place, you can work on it to turn it into your dream home, no matter what shape it is in when you first buy it. About the only thing you really will have to watch out for is to make sure that whatever place you get will have a good foundation. You can change or improve everything else over time. In a funny way I think life is like that too.

Well, to your question about the spring I used to get nice cold drinks from when I went fishing when we lived on paper mill row.

If you walk up along the river bank on the old road



Crinkleroot

behind paper mill row to the bottom of the hill that goes up to the 9th line, you will see several springs along the bank on your left as you walk up the path. Also on your right as you go up the path and hill to the 9th line, you will see some marshy ground. If you look carefully you should see some of that Indian pepper, or crinkle root, as we always called it. You can eat the roots of the plant and they taste a

little peppery. The crinkle root will have usually just one

stalk growing up from the root with a group of leaves growing at the top of the stalk. Then if you follow the stream from these springs down back towards the paper mill, to where the pond for holding the spring water used to be along side the main river, you should find a good bed of watercress growing in the bed of the stream. If you really want to taste something good, take some of that watercress home with you, wash it good under the tap with cold water, to get all the dirt out of it and the little water creatures that hide in it. Then butter two slices of bread with good butter, put some salt on the watercress and enjoy a very tasty lunch.



Holding Pond for Barber Bros. Paper Mill (2013)

I understand that the holding pond for that spring water is a mass of weeds now. Too bad, as I used to catch a lot of three and four pound catfish in that pond. And I can tell you, they were very good eating and helped keep food on my mother's table when I was a young boy and dad was out of work, which was quite often.

Chilblains. These happen when you have ankle length shoes on in the winter. The snow gets in the top of the boots and melts and eventually runs down into your boots. You end up with your feet in ice cold water all day, and of course your feet are always very cold. The chilblains are the pains that are sometimes unbearable enough to make you cry, and that shoot back and forth through your feet.

Also there is a place around your ankle where the top of your shoe rubs back and forth on your ankle and leg and forms what the Doc calls a scurf in a day or two. After about three or four

days this starts to bleed and keeps on bleeding and is usually quite a mess by the time you take your shoes and stockings off at night.

We used to soak our feet in a bucket of hot water before going to bed to get rid of the chilblains. This soaking would stop the bleeding and soften up the scurf. We would then dry our feet good and smear on vaseline, which would stop the pain and loosen up more of the scurf.

In the morning our stockings would be dry, also our boots, which would be as hard as iron very near. We would squeeze into our boots and suffer with pinched toes until we got them wet and soft again, and then we would go on through another day of misery.

We had never known any different in the winter, so it did not bother us as much as it might the children of today.

I think that life was much more interesting when I was a boy than it is now, and people were much more contented and happy. Everything moved along at a slower pace, and people were more interested in the welfare of their neighbors than they are now. There was not a rush to get from one place to another, and I believe people were much more friendly than they are now. Kids at least had more work to do around home, and took an interest in doing it. Now they do not have hardly any work to do, and so have a lot more time on their hands to get into all kinds of trouble.

All you have to do is read in the papers about the vandalism that is going on now to see just what I mean. In my day all kids were taught to respect the law and other people's property. Oh we swiped apples and peas and corn when we had a chance from the farmer's fields, but we did not destroy property in the senseless way the kids do today, such as breaking windows in cars

and homes, stealing anything they could lay their hands on, or destroying town or private property in any way.

When we did anything that was wrong and were caught at it we were punished quite severely by our parents. Now the kids seem to know that their parents will protect and excuse them from all punishment of their crimes as far as the law is concerned.

I think it would be a good thing if boys and girls would be organized into clubs or groups, for training in physical culture and compulsory camps in summer holidays for a month to be trained in physical fitness, along with an education in how to be a good citizen. They should have a uniform, which they would keep at home and be responsible for, and as they grew up, a size to fit them should be supplied when they turn in the one they already have.

Sure, it would cost a lot of money, but, the government seems to have lots of money to give away on other programs that are doing no good whatever. We would have a healthy young people to take over the running of our country when they grew up, beside giving them a much needed education of their duty and responsibilities for the country they are living in and call home.

It would no doubt lower the crime rate, along with vandalism, and make our country a better place for everyone to live in.

You ask about the place I lived in before I came to live at my daughter's house here in Thunder Bay. When my wife and I moved back into the part of Canada that I liked best after I retired, the Rainy River District, I built a nice little home on 26 acres of land I bought, a home with all the modern conveniences. It was a perfect place for my wife and for me to spend our last years.

I should never have been pressured into leaving it.

That place had a small river, the Little Grassy River, flowing past the house, a big wild rice marsh that we could see out of our kitchen window and we could watch the ducks, geese and wild marsh birds and animals for hours. It was close to the bush where the deer came out to feed on our lawn in the morning and evening. Birds would come all winter and feed at our feeding stations right outside our kitchen window, along with the squirrels. It had good growing soil for a garden, and I had a very big garden with lots of berry bushes and strawberries also. I grew sunflowers there for seed to feed the birds in the winter and the squirrels.

When I built our last small home up there in Rainy River, I had it well insulated, and heated it with electricity and a coal and wood burning stove in the kitchen. It had a nice large bathroom with a tub and shower. We had a good well with a never failing supply of good clean, cold water with a pressure water system and hot water heater. We had a nice big fridge and an automatic washer handy in the kitchen. We had good TV and radio reception from Winnipeg. We were well back from No. 600 gravel highway so that we did not get any dust from it, and the breezes and swallows kept the insects busy so that we were bothered very little by them. We had bush rats that used to bother our garden a bit, but our little dog, Bambi, and our Tom cat soon learned them to stay in the bush where they belonged.

My wife had her flower beds and they looked real nice when in full bloom.

That little house up in Rainy River was perfect for my wife and me, and I am sorry now to have lost it by coming here to live in my daughter's house.

Oh, I almost forgot. About the Nortons, I never did find out what my mother had against the Nortons, especially against Mrs. Norton. I ask her many times, but she always put me off

with some sort of an answer that did not satisfy me at all. I do not know what it was, but whatever it was, my mother took it very serious, as she wanted nothing to do with any of the Nortons for the rest of her life. And if I got involved with any of the Nortons, my mother made sure to let me know that she did not like it one bit.

Well, I will close off for now and get this letter, along with some more vistaVision memories, into the mail. All the best to you and your wife. Write back soon.

Your friend,

Sam.

vistaVision Memories

Jollop

I remember the first building that I ever built when we were living on paper mill row. I built it in the summer of 1912. I built it out of old scrap lumber that I had saved from scrap wood we had got from the paper mill when the dam was washed out the previous year.

That summer, there was lots of dry wood off the big pine trees on the land across from the paper mill, and in my spare time I used to go over there and drag limbs up and back home with a piece of rope and cut them up with an old dull bucksaw we had at the time. After I met old Mr. Forgraves, who had a carpenter shop down the road aways, I made a deal with him to keep my bucksaw sharp and clean and I would keep his shop clean and tidy.

Boy was that heaven to cut those pine limbs with a sharp, well cleaned saw.

I was only eleven then, but I was much stronger than my brother Tom, and I would cut the wood up and split it until I had a very big pile behind the house for my mother to use in our cook stove and for heating in the winter.

I had been using two stakes driven into the ground to lay my wood on while cutting it into small lengths, but it did not work so good. I told Mr. Forgraves my troubles that I was having and ask him, if he knew a better way to do it. He said he would think about it and let me know the next time that I came down to his carpenter shop.

I went down the next afternoon and he had made me a sawhorse out of some cedar 2 x 4s and had it all finished. He ask me if I could carry that home, and I lifted it up and it really was very light. He told me it was mine and to take it on home and try it out, and if it was too high to work at in comfort, to dig some holes at each of the legs until it suited me.

I did that and was it ever good to have something to hold the wood so it would not slide all over the place. I had quite a pile of limbs ready to be cut into stove lengths so I went right ahead and cut up the whole works.

That night we had quite a rain storm and there were high winds along with it. In the morning I saw that all my wood pile was wet. I knew it would dry out when the sun got at it but

I began to think of how I could keep it dry. I had always kept the wood there so mother would have wood to cook with, but there was very little room in the house for storing very much dry wood.

I was thinking about that all the way down to Mr. Forgrave's shop one day as I was going there to clean the place up for him.

We also got empty hardwood bleach barrels from the mill for firewood that year. When I had cut these barrel staves into stove lengths I could see there was no place to store them either, along with the other wood I had cut up, to keep them dry.

I decided that day to put up a good big building to keep our firewood dry.

I measured off a space from the side of our chicken house about fourteen feet long by about twelve feet wide. I then dug holes at each corner, and about half way down the back and front sides, and along each end. Then I cut off posts from some of the logs I had salvaged from the flood for the front of my building.

I had the front posts ten feet long and the ones for the back were nine feet long. I had dug the holes in the ground two feet deep all around where the posts would go. I put the front ones in first with my mother's help, as they were all water logged and heavy, but I managed to get the back ones in by myself.

Now I had to figure out a way that I could cut the centre posts off so that I could get the slope right for the whole roof. I finally got them cut off at what I thought was the right angle and I worked at it until I had all the post sections spiked together and at the right height.

I had been picking up nails around where they were building the forms for the new dam for quite awhile, and I had one pail full of four inch spikes, and another full of two and a half and

three inch nails. I had quite a lot of different lengths of pieces of two by fours I had salvaged from the old, washed out dam, and I spliced them together to get them the length I wanted for studding, and I got some different sized pieces of plank that I used for rafters.

Now I needed a roof.

About halfway down into the Glen on the 9th line, where what is now called River Drive crosses the 9th line, there had been a big sheet metal sign, advertising MacDonald's Plug Tobacco. In the night of the big flood the wind had blown it down.

I went over to look at it, and it seemed to be the answer to my problem of mother having dry wood all the time. The sign was about six feet long and about four feet high and if I could get the wooden strips off it, I thought that I could drag it home and use it to make a start on the roof for my little building.

I went back home and got a little hatchet that Mr. Forgraves had given me, and a tin tomato can, and went back down to the sign. I split the pieces of wood along the sides and top of the sign and wiggled the nails out of the wood and metal and put them in the can. Then I went over to a garbage dump down the road aways and looked around until I found a long piece of galvanized wire. I fastened the wire to the sign through one of the nail holes and started dragging it home.

I had near a half a mile to go, and it was hard work and took most of the rest of the day, but I got it home and left it in the edge of the bush. I did not want my dad to see it or he might make me take it back. I knew my mother would pretend that she never saw it because when she saw what I was going to do with it she would be very happy to have dry wood all the time and not have to try and get a meal with wet wood.

Next day I got busy and straightened all the bent nails that I had in the can, and then nailed the sheet of metal up on the side of the house along one of the long sides of the metal, and then I laid the sheet of metal on the studs I had put up as rafters, with a slight overhang.

I then took my two wheeled cart that I had made quite awhile before and went over to Bill Evenson's place. He worked in the paper mill and had a lot of old dryer felt in his barn from the paper mill. I was pretty sure that I could talk him out of some of it as he was a very kind man and easy to get along with.

He was at home and when I told him what I needed and what I needed it for, he said sure, and to come down to the barn and he would cut me off all that I needed. I had measured each side of my little building with pieces of string, and I gave them to him and he cut me off the two pieces that I needed. I thanked him and hurried home and held each piece up and they fit pretty close.

I could not get them up before my dad came home that night, so I just hid the pieces in the bush till the next day when I would try and finish it.

The next day I tied the two sides of the dryer felt to the holes in the ends of the sheet of metal with pieces of spindle band cord that dad was always bringing home from the woolen mill in his pockets.

The side at the back I did a little different. I nailed it to the cross piece that I had put on top of the two posts at the back. I then nailed both end pieces to the wall of the chicken house. On the two back corners I put small holes through both pieces of dryer felt and put cords through the holes so that the ends could be tied together to keep the wind from blowing snow onto the

wood in the winter. I now could pile wood in this shelter of 24 square feet by about five feet high and always have it dry.

My dad never noticed my shed, although he walked past it at least twice a day until one Sunday when he was in the house and mother ask him to get her some wood. He came back in laughing and wanted to know who put up that contraption.

He would not believe it when mother told him that it was me and that I did it all by myself.

Dad said he was not going to have anything like that near his house where he had to live and he was going out and rip it all down.

Mother grabbed a stick of wood out of the wood box and told dad he would only do it over her dead body.

She told him that he was too busy with drinking up his wages and treating his friends to all the drink they could hold and was not the least bit interested in whether his family survived or not. Now, when one of his own children was more of a man than he was and did something for her that would make things a little bit easier for her to look after the family, something he had never done for her since they were married, he wanted to go out and tear it down. Mother told him he was not going to do that as long as she was alive to prevent it, and dad knew that she meant every word of it.

Mother told him that he could go back and stay with his drinking friends and not to come back home until he could apologize for his behavior in front of his own children.

I would have liked to have a picture of that building because everyone that saw it laughed at it. I did myself after I was married and came home from the west after being away for over five years. It really did look weird.

Dad was sort of sobering up at the time, so he said to mother, "if that is the way you want it, Elizabeth, that is the way it will be," and he went out shutting the door very quietly behind him. We never saw him again until about six-thirty that evening, when he opened the door and walked in like nothing had happened.

He went out again to where we had the washbasin, water, soap and towel near the end of the house where I had my wood pile. He washed up good and combed his hair, which I do not ever remember him doing when he came home from work, unless he was going out again. We were all pretty quiet at the table, with mother and dad talking a little back and forth but not saying a word about the night before.

After supper dad came over to where I was sawing wood and ask if he could help. I told him that there was a lot of dry limbs on the big pines across the river that I would like to have out of the bush. I told him that I got dizzy every time that I climbed up a tree to cut them off and he said he would go up and cut some off for me. So I gave him a piece of rope to haul up the saw when he got up in the tree and he was in business.

When he got all the dry limbs off that tree I showed him, I helped him get started on another tree and I started dragging the limbs up to the house. I had just made about four trips when he had the second tree cleaned of dry limbs, so I went to get him started on another tree.

Dad climbed four trees that night, and I had enough limbs to keep me busy for the next two days sawing them up and splitting them and piling the wood in my little wood shed.

We were doing fine and getting a lot of wood ahead for the winter.

That Saturday when dad came home about half past twelve and dropped his pay envelope on the table in front of my mother, mother was so surprised that she started to cry.

Dad told her it was alright, it was all hers to do with as she wished, and then he said, lets have some dinner.

We had our dinner, then I went out to get to work on my wood pile.

Dad came over and said, "your getting smaller working so hard, lets take a holiday and go fishing down the Credit." He ask me if I had any lines or hooks and I said no, then he said we will go up to the store and get some, or better still you dig some fish worms and I will go up to the store and get some lines and hooks.

Well I learned a hard lesson that day that I have never forgotten.

I learned that my father, who I had always thought was so strong and honest, was really very weak and easily diverted. He never came home until late that night and he was really drunk.

I got out of bed and put my pants on, and went out into the kitchen where mother and him were in an argument. I said to my dad that we could not catch any fish this late at night and anyway I had let all the worms go back into the ground, and then I turned and went back to bed and cried myself to sleep.

After that day, I never had much to say to my father for the rest of his life.

Mother and I would put in a garden each year, and mother would make Tom and I keep it free from weeds and potato bugs at first. When I took quite an interest in the garden, Tom started to not do so much work at it and it was not long until I was looking after the whole garden as well as picking raspberries, of which there was plenty all over the place.

It was there, when Tom was working as little as possible in the garden, that Mae got the ends of two fingers cut off with an axe by Tom, who had been fooling around with it. Tom, of course, denied doing it, and said that I had done it. Mother always believed Tom over me, so I got blamed for it. Mae eventually told my mother who really did cut them off, but I had already had a good beating for the accident, and it was one more mark to chalk up against my brother.

Mother did not seem to notice that Tom was laying down on the job and letting me do all the garden work. She did not seem to notice that Tom, not me, had hurt our sister, Mae. I guess she was so busy just keeping us alive that she never noticed what was going on.

Tom was the slickest guy at getting out of doing any work or ducking any blame that I have ever seen, except perhaps my father and my grandfather Allen. My dad would only work in the garden a bit, or cut a bit of wood if he wanted to get some money out of my mother for to go up to the Exchange Hotel at the railway station and have a beer or two.

While I was going to school, I had jobs on farms and market gardens around town in the summer holidays.

The first job I had was working for Joe Rush, who later was a big wheel at the Guelph Agriculture College, and a Mr. Bradley who was the man who helped start the Dominion Seed House in Georgetown, years later, just before the Hungry Thirties hit. His sister, Miss Bradley, taught me when I was going through the second reader.

When I worked for Rush & Bradley in their market garden, I helped set out thousands of cabbage plants, and I crawled along on my hands and knees through half mile long rows of onions full of thistles and weeds, with the sun burning a hole in my back for ten hours steady for fifty cents a day.

There were two of us boys who worked there at the time, and a hired man named Ernie, an Englishman just over from England by the sound of his talk. He pushed a hand cultivator down between the onion rows cutting off the weeds and thistles. The other boy and I went along after him, weeding and thinning two rows at a time, one on each side of us.

Ernie was the boss. If he was at the other end of the field and we stood up to take the kinks out of our back, he would roar at us to stop loafing on the job and to get back to work. I think he had experience as a sergeant in the English army. The other boy quit the second day at noon and never came back, so I had to put up with Ernie alone.

I made up my mind that he would never make me give up. I got so that I would swear at him and, as he was very religious, he began to not talk to me anymore because he said I had a dirty mouth. It got so that when I would stand up to stretch my back, if he was near he would look the other way and keep on moving.

No one that has not experienced it knows how nice it feels to stand up and stretch after crawling along on your bare knees for a half a mile or so, supporting your body with one hand and pulling weeds and thistles with the other under a glaring hot sun.

When I was working on the market garden, a young boy about my age was down at the swimming hole on the Credit river in the paper mill bush one time, along with a group of other boys from the Glen. His name was Edgar Price, and he was one of a large family of newcomers from England that came over here to work in Sykes woolen mill in Glen Williams. He was a skinny little fellow, with crooked teeth, and he talked like he had a bad cold in his head all the time. Anyway, we got to talking and he told me he tried to get a job in the woolen mill but they told him he was too small to do a day's work.

He said that he wanted to get a job very bad, as they needed the money at home.

I told him if he could be over at my place in the morning I would see if Joe Rush would give him a job pulling weeds. I told him it was hard work but he paid fifty cents a day for a ten hour day.

He said that was more than his 18 year old brother made in Sykes woolen mill, and his brother was an expert spinner. He said his brother only got 35 cents a day for a ten hour day, and he had to work steady and fast all day long.

He was at our place by six the next morning, ready to go to work.

Mother ask him if he had his breakfast and he said he did, so she told him to pull up a chair and have some more. He did, and the way he put away those pancakes we were having that morning made mother wonder if he had eaten anything all that week. He finally shoved back his

plate and said he had enough to do him and told my mother that he could not remember ever having such a good meal as that.

Mother told him if he got a job there today to come down for dinner and supper.

We went up and I ask Joe Rush if he could give him a job, as his family needed the money.

Joe looked him over and said he was so small that he did not think that he would last a half a day, but that he would try him out for a day, and if he was able to survive the day he would take him on for the rest of the season at fifty cents a day.

The boy had never worked in a garden before, but after I had showed him which was weeds that were to all be pulled out of the ground, and which were plants that were to be left in the ground, and how to thin them, I had to hustle to keep up to him. I told him not to go so fast, as it would be a long day and to just keep going at the speed that I set and he would have a steady job. I told him it was not how fast he went that counted, but was how good and clean a job he did that would get him a steady job. I said every weed had to come out, and the plants that were left had to be just so far apart and no farther.

He slowed down then and really did a good job.

By noon I saw that he was getting quite tired, so I told him we would slip down to the swimming hole and have a quick swim and cool off a bit before dinner. We did that and sure felt much better, as it had been a hot morning crawling along those rows of onions on our hands and knees. I had made him take off his shoes and stockings when we started to work that morning and told him to leave them off so that his feet would toughen up like mine. I said I never wore

shoes from early in the spring until near winter every year, and it sure felt good to not have shoes and stockings on.

He stayed at our place and had his meals and slept with me until Saturday night, then he went home to take home the wages he had earned that week, but was back Sunday night without his shoes and stockings.

We worked together all that summer, and on weekends in the fall, sometimes we would go up and help out after school when the crops were being taken in, especially when the apples were being picked.

This boy, by being out in the fresh air and getting all he could eat and a soft bed at night, had done wonders for him. Whatever had been wrong with him that made him talk the way he did when I first met him had disappeared, and now he talked plain and you could understand every word he said.

At first his skin had peeled under the hot sun all day, but mother used to coat him with goose grease every night before he went to bed, and again the next morning before he went to work. It was not long until he stopped peeling and got a real good tan. His face filled out as well as his body, and his swimming improved and he got much stronger. He offered several times to pay mother for his board, but she refused saying that his family needed it more.

There were sixteen children in his family, while there were only six at that time in ours.

When it came time for him to go home for the winter, he did not want to go, he had got so used to our place where he got all he could eat and lots of milk to drink, something he had never received at home.

At that time we were very poor, what with dad's drinking and being out of work most of the time, and only having what little money I could make and what mother made taking in washing and other odd jobs that she could get.

Tom was a lot like dad and he would not go out and try to make some money, and for some reason mother never pushed him.

Still, we did not lack for food at that time, for we had a cow and chickens and sometimes a pig. We had a good big garden with about every kind of vegetable and berry in season. I picked a lot of wild strawberries and raspberries on Sundays, and I worked in our garden in the evenings when I was home from work at the market garden farm. I could work fast in the garden with a sharp hoe, but it was picking the potatoe bugs that got me down. Mother would not allow bug poison to be used in our garden, as she was afraid it would get on other vegetables and some of us would get poisoned. We lived mostly off our garden and cow and chickens in the summer, and along with the large amounts of fish that I would catch in the Credit river, we were pretty well fed.

I had been over to Edgar's place once or twice and I knew I had a lot to be thankful for when I left there. I always thought that we were about the poorest family in those parts, but after seeing the inside of the home where Edgar lived, our place was like what a well to do family would have compared to what Edgar's family had.

Squalor and filth were everywhere, mixed up with children of all ages, dressed in some of the weirdest collections of clothing I had ever set eyes on. The table was loaded with dirty dishes and flies were everywhere. Most of the children were dirty and unkept, with tangled hair and dirty faces, and filthy looking hands and bare feet. Some of the clothes were too big for their

scrawny little bodies. The filth and smell was terrible, and I did not see how anyone could survive in there.

Over in a corner sitting on a box was a woman breast feeding a very small, wizened up baby that was so skinny, it looked like it was dead. The woman herself was very thin and starved looking. Edgar introduced her as his mother. This woman had no teeth that I could see, and I could barely hear her when she spoke to me to thank my mother for what she had done for Edgar.

I did not think at the time that she would live very long, and it turned out that I was right.

She died one cold night that winter, and Edgar came all the way down to our place that night in the cold to tell us. Mother gave him a good hot bath and a hot drink of milk and some cookies and sent him off with me to my bed, where he cried most of the night.

He stayed with us for nearly a year, for as soon as his mother died, his father deserted his family and was never seen around there again.

We could not keep Edgar with us, as mother wanted to do, because dad forbid it, so he got a good home on a farm not far from where we lived. When that farmer retired and moved to Brampton, Edgar was a young man and we drifted apart, as his life was much better than mine, and when his adopted parents died, he inherited the farm and did well on it with a real nice wife.

In the fall of 1912, it was not too bad when I worked in Joe Rush's market garden after school twisting tops off the same onions I had weeded earlier that summer, or twisting tops off carrots, especially early Saturday mornings when the dew had frozen in the tops over night.

There were also beets, parsnips, turnips, cabbage, and cauliflower to prepare for market. One thing that they did not go in for was potatoes. I guess it was because so many farms around Georgetown went in very heavy for potatoes at that time.

There was apples to pick, sort and pack, and they had a lot of orchards for those times.

There were earlier fruits that I helped pick and handle, such as cherries, plums and pears.

When I would be through at Joe Rush's market garden for the season I would look around and there nearly always was a farmer who wanted cheap help at getting in his potatoes, turnips, apples and cabbage.

That year, I found some plum trees under the CPR railway bridge over the Credit river, the old iron bridge, on the side next to the station. I had seen those bushes hundreds of times when I went over the bridge and looked down, but this particular day towards fall, when I was going to cross the bridge, something made me stop and really look at that group of trees. They seemed to be pulling at me to come down and look at them up close, so I decided to play my hunch that there was something familiar about them.

They were rather hard to get down to, but I made it, along with quite a few scratches and bruises on my legs and feet for my trouble, as I was barefooted at the time.

When I got up closer to them, I found out they were plum trees and were they ever loaded with the biggest plums that I had ever seen, most of them were ripe and quite a few were on the ground. I looked around, and then stated to pick all the plums on the tree's side next to the bridge and those at the top of the tree. I put them inside my blouse after tying the cord tight at the bottom. I must of had around fifty pounds of plums inside my blouse when I decided that was all that I could carry. I could not go home on the side of the river that I was on, as I would

have to pass within a few feet of the Armstrong home and pass close to the paper mill, and the Armstrongs, and perhaps some of the people in the mill, might go looking for those trees. I wanted to go down there in the next couple of days and get the rest of those plums so my mother could can them for that winter. So I went across the river and up the far side through the bush to the bridge over the paper mill dam and crossed over that, then along the bank to the mill ponds until I was back of our house, then up the bank and then I was home.

Mother had a neighbor visiting with her, so I went into the woodshed and quietly put all the plums in a basket there, then went into the house for to see if I could get some dinner, which I was quite late for.

The neighbour had her tea and then left and I went out and got the basket of plums and brought them in and at first my mother said I stole them from Joe Rush's orchard.

I told her that she knows that Joe Rush had all his plums picked two weeks ago and had she forgotten the money that I gave her that I got for working there picking the plums? I told her that there was lots more down there but I did not want her to tell anyone, not even dad, where I was getting them as there would be a rush every year to get them when word got around, and the trees would be destroyed and we would get no more plums.



The Old Iron Bridge Over the Credit

Next morning I was up early, had my breakfast alone with dad and my mother, as the kids were all asleep, even my brother Tom. I took two twelve quart pails that mother gave me the night before and was down the far river bank through the bush and then across the river by the

bridge and was picking plums when the seven o'clock whistle blew at the paper mill.

I had both pails filled before twelve and there still were a lot of plums left on the trees. I had a hard time getting the pails across the river as the water was up to my knees, sometimes higher, and I had to hold the pails up with both hands and take them across one at a time. They were sure heavy and I had to put them down and rest many times on the way home.

I thought that I would never get there but I found out it only took me about two hours or so to get them home and up the bank to the house. I had fitted huge burdock leaves over the tops of the pails so that no one could see what was in the pails if I happened to meet anyone on the way home.

I did not consider this as stealing as these trees were on the CNR right of way and were never planted there by anyone. Someone threw some plum pits out a car window one time, years before, and they fell down there and eventually took root and grew into trees, just like the strawberries along railway tracks. These plums were wild fruit and I figured they belonged to anyone who would pick them. I was willing to pick them and to protect the trees from being destroyed if I could keep others from finding them.

I came down the next day and picked the rest of the plums and before I left I removed all the spoiled plums from under the trees and every possible thing that would give anyone any thought of coming all the way down that long bank to investigate those trees. The cows that pastured in that field under the bridge did not bother the trees, for there were a lot of three or four inch thorns on them that sort of discouraged them.

Years later, after I was married and came back to paper mill row to live, I went down to where those plum trees were, and found that they had all been hacked down with a very dull axe or hatchet. I felt very bad about it as it had been part of my youth and I had kept it a secret for many years, and our family had enjoyed those plums when times were hard and money for food was scarce. It also made me very mad to think that someone would destroy those plum trees just out of pure malice, rather than wait for them to bear fruit and then pick it for their own use. It would have cost them nothing but a little work and the benefits to their family and its pocket book would have been well worth the effort.

Oh well, I guess some people see things different.

I worked for one farmer once, late in the fall of 1912, who had two days digging potatoes at 50 cents a day. I got another boy and we went up and went to work.

Most farmers gave you a good dinner free. Not that cheapskate.

We did not bring any lunch, so the other boy quit and went home, but I wanted that dollar for the two day's work, so I stayed and went over to his apple trees and helped myself to some apples. They were my dinner.

When he came out after his dinner he was mad because the other boy had quit.

I started swearing at him and ask him if he wanted his potatoes to get harvested or would he rather dig them out after the ground was frozen.

He just looked at me for a few seconds, and then took the team and started digging potatoes.

I could do a bit better with the other boy gone because I always had to hold his bag for him or he would spill his potatoes all over the ground when he tried to put them in the bag by himself.

Well, we were through the next day late in the evening. I ask for my dollar and he told me he did not have any money in the house but would drop in the next time he went to town and pay me.

I never did get that dollar. I pestered him for it the rest of that fall and all winter.

The next spring I found out that farmer contracted with the paper mill to move a pile of coal for a fixed price.

In the early summer when it started to get hot, I fixed him and made that dollar cost him many more. He had to put up a bond that he would have that coal moved by a certain date or he would lose his bond, which was \$200.00.

Well, first I swiped some jollop from the mill horse stable that was always open in the day time. It was in solid form and had to be dissolved in hot water. I took it home and dissolved it in some hot water and put it in a clean small bottle that I could carry in my pocket.



Old Style Lunch Pail

This man that was moving the coal by contract and would not pay me the dollar he owed me was in for a rough time. He brought his lunch with him each day and left it in the mill wagon shed until lunch time. He had his lunch in a lunch pail, the lunch in the bottom half of the pail and his tea in the top half with a tin cup fastened to the top. These lunch pails went out of style when the lunch pails with thermos bottles came in.

I would go down to the wagon shed each morning and put three drops of this strong laxative in his tea. It was very near tasteless so he never found out why he was spending more time in the bush than he did in the moving of coal. After he had finished moving the coal and had lost his bond because he was late with it, I went and asked him again for the dollar he owed me.

Of course he did not pay me.

I told him what I had done with his tea, and then I took the bottle of laxative, which was still about a quarter full, and set it on the end of his wagon.

He came over to pick it up, by which time I had a good start down the road. He did not move for a while, just stood and looked at the bottle then smashed it on the wheel of his wagon and started to swear.

I told him he should not have broken the bottle and wasted what was in it, as it was worth two hundred dollars and all the work he did not get paid for in moving the coal. I said he could have saved his two hundred dollars and got paid for moving the coal by just paying me the dollar he owed me for the hard work I had done for him the previous fall.

He then caught up some stones and threw them at me, but I could dodge them quite easy. He started chasing me, which was a mistake because being barefoot and with only a blouse and a short pair of knee pants on, he never had a chance.

He went to the mill superintendent Mr. MacNicol, a big red-headed Scotchman, and told him what I said I had done.

I was sitting out on the mill dam bridge railing and Mr. MacNicol came out and called me over to the office. He ask what I had against this man, and I told him the dollar business and the two days of backbreaking work and no pay.

He ask me if I had put the stuff in the man's tea.

I ask him if he thought I would do a thing like that.

He looked me in the eye and said he did not think that I would do such a thing.

That settled that as far as I was concerned, but this farmer came to our house that evening and told my mother all about it. He said that the reason that he had never paid me was because I was lazy and did not earn the money.

Mother ask him if he was through lying, and got between him and the door and really gave him a good tongue lashing. She said that he owed me a dollar and he was going to pay it before he left the room or she would give him something to remember.

He finally handed over a dollar, not to me, but to mother.

I still have never been paid the dollar for those two days of work. But I do not begrudge her the dollar, as it was worth that much to hear her work that man over with her tongue.

There was another boy I knew about this time called Frank who was adopted by Billy Gamble who run a small market garden on the corner of the ninth line and a road that came down the hill from College street. That road's gone now, I believe. Frank was adopted when he was about five years old and Billy Gamble got him to work right away pulling weeds in his market garden.

Frank had to be up working in the garden before he went to school in the morning, and as soon as he got home from school at four in the afternoon. Weekends and summer holidays he spent all his time in that garden, even when it was raining. Billy had some greenhouses that he operated all winter, and Frank had to work in there in the winter to keep the fires going and looking after the plants.

It was a funny thing about Billy Gamble, he had a son and a daughter around the age of Frank that he used to work their hearts out of before he adopted Frank, but after Frank was one of the family, young Billy and Susie never did no more work in the garden, or in the greenhouses.

Frank ran away from there the second spring that he lived there.

Old Billy had him picked up, and from what Frank told me later, Billy nearly beat him to death when he got back. Frank said he had not planned his leaving very good, but the next time he left, he said he would have it planned so that Billy or the police would never find him.

One morning when the harvesters were going out west for the harvest, Frank went west with them.

Frank and I had cooked up a story that we thought would fool old Billy Gamble long enough for Frank to get to where he was going and get hid out so that he would not be found. Frank was going on fourteen then, a little older than me, and he was a big boy for his age.

When Billy found him gone he came around down to our house to question me, as he had seen me a lot with Frank, helping him with his work. I told him that Frank had told me where he was going and ask me not to tell anyone. Billy offered me a nickel if I would tell him where he went and I said no I would not tell him. When he got up to a quarter and gave it to me, I told him that Frank said he was going to cross over into the States, and then work his way to San Francisco, and Billy would never find him down there.

Billy took off and got the police to watch the border while Frank was heading west to Alberta.

Frank stayed out west and I went to see him several times when I was out there, years later. He stayed out there until he was twenty-one, and then he came back to Georgetown and got a job as a section man on the CNR and got married and was still on that same job when my family and I left Georgetown to homestead in the Rainy River District in the Hungry Thirties. He may be dead now as he was a bit older than me.

If I remember right, he married one of the Cousins girls that used to live on paper mill row in the house next to the mill.

It was in the winter near my last year in school, that I first met Miss Emily Anthony.

She was a big, tall, strong country girl of seventeen that was going to high school in Georgetown. She was the only daughter of Andy Anthony who had a farm up over the big hill about two miles north of where I lived. She drove a horse and cutter to school in the winter and this particular morning she came along as I came out on the road in front of our place. She stopped and told me to jump in and get under the big buffalo robe she had over her legs and knees. She also had some hot rocks to put my leather shoes on.

I was already cold just walking up through the snow to the road, so I got in.

We talked, at least she done most of the talking as I was very shy at that time around the opposite sex. It was not long until I lost my shyness while she was talking, for she was that kind of a person who could make you feel very comfortable in her presence, and she soon had me talking to her very freely.

She was not what you could call a pretty girl, but just a good wholesome country girl that was kind and very friendly.

She told me all about their farm and what she did there when she was at home and what she was studying in high school, also what she planned to do when she was through with school.

She said she planned to marry a good healthy and clean minded young farmer when she grew up and have a farm of their own with several children and always live on the farm. She said that she just loved farm life and could not think of ever living in town or working for someone else as a housemaid or a housekeeper. By that time we were near enough my school so I got out and thanked her for the ride and she told me before she left that if I would wait and

watch for her, she would give me a ride every morning to school, so we could talk some more as she said that she liked talking to me.

Well I did ride with her quite often after that.

When my older brother Tom, and my oldest sister Mae left for school, I always made my chores last as long as I could so they would be well on their way before my ride came along.

My brother never had any chores to do before going to school in the morning.

I had to feed the cow and clean out the stable and water the cow by carrying two twelve quart pails of water from the pump, before we had town water in the house, about three hundred yards to the barn, and if the pigs had not been butchered by then I had to feed and water them also, then get two more big pails of water for using in the house and fill the wood box up. If it had snowed during the night, I would have to clear a path to the barn, chicken house, outside toilet and to the pig pen if the pigs were still there. When mother was going to wash clothes the next day, I would have to fill the wash boiler and tub with water the night before.

To this day I can not understand why mother never made Tom do some of these chores.

My father never did any work around home unless he wanted to get some money from mother, and my brother never did any if he could figure a way of getting out of it, so I was always the goat. Perhaps it was good training for me because it made me very tough and I learned a lot from it and the most important thing that I learned was to like to work and to work hard at any job that I took on.

This liking to work and doing a good job has kept me on the job several times many years later, when other men were laid off, so I really benefitted from being loaded down with work when I was a kid, at least that is the way I look at it now.

February 9, 1977

Dear Friend,

I got your welcome letter today and have already read it over several times to make sure I understood every part of it. Well, there is some news from around here to tell you about.

My oldest boy, Lorne came over to stay with us for a couple of weeks from Oregon, and he brought his new wife, a Korean girl, Po, with him to introduce her to his mother and me. We liked her right away. She had seen lot of misery in her life and she knows what life was all about.

I had a bit of a surprise this one morning when they were here.

I was sitting on the edge of the bed, naked as usual, having a big yawn with my eyes closed, and when I opened them, there was Po, Lorne's new wife, standing in front of me.

She said she had come in to help me get dressed.

Well I was so surprised that I could not speak for a moment, but the strange thing about it all was that I did not feel the least bit embarrest. I just sat there and thanked her and told her that I could dress myself, and if she would just sit down on a chair, I would show her how I did it.

Lorne and his mother were in the front room talking, and it seems that him and his mother have done nothing else since they had arrived. Lorne does not come up to my room to talk with me much though. I think it is because I am very hard of hearing and I think he finds it embarrassing to have to shout and repeat himself so much. And I find it embarrassing too, so I am pretty much left alone most of the time. So I did not expect anyone up in my room that morning, and I did not worry too much about not having any clothes on.

But there was Po.

Po sat on a chair and I put on my shorts and sweat shirt, then my pants. Then I went over to my rocking chair and showed her the invention a girl in the hospital had thought up for me to put my socks on with, as I cannot bend at my hips. I put my socks and shoes on, and then went to the bathroom and Po watched me wash and shave, to see if I needed any help.

I was not sure I should tell you about this because I thought you might be a bit shocked, but as you have said that nothing shocks you, here it is.

I did not feel the least bit shocked about it, just surprised.

I ask Po about it later on in a conversation, and she said there was nothing wrong about it, as she knew she had a body and was not ashamed of it, and she expected that I or anyone else would feel the same way about their body. It gave me a new slant on the big difference in the way some people thought of their bodies.

I think it is wrong to feel about one's body the way some people I have met do. I do not advocate going around almost naked like some do, but I do think there is too much thought about a body only for sexual reasons. I think Lorne's first wife, Grace, was one of those. I will tell you a bit about her a little later on.

When I go to bed I do not wear clothing of any kind, just sleep in the raw and there is a reason for that. Ever since I had my hips operated on, I have been unable to turn in bed unless I wake up and sort of lift my body up off the bed a bit, then turn. When I was in the hospital, and wore pajamas, they would roll up into big wrinkles when I turned and were very uncomfortable to lay on and made it hard to get out of the bed. I told the nurse about it so she suggested that I not wear anything at all. I tried that and it worked fine, so I have been sleeping like that ever since, and getting some good nights of sleep.

You do not need to apologize for your handwriting as I have told you before I have not had any trouble reading it. I wish I could write as clear as you do, but my hands are so useless to me now when it comes to moving a pen or pencil around the page that I have come to depend on my typewriter to write anything down. My teacher in the third reader, they did not call them grades in those days, Miss Melissa Ryan, said that I had the best handwriting in the class back



Spencerian Script Example

when I was a boy. Good handwriting in those days was a must and we sure had to be good, or else. Then when I worked in the shoe factory of the Dayfoot Bros. when I was 13 years old, Mr. Albert Watson, who was about 70 years old at the time, learned me to write the Spencerian Script. I was getting pretty good at it too when I had to leave the

factory and go to the Barber Bros. paper mill to work. I will tell you more about this man and the shoe factory one time.

I have had this typewriter I am using for many years now and it has gradually become a sort of lifeline for me for the writing of letters, and of course, for writing my vistaVision memories, which I enjoy doing very much. If anything should happen to it, I do not know what I would do. I only have my stereo and my TV and my tape recorder to keep me company and busy now, and losing that typewriter would be a big loss, if it were to happen.

I guess I will just have to make sure it does not happen.

It was my birthday since the last time I wrote you, and also my and my wife's wedding anniversary, as we got married in 1926 on February the 8th, over fifty years ago now. I am feeling pretty good, given the condition I am in, and I think, if nothing else goes wrong with me, I might have a chance at hitting 100 years after all.

My wife says she is sure I will. I hope she is right.

Well, I will now get to your questions.

You ask about the price of things around 1910. You could buy quite a lot for 50 cents or a \$1.00 in those days. You could get a 25 pound bag of flour, 15 pounds of white sugar, or 20 pounds of brown sugar for 50 cents if you knew where to shop. Also you could get two nice big steaks for between 40 and 50 cents, a package of tea of about two pounds for less than fifty cents. Butter was 30 to 35 cents a pound, depending on what store you went to. A single loaf of fresh baked bread was five cents, a double loaf was 10 cents. A dozen, usually 13 in number, doughnuts was 10 cents. They called this a baker's dozen at that time.

In the butcher shop, if you bought a little meat such as a small roast of two or three pounds and had a family to feed, the butcher would give you a beef heart or a couple of beef tongues, or perhaps the beef shank with lots of meat on it to make a kettle of soup. This would be free with your small roast.

When I was a boy I used to go down to the slaughterhouse with my two wheeled cart and they would give me a whole beef liver and sometimes two or three beef tails called oxtails to take home and make soup with them.

You sure could buy a lot with 50 cents in those days and people were more considerate and helpful too, I think.

You ask about my grandmother curing grandfather Allen of alcoholism by hitting him over the head with a barrel stave. My grandmother was a very quiet hard working woman, who raised a large family with a lazy husband who never helped her much. When he was younger, grandfather Allen drank a lot. But she cured him of his drinking habit in one argument with her husband, with a barrel stave. He never drank again after she got through with the beating she gave him, so the story goes, and grandfather Allen seemed to take pride in telling it when someone offered him a drink of hard liquor.

Grandmother would never say anything about her giving him a beating, she just told people that grandad liked to tell that story, and if it gave him pleasure it was alright with her. I can believe it was a true story, about the only thing that I ever believed about my grandfather's stories that he told.

Well, you ask after my health. I am in pretty good health, considering the condition I am in. I have been getting these anginal attacks about two years now, maybe a bit more, but not

quite as severe as I get them now. I used to get about one or two per day when they first started. Now they come a little more often, especially if I try to get up after I have been sitting around for a while. A 5 mg. Isordil tablet used to stop them cold. Now I have them several times a day and it takes a 30 mg. Isordil tablet, along with an Inderal tablet, each time to stop them.

It is true that they are more severe now than they used to be, but I do not mind them as much as I did. I suppose that it is because I am not afraid of them anymore, and I am now more confident on how to handle them.

I wrote up a section about my brothers and sisters for you for this letter like you suggested. As I started to do this, it suddenly struck me that when you come right down to it, I know relatively little about most of them. Some I do not know much about at all because they never told me much about themselves, others because they were too young for me to really get to know, and others because I was away from home at the time when things were happening to them in their lives. One of them, Annie, I know almost nothing about because she disappeared from the family over forty-five years ago and no one has heard from her since.

Well, I had better send this out before the mail comes.

Wishing you the best,

your friend,

Sam

Family Portrait: Brothers & Sisters

My oldest brother, Tom, was born October 23, 1899.

I remember when we were younger I made the first garden of any size we ever had when we lived on paper mill row, and I worked hard in it to keep the weeds down and getting the rocks out, but my brother Tom always managed to get out of all the work around the place for years, then he went into the army just when the first war started.

When he got back, Tom married a neighbour girl in the next house to the left of the family house on paper mill row, Phoebe Collins. Tom tried to marry the older Collins girl, but when she turned him down he married the next oldest girl, Phoebe. Him and his new wife bought the house on paper mill row next to my mother's place, and they had one child, a boy, who they named Roy.



Tom worked in the Barber Bros. Paper Mill for awhile when he came home after the first war was over, then as special policeman in Georgetown for awhile. Tom sold their house a few years later and moved to Toronto, where Tom had a job with the Hydro operating a substation until he died at the age of around 60 years.

I had never figured out why all my family stopped writing to me when I was up in Thunder Bay during the second war at about the time my mother died, until not long ago, now I think that I know. When my mother died in March of 1943, Tom sent me a letter telling me of my mother's death and asking me to send ten dollars to help buy a stone for her grave. This was right after the Hungry Thirties were over and the war was on and we were living in the Larrabee place up in Murillo, just outside Thunder Bay. At the time, ten dollars, if I had it, would have seemed like a fortune. So I wrote back to Tom and told him that I did not have ten dollars since we had just come up there to live and I did not have a steady job, so I could not send the ten dollars right then to help buy the stone.

Right after that none of my letters were ever answered.

The next year when I was working in the shell plant, I sent a ten dollar money order to my older brother as my share in paying for the stone. I found out years later that he had never told any of my brothers or sisters about it and instead had a good drunk on my ten dollars.

That was my brother, Tom.

My oldest sister, Mae, was born in 1903 and she married Joe Shevlin, who was also employed by Ontario Hydro for several years. They had no children of their own but did have an adopted son who is still living in Toronto.

When Mae died of diabetes in 1967, she was dead and buried before I received notice of it. I would have liked to have went to her funeral, and would have if I had known about it in time. She was a very brave girl as a child and a very brave woman as she grew older and I miss her very much. She married the wrong kind of man, but did not find that out until after they were married.

Joe Shevlin was a real gentleman with her before they married and she never knew that he drank a lot or chased after other women while he was courting her, but she soon had her eyes opened after they were married.

They adopted a baby boy from the Mackie family that lived near our place on paper mill row when Mrs. Mackie died from TB. Mae's husband learned the boy to drink when he was only two years old, but she fought her husband right along about that, and when her husband lost his legs in a car accident while he was drunk, he gave up the fight of trying to make a boozer out of his adopted son.

Mae was able to cure her adopted son of drinking and got him a good education so that he would be able to look after himself. When Mae died he took it very hard, so I am told.

I do not know where Mae's husband is now, or if he is still alive, nor do I much care. He was always a burden to my sister, who was a fine woman and really took care of the drunken bum when he was too drunk to do it himself. He was in charge of a Hydro Transmission station

near the Goodyear Rubber plant in west Toronto. Mae always took over the operating of the plant when he was stupid drunk and saved his job many times.

I ask her several times why she did not leave him and have a good life for herself.

She always said her husband needed her and she had promised to always stay married to him and that she would never go back on her word.

My next oldest sister Annie was born in 1904, and she married Don Forster. They had one daughter. Forster was a mean brute when he had been drinking, which was most of the time, so Annie waited until her daughter was old enough, then Annie disappeared.

Don Forster did not go with Annie and I do not know if he knows where she is.

I have often wondered where Annie disappeared to about 45 years or more ago, and decided to try and find out where she had gone and if she was still alive. I wrote to all my relations and ask if they had any information about her whereabouts.

I finally found out where she was, somewhere in Vancouver, and I suspected that Tommy Hempton, a man I knew who worked at the paper mill when Annie worked there, back around 1932, is not very far away. Then one day I received a letter giving me the address of her daughter, Grace, over in the States, who was now married over there.

I wrote to her daughter and received a very quick reply.

She said her mother was well and happy and wanted nothing more to do with any of her family that had treated her so harshly. But she said that she would write to her mother and ask her if she wanted her to give me her address in Vancouver.

About two weeks or so later I received a letter from Grace saying that her mother did not want any of the family to know where she was living as she had cut herself off completely from all of them and did not ever want to hear from any of the family.

It was a very bitter sort of a letter, but it gave no details of why she was so bitter against her own brothers and sisters who were still alive.

I was away from home out in the west living with my wife's family at the time of her disappearance and did not know what the trouble was all about. I had always been the one that Annie had turned to for help when she needed it, and I had considered that her and I were close friends, but her attitude now towards me was quite a shock.

I wrote some more letters to all my brothers and sisters and ask them to fill me in on what had happened while I was away out west. I got answers from some of them and none from the others, but the ones I did get denied knowing anything about it.

I wrote and told her daughter where I had been when the trouble, whatever it was, had happened. I did not have the least idea of what her mother was talking about, and if her mother was going to punish me for what the others did, there was nothing I could do about it. I told Grace to tell her mother that I was very happy to hear that she was in good health and was not in need of any help from me, and that I wished her a long and happy life as there were only a few of us left.

I ask Grace to tell her mother that my children were all well and had families of their own, and my wife and I were now all alone, and if she did not want to correspond with us, that was her right and we would respect it. I said that I would like to hear from her personally and resume our close relationship that we had before I went out west.

I told Grace that I was very proud of her for respecting her mother's wishes, and if there ever was anything that I could do to be of service to her mother, to be sure and let me know and I would do whatever I could for her.

I never heard from Grace in answer to my last letter and I have never written to her again. If they both want to keep their privacy, I will respect their wishes. If Annie ever does need my assistance, she may be too late in asking for it as I could take The Long Trip most any day now, a trip that we all have to take sooner or later.

The next in line, my brother Joe, was born in 1907. Joe married a girl in the city of Toronto. Joe never used to talk to me very much when he was a young fellow when I was home between trips around other parts of Canada. He was always interested in other people his own age, which was natural for a boy to be like that at his age. Now that he is older and is sick and in the hospital in Milton most of the time, he sort of hangs onto me much more, even if we are a long way apart.

His first wife died several years ago, leaving him with two daughters and one son, who are all married and have children of their own.

Joe married again a few years after his wife died.

His second wife was an alcoholic and Joe does not drink or smoke, so they could not get along. She liked dogs and kept several in the house and the odour got too much for Joe, along with his wife most always being the worse of drink when he came home from work. About four years ago he divorced her and then sold their home in Milton and divided things up between them and parted.

Joe rented an apartment in a new building in Milton for senior citizens and has been living there ever since, when he was not in the hospital.

It has only been the last few years that my brother Joe has been answering my letters.

My sister Maude, the next one in line, was born in 1911. She married Steve Norrie and they live in the town where she was born, Georgetown. They have one daughter, who is now married.

Next comes Stanley, born in 1912. He also lives in Milton now. Stanley has a son and daughter. He is manager of an Old People's Home there. Stanley was about five foot four, short and husky like me, blue eyes and blond hair, getting quite bald the last time I seen him, which was about twelve or fourteen yeas ago. He is very pleasant around the fair sex and around everyone when he wanted something. Stan was used to having his own way as a boy, very neat and particular about his person, but his morals were not very high at times.

Then there is Harvey, who was born in 1914. He lives in Georgetown with his wife Bessie. When Harvey stopped answering my letters, his wife Bessie started to answer them and I have been writing to her ever since. She is a fine person but the rest of the family treats her real mean, just because Harvey is an alcoholic.

I like her very much and think that she is a very much more superior person than those who look down their nose at her.

She sends me a bundle of four Georgetown Independent newspapers every month, at her own expense, but I would not let her do that, so I send her a dollar by return mail when I write to her to pay for the postage. She must love Harvey a lot to stay with him and look after him the way she does, as he does not treat her as good as he should.

They adopted two baby girls Barbara and Patricia, when they were first married and both are now grown up and married and have children of their own.

Bessie took care of my mother before she died when mother's own daughters did not have time to care for her, and then Bessie was the only one there when my father died after her taking care of him for years after my mother could no longer care for him.

As far as I know, I was the only one that ever thanked her for all her trouble and I am the only one that ever writes to her from our family, and those that live within walking distance never go to see her or make her welcome in their homes.

It is very disgusting and I am not proud of my brothers or sisters at all for their treatment of this wonderful woman.

In the years that Bessie and I have been writing to one another, she has never said a word to me against any of them and that makes me mighty proud of her and shows that she has more character than they have. It is not hard to read between the lines of her letters to see that she feels this denial of her right to belong to the family hurts her very much, and I try very hard in my letters to let her know that as far as my wife and I are concerned, she is one of the family.

Why she wants to be one of such a family, I may never know, but she thinks it is important to belong, so that is the way it is.

Then there is Harry, the youngest, born in 1917, who lives in Georgetown. I do not know the last name of the girl he married, but her given name was Olga. I do not know how many children they have or anything about the family.

I have not seen Harvey or Harry since they were little fellows of about eight or nine. I have written to both and sent them cards at Xmas, but except for Bessie, Harvey's wife, who

writes to me quite regular and sends me the Independent paper, I do not hear from Harvey or Harry or any of the rest, except Joe once in a while.

I used to write to my brothers for awhile but they were not of a mind to write to me, and when I had written to them several times without an answer, I stopped writing to them. I used to write to my sisters too, and they used to answer my letters after a long delay, then my sister Mae died and my other sister Maud stopped writing to me as well as all my brothers.

My oldest brother Tom died an alcoholic at the age of sixty, and my second youngest brother is still living, an alcoholic. My oldest sister Mae married an alcoholic, and both are dead now. My other three brothers and myself do not drink so I think we came out of it fairly good with having a father who was an alcoholic. My other two sisters do not drink as far as I know, although I have not heard from them for many years.

We never had what you could call a family reunion. They all came home, those that were not home, when I arrived back from Calgary after I was married, and of course when my wife came down later, they all came home to pick her to pieces.

I do not know really why it is that none of my brothers or sisters, except Joe, answer my letters, but now I really do not care very much, as I think that if they do not want to write, that is their privilege and their own choice. I have made my own way in this world and raised our own family of seven with a lot of work and help from my good wife, and so I do not owe my family anything. I never ask them for any help, and of course I never got any from them, so there are no regrets, nor do I feel that I owe them anything.

vistaVision Memories

Ear Worms

One time, in the summer of 1912, four big touring cars came into Georgetown and stopped in front of McGibbon's Hotel on Main street. It was towards the end of the summer holidays and a lot of us kids were in town. We gathered around these cars to have a look at the people who were in them.

There were about twenty men and women in the cars, and they were a tough looking bunch, and the cars were loaded with a lot of stuff tied onto carriers on the roof.

One fellow with an enormous mustache got out of the lead car and made a speech. He said they were going to set up in the park, and there would be shows and games for everyone that evening. There would be no charge to enter the park, and everyone was welcome. The shows would start at eight sharp, and he told everyone to come and enjoy themselves.

When dad came home that day I told him about the show. He hurried through his supper and shaved and dressed in clean but old clothes and left for town.

Mother said there was going to be trouble in town and I must stay at home.

I did not want to disobey my mother, but I wanted to see what went on in town, or in the park if that was where the trouble was going to be. I took my fishing pole and a can of worms and went down to the pond back of our place. Mother watched me go and I guess she thought I was set for the evening, but I hid my pole and worms in some brush and run up through the bush to where the path comes out on the ninth line, then went up through College street to town, running all the way.

I was bare footed as usual, so it did not take me long to get to the centre of town.

There were very few people on the streets, so I started running for the park and was there in a few minutes.

I kept close along the buildings until I got into the bush around the park, then I began to look around. I saw several tents that had been put up along the edge of the park with a bigger tent out in the open land. There were some people going to the big tent, but I noticed that there were only men around the smaller tents.

I had hidden under a cedar tree that had the lowest branches bent down touching the ground. I heard a lot of rustling in the leaves in the bush behind me and I crawled under the branches of my tree to that side to see what was going on.

There were a whole lot of men with clubs in their hands standing in the bush just outside the park whispering. They started to move towards the tree where I was hiding, then I recognized Sandy MacDonald, the town policeman, and I knew then who they were and what was going to happen.

I got up right along side my tree, close as I could get to the trunk, and listened.

Sandy told them that each pair of men were to go to the tents he had mentioned for them to go to and carry out his orders, then he said, "lets go."

They walked towards the tents and when they were all in position they went in. Then the fur began to fly. Some town men who were in the tents run out and took to their heels. Then I could hear blows and yells and swearing, then the men with clubs at the tent nearest to where I was came out dragging another man. In some of the tents there were two strange men, and they were the ones that were being dragged out.

When they had all the men out of the tents, the men with the clubs pulled bottles out of their pockets. I thought they were all going to have a drink to celebrate their success, but they did not drink. They poured the contents of the bottles on the tents and what was inside, then touched a match to them, and they started the tents and everything in them to burn fiercely.

I watched for awhile, and then remembered that it was getting quite dark and that I had better get home before my mother started to worry about where I was.

The Georgetown fire department were already on the job but they were not trying to put the fires out.

I started out of the park in all the confusion.

I do not think anyone paid me much notice in the shadows cast by the fires, and I got home in a very short time by taking short cuts which I could do now as it was very dark. When I went into the house, my mother ask me where my fish were and I told her I guess that they were still in the river as they were not biting for me tonight.

It was not an outright lie, so I did not feel so bad about deceiving her.

I had learned a lot that night, but I did not get the full story until after I was married, years later, when I was back living in paper mill row in a house of my own. I heard my dad tell it to one of the men he was working with at the mill, and I will try and tell the story now as my dad told it.

When I told my dad at the supper table about the strangers in town, he knew there would be trouble that night. The strangers had not ask for a permit to use the park, so Sandy knew they were crooks. He had all his volunteer police told to come to the town hall where they got their clubs, bottles of coal oil, and orders. Sandy had checked each tent, and found out what they were planning for the night, and how many operators would be in each tent.

His men were to go in and smash things up, and if the operators objected, they were to be knocked out with clubs. Then they were to empty their bottles of coal oil over the tents and what they contained, and then set the tents on fire. The men and women were to be put in their cars, the men that were knocked out were to be brought around under the tap so that they could drive their cars. They were to be told that if they ever came back to Georgetown they would be tarred and feathered and rode out of town on a rail, and their cars would be destroyed.

They never came back as far as I know.

Every game they had in those tents was rigged and while they did not get very much, \$100.00 was taken from them before they were allowed to leave and turned over to the town's charitable organizations.

When I was a young fellow, Sandy McDonald was the only police officer in Georgetown. He was an old man with white hair and a big white moustache. He was very popular with most everyone. He looked after all the police duties, as well as the waterworks, and was the treasurer's office as well as town electrician. All the kids were fond of him as they liked to listen to his stories, which he was always ready to tell, even if he had only had one child for an audience.

In the summer holidays when he sometimes would be digging up leaky pipe, I used to follow him to watch what he was doing and help out when I could, or just as often, to get in his way. He would work away in his long rubber boots, all the time talking in his Scotch accent, telling me stories of his life as a young fellow when he lived in Scotland.

I thought Scotland was a wonderful country the way he told it, and I told him that someday, when I grew up, I was going over to Scotland and see all of those places he was telling me about. He told me to let him know when I was going, and he would go with me and show me all around the whole of Scotland.

I believed him, never thinking that he would be dead before I was many years older. I missed that old man and his stories of Scotland very much, and I have never forgotten just what he looked like and how his voice sounded.

When he would find a man too drunk to know what he was doing, I don't think he ever put one in the jail. He would always take him by the arm and help him home and not report him at all. Of course if the man was violent, Sandy would bundle him up to the jail in the town hall and make him comfortable in a cell and lock him up until eight in the morning, then if the fellow

was sober and there had been no complaint laid against him, Sandy would turn him loose and tell him not to let it happen again.

Sandy was liked by most everyone, except perhaps a few of the church people who thought he should crack down on more of the drunks, but generally, he kept things pretty quiet in town.

He had his biggest troubles when a circus or traveling show came into town for a few days. Then a funny thing would happen in the town. The drunks that Sandy would have helped home at any other time were never drunk, but instead were completely sober and were his deputy police force during all the time the strangers were in town.

I know this to be a fact, as my dad had been helped home more times by Sandy than I think had anyone else. These so called drunks were a tough bunch of deputy police men and strangers obeyed the law when in Georgetown and did not get away with any funny stuff.

My dad did not drink so much while he was on Sandy's unofficial police force, and I think if Sandy had live a few more years, my dad would have quit drinking altogether, and the good that was in him would have started to come out. I know my mother would have had a more happier life, which would have been very good for all of us, I am sure. It would have been very good for dad too, as I do not think he was a happy man living the way he did, being drunk so often. It must have affected his body and his mind sometimes when he suffered a hangover. I have heard quite often that a hangover is not very pleasant.

I think Sandy died sometime in 1914, but I am not sure as to the date or the year. All I know is that when I did not see him for a long time I ask my dad where he was and he said the old fool was dead.

I never forgot my dad calling Sandy a fool, because he was not a fool. He was a very kind and sympathetic person, with always a kind word and a good excuse for peoples failings. My dad used to say that Sandy was not as old as he looked when he got into a scrap with someone he was arresting. He said Sandy could handle himself real well. Sandy liked his drink, like a lot of people did at that time, but I never saw him drunk in the short time that I knew him. He was a good officer and Georgetown should feel very proud of him.

I went picking strawberries one time, just outside Georgetown along the railway tracks on the other side of the iron bridge. We had two days of rain just before I went, and I thought the berries would be plentiful. I had been picking for quite a while in this patch of berries, when I saw something move in a patch of long grass and I went over there on my hands and knees and carefully parted the grass, and there was a very young rabbit. I reached in and picked it up and as I looked it over, I discovered a hole behind each ear. As I was looking at one of these holes, a fat worm came out to the edge of the hole and then ducked back into the hole. I was still able to see the worm, and when I looked into the hole behind its other ear I could see an ear worm there too.

I put the little rabbit in my jacket pocket and finished filling my pail with berries and went home.

I ask my mother for a long darning needle and went out on the back porch and waited for the worms to put their heads up again. When they did I stuck the darning needle through their heads and pulled them out. I waited to see if there were any more, but found there were no more

in those holes. I looked the rabbit's body over real careful, but did not find any more holes, so I went in the house and got the jar of vaseline and filled the holes with it. I then got an old wooden box and some fine chicken wire and made a home and a yard for the little rabbit.

I went up into the garden and got some lettuce leaves and some sour grass and put it in the yard for the rabbit. It started eating the lettuce right away and when it had finished that, it started on the sour grass. I got a small pan and put some cold water in it and he had a good long drink out of that, then started washing his face, just like a cat does.

I was learning a lot about wild rabbits that I had not known before.

I kept him for over a month until the holes were all healed up, then one day I took him down to where I had found him, but he did not seem to want to leave, he just stayed there and when I would move away he would hop along behind me. I finally crawled through the fence and went into the bush with him following me. I sat down with my back against a tree and watched him hop around and explore. Soon he was out of sight and I got up quietly and left the bush.

He did not follow and I was glad in a way that he was back where he belonged, although I knew that I was going to miss him as I had become quite attached to the little fellow.

I never went out hunting rabbits in those woods again after that, as I did not want to have saved him from those ear worms, just so that I could go out and perhaps shoot him someday.

When I was about 13 years old, there was an old man that lived in part of a two story white house on Main street west in Georgetown, close to where Main street joined No. 7 Highway. His name was Bert Kentner. He was a very old man, I would say about around seventy or more. He was very thin and he had a great sense of humour and a bushy red mustache. He was very slow moving and liked a nip of whiskey when he could get it. He had an old phonograph, one of those old ones with a big horn on it, and Bert was always playing it whenever I went there.

I believe he was related to the Logan family in some way. Norman and Tom Logan and I used to go and see him quite often and chip in and take him a load of groceries and tobacco, and once in a while, we would get a bottle of whiskey from a bootlegger and take him that too as he liked whiskey very much.

I do not know how he got his food or paid his rent as he had no money and could not work, and I know the food we took him did not feed him very long.

When he had a nip or two from his bottle he would start and tell stories, and what stories they were. We would sit there and listen to him for hours, and I do not remember him ever telling the same story twice all the times we went to see him. He told so many stories about when he was a young man and I wish I could remember the way he told them, but they are all mixed up in my mind. I do remember that we enjoyed them very much, and he was a good and very interesting story teller.

I did not know him for very long though.

When I came back to my mother's place from Trenton after the first war, Bert had passed on, taking his stories with him.

I would have liked to have been able to put his stories on paper. They were mostly about the early days in Georgetown and Glen Williams, and it seemed like he knew all about the people that first came there to live.

Bert Kentner would sometimes dance for the Logan boys and I, and for an old man, he could step dance real good. Between his dancing, story telling and singing, he used to put on a very entertaining evening, and we all enjoyed it very much, and to me at least it will always be one of the highlights of my youth. Here was a man who had nothing except his old phonograph with some records, who could not work or get around very good, who was without any income, yet he could be happy and entertaining and I never heard him complain or say anything bad about anyone. He was getting all the enjoyment out of life that he could, and as far as I know, right up to the end he was a happy man.

When I think about Bert, I cannot ever remember seeing him in a hurry.

Of course in those days I do not remember very many people ever being in a hurry to get somewhere, usually they walked and took their time and enjoyed the walk. There was no rushing up and down the streets, and in and out of stores like they had only so much time to do it. People had time to stop and pass the time of day with you, and enquire how your family was, and how you were getting along, and about your well being. Now it is like a mad house when you go to town, everyone is rushing around like their life depended on them getting to where they are going as soon as possible. People bump into you in stores and on the sidewalks, and rush on without even speaking to apologize for bumping into you.

I stayed at school in Glen Williams when we lived on paper mill row in the house my mother rented until I past my entrance to high school, then I went to work to help mother support the family because dad was not holding a job much again.

When I was a boy of 13 or so, there were several interesting families that lived in the house on paper mill row that I eventually bought, years later, for my wife and I when we moved back to Georgetown from out west.

There was an English family that were living there when my mother first moved us all from the old Academy to paper mill row to live by the name of Blythe. There was the husband, Tom Blythe, his wife and one son, Cecil, nine years old. They also had a friend of the family living with them as a boarder, a man named Fred Lays. Both the men worked in Barber's paper mill. After living in that house for three years or so, the Blythe's moved to Toronto, the boarder moved away, and I heard no more about them.

The next family to move in there after the Blythes was a man and wife. I just know the name of the woman, not the man. It was Lorraine, and she was a very beautiful woman about twenty or twenty-one, with very black hair and black eyes. Her skin was an olive color and she had very white even teeth.

Her husband had black hair with black eyes and an olive complexion. He was always smiling, but it was not a warm smile like the woman's. His smile seemed more like something he put on, like a mask. He spent most of his time, when he was at home, just sitting on the front porch playing a mandolin and singing in a strange language. He had no job that I ever knew of, and they had no furniture at all in the house. They did all their cooking out in the back yard, and

when I got a chance to look in the house when the door was open on a hot day, all I could see was some bedding in one corner of the front room and two big suitcases along the wall.

I found them to be quite strange and not very friendly.

They would both go away just as it was getting dark on some nights, and one night when I was sleeping out on the lawn because it was too hot to sleep in my mother's house, I saw them both coming home just as it started to get light in the morning. Each had sack over their shoulder that seemed to have quite a load in it.

I never did find out what it was they had in the sacks.

I slipped through the fence one time shortly after that early in the morning and tried to look in the windows which had no curtains on them. There were no lights in the house and it was still too dark outside for to give very much light through the windows, so I went back home and rolled up in my blankets again and went back to sleep. But I was more interested than ever in those people, and in what they did under cover of darkness.

At that time, there was quite a kerfuffle going on in town. But I was not quite old enough to figure out from the talk I heard around our table at meal time between my father and mother just what was going on in town.

We did not get the weekly Georgetown Herald at that time. Sometimes Dad would bring home a Toronto Star Weekly on a Saturday night, but there was never any news about what went on in our town in it. Then one day, when I was uptown around noon and was snooping around the trash behind the stores to see what I could find that might be useful to me, I came across a Georgetown Herald. It was about two weeks old, but to me it was full of information.

It seems there had been a rash of things missing from most every store in town. There were no signs whatever that they had been broken into, but still a lot of things were missing from these stores, and the Provincial police who had been brought in to solve the mystery were not making any headway. They seemed to think it was either the employees or shop lifters that were the ones that were responsible for the missing goods.

Thinking it over now, it seems stupid to me that the police would suspect the store employees in a case like that, where every store was missing goods at the same time. I knew some of the employees that quit their jobs because of the way the police was watching them. However I took this Herald back home with me and read it over so much it was just about wore out.

I began to suspect these two neighbors right next door to my mother's house, but did not know just what to do about it, after all, I was really still just a kid of 13, and who would listen to a kid's suspicions?

I thought it over for several days, and then one day I came up with the answer to who would listen to me: Sandy McDonald. I was pretty sure he would listen to me and not laugh at what I had to tell him, so I went uptown that afternoon and looked for him. It took me some time to find where he was digging up a water pipe out near the park. He had a helper there with him, and it was awhile before he had time to talk with me, as they had just uncovered the leak in the pipe.

He told the helper that he guessed they would have to uncover the pipe to the next joint and put in a new pipe. He told the helper to get to work on it and he was going to take a rest in the shade of a big maple that was some distance away, which suited me just fine.

We went over to the tree and sat down and when he got comfortable he said, "well, what's on your mind, Sam."

I told him everything I knew and a lot that I suspected.

He never ask a question once, and when I was finished he got to his feet and said, "come with me." He told his helper he would be away for awhile and to keep digging, and we went back to town. We picked up the man in charge of the plainclothes men investigating the robberies that were happening in town, and we all went up to the town hall.

I told my story all over again, leaving nothing out.

For a long time the Provincial Policeman did not say a word. Then he ask me to describe these two people. He then said to Sandy, "that's the answer." Then he turned to me and ask me if I had mentioned this to anyone else, and I told him just to my friend, Sandy.

He told me not to talk about it to anyone.

I went back home, and did my chores that evening after supper, and was pulling some weeds in the back garden for the two pigs we had when I saw two men come up the bank at the back of the house next door, the house these two strange people were living in at the time. The two men just stood there, looking over the top of the bank, and talking to each other. Then I looked up to the road at the front, and there was a big car coming down the lane to the house. Then I knew what was going on.

It was the police and they had took me serious.

I did not know much about it then, only what I saw, but it was all in the Toronto Daily Star a day or two later. Dad bought one and brought it home and the first chance I got, I took the paper and headed for the bush.

It seemed these two were crooks that would go out into some country town and rent a house, saying their furniture would arrive later, and then go out at night and rob the stores in the town. They would only take things that were sellable in the city, and a car would go out to the three gangs of two they had in different parts of the district, and pick up the loot that they had managed to collect that week, and take it into Toronto where it was sold.

It seemed that the police had been suspicious of them for a long time, but could not get any evidence.

My name was not mentioned in the paper. I was just referred to as the small boy who had tipped off the local police.

They gave old Sandy MacDonald a very good write up in the Toronto Star, and he was kept on as Georgetown's one man police department for awhile after that, until he died.

I was real glad that my name had not been in the paper, as being just a kid, I imagined that the rest of the gang that the police might have missed would be after me, if they knew who had told on them. I was very nervous and very watchful about keeping away from strangers. I felt that there was someone waiting to grab me at every dark alley in town, so I did not go uptown at night very often for a long while. I only felt real safe in the bush at night, or along the river and pond behind the Barber Bros. paper mill dam. The island in the pond is where I would always go when I wanted to fish in the day or at night, for I was sure that no one could sneak up behind me there. I had a room of my own by then in the upstairs of our house that my mother rented, but I was so nervous about being attacked that I used to keep both windows closed and locked at night for a long time and always blocked the stairway with a chair at night.

In time I began to gradually get over my fear of someone coming after me for telling on them.

Just before the first world war started tragedy struck the Allen clan.

George Allen, my father's brother, and grandfather Samuel Allen's second youngest son, was married and had two sons and a daughter at that time. His oldest son, Victor, was about five or six years old that spring, when he and another boy were playing on the river ice near where the wooden gates were that controlled the water to the big ditch that carried the water to the water wheel that operated the Sykes woolen mill.

No one except the boy playing with him on the ice knew how Victor fell into the water, and he was too scared to ever tell, as far as I know. Anyway, Victor fell into the water and was carried away down the ditch under the ice. It took several days to find his body as all the ice had to be cut off the ditch, which was a long one, then the gates at the head of the ditch had to be closed and the ditch drained of water. They found his body right at the intake screen going into the mill, which they should have known that was where it would be, if anyone had stopped to think a bit about it.

It was a very sad day for the people of Glen Williams, as the boy was very well liked there, so were his parents. His parents knew the danger of a child falling into that water and drowning, as the ditch was only about twenty feet or so from the front of their house, and there was no fence along the ditch at that time.

Many people went after Sykes for not having some kind of a fence along the ditch, but it was too late then for to save Victor's life, but it could prevent such a thing from happening in the future.

No fence was ever built as long as I lived in that part of the country, and I have often seen very small children that lived in that row of houses playing on the road along that ditch that was only about two feet away from the road.

Just across the ninth line, on the south side of what is now River Drive, at the top of the hill where the road goes down into lower Glen Williams, all that field there used to be planted to hops. Indians used to be hired to come there and pick the hops when they were ready for picking. When the hops were all picked the long poles that the hops grew up around were then taken off the field to one side and stacked with the big ends down, in the shape of an Indian teepee. There was quite a large space in the centre, as I found out one day, by moving the bottom ends of some of the poles. I moved the poles far enough aside so that I could squeeze through them and get into this space in the centre.

The space was about ten or twelve feet in diameter.

There was about eight or nine poles in layers all around this teepee shape made of sixteen or eighteen foot long poles. I looked around inside the best I was able to in what light there was, and decided this was a very good place for me to have a hidden home that no one could find.

I went back home after closing the entrance to my new home, and started to gather up mill canvass and old wet felt pieces from around the mill, also cord from the alum bags.

They did not plant any hops the next year, or never again was any planted on that land after the year that I had found a way to get into the centre of the teepee. There was corn planted there every year after, but the teepee stayed there for quite a few years.

I made a very comfortable little refuge for myself there and used to spend a good deal of my time in it.

To get back to furnishing my new teepee home. I took these pieces of mill felts down to the island in the paper mill pond and I washed them all several times to get them a bit cleaner from the chemicals that were in them and hung them over a line that I had put up among the trees on the island so that no one would be able to see them, and left them there to dry. In the meantime I took some of the heavy canvas I had gathered up and sewed the pieces together with cord from the alum bags to make myself a good hammock that I could sleep in when I decided to stay there overnight. I got the hammock finished and fastened it across the space in there with two pieces of good strong rope, I put a short piece of board in each end to keep the ends open and tacked the canvass to the ends of the board to hold it in place.

The hammock was about two feet deep and about three feet wide.

I filled it about half full of dried grass and when I had the pieces of mill felts as clean as I could get them and they were well dried, I took them up there and fixed them in my bed. Then I got an end off a new dryer felt that had been put on a dryer and was too long and had been cut off and discarded.

I looked around the scrap dump at the back of the Barber Bros. paper mill and found a five gallon can of tar that had been discarded not so long ago and found when I got the lid off there was still enough tar in it for what I wanted.

I took it and the felt over to my island one day and built a fire and heated the tar up until it was hot and would flow good. I had the remains of a half worn out whitewash brush that I found in the garbage pile. I had cleaned and washed it until it was smooth and workable again. With this brush and the tar I coated a big enough piece of this new dryer felt on both sides so that I could take it to my Teepee house and fasten it to the poles on either side of my bed to keep any rain that leaked in from wetting my bed.

It worked fine and any time I slept there when it was raining, I never felt a drop of water.

I built a little floor out of round logs to hold my dry fire wood and always had a good sized pile of dry wood on hand covered over with a piece of dryer felt.

I spent many happy days and some nights there over the years when I was a boy and when I first worked in the paper mill. I enjoyed fixing that place up and I cooked many a meal over a little fireplace I had made out of stones.

I stayed there quite a few nights in the winter after I had figured out a way to keep anyone from finding out my little secret by following my tracks.

I would come up from the bush, then down along a rail fence to where these poles were stood up into a teepee. I would then walk around the poles and then when I would go inside, I would be careful when I moved the outside poles from the entrance, not to disturb the snow any more than I could help. When I came out, I would carefully put each pole back in its place. I

would then walk around each pile banging on them, like I was trying to scare out a rabbit, and then walk down to the road and home.

I would come into the piles a different way every time until the next snow fall or the next windy day.

No one ever found out about that place.

We had a big garden out in front of the house on paper mill row my mother rented with one lovely apple tree, and at the back we cleaned up the rubbish and built a garage, and we had a big berry patch of raspberries and strawberries.

Usually, back then, most families had four to ten children, but two families on paper mill row had only two.

There was one pump for all the houses there, and it was right in front of the house we rented when we came there to live, so we did not have to carry our water very far compared to the others. Ours was the fourth house from one end of the row of houses and the third from the other end of the row. The family at the end next to the mill had to carry their water the farthest, about a quarter of a mile to the pump and back.

When we first moved into the house my mother eventually bought, I worked on fixing it up for well over a month in my spare time. Then, when the town put the town water line down the road past our place, now called River Drive, I did most of the digging to get the water into the house.

I then had to put in a sewer pipe and dig the ditch for it and get a big wooden barrel and bore a lot of holes in it and dig a big hole for it in the back garden. I bought the tile and put them in to take the waste water from the house. It saved my mother a lot of work by not having to carry all the wash water out of the house each day.

I had never done anything like this before, and perhaps it was a very rough and unskilled job, but it worked. Of course, my dad had predicted that it would plug up in a few days but I could not see how that could happen, and it did not happen.

I did notice though that neither my dad or any of the others ever offered to help me when I was doing all this. My dad was too busy boozing and none of my brothers or sisters cared enough about making our mother's life a bit easier to help me.

When my mother first moved us onto paper mill row, the Bell family lived on the end of the row to the west of us. They had three children, two boys, William and James, and one girl, Lulu. Mrs. Bell was a big woman, about six feet tall, and her husband Jim Bell was a very skinny man, about the same height. Jim Bell drove the team that hauled paper up the hill to the coated paper mill that was the only coated paper mill at the railway yard at that time.

Mrs. Bell nearly died when she was having her third child, James, so she would not have any more children. According to gossip, she would not sleep in the same bed with her husband, but instead had her daughter sleep with her all the time. Her husband started to drink then, never getting real drunk, but he was never really sober any time that I ever saw him.

Those houses on paper mill row were built side by side, in the old French habitat style, at the end of a long strip of land, furthest away from the main road. At the back of these houses was a sort of private road that would make it a shorter distance to go back and forth to work in the paper mill, and easier for the bread, milk and butcher wagon to reach each house. Right back of the house that we lived in when we first went there to live, was a bank of brown sand about two feet high, where myself, my two sisters and some of the neighbor children used to play.

One day I saw the team that Jim Bell hauled paper up to the coating mill with running wild down the road in front of the houses with no driver. They ran down to the corner where the road turned down past the mill barn, then turned up the back road on which all us kids were playing, pulling this big empty paper wagon.

I grabbed my two sisters by the hands and yelled at the other kids to run, and started for our house, which was about 80 or 90 yards away. We all just got inside the old fence along the road when the team and wagon went passed in a cloud of dust. The team went up to the end of the road and stopped.

Mrs. Bell came out of the house and quieted them down, then got a piece of rope and tied them to a tree. After a long wait Jim Bell and his helper came down over the hill on the front road and when they saw the team and wagon tied up to the tree, they came across through our garden to where the team was.

My mother, who had come out when she had heard my sisters screaming, was mad enough to bite nails by then, and when she saw Jim Bell and his helper running through our garden, she grabbed up a barrel stave off the wood pile and run after them, and when she caught up to them she started to hammer them over the back of their shoulders with it. She got in some

pretty good licks too before Mrs. Bell came out of the house and said to my mother, "Give them hell, maybe that will learn them to stay on the job instead of in the barroom." Then she said, "but don't kill them Elizabeth, not today anyway."

Mother gave them a few more cracks with the barrel stave, then told Jim Bell and his helper that the team and wagon had just about run over six children because of their boozing habits.

Jim finally took his team and wagon and went back down to the mill for another load of paper, and Mrs. Bell and my mother went into our house and talked it all over, I guess over their cup of tea. Us kids we all went back to playing in the sand.

February 25, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter yesterday and now wish to thank you for writing back so quick. I was very touched by your concern over me, but do not worry my friend, as I am feeling

pretty good right now. It will soon be spring, and this spring I am going to get outside again, if I can get some co-operation from my legs, which are not near as strong as they used to be.

I was rather down in the dumps a few days ago when I saw in the paper that one of the men I worked with on the Security Force at Great Lakes Paper had gone out for a drive in the evening, and when he came home and sat down in his easy chair, he fell over on the floor, dead from a heart attack.

He had only been pensioned off a few months.

There are only three of us left now out of a force of eighteen, and one of them has had heart trouble for several years but managed to keep on the job until he was pensioned off last year.

Well, I guess we all have to go sometime, some earlier and some a bit later.

Two of my grandchildren were married this year so far, and I think there will be another wedding early sometime in June. It is very hard for me to remember the number and names of my grandchildren, and as far as the names and numbers of great grandchildren, I am at a complete loss.

I cannot understand why you have not received the letter that I wrote the day after receiving your letter of February 15. It was rather bulky, so I put on an extra ten cent stamp, just in case it was overweight. I had several sheets of information in it, along with several pictures. I had my address typed on the back of the envelope and should have received it back if they could not deliver it.

I am going to write a complaint to the local postmaster here in Thunder Bay, as the local rural mail carrier is having young children picking up mail from the mail boxes sometimes and

delivering the mail. The adults are getting paid for this job on the rural routes and I have been getting some sloppy service quite a few times with my newspapers being torn and packages of records broken open.

I think if adults take a contract to deliver the mail, they should do so and not send their children out to do it, because I do not think that the children have the right sense of responsibility. However I will look into that to see what can be done about it.

I am very sorry that you did not receive my last letter, as it will leave a gap between the last letter you received and this one, which I hope you get alright. However I will try to remember what was in that letter and type it out again and send some of it along in the vistaVision memories I will attach to this letter, and some more at some future time, as I remember it. I have found a few old negatives I am sending off tomorrow to Toronto to get prints, and will send you some of those soon too.

My wife has two little boys that she is taking care of for the Children's Aid, right now. One of them will soon be a year old, the other is a little over a month old. He was a premature baby and they thought he was going to die, but they kept him in an incubator for awhile, then brought him out to my wife, and now he is blooming like a flower.

My wife is always at her happiest when she has some of those little so-called unwanted babies to love and take care of. I keep telling her that she has been doing that long enough, but she says it is never long enough as long as there is a little one that needs love and care, so I have about given up on trying to make her see that she cannot go on forever. Of course she gets a lot of pleasure, as well as hard work, taking care of these little ones, so if she enjoys herself that way, who am I to say no.

My mother loved children too, but it was not a happy home, and I do not think our home was ever like the home my wife and I tried to have for our family. We had a home where our children could grow up and not see a drunken father and a mother who were always fighting over lack of money or food and clothing.

Well I guess I had better get to answering some of your questions that I answered in my lost letter.

I think you were worrying about me paying for those pictures that I sent you. Do not worry about it, I have quite a few pictures that I can send you, some of them are rather old but I think you will be able to see what they are all about. My best negatives were in a box that somehow got lost coming down here with our furniture when we left our last place in Rainy River to come down here to live in our daughter Pat's place. Those negatives can never be replaced and I sure will miss them.

Do not worry about how long it takes you to answer a letter of mine. It is to be expected that you would have to read my letters over several times before you could understand what they are all about. I make so many mistakes when typing that I often wonder if you will ever be able to read them at all. I am trying now to cut down on these mistakes, by typing a line and then reading it before I go on. That way I can catch most of the mistakes, I hope, and you will have a much better chance to understand what I am trying to say.

My eyesight is real bad now, but I find by putting a much stronger lightbulb in my lamp, I can see where my finger is going. I type with just one finger, which is a good thing for me and for you too. Imagine how many mistakes I could make if I were using all my fingers.

You ask about the Barber Bros. paper mill. When I was a young lad I used to take my father's or my brother's midnight lunch down to the paper mill where they worked - when my dad or brother were working - and I used to watch my chance and follow the elderly night watchman around when he would make his regular round trip to punch the security guard's keys. I would follow him around in such a way that he, or no one else, would see me.

It was quite a game with me.

One night when he was up in the top story of the beater room where there were empty alum bags stored, they suddenly burst into flames after the old watchman had gone past them. He punched his key and turned to come back, and as the bags were burning along the edge away from him, he did not see them until he was just about past the pile.

He looked at them for a moment just as if he could not believe his eyes, then started to shuffle a bit faster towards the stairway where I was watching him. By the time he got there, the whole pile was on fire and the flames were licking at the wooden ceiling. When he arrived at the stairway, I was gone down the stairs and out the door at the south end of the building, and along the roof of the machine shop, then down to the ground by the boiler house where my father was working.

I found out afterwards that the watchman had gotten down the stairs two floors below where the fire was and told the beater engineer, and he and the two beater men had got the fire hose up there in time to put the fire out without too much damage being done to anything except the pile of bags.

You would have thought that would have learned the company not to store those bags up in the attic any more, but they still kept storing them there, and several years later, when I was

working in the mill on No.1 paper machine myself, they took fire again and burned that part of the mill right down to the basement, and it took them about a year to rebuild it.

It was a good thing for me that no one saw me up there when the first fire occurred, or they would have said that I started the fire, which would have been wrong of course.

About people rushing around today and not being polite. This not being polite and considerate all started some time ago, then deteriorated more and more and has ended up the way of life now. There is, in my opinion anyway, not very many honorable men in the world compared to what there were years ago.

I could be wrong of course, and I hope I am, but with all my years behind me, when I look back and remember, I can think of only a small number of men and women today that I actually could say were men or women of honor. I can truthfully say that I have always given the respect to women that was due to them, even though there were some that I really did not like otherwise. And I have always tried to judge a man by his actions toward his wife and children. Of course I know I was not the best father in the world, or perhaps not as good a husband and father as I could be now if I had a chance to do it all over again, and I can only say that I did not have the best examples set for me in my younger years. But I did the best I could with what I had and knew.

Oh well, hindsight is always a beautiful way of checking up on yourself when it is too late to do much about it.

I have tried not to make the same mistakes that were made in my upbringing, in the bringing up of my family, but it seems that I have made other mistakes that I can see now when it is too late to correct them. I guess this is the way people are supposed to learn and pass it on to

their children so they can avoid them. In this too I do not seem to have been very successful. In some things I can see where I went wrong, but in most of my mistakes, I cannot figure out how I made them, or what went wrong. I guess I am just too dumb to see how these mistakes happened.

I may get the answers one of these days before I die, but I do not know what good it will do me, as I think it is much too late for that now.

Also thanks very much for that book of poetry you sent to me. I thought that new type of poetry of yours was rather nice but I do not think I could manage it myself. I do not think I have the required education for that. Everyday poetry is the way I think and the way I see things. I try to tell a story as I see it, I am not saying it is right, but that is just the only way I can describe it. While I have not as yet read it all or do not understand much of the poetry in it, I would appreciate receiving any more copies of it that you might get so that I can study it a bit more. Perhaps books like the one you sent me will learn me to write real poetry, which I would very much like to do. I have always been satisfied to write my kind of poetry that might tell a story, but now I see that somehow I seemed to have missed something somewhere. I guess it is due to my lack of education that I do not have the knowledge to understand real poetry, but perhaps I could learn in time.

These days I read all the poetry that I can get my hands on, but like I said, most of it I do not have the least idea at what the poets are trying to say, except when I come across some that resembles what I try to do, tell a story, then I understand what it is all about.

How is your house hunting going? You have not mentioned much about it. I get the Independent paper quite regularly from a sister-in-law in Georgetown, and I would not blame you

if you found the prices people are asking for homes to be depressing. But do not give up, my friend. Just keep looking and sooner or later you will find a place that you can afford and that is just about perfect for you and your wife.

Good by for now and send lots more question. The best to you and Mrs. Filter.

Your friend,

Sam.

vistaVision Memories

Floating Socks

I do not think I have ever saw my mother as mad as she was the day when Jim Bell and his helper let the team of mill horses get away from them, and if Mrs. Bell had not come out and told her not to whale her husband until he was dead, I do not know what would have happened. What Mrs. Bell said brought my mother out of a killing temper, and she had a dandy, and that brought her back to what she was doing.

I did not realize it then like I do now, but my mother really loved her brood of kids.

When the Bells moved away from there when the paper mill row houses were all put up for sale, a family by the name of Barkers bought the house I would buy years later for \$750. They were an English family not long over from England. They had two girls, Kay, nine, and Elaine, seven, and a son Wilfred about four.

Mrs. Barker was a very nice woman, but I do not know just what her husband did for a living. He was away most of the time, and all of them were rather well dressed. I do not know for sure, but I think he was some sort of gambler that spent most of his time in Toronto. His hands were always well cared for and looked very soft and clean. He had a very pale face and wore a small mustache and long sideburns. When he was home, I never saw him do any work, such as cutting wood or carrying any water from the pump. His wife and the girls did all the outside work as far as I could see.

The Barkers moved away in a few years and a family named Kelly bought the place.

Jim Kelly and his wife were pretty nice people. They had two daughters, Velma, sixteen, and Florence, twelve. Jim Kelly had asthma very bad and I used to see him out on his front porch wheezing and struggling to breathe, quite often. He sometimes, when he was feeling good, played his violin for me, and he was very good at it, at least I thought so.

One night after he had been playing for some time, he ask me if I knew what mullein leaf looked like.

I said sure, I had seen lots of it.

He said if I would get him some of the leaves the next day he would pay me for them. I told him that I could get him some right now, in a few minutes.

He said it was too dark for to see, but I said to just stay where he was for a few minutes and I would be right back.

I got up and away I went over the fence of his into the next field where cows were pastured all summer. Our cow pastured there too. I knew right where there were several big mullein stalks right close, so I went there and got all the big leaves off the bottom of several stalks until I had quite a bundle. Then I run all the way back. It only took me about ten minutes or so for the whole trip.

When I got back and gave him the leaves, he ask me where in the world I had got them so fast and such nice big leaves. I told him where I got them. Then he told me that he had been suffering for days from asthma because he had run out of the mullein leaves, which he smoked in his pipe to relieve his asthma, and did not know where he could get any more.

I said any time he wanted some to let me know and I would get him all he wanted.

He wanted to pay me but I did not want money. I told him that I would much rather have him play his violin for me once in a while as I never could get enough music.

He said he liked music too and would play for me as often as he could, not for getting him the mullein leaves, but because I liked music.

I got a bushel basket that apple pickers used and I really cleaned that field of those mullein leaves as they continued to grow out of the plants as I took the big leaves off. Jim Kelly dried them, and soon had a big supply ahead that would last him all through the winter, until the mullein leaves were ready to be picked the next year.

Unfortunately Jim Kelly did not live to smoke all those leaves or play his violin for me many more times. He caught cold that winter and died. His family stayed on in the home they

had. The oldest girl, Velma, married a man named Jim Williams, and when he was arrested in Guelph for raping a seven year old girl and given a jail term and twenty lashes, his wife left him and I never heard what became of her for sure.

The mother and the remaining daughter left Georgetown, and I never saw them again.

Then was when the Collins took over the house west of the place my mother had.

Mr. Alfred Collins worked in the foundry in Georgetown and had three daughters and one son, Alfred, Jr. His three daughters were Florence, 19, Phoebe, 17, and May, 12. His son was twenty-one and worked in the foundry too.

Mrs. Collins was a short, stout and jolly woman that you could not help but like the first time you met her.

My brother Tom eventually tried to marry the older Collins girl, Florence, but when she turned him down he married the next oldest girl, Phoebe. Tom and his wife Phoebe bought the house just east of my mother's house.

The Collins family were still living in the same house when I was married and came back east to live, years later.

Around 1912 too, a family by the name of Smith bought the house on paper mill row I would buy after I was married. They were so dirty about their person that we were always referring to them as the mucky Smiths. They had one son and one daughter, and the one son looked like he had never been washed since the midwife washed him when he was born. The daughter was just as dirty, and her long blond hair looked like it had never been washed or had ever been combed. They were sent home from school several times to get cleaned up, but that did not seem to learn them anything about keeping themselves clean.

The Smith's had a cow too, like we did at the that time, and one day they took it down to where our cow was staked out to pasture, and staked their cow out there.

My mother was washing the breakfast dishes when she looked out the window and saw them putting their cow on the pasture that mother considered belonged to her cow. She changed her apron for a white clean one, which was a sure sign of war, and with a wet dishcloth in her hand, she went down the road to where the cow was to do battle.

I went along with her to see the fun, and when we got there, she told Mrs. Smith to take her cow out of there at once. Mrs. Smith was a fighter too, so they went at it. Mother hit Mrs. Smith across the face several times with the wet dishcloth before Mrs. Smith could get in a blow, then they both grabbed two handfuls of hair and started to yank one another back and forward. Mother, being heavier than Mrs. Smith, got her down on the ground and was banging her head on the ground when the Smith boy and girl started to bang my mother on the head with their fists.

That was what I had been waiting for, so I got into the fight then.

I was a pretty good rough and tumble fighter at that time, so it did not take long until them kids were crying and standing out on the road wailing for their mother.

My mother finally run out of steam and let Mrs. Smith get up on her feet. Mrs. Smith was crying and the tears were making tracks down through the dirt on her face.

Mother told her to take her cow out of there at once, then told her about a place further up the road, in near the paper mill, where she could pasture her cow as long as she wanted too. Then mother told her to go home and for God's sake clean herself up, also her children.

Mrs. Smith said she did not have time as her husband would not do any work around the place and she did not have the time to waste on getting cleaned up.

Mother told her to lay the law down to her husband about him having to do the work, and to talk really tough to him and see that he did some of the heavy work. She also said the kids were big enough to help, so make them take the cow out and bring it back from the pasture. There were lots of odd jobs they could do around the place to save her a lot of work, and for her own sake, clean up the family and house.

They talked back and forth all the way back home while I and the two kids took the cow up to the other pasture.

Mother and Mrs. Smith became real good friends as long as the Smiths lived there. Mother went over and worked for several days helping her get her place cleaned up.

I took the kids down to the swimming hole and learned them to swim and I always kept a bar of soap hidden at the swimming hole, so I got that and had the boy duck his head under water, and when he did I told him to keep his eyes shut, while I washed his hair. I worked up a good lather on his head and started working his hair good through the lather of soap. I told him to put his head in the water and I would rinse the soap out of his hair.

After I had the boy all clean and fresh looking, I ask the girl if she wanted me to give her hair a good cleaning like I had the boy.

She was very reluctant for awhile, until her brother told her how nice it felt to be clean, and then she let me do her hair too.

It was a much bigger job than the boy's, but I finally did get it done and it was very pretty hair, even when wet. I started to soap her body, but she backed away and she told me that I could not do that, and I ask her why. She said because she was a girl. So I said so what about that? I

was just a boy and so was her brother, and she had just a body too, and it was very dirty, so why should I not help her to get it nice and white like our bodies, instead of having it look like a pig.

She looked at us for a minute or two, then said alright, she wanted a nice clean white body too.

I soaped her all over good and then had her stand in deeper water and splashed water on her until all the soap was washed off. I told them both that after they had learned to swim, they could wash their own bodies, but right now I would not let them go out into the deeper water because they might slip on the rocks in the bottom of the river and perhaps drown.

When their parents saw how clean they were and how nice the boy and girl looked with their clean faces and hair nicely combed, they were very surprised. I had brought a comb along from one of the many we had at home, and they both combed their hair until they looked nice and clean cut.

We went down there most everyday, and they both learned to swim quite easily and it seemed to come natural to them both.

One evening, when the husband came home from work, he called me over to the fence and ask me if I would take the whole family down and learn him to swim.

I told him that I could show him how it was done, but I could not hold him up while he was learning how to use his arms and legs.

He said he was willing to try it alone if I would just show him how.

I ask him what he would use for a bathing suit.

He said he had an old pair of overalls that he could cut off most of the legs and they would do fine.

I told him he should tell his wife to bring along a dress that she could wear in the water, as I thought she might enjoy a cooling off as it had been a pretty hot day, and to get something for the boy and girl to wear too as they might like to get in and enjoy the water again.

They got everything ready, and I took an old pair of my brother's shorts and a safety pin to hold them up.

We went down to the river and Mr. Smith got into the water and got all wet, then I gave him the soap and told him to enjoy himself. He was coming along fine when his wife started to undress. She had an old summer dress on under her clothes, next to her body, so she managed to get all her clothes off, and still keep her body covered. She went down into the water and really gave her husband a good soaping because when he came up out of the water after the soapy suds was all washed off him, his body was very white and clean looking.

Mrs. Smith then said, "you kids go up the path aways and stay there until I have had a good bath. I will call you when I am finished."

We did that, and as it was not dark yet, I showed the boy and girl the springs along the path and I showed them how to tell the Indian Pepper plant, or crinkle root as we called it. They tried eating a bit of it but said it tasted hot.

I then showed them a Jack-In-The-Pulpit flower and warned them never to eat the berries that were on top, not to even try to taste them or they would be very sorry they had. I also took the skin off the bulb at the root and showed them the white bulb there and repeated my warning about eating or tasting it.

I then took them over to where there was nettles at the edge of the swamp and told them never to touch them or let them come in contact with any part of their body or they would suffer

severely. I told them if they should ever be touched by these nettles, to take a handful of wet mud and pack that on where the nettles had touched and it would help to stop the pain. I told them to be sure and take a good look at the nettles so they would know them whenever they saw them again. They were mostly to be found around wet places, so I told them to watch for them in wet swampy places.

Just then we heard their mother calling, so we went back down to the swimming hole.

When I saw Mrs. Smith with her face really clean and her hair combed and braided in two braids, I could hardly believe it was the same woman. I burst out telling her she looked real beautiful. She got very red in the face and said thank you.

Her husband sat there with a big grin on his face, then he said we would have to do this more often.

I said any time he wanted to come down here, to just let me know and we would go on with the swimming lessons. I said that any time the women folk were not along he would not need his bathing pants, as when men and boys were here, no one wore bathing trunks, not even on Sundays, when there were around fifty or more here every Sunday.

Him and his wife were rather shocked for a moment, but soon got over it and thought a person would enjoy themselves more if there were no clothing at all to interfere with their swimming.

We made our way home with me leading the way, as it was quite dark now.

Mrs. Smith said she had not felt so good and clean for years, and that she was going to make good use of the swimming hole on the Credit river from now on.

I told her she had better learn to swim then, if she was going to use that swimming hole as it was over eight feet deep near the centre and she could drown there in a very few minutes. I told her there was a shallow place up river, right where the intake box was along the path, for taking the clean spring water to the paper mill. The water in the river there was only about two or three feet deep and for her not to wander downstream or she would get into deep water and deep trouble if she could not swim.

She said that she would be careful, but was going to try it out as soon as possible.

The Smith kids both got to be good swimmers and divers that summer, and were always clean about their body, and their clothes were kept much cleaner. My mother told Mrs. Smith where she could buy a long metal bath tub like we had for having our bath in cold weather, and Mrs. Smith bought one for \$2.50 at Reed's hardware store. The boy told me they all had baths every night, in nice warm water, until the novelty wore off, then they had them twice a week.

Then they bought a small farm near Arnprior, and when they moved down there the boy and girl used to write to me quite often, then gradually stopped.

I had another place that I spent a lot of time when I was around 11 years old. It was an ice cold spring in the swamp that came out of a gravel bank about twenty feet high at the edge of the bush behind our place. I had been exploring this place one day because it was so very hard to get into through the brambles that grew around it, and the ground was very boggy.

When I got into where the stream came out of the bank, I was well rewarded for my efforts and lost skin when coming through the brambles.

I found a stream about two feet wide and two or three inches deep, with the bottom covered with different colored small stones that sparkled beneath the water. I picked some out and they were beautiful, but that was not the best surprise. There were some stones that seemed to be composed of a white clay that was very hard. In this clay there were very clear impressions of the skeletons of what looked like little fish about an inch or so long. In others there were impressions of skeletons of strange little creatures and all sorts of little shells that I had never seen before.

The skeletons and the impressions were so clear and distinct that I sat there on a log and studied them for hours at a time.

I used to come down to that stream a different way each time, so that if anyone came across my tracks in the swamp it would not be easy for them to trail me into the little stream. I brought along a small box each time with some very small fruit jars which I would first fill up with clear spring water, and then put these little colored stones and pieces of this white clay in jars by themselves. With the colored stones I would mix in a lot of very clear pieces of glass that I found in the stream.

When the jar was full and the top was screwed down, I would set the jar in the sun and boy, did it ever sparkle.

I took these home and hid them between the walls in our cow barn where my brothers or sisters could not find them. If they found them they would of course run to my mother with them

and she would make me empty the water and stones out as the fruit jars were hers, and I knew she would never let me keep my rocks in them.

I made a little dam a short ways downstream from where the water came out of the bank, so that any stones that would come up with the water from then on would stay behind the four inch high dam I had made, while the water went over the top.

I came down there a lot of times through the summer of 1912, and got several more bottles full of rocks and water.

When I found that I could get square gin bottles made of clear glass over at the town garbage dump, I went over there with my two wheeled cart and a sack and brought home a load in the box of my cart and a half a sack full tied on top of the cart. I took them down to my stream and put some fine sand and some water in each bottle and shook it back and forth until the bottle was clean. I did this with them all, then took enough bottles home to hold what stones I had hid in the barn. I emptied all the jars into the bottles, washed the jars out good and put them back in our cellar where I got them from.

I guess all young boys have had, at one time or another, a crush as it is called, on a young girl about his own age when he is going to school. I had such a crush when I was about twelve years old. I never did say or do anything to let this little girl know how I felt about her, as her family were well respected in town, and her father was principal of the high school.

When I was in the same class that she was, when we had spelling matches each month, she was the leader of one group and I was the leader of the opposing group. When just her and I were left on the floor, the teacher would give us some real hard words to spell, but both of us always spelled them correctly, so we usually ended up in a tie. This went on until we both had our exams for high school and we both past with honors.

She went on for more education, I went to work at the age of twelve going on thirteen.

That year her father took a position as principal in a high school at London, Ontario, and I never saw her again.

She was a cute little girl, with red hair like my mother, cut in the Buster Brown style that was all the rage at that time. She had dark blue eyes with a very white skin and had some freckles across the top of her nose. She always had red cheeks and seemed to always be happy and laughing.

I thought at that time, that she was very beautiful and would have liked to have had her for a friend, but there was too big a gap between the way we lived for us to be any closer than just children going to the same school.

I left school in 1913 when I past my entrance exam to high school, and I went to work in Sykes woolen mill in Glen Williams that fall sorting spindle tubes in the spinning room. Because I was working now and could pay board, I was given two rooms upstairs in the house my mother rented on paper mill row, but I had to furnish them myself. In the east room on the far side of my

bedroom at the head of the stairs, I fixed up shelves on the wall for my bottles of stones in such a way that the sun would shine on them in the morning.

It sure was a pretty sight to see them sparkling in the sunlight first thing after I woke up.

Of course, years later, in 1918, when I came home after being down at Trenton, Ont. working in the first world war industry there, all my bottles were gone. And of course, no one seemed to know what happened to them, and if they did, they would not tell me.

That is when I first started to get the belief that I was not wanted in that house and began to plan to leave it for good soon.

But back in 1913, after I finished with school, my uncle, George Allen, was foreman on that floor in Sykes woolen mill and he got me the job sorting spindle tubes. A few weeks later I went down to the mill basement to wind yarn for the blanket looms. The floor where I had to stand while tending the winding machine was over the tailrace of the water wheel, and the floor was full of wide cracks up which cold air rose right up my pant legs. I did not wear any underwear in the winter in those days, so I near froze every day. In fact, I never wore underwear until I was past eighteen.

After a few months winding yarn I went from the winding room to the shaping room where I turned socks for Jimmy Norton and his cousin Art Norton, who were working piecework. I was getting 50 cents per 10 hr. day, while they were making between 2.00 to 2.50 per day. I had to turn socks to keep them both going steady, but I had to turn twice as many socks as either one of them would shape in a day.

I was there when the picking room took fire and burned into the mixing room downstairs, the knitting room, and the shipping room upstairs. When the fire really got going the head

shipper got Art Norton and I to go up to the shipping room and throw bundles of socks, with a dozen pair of socks in each bundle, out the window into the tailrace of the water wheel that would carry them down river, away from the fire. That afternoon we threw hundreds of bundles of socks out into the water before the floor started burning under our feet, then we jumped out the window into the water and floated away from the mill.

The rest of the woolen mill was saved, but just the stone walls were left standing of the building where the fire had been.

I went up the river later that night with the paper mill punt as far as I could go, tied the boat up and took a twelve inch plank about twelve feet long and pulled it up the river to where the bundles of socks we had thrown out the mill were snagged. I got up on the sand bars and I was able to get fourteen bundles tied onto the plank. Then I floated it all down to where I had left the boat and put the bundles in the boat, also the plank.

I then took the boat down to the island in the mill pond behind my mother's house and hung all those socks from those bundles on the limbs of low growing bushes and little trees so they would dry out and not rot. Then I took the boat back to the mill that night, putting the padlocks back on the chain so that no one knew the punt had been taken out that night.

Next day I went up on a hill overlooking the island to see if there were any of the socks showing, but could see none.

I left them there for nearly a month, then I started bringing a few home whenever I could get the paper mill boat up there at night without anyone seeing me.

Sykes would lose nothing if I got some of those socks, as the insurance would pay for them. I thought if anyone was going to get any of them, I had earned the right to have some of

them by fishing them out of the river. I thought that as soon as we had been ordered to throw them in the river, they did not belong to Sykes anymore, as he had ordered them to be discarded.

Anyway, we had enough socks to let all our family wear a pair to bed that winter to have warm cosy feet all night.

The woolen mill used to haul their socks and blankets over to the Georgetown freight sheds with horses and wagon in the summer, and with horses and sleigh in the winter. I used to hitch a ride over and back with the driver, Bob Hill. In the summer he would bring back a big load of soft coal for the boiler house, and they would store it in a big storage bin for the winter heating of the mill. Sometimes he would bring back a load of bales of wool or bales of rags.

There were other things that he brought from the freight shed up at the railway station, such as drums of oil, parts to repair machines, spindle band cord for the spinning machines, boxes of spindle tubes for winding the yarn on, boxes of thread for sewing the openings in the toes of socks and for sewing the ends of blankets, barrels of soft soap for washing the blankets and socks before they were packed and shipped, and supplies for the office and mill in general.

Sykes paid in cash, once a week, and it was always Mr. Sykes himself who drove over to the bank in Georgetown in his fine horse and buggy or sleigh to get the payroll. I noticed one time when he past through where I was working, he was in an awful hurry, and as he trotted down the alley past me, his coat swung open and I saw a gun in a holster strapped around his waist, and I guessed that he was going for the payroll that day.

Later that fall of 1913, the Scarlet Fever visited my family.

My father, older brother Tom, and I left home for over a month because of it.

My father was working again, this time firing the boilers in the Barber Bros. paper mill, and he slept in an old shed belonging to the house we rented where my mother and the sick kids lived. In good weather he ate his meals under the grape arbour on the place, and in bad weather he ate in the shed where he slept.

Tom boarded over in Glen Williams with the Evanson family, and I boarded at my Grandmother Allen's home and stayed working days at Sykes woolen mill, down in the Glen.

I did not like working in that place, as there was always the smell of oil wherever you went in the mill and especially in the spinning room where I worked for a short time, and again in the blanket weaving room. There was so much noise from the machinery in the place that you had to shout to make yourself heard, especially in the blanket weaving room, which was the worst. The only place in there that I worked where it was quiet enough that you could talk in your normal voice was in the sock shaping room where I turned socks to shapers with Jimmie Norton and his cousin Art.

Sykes mill was not a good place to work for people like me who were on the bottom rung of the ladder of employees. Working there was so bad that I left later that fall of 1913 to go to work in the Dayfoot Bros. Shoe Factory up in Georgetown, and there I started to learn a good clean trade at 50 cents a day to begin with.

Dayfoot's tannery, which used to supply the leather to his shoe factory, was burned down some years before I was born, so the shoe factory got their leather shipped in from someplace else. All that I ever saw where the tannery had been was a big pile of brush with a small stream running through it. However I do know quite a bit about the Dayfoot shoe factory and some of the people who worked there.

The shoe factory was a long building, three stories high, built of wood, on what was first called Tannery road, then John street, and now called Mill street, I believe. The top floor where I worked was where the shoes were cut out and sewn together, that is the uppers or the tops of the shoes and boots.

Albert Watson, a man of over 70 years old at the time, cut out all the work boots and shoes, and when they had an order for army shoes, he cut those too. Charley Vint cut out the fine shoes for ladies and children, and high tops for miners and prospectors shoes or boots.

Mr. Watson had a corner by himself where the blow pipe communicated with the office. The second floor was the floor with the office. The blow pipe had a whistle at each end. When you wanted to talk with someone in the office, you pressed a little lever on the side and the whistle on your end would fold back. Then you would blow into your end of the pipe and the whistle at the other end would sound and they would press the little handle on their end, then you would say what you were calling about, and then you put your ear to the pipe and listened to the answer.

There were two wax machines for sewing waterproof boots on the north side of the third floor, then four sewing machines for different kinds of shoes. Then around to the south wall there were two sewing machines, one padding machine, one machine for putting hooks and

eyelets in shoes. Then between the two walls north and south where the stairs came up, there was one machine for skiving leather, and one machine for crimping the tongues on high topped boots.

There was a stove at both ends of the room where leather waste was burned for heat.

On the second floor was where they put the soles and heels on the boots and shoes. The soles were nailed on by hand or sewn on by machines and the heels were put on by machines. The boots and shoes were buffed and finished and packed and shipped from this floor.

The office and time clock were at the front of the building.

The basement was where the leather was stored, along with the rest of the supplies.

The flammables were all stored outside in a small building well away from the main building.

The women and the owners had toilets and washroom facilities inside the building, but the rest of the employees had only outdoor privys on the north side of the building. When the wind from the north blew, it was sure cold in those privies and you did not sit there and dream.

I learned so fast how to cut out what they called fittings from scrap leather that in a short time they gave me a brand new cutting board and showed me how to take care of it. I felt real proud of that board and took the best possible care of it.

The only fly in the ointment was the fact that there were four young women working in the same room with me. I was so stupidly shy that my life there was miserable most every time I had to do things for them.

They worked piece work, and I had to see that they were kept supplied with whatever they were working with. The girl that worked on the wax sewing machine had to be supplied

with liquid wax and thread. The wax was heated in the machine and the thread went through the wax as it sewed the parts together. Another girl cemented the tongues into the dress shoes, both men's and women's, before they were sewn into the shoes. The thin insole that was also cemented into the inside of the fine shoes was also done by this girl. The two other girls sewed the rest of the upper parts of all shoes and boots together.

I used to have to soak the long tongues in water for two or three hours, then shape them one at a time so that they would fit into the different styles of high top boots, such as miners and prospectors boots.

After I found out that the girls were not going to bite me, I got along with them very good and lost most of my shyness. I really got to like them very much as they were always willing to take time off to show me how to do things the right way, and never complained to the foreman if I did not get their supplies quick enough.

There was one real nice red headed girl who had graduated from high school who, when she found out that I had past my entrance to high school but could not go any farther for lack of money, used to come back from lunch a half hour early each day to give me high school lessons.

If my mother had let me stay there, I think I would have got a good education from that girl because she was smart and knew how to teach.

Mr. Albert Watson, the oldest man in the cutting department where I had my cutting board, was learning me what parts of the shoe to cut out of what parts of a side of leather. He took great pains to see that I understood exactly what he told me, and never seemed the least bit impatient if I, at first, did not understand. He would show me and explain it over and over again, until I knew each thing perfectly before going on to the next.

I also run errands for Miss Dayfoot, who was the office manager. Wherever I went on an errand for her in town, I was always treated to something nice to eat, and in cold weather, a hot drink, in summer, to ice cold lemonade or orangeade. Most times I would get cake or cookies, sometimes ice cream.

Today, I hear the old shoe factory building has been converted to apartments.



Barber Bros. Paper Mill, circa 1910

When the first war started, my dad and Charley Burnside got pretty drunk one night and both agreed to enlist in the army in the 164th Batt. Charley told my dad to go ahead and enlist and he would be right behind him. Dad enlisted but when it came Charley's turn he chickened out and would not

go through with it. Dad never forgave him for that, and they never had any more good times together after that as far as I know.

My brother Tom, who was a couple of months short of 16 years old at the time, enlisted in the army too, and then things got a lot better for my mother.

By 1915, I was not making enough at the shoe factory and my mother had got me work in the Barber Bros. paper mill as winder boy because so many of the men there had signed up for

the war. It helped that my father had worked there, off and on, because my mother had got to know many of the people there, and she knew who to ask for a job for me. Also, at the paper mill I was getting paid more than I was at the shoe company. I was getting 26 cents per hour for a twelve hour day to start off with, later I received a bit more.

The first thing my mother did when the money started coming in was pay off the doctor bills that had been owing for years. We did not have free health care back then.

When she bought anything after the doctor's bills were paid off, she paid cash or did not buy the goods. Soon, with the money coming in from the army and the Patriotic Fund, and when



*The Double House my Mother Bought on Paper Mill Row
(with my Brother Harvey Standing in the Doorway)*

I paid for board, mother was able to buy the house next door to the one we had been renting for \$1,500.00. This was a double house that included about six or seven acres and an old barn that was on the place, so I think that she got a good buy. I gave her the two hundred dollars I had

saved in the bank, she put three hundred with it and made a down payment of five hundred dollars to the owner of the house we were renting on paper mill row, Mr. John Willoughby. She paid the rest off at \$15.00 per month with 5 per cent interest every three months.

By the time my dad and brother came home when the war was over, we owned that house and land.

The house my mother bought had a kitchen on each half of the house. The kitchen that we were using on the west half of the house was just a lean-to kitchen and had been sitting on little posts set into holes in the ground. The posts had been rotting away for years and when mother bought the place the kitchen was settling away from the wall of the house at the top, leaving an open space of about four inches that let in a lot of cold in the winter and rain in the summer.

I dug out all around the bottom of the kitchen, down below frost level, then borrowed two railway jacks and a pair of bolt cutters from the machine shop at the paper mill where I worked. I then cut a hole up through the ceiling of the kitchen and went up and cut off the spikes that had held the kitchen to the house. Then I put the jacks under the back of the kitchen and lifted the kitchen back up until it was again tight to the wall of the house. I then put blocks under the back to hold it there and had two wagon loads of gravel brought in, along with several bags of cement.

I mixed gravel and cement together with water in a big box I had made out of scrap lumber and put a concrete foundation under the kitchen and it never settled again while I lived there, or any time after, as far as I know.

I got advanced from winder boy to back tender on No. 2 paper machine in less than a year, which was very unusual in those days. There was also one man on the other shift of that paper machine who had been working there for over twenty-one years as a back tender and had been tried out as a machine tender several times but failed.

The way it worked at the time was like this: a machine tender had full responsibility for the quality, weight per sheet and the total weight of the production on his shift. He also was responsible for the back tender and winder boy. The back tender was responsible for the oiling of all moving machinery twice, sometimes oftener, in a shift. He was also in charge of the calender's reels and winder. When the paper broke anywhere on the machine, the machine tender, back tender and winder boy all worked at getting the paper over the machine again as fast as possible. The back tender usually took the paper over the dryers by hand, then through the calenders and so on to the reel.

So back tender was an important job as far as keeping the paper machine running in good order and producing it's quota of paper each shift.

On No. 2 machine, the machine tender, Charley Burnside, always insisted on taking the paper over the dryer himself. He always worked with his shirt sleeves rolled rather loosely part way up to his elbows. One day, while taking the paper over the dryers, his sleeve caught in one of the top rollers between the red hot dryer and the dryer felt. It pulled his arm up into the dryer, lifting him off the floor. The little automatic roller on top of the dryer that took up the slack when the felt stretched, or went the other way when the felt shrunk, came back against the spring that controlled it, thus loosening the felt, and Charley's arm came loose, but not before he had been badly hurt.

Another time I saw a young man get careless and get his index finger in the calender rolls.

It went in as far as the knuckle then bounced back out. He lost the finger back of the first joint.

And then there was the time we had a bad fire while I worked on the paper machines.

Some alum bags stored in the attic over No. 2 beater room took fire one night I was working the night shift. I had the machine shut down and washed in a few minutes while the mill whistle was calling the Georgetown fire brigade. The three floors of the beater room were a total loss. They were made of wood and were getting pretty weak and had to have new bracing quite regular. When rebuilt, the floors were of concrete and the bottom floor in the basement had a new cutter room fitted out with bright lights and was nicely painted and heated. The old moldy smell was gone, and it sure was a big improvement.

Also at the far end they put in concrete storage tanks lined with tile, instead of the old leaky wooden ones that were there before. The wiring system that they had when the old dynamo supplied the power was replace by a new modern one with plenty of bright lights. All the walls were painted a flat white, and it sure made the old basement look bright and cheerful.

I have found it strange, sometimes, how someone who has professed to be your best friend can turn the other way and stab you in the back when you are not looking. I refer to one man in particular who I knew when I was working at the Barber Bros. paper mill just after the first war started, Dave Lawson.

When I was working in the mill and I was a few months past fifteen, the mill was very short of machine tenders because of the war, or because, like Charlie Burnside, they had been injured and had to leave the job, so they sent over to Norfolk, Mass. in the States for Dave Lawson. Dave was a Canadian back tender working in a paper mill over there. He came to work as machine tender on the No. 2 paper machine to replace Charlie Burnside where I was back tending at the time.

From what I saw when he first came there, he knew very little about running that paper machine, so he started to depend a lot on me to show him how things worked. I did not mind that, and I was glad to help him out as he was a very convincing talker.

He wanted to bring his wife and two children to live with him in Georgetown, but could not rent a house anywhere. At that time my mother had bought the double house and we were using the whole house, both parts of it. Well I talked my mother into moving all our things into one half of the house and renting the other half to Dave for just four dollars a month, until he could rent another house.

He got his family over from the States and was soon all settled in.

Dave used to be a strongman in a circus before he got married. He used to show me his scrapbook of shows and circuses that he worked for, and pictures of himself and some of the people he worked with. I thought we were good friends and we would go out hunting rabbits and coon in the fall and winter together. In the winter and spring we would trap muskrat and mink and sometimes a skunk or two.

While at work he would show me how to learn weight lifting. I got so that I could lift a 50 pound weight up over my head with one hand several times. It took a lot of practice before I

could do that, but I did not mind that as I was getting a lot stronger every day and feeling a lot more alive, now that I was sure I had found a real friend.

This went on for near two years, and then the bubble burst.

When I came on duty at the mill, the first thing I had to do was oil the whole machine from one end to the other. While I was away doing that, Dave was supposed to watch my end of the machine, as well as his own. One day, when I finished the oiling and came back to my part of the machine that I was responsible for, I found a good sized piece of scrap paper had somehow got into the calender stack and stuck to one of the steel rollers that put the finish on the paper. It was leaving a big mark on the sheet coming through the calender rolls every time it came around. I quickly got it off and put a marker in the roll on the reel. When we started to wind that reel onto a roll on the winder, I stopped the winder and called Dave over and ask if I should tear off the damaged paper on the reel. He was machine tender and it was his responsibility to make that kind of decision.

He said no, just wind it on the roll as usual, putting a marker in the roll where the damaged paper started and where it ended. That way we could save the half of the roll that was not damaged and had a better chance of making quota for our shift.

I did this and the winder boy heard the whole conversation.

We were on the 7 at night until 7 in the morning shift at the time. I went home in the morning, had breakfast and went to bed. I had been sleeping less than an hour when my mother woke me up and said I was wanted down at the mill.

I dressed and went down.

When I got to the office, Dave Lawson was there, and Ed MacWhirter, the Manager in charge of the mill was also there. He told me that he had seen this damaged paper when it had come through the cutters and he wanted to know what had happened.

I told him the paper was sticking to the roll in the calenders when I came back from oiling the machine and that I had asked the machine tender if I should tear it off the reel and he said to let it go and put in markers where it was so that we could save half the roll of paper that was not damaged.

He then said that Dave had said he told me to cut the damaged paper off, and that I had refused to do so.

I told the Manager that Dave was a damned liar and I could prove what I said to be true. I said that I could prove it by the winder boy, he heard Dave's orders to let the paper go on the roll and put in the markers. I said Dave let the paper go so that he could claim that much more tonnage for it, and he was lying now to try and make letting the damaged paper go through stick to me.

The Manager said to come into work at the regular time and to not let it happen again.

When Dave and I went out of the office, he tried to walk home with me, but I run on ahead and went away back in the bush and lay down under a tree and slept there until late in the afternoon.

That night, when Dave came into work, I did not speak to him all night, and in the morning I waited for the Manager to come in. When he did, I ask him to transfer me to No. 1 machine.

He wanted to know why I wanted a transfer.

I told him I did not want to work with a man like Dave any longer, a man that would lie like that over a little thing like a few pounds of paper was in no way to be trusted. The next time anything happened on our shift, it might be something serious, and I did not want to be around to be blamed for it.

The Manager was a pretty good man. I had put him in a spot and felt rather bad about it.

He said the only thing he could do would be to talk to the back tender on No. 1 machine to see if he would trade jobs with me. If he would, we could change as soon as we wanted to. He told me to come in on my regular shift and he would see what he could do about the change.

I came in that night at my regular time and I continued to only speak to Dave when the job called for it.

He came around to where I was having my lunch and started to tell me why he had lied to the boss, but I put away my lunch and went over and checked the part of the machine that I was responsible for. On several occasions he tried to talk to me but I just walked away from him. I was hurting inside very much over being betrayed by someone who I thought was my friend, but I would not let him see the hurt, because by then I had remembered a lot of little things about him that I did not like very much, things that I had overlooked before because of his way of talking himself out of anything that I objected to.

When we were on the night shift, for example, he made it a regular habit to go up to the office when the watchman was out on his rounds and call up the operator at the telephone exchange who was always on night duty after midnight, and make dates with her. He was out with her many a night before they both went on duty. I saw them myself twice down in the bush near our home.

I did not like seeing that as he had a very nice wife and two very nice children, a boy and a girl of about 6 and 8.

Another thing. When we were trapping, we agreed that he would check the traps one day and I would check them the next day. This worked fine for awhile, then I began to wonder why, when I checked them, I always got more fur than he did, until one day, when the dealer came around to buy furs, he told me that Dave and I were the best trappers in those parts.

I asked what he meant by that and he said Dave sold him very near as many pelts as I did.

I was supposed to sell all our pelts that we took as Dave did not know how to get a good price for the pelts, and I did and always got the best prices, and when I sold any of the pelts, I had always given Dave half of what I got for them, but I never got anything from what he sold.

When I found out he was selling skins and keeping the money, I lifted all the traps one evening and brought them all home. They were all my traps so Dave could not claim I stole them.

He never said anything about the traps for a few days, then one evening, when I was out at the woodpile behind our house cutting up wood, he came over and told me about the missing traps. I told him I had lifted them all and the partnership was through. He wanted to know why and I told him I knew that he had been selling some of the pelts to the buyer in town and I had not been receiving any of the money that he got for them, so I said there was no more partnership. If he wanted to trap, the river was there, hop to it, but with his own traps, and what pelts that I had drying, I would sell them and would keep all the money I got for them. I said it would help pay for the ones he stole out of my traps.

He did not like that. But I never went partners with anyone again.

He finally got a new house up on College street in Georgetown where he had to pay \$25.00 per month, and that was a lot of money in those days.

Shortly after that, he got fired from the Barber paper mill for not producing enough tonnage, and one order that he was responsible for was overweight per sheet and was returned to the mill. After that, he went to work in the Don Valley in Toronto in a small paper mill there, and I never heard no more about him.

March 16, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter today and was quite pleased to hear from you again.

Well, I have been having trouble with my old typewriter and I decided to replace it with a new one. After asking one of my daughters to buy me a new typewriter when she was in town, I finally got my new typewriter today, and I am now just trying it out.

It is a very nice looking machine, but I may get used to it in time.

I got used to the other one I had, so I guess I can get used to this one.

It cost me \$134.00 but if it is as good as it looks, it will be well worth it. I expect to have a bit of trouble with it at first as it is altogether a different kind of a machine, but I am quite sure I will get used to it. It has a lot of gadgets on it that I will most likely never use, but they are there if I ever need them, and it is a lot smaller than the old machine, but I will get used to that.

We had a heavy fall of snow over the last two days, and I hope that we can get a lot more of it before the winter is over for good. Last fall was a very dry one and most all the wells in the surrounding country have been dry for most of the winter because of it. Farmers and people living way out in the country have had to haul water from the city of Thunder Bay. Some of the farmers have went broke and had to sell there farms and livestock for what they could get. The city had hydrants set up where water could be had free at first, but now the demand is so great, they are planning on having people pay for the water.

Some people that haul water for the people who have no way of getting it themselves are charging \$15.00 per 100 gals. My son, who has a 200 gal. tank on his half ton truck, hauls water for us for \$20.00 per month which is real cheap. He gets his water from a flowing spring at an abandoned cheese factory. He can fill his tank in about ten or fifteen minutes. It is much better water than the city has, as they put a lot of chemicals in their water to, as they say, purify it.

Well this spring water we get is pure and ice cold, even in the summer. I have stopped there at that spring for a drink from that pipe many times when I was up along the Kam river fishing for pickerel.

The last two years I went up the river fishing, I never caught any pickerel. The year before, the government put some poison in the Kam river up at the falls to kill off the young lamprey. They said it would not harm the other fish, but I never caught any pickerel, black bass, small mouth bass, or perch in that river since. This is just another thing that makes me wonder about believing the goverment about anything they say.

Now to answer your questions.

You ask about how I found that little spring with all those shiny rocks. Well I knew the country around the Credit river and the paper mill really well and I would often spend a lot of time, day or night, walking through it just to see what I could see and find. I especially liked those walks down the road to the Cut Hill as it was called, where the line was between Georgetown and Glen Williams, then I would turn off and take the old road back of our place through the bush along the Credit River all the way home. It was during one of those times that I spotted the little spring and those shiny rocks.

Sometimes, on a frosty night in the fall, I would build me a little fire at the edge of the river down there and sit on a big rock and watch the muskrats and the mink, and sometimes I would see a duck or two swimming around in circles on the mill ponds. Lots of times I would see coons coming over from the other side of the river to the island for the wild grapes that were there. It was a wonderful time for me in those long gone days.

About what things were like during the first world war, there is so much to tell that I hardly know where to start, however I will give it a try, if you can stand my mixed up way of putting things down on paper. Right after the war started, it was not long before prices started going up. Sugar was 10 lbs. for a quarter before the war started. Not long after it started, you



Joseph Flavelle

could only get 5 lbs. for a quarter. 100 lbs. of flour was \$1.50, it went up to \$14.00 a hundred weight before the war ended. All foodstuffs went up in price from fifty per cent to over one hundred per cent. Then in came price and wage controls and the prices on everything went down to a fairly reasonable level. Yes, there was great profiteering in the first war amongst a lot of people. One man in Toronto that I know of that owned two small butcher shops ended up, after the war was over, a millionaire. He even got a title, he was called Sir Joseph Flavelle.

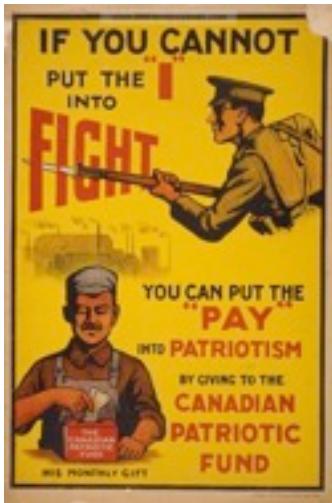
When my mother and I went to Toronto to visit one of her sisters during the war one time, on our way back to the train when it was time to go home, mother bought some meat in his butcher shop, that is why I remember him so well, a medium sized man with a full beard and with a bowler hat on his head.

Then the craze went around amongst the young girls that any fellow that could move one foot in front of the other should be in the armed services, and if he said no, they would stick a big white feather in a button hole of his coat and spread the word around that he was a slacker. Then none of the girls would go out with him. Some even got yellow chalk and would get behind a fellow and mark a big yellow stripe down the back of his coat.

When conscription came along, they soon rounded up a lot of fellows that had been hanging back.

During the first world war the goverment urged everyone to work a piece of land and raise as much food as possible, and to help in every way they could in harvesting the crops in the fall, such as vegetables and fruit, and to raise an animal or two if possible in order to have more

food to send overseas to our fighting men. We were asked to invest all the money we could in Victory Bonds and to knit socks and sweaters and send them to the sons, fathers and husbands, and anyone we knew over there who might need them. There also were women's organizations that made bandages and raised money for all sorts of medical supplies. Then there was the Patriotic Fund which raised money to help soldiers' families and they sure helped my mother to buy her house after the war started. Another thing that was going around too, a very ugly thing, and that was the way any German or any of his family was treated. There were quite a few violent demonstrations against them in Georgetown and in the country round about. It never got out of hand, but several people who were really good Canadians were bothered a lot because their origin always back was German.



Patriotic Fund Poster

There was one young fellow I knew that was given a pretty rough time by a lot of the girls for not enlisting in the army when the war started. He looked healthy but he always said he was too sick to be a soldier. In about three or four months after the war started in 1914 he died of cancer of the lungs. To hear the way those girls talked after he was dead, you would think that he was their hero and best friend. It made me sick at the stomach.

There was one girl, a red headed Irish girl, very good looking, that always talked to him when he was around, and never said a mean thing to him or accused him of being a slacker. I had a great respect for that young woman for acting like that when so many of the other girls kept after him to enlist.

When the men and boys enlisted in the armed services, their employers said their jobs would be waiting for them when they came back. What a lie that was, the biggest whopper that was ever told. There were very few jobs for most of them when they got back, and in the larger centres they were unemployed by the thousands.

A lot did not come back to their quiet village or town life. They were buried in an unmarked grave where no one knew where they were. Some that came back would never work again, and no one seemed to care except their families who had to do with less, besides supporting a member of the family who could not support himself.

I know of one man who hanged himself, and another who deliberately drank himself to death. I knew this last man quite well and talked to him and gave him money several times and tried to bring him out of it, but he said he had been betrayed by his former employer and did not want to breath the same air as that kind of man.

There were no real food shortages at first, but people started to hoard things that were in short supply, then orders came out that you could only get so much sugar, tea and things that were imported, but there was lots of plain food being grown, so there was not shortages of food that anyone would have to eat less.

How was the war affecting me and my family?

In 1916, when I was just fifteen, I went to Toronto and tried to get in the navy, but the fellow at the desk looked at me and said to go home and eat some more porridge and come back when I got my growth. When I went back the next year, another fellow looked me over and said I was not filled out enough yet and to go back to the farm and milk a few more cows, then

perhaps they would take me. The next year I went back for a third try, but there was no one there and the office had been closed and I never did make it into the navy.

For my mother it was always about getting enough money together, so I always felt wanted in our home as long as I was working and paying my board every payday, or paying whenever mother was short on her payment of interest or principle on the house she bought. By the time I was 13 or 14, I got the impression that I was only wanted as long as I would pay my way.

It was not like that with my older brother Tom. He never contributed to getting or keeping our home. In fact, he never contributed to anything. As far as I can recall, mother did not make him pay board either, and that all got to me.

Mother did not seem to mind him not paying his way. I always had known that mother preferred my brother Tom over all her children, although he treated her the worst of all the others put together. Tom was a lot like my father, and for some reason, mother seemed to always put up with that. Mother always seemed to treat me as the work horse and Tom as the best one of the litter. It may have just been my imagination, but that is the way I felt. It burned me up when I saw how Tom squirmed out of doing his share.

Now that I am older and have helped raise a family of my own, I can see where my mother did not have an easy time of it. She had to cope with a husband who was drinking up his money about as fast as he made it, who took no interest in his family whatever, except to increase it's numbers. Why she ever married that crumb I will never understand. She had to cope with having to give birth to so many children, along with numerous miscarriages, and to top it off,

with having to work at washing other peoples dirty clothes to keep her children fed and clothed.

So I cannot blame my mother for pushing most of the chores onto me.

She knew I would do them, and I know now that she could not trust Tom or my father to do them as the chickens, cow, and pigs, along with our garden, is what kept us all alive. A failure in any one of those meant less food for us all, and I guess mother could see that, and she knew that I would do a good job at whatever I tackled.

About the letter that was lost in the mail. I am writing a letter to the postmaster today to see if he can trace what happened to that letter. I may be able to replace some of the pictures, but I will not know until I go through all of my large amount of snaps, and I will let you know the next time I write. I do not want to take the time now to look through the pictures as I believe you will want to receive this letter and vistaVision memories as soon as possible to know that I am still alive and kicking.

I have remembered a few more things that was in that letter, and perhaps I had better tell you about them while they are still fresh in my mind. So I will get to that in the vistaVision memories.

I want to get this letter in the mail tomorrow, if I can, as I have the vistaVision memories to go with this letter almost ready to go. Well my friend, I had better close now and try to remember what was in that lost letter and write it again.

Good by for now, and write back soon.

Your friend,

Sam.

vistaVision Memories

Leaving My Mother's House

When I was down near the old Barber Bros. dynamo one spring when the snow had started to melt - this was around 1916 - I was hunting for rabbits with a single shot, long barreled shotgun. I had no luck on the north side of the Credit river below the Barber dynamo which used to bring electric power to their paper mill, so I crossed the river to the south side on the ice where it had not broken up. The high bank on the south side was coated with ice, but I thought there was enough bare spots on the face of this high clay bank for me to get to the top where the bush was, and where there usually was quite a few rabbits.

I started up the bank with my shotgun hung over my left shoulder by a piece of rope. The clay was a bit soft and slippery on the surface and I had trouble getting toeholds with my leather boots. I got up about twenty-five or thirty feet and could just reach a small cedar bush growing out of the bank with my right hand. It was a very small bush, but I thought if I could

pull myself up it a foot or so, I could reach a bigger tree with my left hand and would have trees to hold onto all the rest of the way to the top.

I reached for the small cedar shrub and got hold of it with my right hand and started to pull myself up. Just as I was reaching for the bigger shrub with my left hand, the one I had hold of with my right hand pulled out of the ground and I started to slide back down to the open river below me.

The dynamo dam had been washed out by then, so the river was open for twenty or thirty feet, then the water all went under the ice again. I knew if I slid off the cliff and into that water and got pulled under the ice that I would be done for.

I slid down very slowly on that soft sloppy clay for about ten or fifteen feet trying to brake myself with my boot when my right foot came to a stop on a piece of shale clay that stuck out from the bank. I rested there until I got over my fright and then started to look around to see how I could get out of the danger I was in.

I could see no hope of getting out whatever until I remembered the big hunting knife on my belt. I got my knife out and dug a hole in the frozen clay for the toe of my left boot and that took the strain off my right leg which was all that was keeping me from falling into the river and going under the ice. I then made a good deep hole in the bank of clay for the right toe of my boot, and then I could get to work on the business of cutting toe holes all the way back up to the top.

I do not know exactly how long it took me to do it, but the sun had gone down and the clay was freezing again by the time I reached the top. When I finally arrived at the bush, it did not take me long to get out of there and go home.

I sure was a mess, the front of my clothes were all covered with clay, and I was soaking wet with sweat.

I stopped in at the paper mill and went down to No. 2 paper machine room and peeled off my clothes and hung them up near the paper dryers and then went up to the wet end of the machine and hung a hose up under the boxes where the paper ran into the paper machine and had a shower with ice cold water right out of the river.

When my clothes were dry, and that did not take long in the heat from the dryers, I brushed the dry clay off them, then I got dressed and went home.

It was a good thing for me that it was Saturday and I was on the night shift as the mill shut down on Saturday night and I did not have to go to work until my next day shift on Sunday morning, for I was all in and just about beat.

I never mentioned my experience to anyone, so there was no talk at home about my close shave with a watery death, but I have never forgotten it.

When there was a large construction crew at the mill rebuilding the boiler room after the alum bags caught fire and set the building on fire, there was a fellow on that crew who came from Montreal and they used the same outside toilet that the mill personnel did. That toilet had wooden seats and I got a good sized sliver of wood in my left thigh about halfway up from my knee. It got very sore and started to swell up so I went up to see Dr. Williams in Georgetown.

He took one look at it and got out his lance and lanced it and squeezed out all the puss he could and put some disinfectant on it and a bandage and then gave me a big injection in the arm and told me to come up the next night for further treatment.

He told me I had picked up syphilis off that toilet seat.

He was the District Health Officer at that time, and the next day he was down at the mill and held a clinic and tested everyone in the mill for to see who else had it, and to find out who had brought it there. He found two that had it the same way that I did, and he also found the carrier. The carrier was one of the construction crew rebuilding the mill's boiler room, and he was sent back to Montreal for treatment and Doc took over the care of the others that had been contaminated.

That John was burned to the ground right after that.

I got over my trouble and was quite healthy and well in about two weeks, but I never sat down on a public John again in my life.

One night, as I was coming up over Cut Hill on the 9th line where the Georgetown and the Glen Williams border line meet, I saw a horse and buggy turned off the road to one side, and the horse was eating the dusty grass along the side of the road. I thought there was something wrong, so I went over to see if I could be of some help.

There were two girls in the buggy that I knew lived on farms at the upper end of Glen Williams. I ask them if they were in trouble and needed any help.

One of them said, "boy are we ever in a lot of real trouble. We are both pretty drunk, and when we get home, our dad is going to murder us."

One of them then held out a bottle and ask me to have a drink.

When I told them I did not drink, they both started laughing and one said that was the best joke she had heard for a long time.

I had by this time got the horse by the head and backed it around onto the road and headed it in the direction of their home.

The girls then ask me to get in the buggy and drive them home. They said they would give me a good time on the way to their homes, and they would see that I got something from them both that I would like very much.

I told them that all I wanted right now was to get home and into my bed, as I would have to get up and go to work early in the morning.

Then they started swearing at me and calling me a scaredy-cat and other names, so I left them there and started on my way home down what is now River Drive.

The next time I saw one of the girls, I ask her how she had made out with her father when she got to her home.

She said that she did not know what I was talking about and that they had never met or talked to me or offered me a drink on the night in question. She also said if I went around telling other people things like that she would tell her father and he most likely would use a horsewhip on me.

I had several experiences similar to this that learned me to be careful about offering help to anyone that looked like they could use some help.

Near the end of the first war, in 1918, I was still living at home and working in the paper mill and I still did the chores like looking after the cow, pigs and chickens. By then, I decided that my brothers who were getting to be rather husky kids, should do some of the smaller and lighter chores around the home, and so learn to do a little work for a change. I gave them things to look after that they could do, and I was rather tough with them, as they did not want to do anything except fish and swim after school or on the holidays from school. I made them get a hoe in the evening when I was on the day shift and put some time in the garden and clear out the weeds, and I worked along with them to see that they stayed on the job. I gave the job of keeping the wood box filled to my brother Joe, and I had to take him in hand several times before he saw that I meant what I said.

After he got working in the mill though, Joe would do nothing around the home at all.

We had quite a battle out in the back yard one night after work, and mother came out and gave me a good scolding for knocking Joe around and called me a big bully and ask me who gave me permission to boss my brothers around and make them all help with the chores around home.

Well that tore it, I had had enough of being the goat in my mother's house. I had had enough of doing all the work and watching the others, especially Tom, get off scott free. That very night I packed two suitcases and let them out the upstairs window of my bedroom after everyone else was asleep, and the next morning I grabbed those suitcases, went up the hill to the

train station, and took the train to Trenton, Ontario, to work in the war industry there. I had read in the paper the week before that Trenton had a big chemical company, the British Chemical Company, which made explosives for the war, and that they were looking for workers.

Mother was too soft with the rest of the boys, like she had always been with my older brother Tom, so I was not going to stay around and work at two jobs while the boys took it easy and enjoyed themselves. I thought that I had done enough for the family, and now it was time to start looking out for myself.

When I arrived in Trenton and had found a place to live and had gotten a job, I wrote my mother a long letter telling her just how I felt about things, and why I left, and what my plans were from now on.

She sent me a letter back saying she was surprised that I felt that way and that there would always be a home for me with her at any time that I cared to come back home. She said that she had never understood me like she did Tom and the other kids, and still did not understand me, but that was alright and to come home whenever I wished.

It was in the spring of 1918 that I left my mother's house and the paper mill job I had to go to Trenton, Ontario, to work in a chemical factory where they made war explosives. In the Union Station in Toronto, when I was on the way to Trenton, the army had every door to the station watched, and you could not get in or out without showing your birth certificate. If you were eighteen or over, you were conscripted into the army on the spot.

As I was going to the train to Trenton, a little short soldier stepped out from behind an enlistment poster and ask me to join the Bantam battalion.

I did not want to be a soldier walking through the mud and standing in trenches full of water and being wet all the time, so I said no, I was going to Trenton to make high explosives for the war.

He said did I know that he could take me in, whether or not I wanted to go.

I told him that I was only seventeen and was in Toronto to get my birth certificate and I showed him a letter asking me to come to Toronto to get it.

He then let me go and I got on the train and went to Trenton on the CPR line.

When I got to Trenton, I had to walk about a mile or so until I arrived at the edge of town. I stopped in at a religious meeting and ask one of the ladies there if she could tell me where I could find a place to stay for the night. She sent me into town with instructions on how to find a Mrs. Hinds who took in boarders.

I walked another long way carrying my two suitcases, which were rather heavy, but I finally found the place. There was Mr. & Mrs. Hinds, their three daughters, Mary, sixteen, Priscilla, twelve and the baby Louise, age five, and one boarder.

Boy did I ever learn a lesson from that first night at the Hinds.

That night I had to sleep in the same bed with their boarder, a young man from Hamilton, because Mrs. Hinds had not yet fixed up a room for me as I had not called ahead to tell them I was coming.

The next morning I started to feel itchy around the groin. The other boarder that I had slept in the same bed with was on the day shift at the chemical works and had gone to work. I

remember I was scratching myself that morning and looking the room over, and on the dresser I saw a little round tin that read Blue Ointment on it. The word *ointment* caught my eye. I thought if it was ointment it would stop this terrible itching. Little did I know at that time that this was the only ointment that would kill those crabs that I had got from the other boarder. I smeared some on where I itched so bad, and had breakfast, then went out to find a job. I did not get my

birth certificate yet, so I could not get on at the chemical plant that day as you had to show them your birth certificate to make sure you were a citizen, not some spy sent over from Germany to disrupt the war effort.

That day, when I got back to the Hinds place, I told Mrs. Hinds about this man, her boarder, having crabs, and that he gave them to me. She put him out of the house at once, and washed and disinfected his

bed the same day.

I later heard that this fellow went to live with a French family in another part of town. They had a very nice, good looking daughter, 17 years old. After awhile, the father found out that this fellow with the crabs had been fooling around with his daughter, and the father gave him an awful beating and said if he did not marry his daughter right away, that he would kill him and throw his body in the Trent river.

This fellow with the crabs came over to ask Mr. Hinds what he should do and told him all about it.



Blue Ointment Tin, circa 1918

Mr. Hinds, who had been a minister at one time, said he had better marry the girl, as he knew the father and he would do exactly as he said he would. This fellow then ask Mr. Hinds if he would marry them, but Mr. Hinds said he could not do that as he no longer had the authority to perform marriage ceremonies, and as the girl was a catholic, they would want her to be married by a priest in the catholic church.

The man married the girl and right after the wedding, some of the girl's relatives took this fellow out to a barn on the father's place and gave him a good hiding on the bare back with a buggy whip. That evening they took him to the CPR station and bought him a ticket to Toronto and told him if he ever came near the girl again to whom he was married, they would give him a very painful death.

Mr. Hinds told me all this one night and I have never forgotten it.

I later heard that this girl gave birth to a baby girl, and later on got a divorce on desertion grounds from her husband.

This is the first time that I have ever mentioned it to anyone.

I still did not have my birth certificate yet so I got a job at a place that was not in the war industries where they made wooden bricks and then creosoted them, and also railroad ties and telephone poles.

First I was put to work cleaning all the weeds and brush from between the railway ties around the yard. It was hot, dusty work, but I had a good sharp hoe and I kept it sharp. I worked

at that for a couple of days, then the boss came and ask me if I wanted to work overtime at piece work loading treated ties in the dump car.



*Me at 17 and Just Arrived
in Trenton*

speed. After they had reached top speed it was not so bad, and in about two or three days it did not bother me at all.

At first I had to work very hard to be sure that I got all the broken and scrap stuff off the belt. But in a few days, when I had worked out a system of my own, I found that it was quite an easy job to keep up with the saws.

When they were sawing bricks from 2 x 6 lumber, my job was to stand in front of the saw where the bricks came out onto a conveyor and pick the broken bricks off the conveyor and drop them on another conveyor that took them to the boiler house.

I had seen some of the fellows that were loading cars and I was having none of that kind of work and I told the boss so.

These fellows were smeared with tar from the top of their hat to the bottoms of their shoes, and from what they told me, it burned like fire every time a bit landed on bare skin, and what a mess they all were in when they got the cars loaded.

Then one morning the boss took me into the room where they sawed the bricks and showed me what to throw off the sorting belt. I told him that I thought I could handle it alright. When they started the saws turning, all twenty-two of them, it just about scared the pants off me. The noise was terrific, especially the whine of those saws when they were picking up

Once, one of the saws broke into several pieces. The governor belt on the steam engine that supplied the power to the saws had broken and the engine started running out of control. When them saws started to whine it was a terrible noise and you knew something was going to give and soon, so I jumped out of the open window near where I was working.

I found out afterwards that several of the pieces from that saw were stuck in the wall right behind where I had been working. It was reported in the paper that a large piece had went right across the Trent river and come down through the front porch roof of a house. Another fellow and I went around to the house to see if the story was true, and there was the hole in the roof. I ask the lady of the house if they still had the piece of saw. She brought it out and showed it to us, so it was true. I think it was well over a quarter of a mile from where the saw took off to the house where it landed.

I have often thought about what that would have done to a person's head, if it had hit them.

I had another very close call with death while I was working at the creosote plant. They had a little motor engine run by electric power from an overhead line like a street car used to be operated at that time. The little wheel that ran along this wire had, for some reason, broke off this day while the little engine was pushing a string of cars into the tunnel where they done the creosoting.

The foreman got a long copper bar, about an inch or so thick, and about a foot long, and fastened it to the rod from which the wheel had been broken off. He done this in rather a hurry, and did not do a very good job. Then he told me to stand on top of the flat metal top of the engine and hold this bar of copper on the overhead wire. He had attached a broom handle to the bar so that I could guide it along the cable as the engine moved along.

I did not like standing on that metal top of the engine, for if anything went wrong, I would be cooked like a roast chicken.

He assured me that there was no way that the electric power could get to me, and I believed him and it near cost me my life.

He backed the engine up a few times and went ahead short distances, showing me how safe I was, then he went ahead and hooked onto these loaded cars of ties and started pushing them into the tunnel. He had told me before we started to push the cars not to let that bar of copper lose contact with the wire for any reason.

I kept looking up at the bar of copper all the time while we were moving, then I saw it starting to melt and the molten copper run down the cable towards the motor. The hot metal set fire to the covering on the cable and it sure was burning fast towards the hole in the plate of steel that I was standing on where the cable went into the motor. When I saw it was about two or three inches from the plate I took the bar of copper off the wire, threw it on the ground and jumped for my life away out on the grass.

The foreman come out of the cab and started to swear at me until he saw the cable burning close to the hole going to the motor. He grabbed the fire extinguisher from the cab and

put out the fire. When he saw how close we both had come to dying, he changed his tune mighty quick.

I then got my stick with the bar that was partly melted, and the cable that had all the insulation burnt off it, and ask him if he called that perfectly safe.

He did not answer, but his face went very white.

March 28, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter today, so I thought I would get busy at once and answer your letter right away.

Well, I had to return my new typewriter. I did not get used to it. At the price that was asked for it, I did not think it was worth the money. There were too many gadgets on it to suit me. For one thing, and this was very important to me, when I had to erase a letter, I had trouble

with my poor eyesight to find where I had erased the letter and to get the proper letter lined up in the same place. The two little prongs where the arm carrying the letter past through to make the impression on the paper were down in the machine where I could not see them. I had to look down in the shadows in the machine to find them and line them up with where I wanted the letter to go on the paper.

As I make a lot of mistakes due to my bad eyesight, this makes for very slow typing.

I got disgusted with it and took my old typewriter to pieces and found why it did not work. I fixed the part that was giving trouble, cleaned and oiled the machine, and now it operates like a new one. I saved \$134.00 by doing this and now have a machine that I am used to that works real good. I was a little bit doubtful about taking the machine apart, as I did not know if I could put it back together or not with my eyes being as bad as they are, but I thought nothing risked, nothing gained so I went ahead and dismantled it.

When I was taking each piece out, I looked over the place carefully where I had taken it out and was able to remember where each piece went when I started to reassemble it. I had to trust more in my sense of touch than in my eyesight, as I could not see past where the part fitted. However there was a lot of luck to it, and while it took me a long time to put it all together, I felt pretty good when it all worked so good.

I was not as helpless as I thought I was.

The bad thing about all this is that the ribbon in the old typewriter I just repaired is about done. The type comes out a bit faint, so I hope you can read it alright.

I sent uptown with my daughter Pat last Saturday when she was home over the weekend, to get me two new ribbons for my old machine. She got them alright but they would not fit my

old machine, so I have to go back to the old ones that are pretty much wore out until she comes home on a weekend again.

It seems like I can't win for trying with this typewriter.

Just to let you know, I wrote a pretty strong letter to our local postmaster in Thunder Bay about that lost letter you never got, but so far I have had no reply.

Well, I had better start answering your questions as I do not know how long this ribbon is going to last, and my hands are very near useless as far as using a pen is concerned.

You ask about what other experiences I have had that made me be careful about offering to help people out. Well, I had another experience in very near the same spot on Cut Hill as the one with those two girls I told you about that I tried to help get home.

One night, when I was coming home from the Glen, there was another horse and buggy stopped at the top of Cut Hill. In the buggy was "Goose" Parr. He was very drunk and had past out. I got into the buggy with him to try and wake him up, but it was no use, he was out cold.

I recognized the horse and buggy and decided to take Goose home, and the horse and buggy back to the livery stable. I took him home and told his mother where I had found him and helped her to get him into his bed, and then I took the horse and buggy down to Ollie Rutledge's livery stable behind the McGibbon hotel. When Ollie came out to take care of the horse, I was standing on the opposite side of the buggy and told him where I had found Goose and the horse and buggy.

Ollie reached across the buggy and punched me in the face, that was all the thanks I received that time for helping out two people, Goose, and returning Ollie's outfit.

George Parr, usually he was called "Goose" by his friends, was a Vet from the first world war. I had went to school with him for about a year or so. He was just a big happy go lucky kid when he went into the army. When he came back home and found that someone else had his old job and that the promise of the mill manager that his job would be waiting for him was no good, he started to drink real heavy.

Very seldom would you ever see him sober.

I tried to reason with him several times about his drinking but he usually said the world was a rotten liar, and he did not want to live in it any longer. He was just past nineteen when he died and his family, I think, was in a way very relieved, as his drunken spells were causing a lot of gossip around Georgetown where they lived. They were a very religious family.

You ask about names. The fellow's name that had the crabs was Delbert Carr. He came from Hamilton, Ontario, down to Trenton to work in the chemical factory. He had been at this boarding house only a few days before I arrived there in the evening. They did not have a bed for me and ask me if I would sleep with this fellow for one night.

About the girl that got pregnant after fooling around with Delbert Carr. I think it is a pretty low trick to play on a foolish girl, but I know there are lots of fellows who only go out with girls for that one thing, sex, and when it backfires on them they either deny responsibility or blame the girl for seducing them. I have had girls, when I was a young fellow, that tried to seduce me, but my uncle had taught me well and I did not bite and I got some pretty bad names called at me by some of the girls.

I always felt sorry for the girls that got caught and wished there was something that I could do to ease their misery. I tried to be a friend to one girl in Georgetown that got herself

pregnant from a no good character, and it sure got me a bad name around town for awhile, until the fellow who was to become the father of the child got scared and married the girl a few months before the birth happened. I did not mind the hassle I was given before he married her as I knew I was not responsible and so did the girl.

I went to see them many times after the baby boy was born, and was always welcome in their home. They were still married and happy when I was in Georgetown the last time, in the late 1920s.

About my father's reaction to my leaving home. My father never showed any feelings one way or another when I left home to see a new part of the country, but my mother was always upset a lot and wanted me to get married and settle down. When I came home my father was always just about the same as when I went away, he acted as if I had just been uptown. I think he was the same way with all of us though, and not just me. I don't think he cared a bit about his children or his wife, just about boozing with his friends.

Was I the only one that left home? No. Tom went into the army in the first world war, and another brother went out west one year for the harvesting. And then there is my sister, Annie, who went away from home some fifty years ago and never returned and never contacted anyone in the family. Just a few months ago I had her located in Vancouver, but for some reason she still does not want any contact with any of the family. I wrote to her but have had no answer. It's a mystery to me why not.

You ask about me living here, at my daughter's place. Well, I did not want to come down here and look after my daughter's place, that was mostly my wife's and my daughter's idea. I did not want to sell our last little home in the Rainy River District that was in such a very beautiful

location and had everything a person could want in there old age. But my wife had gone into the wilderness with me once before, in the Hungry Thirties when we went to the homestead, and again when I was pensioned off and wanted to go back to the wilderness to end my days there. So I thought this time I should go where she wanted to go to be near a city.

Here at my daughter's place, we are not close to the city by about twenty miles.

We still have to depend on other people to go to the city or do our shopping for us. I try to do all my shopping by mail that I can, but there is lots that I have to depend on my children to do when they come to visit, which it turns out is not very often.

That is why I would very much like to find a place of my own again, where my wife and I can spend our last years together.

Well I must close and say good bye for now. Say hello to Mrs. Filter for me. Best wishes to you both and good luck in your home hunting.

Your friend,

Sam

vistaVision Memories

Black Irish Woman

I finally got my birth certificate and went up to the chemical works and got a job there the next day at 75 cents an hour. I had been getting 45 cents an hour at the Canada Creosoting Co. plant.

The chemical company, the British Chemical Company, took every precaution that they possibly could to keep things safe for their workers, but it was quite impossible for them to prevent stupid errors by the human element. They had plenty of guards on the move continually all over the whole sprawling plant, but there was always someone who thought they were smarter than the ones that run the place, or those who were guarding it against sabotage.

One man who was going to work a double shift at double pay thought he had figured out a way to get out without going out the gate. If he went out the gate, and came back in that way, he could not claim double wages for the second eight hrs. as he would have to punch out and in again at the time clock.

There was a big pile of telephone or power poles along on the place near the electrified fence. He took a running jump off the top of the pile to try and jump over the fence, but one of the poles turned under his foot as he leaped for the fence, so instead of clearing the top wires of the fence he landed on them on his stomach and died right there of electrocution.

My first job at the place was pushing a truckload of full cans of gun cotton blocks from the press room across to the cutting room and bringing back empties.

The blocks were put in presses on the top floor. The operator put the block in the press then let the ram down slowly with low hydraulic pressure. After it was seated at 1000 pounds



British Chemical Company, Trenton, Ontario, 1918

pressure, he would slowly turn on 4000 pounds. When the gun cotton came out below, it looked like macaroni with seven little holes through the length of it. It was then taken in boxes over to the cutting machine where it was cut into quarter inch pieces. From there it was sent to another building by push truck to be dried into very small pellets and glazed with glycerine.

On the presses on top floor of the cutting room, if you let the low pressure ram come down too fast, air is trapped in the press and the pressure increases quickly and you have an explosion. That is why the operator must always stand with his back to the press when letting the ram down, and watch it in a mirror.

I saw the face of a new man that let the ram down too fast, and it was not a pretty sight. It did not kill him, but I would bet he wished it had. He was badly burnt about the face and head and would never see again. He had only been working there less than two days.

Several weeks after I had started at the chemical works, while I was on the four to twelve shift, a bunch of us was outside sitting on a platform under a big bright light. Some of the fellows started talking about social diseases, and one fellow ask if we wanted to see some crabs. Some of the fellows said sure. So the fellow went over to the toilet and came back shortly with a piece of toilet paper folded up in his hand. He opened it up under the light and there was a whole swarm of crabs.

I ask what did they do, and most of the fellows laughed and said they would eat you alive. However they soon told me all about them and seemed to enjoy doing it.

I knew then how lucky I had been to get ahold of that little tin of Blue Ointment. I began to wonder why that fellow that had them and showed them to us did not get rid of them, so the first time that I had to catch him alone, I ask him if he was just keeping them for pets, or did he want to get rid of them. He said he had tried a good many different ways to get rid of them but nothing worked. I then ask him if he had ever tried blue ointment.

He said he had never heard of it.

I told him about my experience.

He then ask me where he could get some of that ointment and I told him to go to a drug store, and if he could not get it at one, to try them all until he did get it. I told him it might take a lot longer to get rid of them than it had taken me to get rid of them, for I had caught them as soon as they had made themselves noticed.

He said he would be glad to give them lots of ointment if he could get it.

I did not see him again for nearly a month, and then he was over one night when we were waiting for powder at the chemical plant. He told me that he had got rid of them all in about a week, and that he was going to carry a tin of blue ointment with him the rest of his life.

One day, the man who operated the machine that chewed up all the scrap gun cotton was called into the armed services, so I got his job. I had to mix a machine full of scraps with enough ether to make it soft.

One time I came in on the four till twelve shift and tested the material in the mixer for softness and found it very hard. I put in about a gallon of ether and started the machine going. After about half an hour I tested it again for softness and found it had all turned black.

I had the foreman come over and look at it, and as soon as he saw it he said it had water in it.

He went over to his desk and looked at the report from the previous shift and found that they had reported a leak in the brine faucet that was around the machine, and that some brine had leaked into the load in the machine, and it was to be unloaded and destroyed.

The foreman had not read the report when he took over his shift, which he was supposed to do, and the spoiled gun cotton was at the bottom of the machine where the water lay and could not be seen from the six inch test hole at the top of the machine. He told me to get a big 20 gallon can and unload it all out the front door where we took out the finished product.

I did this and it did not take very long to take the top part out, but when it come to taking the packed gun cotton from between the teeth of the breakers, it was much slower.

I got the front teeth cleaned out and when I started to do the back teeth, I had to get my head and shoulders inside the machine. There was no mask for to use around this machine as this had never happened before. I just remember starting to clean the back teeth, and the next thing I was aware of was someone saying "take his shoes off as he might start kicking, then cover him with a blanket."

I could not talk and it was an effort to get my eyes even part way open.

I could see it was dark outside and there were two men in white clothes looking at me.

One of them said, "he is coming out of it, he will be alright."

I remember no more until someone was shaking me and telling me that I would have to go back to my job and report before I went home. I ask how did I get down here in the bottom of the machine. I heard them saying that I passed out from the ether, and that I was very lucky that I had slid down there as they could reach me in time and get me to the hospital. The foreman said another five minutes with my head in there inside that machine would have finished me off.

I put my shoes on and felt my pockets to see if I had everything.

When I felt my wallet, I thought of my money, so I took my wallet out and opened it, no money. I had \$3.85 when I left for work that afternoon. I ask the men what became of my

money and they said they did not know, that perhaps it fell out on the way down to the hospital on the little electric scooter. I told them if that happened, how was it that I still had my wallet? The money had been in the wallet.

They had no answer for that. I did not think they took it, but they had the opportunity to do so.

I went back up to where I worked and the men were getting ready to leave. The foreman came over and asked how I felt, and then gave me my money that I thought was gone. He said he took it out of my wallet for safe keeping as there had been complaints of others losing money on the way to the hospital when they were unconscious. I thanked him for taking care of it for me.

I felt rather bad about doubting the honesty of the two fellows who took such good care of me at the hospital.

After passing out from that ether, I was taken off that job and put on one of the high pressure presses that pressed the gun cotton into billets before they went to the cutting room. I was only working on that job for about a week when the ether got to me again and knocked me out for a second time. It was a very hot muggy day and the building was full of ether and alcohol fumes, and I had been told that if they had got to you once before, they would get to you easier the second time. The first thing I knew, I was laying on the floor again, with some of the men

gathered around. I started to get up with the help of two men and I got outside and sat out most of the afternoon in the shade.

The young man at the hospital had told me I should not go back to work around where there was ether, but I had forgotten about it.

The foreman said he would have to put me down in the building where they put the alcohol in the gun cotton to take the water out.

That was a good job and I liked working there. It was dangerous, you could lose an arm very quickly if your mind wandered and you got careless, and it was fast work on those presses, but I liked working at something that was fast and where there was a challenge.

When I was put to work on the high pressure presses that pressed the gun cotton into billets the most blocks that an operator ever put out in eight hours was 305. I wanted to try and beat that record. I ask the foreman if it would be alright to try for the record the next shift and he said, "sure but remember I will be watching you all the time." He said he would not interfere unless I was taking the block out before it reached 4000 pounds pressure. I said he would get the full pressure but that I had some ideas of my own how production could be increased.

Perhaps I had better explain how this press was supposed to be operated.

First the gun cotton comes up from the other side of the property in covered metal boxes about ten feet long, six feet wide, and about four feet high. They were pulled up by a small electric engine on railway tracks. Each pressman had a helper who shoveled this damp gun cotton into a hopper affair at the back of the press. When the press was empty he would empty the hopper, which held about two bushels, into the press. The pressman would then take a brush and brush all particles that was spilled on the rim of the press, down into the press. He would

then lower the ram using about 100 pounds pressure of 1000 pounds available until the ram was seated. Next he would pump in ten inches on the glass scale, which equaled 10 gallons of 100 proof alcohol. Now the operator opens the 1000 pound pressure full and starts applying 4000 pounds pressure. When 4000 pounds is reached he reverses the process, the 5 inch thick block comes up, and the operator puts it in a can made for the purpose and puts the lid on. If his press is already loaded, he proceeds as before.

I had practiced my ideas for several days before I ask the foreman's permission to try for the record. The day before I was to try I had a talk with the men who brought up the cars, and my helper. They were all with me one hundred per cent to see that there would be no delay on there end.

I had timed the ram when it closed the top of the chamber. It had to come down about three feet and it took just a shade over one and a half seconds, plenty of time for what I had in mind. I had tested it out, and found it gave me a fraction of a second to be clear of the ram when it came down. If I missed or faltered I would lose an arm.

I did not intend to miss or falter.

The night before, I got a piece of stiff tin that was smooth and fixed it up to hold some paper and a pencil and so that I could hang it up on my press. In the morning I ask the foreman to see that I was kept well supplied with empty cans, because after you press a block you cannot leave it sit around out of a can or it will get a hard shell on it in a very few minutes.

Everything was fine in the morning, lots of cans and two cars of gun cotton were at my platform, and me and my helper were all ready to go.

I checked my tank to see it was full of alcohol and saw that pressure was right up on my press.

I gave my helper the sign to start filling his hopper and we were away.

As soon as he had dumped the hopper into the press, my left hand started the ram down as my right hand with a brush in it swept under the ram and pulled out. As the ram seated, my left hand switched on the alcohol pump while my right hand was easing on the 4000 pound pressure. My left hand then shut off the pump, and with my right hand on the high pressure lever I watched the gauge touch 4000 pounds. Then I reversed everything as fast as I could.

By the time I had the block in the box and another box ready, my press was loaded again and we were on our way to a big day. How big I never dreamed. I really worked that day, and as I worked, things started to smooth out and everything seemed to fall into place by itself.

The foreman came and watched for about half an hour but did not speak to me.

Pretty soon he was back with the Superintendent and a delegation from the head office building. No one spoke to me or interfered. Two men from the lab stuck a thing like thermometer in several blocks as I put them in the cans, but said nothing to me at all. I thought by the smiles on their faces that I was doing a job that satisfied them.

Finally that day came to an end and I counted up the blocks I had turned out and I could not believe it. I called the foreman over and asked him to count them.

I said it did not seem that I had turned out that many blocks.

He said yes my count is right. He said he had another man counting every block that come out of my press, 552 of them.

When I realized it was true I felt pretty good about it.

The foreman said, "you were taking an awful chance on getting your arm taken off." I told him there was no danger at all if you kept your mind on your work as you were supposed to do. I said if production could be very near doubled all along the line like that by everyone keeping their mind on what they were doing, would not that end the war that much sooner.

He said it might at that.

After that, I dropped back to around four hundred and fifty blocks a day.

The other guys were a bit sore at me for a while, but they soon got the idea and started to do better.

The foreman told me shortly after that that the line from our building never had to wait on us any more. He said the people down where they made the gun cotton wanted to know what we were doing with all the gun cotton they were sending up.

The foreman said he told them that we were giving it to the Germans.

When I was living at the Hinds place, there was a woman of about 35 or so who I found out later was a French woman from Montreal, who came to board. She was a tall, husky woman, with very black hair and very white complexion. For some reason, she seemed to take a liking to me. Perhaps it was because I did not drink or smoke, or perhaps it was because while I was courteous to her, I never sought her company.

To tell you the truth, I was scared of her, in a way. Her talk was always suggestive, it seemed to me, and always, as far as men were concerned, seemed to have two meanings.

One evening she got me cornered in the parlor when I was writing a letter home to my mother. She knew I would have the following Sunday off and would not have to report for work until the following Monday at midnight. She suggested that we hire a car and drive to a beach that she knew of on Lake Ontario where we could be all alone and have a picnic.

I told her that I could not do that as I did not have any money until payday came around again.

She said that she would pay all expenses, as well as getting us a nice picnic hamper.

Then I told her I did not have any swimming trunks.

She said at this beach she knew of we did not need any bathing suits or swimming trunks, and she promised that I would enjoy myself very much.

The more she talked, the more I was determined that I was not going. I was young, but I was not a prude or was not ashamed of my body, but if that woman had it in her mind to use my body to satisfy some wants that she had, she was going to get a surprise. For all I knew, she may have been rotten with some social disease. I had kept myself away for a long time from sex temptation, and I was not going to fall for a woman like that.

When I went to work the next day, I volunteered to work a double shift the next Sunday. The foreman told me that was my day off, but I told him my mother needed the extra money, and I would appreciate it very much if he would arrange it so that I could work the next Sunday.

When I told this woman that I had to work the next Sunday, she said that is alright, I will walk you to work in the morning and, and she told me that that four mile walk there and four mile walk back will fix me up fine for the rest of the day.

I thought she was just talking, but she was up early the next day and ready to leave when I did.

When we had got out of town and were on the long stretch of track up along the Trent river, she ask me about why I disliked her.

I decided to be honest and frank with her, since she asked for it.

I told her that I liked and admired her at a distance, but when she wanted to get more personal and sexy, I did not want to cooperate with her or any other woman. I told her as far as having any kind of sexual relations with her, or any other woman, that was out until I found a woman that I could love and marry. I could not risk having sexual relations with any woman that came along and perhaps getting some disease to take to the woman that I would want to marry. I was not saying that she had anything for me to be afraid of having sexual relations with her, but I was taking no chances with anyone. I said I was sorry if I hurt her feelings, but she ask and I only told her the truth, which I thought she would like better than a lot of lip.

There was another young woman that the Hinds knew because Mr. Hinds married her and her husband, when he was a preacher. She used to come over from the other side of town, across the river to visit with them quite often. Her husband was a brakeman on the CNR.

On this particular Sunday in August of 1918, she came over to the Hinds place early in the morning, when I was on the 8 to 4 shift at the Chemical Plant. When I got back to where I lived after my shift, she was still there. The other two men boarders and Mr. Hinds were all on the 4 to 12 shift that day.

I had my supper, and after washing and shaving, I changed my clothes and decided to go into town for a while. I was in town until about eleven, and when I came home this young woman was still there. I was about ready to go to bed when she came into the front room and ask me if I would walk her home, as she was afraid to go through town alone at that time of night.

I did not fault her for that, as the town had some pretty rough characters around at night. I was rather tired, but told her I would walk her to her home. Her husband was on the four to twelve shift at the CPR and would not be home for more than an hour, so he would not be over to take her home.

It was a nice warm night and we walked rather slow as she was pregnant of about seven months, so she told me. It took us about three quarters of an hour to get to her home, and she gave me the key to the front door and ask me if I would go in first and search the house to see that no one was in the house to attack her when I left.

I went in and looked in all the rooms and in clothes closets or any other place one could hide in, then came back to the big living room where she had already come in from outside. I told her there was no one in the house except the two of us and I was leaving for home now and for her to lock the door after I had left. I put my hat on and turned to leave, and just then there was a pretty husky man standing inside the doorway.

She must of seen him come in because my back was to him and she was facing him, so why did she not speak up?

When she knew that I had seen him, she called him Jack and told me it was her husband.

I said good night to her and her husband and started for the door.

He said, "hold on a minute, I want to know what's going on and what you are doing here."

I started to explain why I was there in the house and why I brought his wife home.

He surprised me by asking me if I liked his wife.

I told him I did and that I thought she was a very fine person, but I said that had nothing to do with me walking her home through the town at around midnight. I said I would do it for any lady that ask my help.

He said, "what could a little kid like you do to protect a woman against those toughs in town."

I said I could do a bit of boxing, and I was a dirty fighter if the odds were against me. I told him I could punch pretty hard and that I knew where to hit where it would do the most good, and if he cared to look, he would see that I had metal toe caps on my boots to make my kicks effective, and I was pretty good at gouging and wrestling.

He started to laugh and said, "if all you say is true, you can walk my wife home any time she asks you to."

I told him if he did not believe what I told him, for to step outside and I would give him some proof.

He looked hard at me for awhile and said, "by cracky, I believe you, and I don't need any samples."

Well I got out of there and went home.

Him and his wife became pretty good friends of mine while I was in Trenton.

One night in October of that year, the young woman that I walked home and Mr. Hinds' oldest daughter, Hilary, were walking over to the railroad bridge that crossed the Trent river with one of the other boarders and I when we were on the 12 to 8 shift. When we got to the bridge, we stopped and said our good-byes and the other fellow and I started to go across the bridge.

The two women said, "are you not going to kiss us good by, you know you might not come back in the morning."

I stopped and went back, and believe it or not that young married woman was really crying. She run to me and wrapped her arms around my neck and begged me not to go to work that night. She said she had a feeling that I would not come back, and she was getting more upset by the minute.

I did not know how to handle this, but I did know it would not do her any good as she was pregnant and the baby was due most any time. I thought perhaps a shock might stop her crying so I took her gently in my arms and kissed her well and long.

I do not know who was the most surprised, her or me. I had never really kissed a girl in my life before, but I must of done a good job of it, because she stopped crying and dried her eyes.

She said, "Samuel, I have never been kissed like that before."

I told her I was Irish, and this was the way the Irish kissed the ones they really liked, so I said she had better be on her guard.

She seemed to have forgotten all about what she had been saying about me not coming back in the morning. She was laughing and talking a blue streak and when we turned across the bridge to go to work she ran after me and caught hold of me and turned me around and really kissed me hard on the mouth, and then run back to Hilary and went home.

This fellow that was with me had a lot of lewd remarks to make about what went on, but I did not answer him. I was too busy trying to figure out just what had happened to that woman who was so young and loved her husband so deeply, yet she would cry over me and try to stop me from going to work for fear I would not come home in the morning.

She belonged to what is called the Black Irish. They have jet black hair, white skin and deep blue eyes. They are supposed to be able to see coming events before they happen. I belong to the blond Irish, who are the silent type, good workers but with not much to say, as they are mostly unable to express their feelings, so they suffer a good deal in silence.

When I finished my shift that day, that young woman was still at where I lived visiting Hilary Hinds, and she cried when she saw me coming down the sidewalk and run out to meet me.

I had a funny feeling that I should quit and look for another job after that night on the bridge. My hunches have never really let me down when they were as strong as that one was, so I quit the next afternoon at four, when my shift ended.

Next morning I went to the CNR repair yards and got a job as a painter's helper.

That very night, about five-thirty, the first explosion went off at the chemical works and continued off and on the rest of the night. I lay up on top of what was called Edge Mountain, along with a fellow that boarded where I did, most of the night watching the explosions. It was a damp night with a heavy dew, and I think I got the flue that night.

That night when the explosions started at the chemical plant, the young girl was rushed to the hospital where her son was born about an hour after she arrived. I visited her in the hospital a few days later, before I left to go home when the war was over. This young lady was having a hard time recovering from her giving birth to such a big child, as she was a very small lady. Her husband was there when I came in to say good by to his wife and son, and he ask me if it was alright to name the baby after me, and would I be it's Godfather.

I told them it was alright with me, and I would feel pretty proud to be a Godfather to such a fine husky boy.

After the explosions got going at the chemical plant, everyone was leaving town and going towards Belleville. I started out for there too, walking like the rest of them, but I felt so weak and sick I just turned around and went back to town. I was going past a grocery store that had all its glass blown out when I went in and got a few lemons and some sugar and went to where I was boarding. There was no one there, so I tried to start a fire in the stove but it just smoked. I went outside and looked up where the chimney should have been. No chimney. I went inside broke a small pane of glass out of a kitchen window, then took the stove pipes down

and stuck them out the window. The fire burned good then and I soon had hot water to make some hot lemonade.

I went upstairs and took the bedding and mattress off my bed and dragged it down to the kitchen and made a bed on the floor. I got the place real warm, then I crawled into bed with my hot jug of lemonade feeling happy and later went to sleep with a belly full of hot lemonade.

This was on Thanksgiving day, October 14, 1918, and I was 17.

I woke up fine the next morning, but I was all alone. No one had come home yet. I cooked some breakfast, washed the dishes, put away my bed upstairs and washed the kitchen floor where I had spilt soot from the stove pipes. After everything was tidy, I went uptown to see what was going on, but the soldiers had taken over the town.

There were a few of the businessmen back and I got a job helping to clean up the glass from the windows the explosions had shattered off the streets.

The Globe and Mail reported later that only one man was hurt in the explosions. He had a broken wrist.

Well, there were close to four thousand or more workers inside an electrified fence that would kill anyone touching it, and only one man got a broken wrist? I did not believe it.

About a month later, on November 11th of 1918, the armistice was signed to end the war, and everyone seemed to be happy. I was in a crowd listening to the announcement by Mayor Ireland of the end of the war, and I had my hands in my overcoat pockets when I felt a hand slip into the pocket on my left side, which my own hand was in.

I at once got hold of one of the hand's fingers and bent it back until it came unjointed.

The owner of the hand screamed as I turned to look at him, but no one paid him any attention as the mayor's speech was over and most everyone was screaming their applause. The man who belonged to the hand was a little fellow like me, much skinnier, with a little black mustache, black eyes and very bad teeth. He was still screaming when I turned around because I still had hold of his finger. I told him he had gotten his hand in the wrong pocket and he should be more careful in the future, then I let go of his hand.

It did not take him very long to disappear in the crowd.

I think he was one pickpocket that would be unemployed for awhile.

April 10, 1977

Dear Reinhard:

I received your letter of April 6 today. I was quite surprised to hear from you so soon, also very much pleased, as it gives me an excuse to have a very interesting time answering it on what looked to be a very dull day for me.

It is a foggy day outside and I cannot even see the trucks and cars going past on the highway when I look out my window. The paper keeps saying spring has sprung, if it has, it must have sprung somewhere else. We have very little snow left around here, but then we never did have very much this last winter. The weather is damp and foggy most of the time, with a few sunny days thrown in once in a while so that we will know that there still is a sun in the sky.

I have been feeling rather low in spirits the last few days as the pains in my chest from these angina attacks are getting more severe, and they are coming more often. The pills I take do not seem to be effective in holding them off.

Yesterday I went for a short walk outside down to the old blacksmith shop back on my daughter's place. I think this is the first time that I have been outside since about last July or August. I have several rolls of heavy roofing in one of the better preserved buildings, about a quarter of a mile or less from the house. I started out this morning to go down there and get the exact weight per roll, as I am planning on selling them.

I got about fifty yards or so from the house, when I had a very bad anginal attack.

I managed to get back to the house and into my room and sit down in my rocking chair before my wife saw me.

I took two of my pills for heading off these attacks before I sat in the chair, and by sitting very still for about fifteen minutes I managed to shake off the attack and am perfectly alright now, except for a bit of weakness when I stand up. I have had many of these attacks before, most not quite as strong as that one, but I always seem to manage to stop them before they really get serious.

I have to admit that they are rather scary when they come on real quick and unexpected like that one did. I have the means of stopping them if I catch them in time, so I am not worrying about them too much. I just live with them, one day at a time.

What else can I do.

But sometimes I get the feeling I am living on borrowed time.

The little premature baby we have here that my wife is looking after for the Children's Aid Society took sick several nights ago at about 2.30 am, and my wife had to call one of the Society's workers and have it taken back to the hospital. They operated on it and found that one of its intestines had a knot in it.

They fixed that up and the baby is back with us and is doing fine again.

Well, we had another bit of a scare last night.

After I went to bed, I thought I could smell smoke in the house. It turned out to be nothing, we could find no fire anywhere in the house. But it still worried me.

Some of the wiring in this house is not so good, so we always have to be ready to move in a hurry if something happens. So when I go to bed at night I always just shove my door to my room closed, but never closed tight, as I am very scared of fire. My door stays open just a crack so that if there is a fire, I will smell the smoke in time.

I am a very light sleeper and have been awakened several times since I have been here by the smell of smoke when my wife has put wood on the fire in the wood stove in the basement. You would think I would get used to smelling the wood stove, but because the wiring here is not so good, any smoke I smell always wakes me up.

Well I think I should start answering your questions.

The woman who came to live at the Hinds boarding house where I was living gave the name of Mrs. Della Francis, but I have no reason to believe that was her true name, except that she said it was her name. She never did talk about herself except to say her husband had died several years ago and that she was not interested in getting another.

She was a tall woman, about six foot or so, with real black hair, a very thick long mass of it. I combed and brushed it for her several times, until she started to get too pushy and familiar, then I backed off and told her I did not have time to take care of her hair. She had a lovely pure white complexion. I never knew her to have makeup on her face of any kind, and I had many close ups to see her face when I was brushing and combing her long hair. She did, I think, use too strong a perfume, and it was rather overpowering at times, but I always managed an excuse to get a breath of fresh air outside.

She had a lovely deep voice and I think she had a much better education than I did, for she could talk right along without hesitating to search for the right word. To hear her at the piano, and her singing I guess is what drew me to her the most, and I was very much disappointed in her when she suggested that we go bathing in the nude on a lonely beach at the lake. She had real black eyes that at times seemed to glow. Those eyes seemed to draw you to her and that sure made me afraid of her, so that after the beach proposition, I stayed mighty clear of her. This lady, Della Francis, was quite put out by my refusing to go with her to this beach, but I did not trust her very far, so did not go.

Why did so many girls go after me? Perhaps the reason some of those girls liked me was because I was so green and honest with them. I never gave them a line like most of the fellows did, because I did not know any lines. I always treated girls and women with respect and

courtesy, and encouraged them to talk about themselves because I usually had very little to say.

They seemed to like to tell me all about their friends, or any gossip they had heard, and I was always a good listener.

Mothers of grown up girls seemed to trust me around their girls. Perhaps they thought I was too stupid to be a threat to them. I noticed this especially in Trenton and found that the mother would watch me for a few days, and when she saw I was really no threat to their girls, she showed no special interest in me.

I am a very silent man, or so my wife says, but my mind is going at top speed all the time. It is full of things that I have as yet not found a way to express. Time is getting short if I am ever to be able to express them. I wrote to our newspaper here twice expressing an opinion on two different things that they ask their readers to give their opinion on, but my opinions were never printed in the paper. I guess I did not express them right, or clearly enough. I am no good whatever when it comes to talking and expressing an opinion about something.

I have a lot of time to think now that my wife has these two Children's Aid babies to care for. They sure keep her busy day and night. I do not know how she can keep going like she does as she is past 67 years old. For that matter I do not know how she has put up with me for going on 51 years.

We have been through some rough times together, but she has never weakened once that I know of. She has been through three childbirths with only me to attend her and never complained or made a fuss about it. That takes real courage, I am sure. She has never been one to complain when I was out of work and there was no money coming in to feed the family. She

always managed to put a meal on the table. When clothes wore out, she would patch them and make over old things so they looked like new with never a complaint.

When I suggested we go to this land I had traded our house in Georgetown for up in the Rainy River District wilderness at the start of the Hungry Thirties, she was just 23 and she was all for it, although she had never lived out of a city or town in her life. At the time we went up to the homestead she was pregnant with our second girl, and she knew that the nearest doctor and hospital were over 30 miles away over some roads that could not be traveled in summer months, and were very seldom ploughed in the winter.

She said, "that's just fine, lets go."

I sent you some pictures of the house I had in the Rainy River District in the Hungry Thirties. I am sorry that they were lost in the mail. I will look to see if I have any more copies of those pictures and if I do, I will send it out to you again.

I do not think I will ever find another place that I will like as well as that little house up there. Perhaps it is because I built it all myself and know that I will never be able to build another house. It is not because I do not have the will or the courage to build one, it is because of these angina attacks that I get when I make a quick move or strain myself.

I am getting these attacks more often now and they last longer and are more severe. I guess a person builds up a resistance to the pills to stop these anginal attacks. Or things have got worse with my health. Ether way, it is not good news.

Well I must close now. I will say good by for now and hope to hear from you again soon.

Best wishes to you and your wife.

Your friend,

Sam.

vistaVision Memories

I Could Have Been Rich

I had one more experience with women before I left Trenton late in 1918 to come back to Georgetown, and I often have wondered why most of my contacts have been with mostly young married women. I am sure that I did not seek out their company, in fact I think they were the ones that sought me for my company. I will say that I really made the first contact with them, but after that, it seemed to me that I was always the one who was being pursued.

About a year or so earlier, just before I left Georgetown to go down to Trenton to work in the war industries, there was a girl I knew in the cutter room at the Barber Bros. paper mill that used to live in Trenton. When she heard I was going to Trenton she ask me to look up a girlfriend of hers in Glen Millar.

I finally wrote to this girl in Glen Millar after I had settled in at the Hinds place, and she wrote back and invited me out to supper one evening to meet her family. She told me to follow the road out to the first bridge across the river, about four miles out from Trenton, and her house was the last one before I came to the bridge.

What she neglected to say was that there was a road to Glen Millar on both sides of the river and that I should cross the river before leaving Trenton in order to reach her house.

Well I went out on the road on my side of the river, and when I had been traveling with a fast horse and buggy for over two hours, I came to a little village and ask a man there if this was Glen Millar.

He said this was Frankfort, that I had passed Glen Millar about six miles back on the other side of the river.

I turned around and went back six miles to the Glen Millar bridge and to this girl's house. When I got there, there was no one home, so I drove on down that side of the river back towards town. About a half a mile down the road, before I came to the underpass where the CPR crossed the Trent river, I met a girl on the road walking towards me. By this time it was quite dark, and I could not see her very well when she stepped off to the side of the road to let me pass. The road was very dirty in those days, so I let the horse walk past the girl slowly.

She looked at me as I went past, but never spoke to me, and I drove on towards town.

I wrote to the girl in Glen Millar that night, explaining what had happened, and mailed the letter the next day.

Two days after, I received a letter from her saying she was the girl I had past on the road that night, and would I come out again the next time I had a day off.

I said I would and did. This time I arrived there in less than an hour.

Her and another girl were sitting in a hammock under some trees, and when I went through the gate and over to where they were, this girl introduced me to her friend. When I ask the girl I came to see for to go in the house so I could meet her parents and brother, she said they were all away from home. This girl was a very pretty girl with dark red hair, white complexion with very dark blue eyes. She was about five foot six and I would say weighed about 110 or 115 lbs, very slender and neat looking.

She seemed to be frightened or worried about something, so I did not stay long.

That was the last time that I ever saw her.

I worked at the CNR paint shop for a week or two after the chemical works blew up, then, in early November, took a train home to Georgetown for the winter. I had liked being in Trenton on my own for the first time in my life. I really had confidence in myself now that I could go anywhere and make a living. I had learned a lot.

When I left Trenton, I wrote that girl to say good-bye, and when I got home, I wrote her and gave her my address. When my mother saw her picture that she had given me, she liked her at once. I think it was because she had red hair the same color as my mother's. It was a very good studio picture and she sure looked beautiful.

We wrote back and forth all that winter of 1919, and I think I was beginning to love her.

One day, though, I received a letter and it was signed, "just a friend."

In the letter she said that this girl that I was beginning to care for had been trapped into marrying a young man in the army before he went overseas, about a year before I met her. There was a lot more in the letter that was just sickening, but I had seen so much of how she wrote in

her letters, that I recognized the writing right away. It was her handwriting, not "just a friend's." She was lying to me when she wrote to me in Trenton and never mentioned she was married, and was still lying to me when she was writing to me at home. She was so stupid that she thought I would believe an excuse of a doped apple this man gave her as the reason she did not know what she was doing when she married him. When I was a very young boy I read this same excuse in a fairy story book about a witch giving a doped apple to a princess.

I wrote back to this girl, and I think that I was rather hard on her.

When she wrote back to me she admitted that she wrote the letter and put another proposition to me that made me sick at the stomach. She wanted me to take her, and we would cross over into the States and live as man and wife, without the benefit of marriage.

Remember this was very near sixty years ago, and that was a horrible thing to do in those days. Today lots of people are doing it and society seems to think it is wonderful. It shows how people's morales have slipped in years gone by.

I wrote her back and told her I was very disgusted with her and did not think she deserved a good husband, and from now on I was through with her for good and never wanted to see or hear from her again.

I did not tell her that I really did come close to being in love with her, and that I did want to see her very much.

In the spring of 1919 I was working at the paper mill again. At that time, the Norton's second oldest daughter who also worked in the paper mill was having a birthday party when she reached eighteen years of age, and she ask me, along with several others, to come to the party, and I said I would.

When I was shaving that evening, my mother ask me where I was going that night.

I told her over to the Nortons, to a birthday party.

Well she hit the roof and said I was not going, and I ask why not. She just said because she said so, and for me to forget about going to that place.

I told her that I said I would go to the party, and that was what I was going to do. I said if she could give me a good reason why I should not go, I would stay at home and forget about it, but I was not going to stay away from the party just because she said I was not to go. I said that I was eighteen years old now, and some months past that, and if I could not choose the places that I wanted to go, I wanted to know why, otherwise I would go where I pleased.

Mother started to cry and said she had a very good reason for asking me to stay away from that house. So I ask her again what her reason was. I said that she knew the reason but I did not, and I was growing into manhood now, and if she could not trust me to share her secret and understand, then she did not trust me very much.

She said it was that important that I not go there, that if I did go, when I came home the door would be locked against me forever.

Well I guess I was so shocked that I got mad and was more determined than ever that I was going to that party. Perhaps Mrs. Norton would let something slip that would solve the mystery. I had already made arrangements with Jack Armstrong to work a bit of overtime in the

paper mill where I was working at the time, if I was late getting back from the party so I finished dressing and rolled up my working clothes and shoes and left them out in the barn.

I went to the party and took along a little present for the Norton girl, a Baby Ben alarm clock. I thought she might like it as it was all through the mill that her father was always coming to the foot of the stairs at their place in the morning and bellowing up at her to get up or she would be late for work.

There were just people at the party from the mill and some of her relations. As far as I could see there was no hard liquor there, just soft drinks and coffee and some of the people gathered around the player piano and sung some songs for awhile, and then a dance was started. The music was a fiddle and an accordion. We all had some light supper, and at eleven I left and went home to go to work for the rest of the night.

Sure enough, when I got home the door was locked against me.

So I got my work clothes and shoes and went down to the mill and punched in my card at close to twelve o'clock.

In the morning after my shift was over, I went up to the Exchange Hotel and rented a room and went to bed.

When I got up in the afternoon, the landlady said my mother had been up in the morning and left a letter for me, and wanted me to come home.

I still have that letter, unopened.

I went down home and ask my mother what she wanted to see me about. I said that I did not think there was anything to talk about as the locked door was final with me. She had never

locked the door against anyone else in our home before, not even against my father or Tom, who always treated her terrible.

She said that I had stayed all night at the Norton home against her wishes, and could now go and live there as far as she was concerned.

I told her that I was the first to leave there at eleven, and had worked in the mill the rest of the night.

She said she did not believe me.

I told her to go down to the mill office and look at my time card and see what time I punched in for work. If she could not believe that, to go and ask Jack Armstrong what time I had relieved him. I told my mother that she had always doubted my word when I told her anything, but when Tom told her a big lie, she always believed every word that he said. I ask her how much money Tom had ever paid for board before he went in the army, and how much I had turned over to her for board every two weeks, without her having to ask for it, and how much I had paid in payments on the house we were all living in when she was short of money.

I said that I knew she had a hard life living with a drunk like my dad, but only she could do anything about that. I had tried to help her with money and doing a lot of work around our home. I ask her if she had ever seen Tom do any of these things or go out and work in the garden on his own. I said that I had come to the conclusion that I was not very much liked in my own home, so in a few days I was leaving and I doubted very much if I would ever care to come back.

Mother sat there and cried all the time that I was talking, never saying a word.

She dried her tears when I stopped talking and said that she was taking my word that I had left the party at eleven and worked the rest of the night at the mill. She also said that she had

good reasons for forbidding me to go to that party, but she was never going to tell me, as it did not concern me at all.

I quit my job at the paper mill shortly after that and decided I wanted to go out west to see the rest of Canada and to get away from my mother's house. Although my mother locking the door against me was one reason I left, it was not the only reason. The main reason I left was that I wanted to get on a boat and get as far away from the Glen Millar girl, Gertrude Ferguson, as was possible. I did not trust myself that I would be able to resist her and not go back. I knew if I got far enough away, I would have a better chance of getting her out of my system.

When I had started back at the paper mill again in 1919 I worked with Mr. John Glassy on paper machines one and two, and as well as working on the paper machines as a relief man, Mr. Glassy was also boss of the shipping department. Mr. Glassy was a tall man around 59 or 60 years old, with a fairly large mustache that was black with some gray in it. He had gray hair and was about six feet tall and very thin. He looked like he was suffering from some internal sickness and was quite cranky when speaking to a person. He wore glasses and was always mislaying them and blaming someone for hiding them on him. Sometimes he would be in charge of a paper machine when the machine tender was off sick, but he was always on the day shift so that he could keep an eye on the shipping department as well.

When I was on the same shift with him, we always got along fairly well, as he knew he could depend on me to keep things going on the paper machine while he was away looking after

the shipping department business. When things were running good when he was on the job at the paper machine, I used to tell him to go and sit down in the big easy chair and take a rest from walking up and down the floor beside the machine. I said things were running good and that I would keep a close watch on the machine. So he went and had a rest in his chair, and I think he appreciated it, as he very seldom ever barked at me.

Mr. Glassy was married and he had a daughter, Miss Gertrude Glassy. Most everyone called her Gert. She had dark hair with a very white skin, and her face was very thin and sort of came to a point like a wedge. She was about five and a half feet tall and would weigh about one hundred and ten or fifteen. She had blue-gray eyes like her father, and she was employed in Jackson's General Store in Georgetown.

My sister Mae and I were very close as we were growing up, so before I left to go out west, I wanted to buy her a bottle of perfume as a little good-bye gift.

I went to Jackson's General Store where they had the kind of perfume I wanted, and I guess Miss Glassy thought that with me being a kid of only 18, she could get away with selling me any perfume, but I picked out the bottle by the same name as my sister used and I told Miss Glassy that was the one I wanted.

She said she would open it so that I could smell it, but I told her not to bother as I did not want to smell it. However she went ahead and opened the bottle and had a smell of it herself, then walked along back of the counter down to near the far end of the counter. She forgot about the big mirror back of the counter near my end that they had there to watch for kids swiping their goods off the display racks. I could see everything she was doing behind the counter down at the far end in one corner of the mirror.

She got a little bottle out from under the counter with a little funnel in it and poured some of the perfume I was buying for Mae in her little bottle, then took another little bottle of water and filled my bottle up to replace what she had taken out.

She went over and wrapped it all up in a nice little box and tissue paper with a colored ribbon tied around it and brought it to me across the counter and told me that it would be \$4.00 for the perfume bottle.

I told her I did not mind paying \$4.00 for an ounce of perfume, but I did object to paying \$4.00 for an ounce of water.

Her face went white and she ask me what I was talking about.

I showed her the big mirror over the counter and told her what I had seen. I ask her if she would like me to call Mr. Jackson, the owner, in from another part of the store, and she started to cry and ask me not to tell Mr. Jackson. I ask her what about the perfume, and she said she would give me another bottle that had not been opened. Then I ask her what she was going to do with the bottle she had watered down. She said she would put it back on the counter and sell it to someone else at half price. I told her she would have to throw it in the garbage can, and that she would have to put \$4.00 in the till to make up the amount Mr. Jackson would lose because of her stealing it.

She said she would do so, and I told her that she had better because I worked with her father down at the mill and I would tell him about it if I found out she did not pay for the perfume.

About that time, my brother Tom got back home from the army and I guess he had been brooding over what had happened to him as a kid when I had beat him up good one time when my mother was out and I was left taking care of my baby brother. So he decided one day when he and some of his friends had been drinking that he would even things up.

He started in on me in front of his friends and started asking me if I was willing to give it a try again, now that we were older.

I told him I was ready any time he was. I did not tell him that Uncle Al, mother's brother who had also been a very good boxer in his younger days, had been showing me how to box over the time that Tom was in the army.

Tom had been doing a bit of boxing while in the army over there too, so I did not feel so bad about what I would have to do if I could. Tom was my brother, so I would not hurt him intentionally, and I was rather proud of him at times when we were alone together. But when he was with his friends trying to embarrass me, well, that was another matter.

That afternoon I pasted him quite a few good ones right on the button and embarrass him in front of his friends, and he never tried that with me again.

In the spring of 1919 I took off again heading for western Canada and places far away from home. I started out going north to New Ontario, as it was called then, and from there I

would head west on the trains. Another young fellow, Norman Norton, a second cousin of mine, insisted on coming along.

We started out that night, after we cashed our last pay checks from the paper mill, to walk north on what was then the Grand Trunk Northern railway line. We walked about twenty-two miles that night, until we came to the first station on the line. We took a train from there to Alandale on the main line. Then we went to North Bay on that train, took another to Porcupine Junction, then we took another from there to Iroquois Falls, where the Abitibi Paper Co. had built a paper mill.

I got a job on a paper machine and Norman got a job setting up pins in a bowling ally.

Three days after we arrived there, Norman's uncle showed up and told him to go back to his parents in Glen Williams.

Norman left for home the next day and I stayed on at the mill for two more days, then drew my time. Mostly French speaking people were working in this mill, and besides I was getting lousey from staying in the camp. The hotel was only for the highly paid employees, the rest of us stayed in the mill camp and provided many a meal for the lice there.

I took a train to Cochrane intending to catch the TransCanada train to the west, but when I got there I found out that there would be no train going west from there for two days. I could not afford to stay there waiting for that train, and that pretty much cancelled my plans for heading out west. So next morning I took a train back down to Porcupine Junction and changed to a train going to South Porcupine where I got a job from a man down at the livery stable cutting fire killed spruce poles at \$20.00 per load. I slept in the hay loft at the stable to save paying for a bed in a rooming house, which was \$2.00 per night.

I had been cutting poles for two days when I met Norman's uncle again. He was a professional gambler who made his living at gambling in mining towns and camps. He ask me how I was fixed for money.

I told him not very good, and he said he had a game coming up that night and there would be a lot of money in the game.

He knew I could play draw poker fairly good, so he said he would stake me to \$200.00 if I would be his partner and pay back the stake and give him a third of my winnings. I said alright, then he told me he would tell me with signs how to play my cards when he was dealing.

The game got started about nine in the evening and we played until daylight.

There were five of us in the game and one man in particular could have made me be a very wealthy man today, if I had only taken him up on a deal that he offered me.

I won three big pots when Norman's uncle dealt the cards, all other times when he dealt he warned me to stay out. One pot had close to a thousand dollars in it. That was the last pot I won when the uncle was dealing.

In the morning, after settling up with my partner, I had a little over \$800.00 for my night's work. I made up my mind then that I would never go into that kind of a deal with anyone again, and I never have.

When I settled up with the uncle, he advised me to get out of town as quickly as I could, so I gathered up my things at the livery stable and told the man I would not be cutting any more poles. He paid me off and I started walking out of town.

I had just gone about a block or two when someone called my name from behind me. I turned around to look, and there was one of the men who had been a heavy loser in the poker game.

I thought at first of running because I thought that he had found out about the crooked part I had played in the game, but decided if he had, that I would give him back what part I had of his losses. However he had nothing like that on his mind.

All he had on his mind was to sell me his interest in 180 acres of land he had filed on for a homestead for \$200.00. I would be able to prove up on it in another year, then I would get a clear deed on the land and the mineral rights. There was a legal sized log house and a small barn on the land, and a horse and harness, a single horse bobsleigh, a cow with a calf and some chickens, also household furnishings went along with the property. He said I had won enough money in the game to pay cash for it, with plenty to spare for to finish proving up on the land.

He was a salesman for the Davies Packing house in Toronto. He had filed on this land before he was married, and when he told his wife that they would make their home there, she said nothing doing, she would never live in a place like that, so he wanted to get rid of it for what he could get.

That was one of the times when I was the biggest fool in the world for refusing to buy the place, as I found out about a year and a half later.

It turns out that another fellow bought the place and went there with his wife and two little children to live. They had a pair of geese, along with some chickens when they moved onto the land, and he proved up on the property the same year as he had bought it and received a deed for it and the mineral rights. At Xmas they killed and dressed some of the young geese they had

raised, and in these geese they found some small gold nuggets, and according to what I read in the paper about it, he hunted around until he found the place in this little stream where the geese had picked up the gold. He filed claims for himself and his wife and father and mother and sold mining rights to a corporation that I believe is still mining there.

At first, when I read the story in the Toronto Daily Star, I did not pay too much attention to it, but the description of the property seemed familiar. Then I remembered that the man who had tried to sell it to me had given me the lot and concession numbers. I thought I still had the little book with the numbers in it, so there was a great scramble and hunt by me to find that book, which I finally did.

The numbers were the same, and for the first time in my life, I had missed out on a fortune. I could have been rich.

I left South Porcupine by train that morning when I refused to buy the salesman's property and went on my way to North Bay. The train stopped at a little station quite a long ways down the road to North Bay, and who should get on the train but my partner, Norman, who I thought was home in Glen Williams by now, and another fellow he had picked up along the track somewhere. Norman had been robbed of the money his uncle had given him for a ticket home, and he had started out to walk home some hundreds of miles. He had stopped at a sawmill along the track and had got a job for short time, but not long enough to give him enough money to go home on a train, so he started walking again and picked up this other fellow.

Norman had enough to pay his way to North Bay and I bought him a ticket from there home and gave him the amount of his cheque that he had when he left Georgetown with me to

give to his mother when he arrived home. If he did not have that money when he got home, things would go very hard with him.

The other fellow stuck close to me and went with me to Midland, where we arrived Sunday night about eleven. The town had pretty well all gone to bed, except for a Chinese cafe. We went in there to have a late supper, each of us paying for our own meal. This other fellow with me seemed to have plenty of money. We went down to a lumber yard to find a place to sleep. I found a small steam engine with a banked fire under the boiler, and the other fellow went up on top of a high pile of lumber to sleep as it was a warm night.

I knew it would cool off before morning, so I curled up in the coal bunker of the little steam engine and did not waken until the other fellow came pounding on the door wanting in where it was warm. I did not open the door as there was only room for the operator to stand in front of the boiler, and I filled the little coal bunker right up to the roof. I told him to look around for another engine. If he found one I do not think it would do him much good, as he was a very big man.

Next morning, after I had a good wash down at the waterfront in ice cold water to get rid of the coal dust I had picked up, I went into town and had hotcakes and a hot glass of milk and was ready to travel. I found the other fellow coming out of another cafe and we started out to walk to Victoria Harbour.

When we got there, the other fellow got a job on a grain boat, but I went up to Port McNichol and got a job on the CPR Athabaska, a laker boat. It did not pay much, but you were only on duty in port for eight hours, and when on a trip, only leaving and entering port and going

through the locks. Any work such as loading or unloading freight you got paid 75 cents per hour extra.

It was a good life, lots of fresh air, good food, and I was allowed to sleep where I wished.

Most of the crew on the CPR Athabaska that I signed on with in the summer of 1919

came from Wiarton or Owen Sound. One fellow, the oldest of the deck hands, about nineteen years old, had the rest of the deck hands scared of him. I was sitting in my bunk one day, which was an upper bunk, when this bully boy came in with a wet towel in his hand. I knew right away that there was going to be trouble from the way he was looking at me.



CPR Athabaska - in warm weather I used to sleep at the base of the smokestack

He snapped the towel at two of the fellows in the two bottom bunks and made them holler with the pain. I was sitting writing a letter to my mother when he snapped the towel and hit my leg. It stung pretty good. I looked at him and ask him what he meant by that. He said that in future when he came into the cabin, I was to look up and take notice or I would get a lot more than that.

I told him to never hit me with a towel or anything else again or he would regret it. I told him that I only looked up to those I could respect, and as I did not respect him, I would not look

up when he came into the cabin. That stopped him for a minute or so, then one of the fellows giggled and that tore it.

This bully named Tweeton then snapped the towel at my leg again real hard. I reached for my ink bottle and threw the ink in his face, not the bottle. His head came just up to my knees from where he was standing on the floor. I slipped off my bunk onto his shoulders and we went to the steel floor together. I pasted him a couple of good ones at the back of his neck. He twisted around under me so that he was facing me and I grabbed him by the throat and started to choke him. He struggled for a few seconds then started to relax. Then I eased off the pressure on his throat and he came around fine.

When I thought he could hear me, I ask him if he wanted some more. He said no. I then told him I would not be bullied by him or anyone else, and I was willing to fight anyone who tried it, and would use any means to stop them from bullying me. I also told him we could either be friends or enemies, it would be his choice. If it was to be enemies, we could go up on the rear deck that was closed in and had a wooden floor, and we would fight it out with our fists to see if he was able to bully me.

There was to be no holds barred in the fight, everything went the same as in a dock fight.

The fellow looked me over for a minute or so and then he ask me if I was Irish.

I told him yes, from both sides of the family.

He surprised me by sticking out his hand and ask me to shake hands with another Mick.

After that, we were good friends as long as I was on the boat.

No one knew that I could box, I never told anyone, not even in my own family. One time, years before, when he was still boxing, uncle Al rented a car and we went to his training camp to watch him in his workout with his sparring partners. After several rounds the manager of the place apparently thought there might be some boys in the spectators who would like to put the gloves on, so he announced that he would pay \$25.00 for every round that anyone could stay in the ring with uncle Al's sparring partner.

Uncle Al and I looked at each other and I said I would give it a try if the ring man would give me the same equipment, including a head helmet.

We sparred around for a little while feeling each other out, then he started to try to hit my head, so I ducked a lot and he kept feinting for my head and toward my right side, but I kept my arm on my body the way uncle Al had learned me to do, and he was unable to land a solid blow in the first round. In the second round he really went after me. He came fast and furious for my right and I crouched over so I could protect my body.

Near the end of the third round he landed a blow low down on my right cheek.

With no thought from me that I could recall, I brung my left hand up and smacked him on the button, and down he went. He was up on his feet in a flash, then the bell went to end the round.

I went over and told my uncle that was an accident and I did not know how it had happened. Then the manager says, "lets get to the dressing room and talk about it there." We did talk about it in the dressing room, and the only answer that anyone could come up with was that it was an automatic action on my part after getting that painful blow on my cheek.

The manager said that I took to boxing naturally and that I should take up boxing as a career. He said I defended myself rather good for an amateur, and with proper training, I could go a long way.

I said no I did not want that kind of a career as when I would really need money when I got older and was through boxing, I would be too beat up to get a good paying job, and that most good boxers that I had read about had never been able to save very much money and had died forgotten and in poverty.

The manager offered me a good salary as sparring partner, but I said no to that too as it would tie me down too much, and I was young and wanted to see Canada.

They wanted me to keep quiet about knocking the sparring partner down with one left handed blow, which I did. I told everyone that he slipped, that I did not touch him. Only uncle Al's sparring partner and I know just what it was that happened, and of course we were not telling at that time.

Now they are all dead, so it does not matter I suppose.

We had another kid of sixteen in our deckhand crew. He came from Wiarton. He sported a cowboy hat and wrist bands and also high heeled cowboy boots. He talked out of the side of his mouth in what he thought was a very tough way. Him and I tangled one day when we were filling the cook's coal box. We loaded the coal on a four wheeled hand wagon in fifty pound

canvas buckets. When we had the wagon full of buckets sitting upright on the wagon, we hauled the load onto the boat and started unloading it.

We had unloaded three or four buckets and when we came back to the wagon, one bag had fallen over and spilled on the deck. This fellow, Carter, turned to me and said, "See what you have done now, you sonofabitch." He had hardly said it when I reached across the wagon and hit him a dandy right on his nose. I started around the wagon to give him some more, then I saw the captain standing about thirty feet away.

I do not know how long he had been there, or how much he had heard, but when Carter was up on his feet, the captain told him when we had the coal unloaded to come into his office.

Carter was really scared and ask me in a very small voice if I thought the captain was going to fire him.

I said it would depend on how much he had heard. I found out later that Carter was given quite a tongue lashing by Captain MacKay and put on good behaviour for the rest of the season.

We had some more trouble on the Athabaska on our 15th trip, on a Friday, that saw one of our crew killed. I did not see it when it happened and did not know about it until the next morning.

We had a French Canadian wheelsman that was on the dope of some kind. He got high on it on Thursday night and Friday morning he loaded up his revolver and went out on deck to even up some scores. He went to the lookout's room first and fired two shots through the half

inch wall trying to kill the lookout that was off duty. He said the lookout did not call him for duty the shift before, and that had got him into trouble with the captain.

Then he went down to the deckhand's room and fired two shots at Carter, the fellow I had trouble with about the coal. He missed him and the bullets went through the headboard of the bunk I was supposed to be sleeping in.

Lucky for me, I was up on deck sleeping by the smokestack because it had been a hot night.

The wheelsman then turned and tried to shoot the captain, but his gun was empty so he started loading his gun when an OPP policeman came up the ramp off the dock.

The wheelsman had one shell in his gun so he shot the policeman in the stomach, then threw the empty gun at him and run down the ramp and along the dock. The policeman went after him and fired a shot over the wheelsman's head and when he did not stop, he shot him through the back.

The bullet came out under the wheelsman's chin and took most of his face off.

The policeman was rushed to hospital but I never heard if he lived or not.

If I had been in my bunk I would not be writing about this now, as the two bullets that came through that headboard would have opened up the top of my head. What I cannot understand is why that policeman, after hearing four shots, came up the ramp with his gun in the holster instead of in his hand. It is mistake like that that can cost a policeman his life.

I left the boat later that fall when ice started to form along the shore and I went back to work in the paper mill in Georgetown for the winter of 1920.

April 19, 1977

Dear Reinhard:

Thank you for your last letter, which I very much enjoyed reading. And congratulations, my friend, on finding a home of your own for yourself and your wife and the little baby due to arrive this fall. I know it is an exciting time when you buy your first home and that you will enjoy it very much, even though money will be tight for quite some time. I know from experience that you will have to stretch yourself thin to make ends meet, but always remember that owning a home of your own is always better than renting a place, and no one can ever ask you to leave. I am also pleased to hear that your wife is doing well as she awaits the moment when your first little one will enter your lives. It is all very exciting and I am pleased for you both that things are going well.

We are having real spring weather now, rather warm, with no rain of course, which we are in need of very much. Still, the leaves are just starting to come on the trees and the grass is

coming up green and fresh looking, although there is not much of it yet. A lot of birds are flying around our house and we have a pair of squirrels that scold our daughter's two little dogs whenever they are outside. There are a lot of crows and some ravens around in the bush, and I have seen robins out on the lawn at different times. The birds all seem to be very busy flying in and out of the trees and old buildings around the place, most likely looking for good nesting places.

Before I go any further, I will tell you that I just put in a new ribbon in my typewriter, and you may imagine what a chore that was for me to do, not being able to see out of my right eye and my left eye getting very dim. I had to do it mostly by sense of touch, but I made it.

I had put in an old ribbon in my machine that I found buried under some papers in my desk drawer and which I had forgotten about. I thought this ribbon would do to replace the fading one I had in my machine. I had bought this ribbon years ago and never got around to using it. Well, when I started to use it in my machine, every time I would punch a key, fine dust would be on the paper, so when one of my granddaughters was over for a visit with my wife and who worked in an office uptown saw it, she said the ribbon was old and dried up. She then went uptown and got me some new typewriter ribbons, for which I was very grateful.

As you can see from the above printing, it is an improvement over what has been done before. I usually have several ribbons in reserve, but I had used them all up and have not been able to go uptown myself to get some more, and when I sent up with someone else, they always managed to get the wrong ones and then I would have to wait a week or more to get the right ribbon. Oh well, I have a supply of the right ribbons coming down from Winnipeg in a few days

when my daughter Mary will be coming for a short visit, so everything will be alright from now on in the line of ribbons.

Maybe I had better stop jabbering and get to your questions before my eyesight gives out completely.

About the girl in Glen Millar. The girl's name was Gertrude Ferguson.

When I finally did meet her, she was sitting in the hammock under an apple tree with a girl friend. I had a personal message to deliver to her from her friend Mabel back in Georgetown, but the other girl that was there would not take the hint and leave, so I did not deliver the message. I was there for about an hour or so, then I took my leave. For some reason she would not meet me again, so I enclosed the message in my next letter to her and sent it by registered mail the next day.

I have never met her since that day that I went to see her, but I got several letters from her and was starting to fall for her. Then I found out she was married. I was a long time getting over that, and I never really trusted a woman again until I met the one that is now my wife.

About my uncle Al that learned me to box, so that I could set my brother Tom straight. Uncle Al was mother's only living brother. He was several years older than her. He had married a catholic woman, so I was told. They had no children that I ever heard of. His wife left him a few years after they were married because he would not become a catholic.

He was a short stout man and had been a professional boxer in his younger days. He had been a cook for quite a long time as well. He would start up a diner on a shoestring as he called it, and when he had built it up into a profit paying business, he would sell the diner and go to another part of the country and start up another diner the same way.

He finally started working for the US Coast Guard as a cook and sold his last restaurant.

He did not believe in banks so always carried all his money with him.

He got mugged one night and all his money and valuables was taken from him. He was left laying in an alley, and when the police found him he was in pretty bad shape. They sent a telegram to my mother and she went over to Chicago, where he was living at the time, to see what she could do for him, but he died shortly after she got there.

We had a punching bag up in the hayloft of the barn where I used to work out with uncle Al and I learned to be a pretty fair boxer, good enough so that I never took no more bullying from anyone. This skill served me well many times as I was traveling around in Canada, and I thank my dead uncle for showing me how to do it.

I have been thinking about your suggestion that I start in on writing a sheet or two about each of my children to flesh out the vistaVision memories I am telling you about. I can see, as you say, that that would add depth to the things I am telling you about, especially when it comes to the times when my children were born and my family was starting to grow. So I will start on that during the times I am waiting for one of your letters and will soon start adding sheets about them to the vistaVisions.

For the past couple of days, I have been feeling rather blue and depressed, and very much alone. My mind started wandering back to when I was a small boy, and the good times that I had then. These kinds of memories always seem to take my mind off the troubles I am having with my body today.

I remember the many frogs along the banks of the pond behind our place on paper mill row, and how I used to creep up on them on my hands and knees and lay along the bank and

watch them catching insects, by the hour. Of course I really did not see them as just frogs, but instead they were people who were getting food for their families. I used to dream up how their home under water was like, and how many of a family they had. I was just a boy of about four years old, and I looked on them as people like I was, and thought they had the same kind of problems as humans did.

Then there were the little wee frogs that sat out on the lily pads and sang in a different way, a sort of continuous chirping sound that would last for near a minute or so. They did not all sing at one time. It seemed to me that they sang in relays of several frogs at a time, so that the music seemed to continue without a break. I have often laid there along the pond listening to them until I was stiff and cold and it got very dark. When I got home my mother usually scolded me for being out so late and told me that one of these days the boogey man would get me.

I paid no attention to that old story about the boogey man as I knew that there was no such a creature and that I was perfectly safe out there among my little friends.

In later years as I grew older and could think better, I used to wonder why people could not learn to live like these wild and contented little animals and go about their business the same as they did, without all the troubles and fights and hard feelings that all humans had with one another. If more people today would take the time to watch how wild animals lived and looked after their families, I am sure that the world would be a better place than it is right now. But these days everybody is in such a rush to get to places and to do some chore or other than nobody has the time to stop, look, and listen anymore.

In the long run, I think this will do us all in.

Somehow I got a little off the track here, so I will try to get back to what you were asking about.

About dock fights. A “dock fight” is a fight where anything goes, feet, fists, teeth, butting with the head, eye gouging, scratching with the fingernails, clubs, stones or bottles, anything or any way you can use to beat the other fellow into a bloody pulp. It used to be a favorite way of fighting around the railway yards or the docks.

Well, I think maybe I had better stop and try and get this letter and the vistaVision memories into the mail. Also, I think I had better try and get some exercise for my legs today, otherwise, who knows if they’ll work tomorrow when the weather is supposed to get a little warmer and I can get outside again.

Congratulations again on finding a home of your own and on starting a family, and I will keep an eye on my mail deliveries for your next letter.

Best wishes to you and your wife.

Your friend,

Sam

vistaVision Memories

Mrs. Fleming's Place

In the spring of 1920 I left my mother's house again, this time for Winnipeg, and this time, I thought, for good. I wanted very much to get away from home and all the squabbles and fighting there, and I also wanted to see some of Canada when I was still young and without a family of my own. I do not have the words to describe what I felt that year, but it seemed like the road was singing to me, promising to take me away from the small world I knew about in my mother's house where things were often not very good, and to show me the bigger world that was out there, if I only had the courage to take it. So that spring I bought a ticket on the CNR to take me out west.

When I left Georgetown, I thought I might get a job for awhile in Winnipeg and see what living on the prairies was all about, but when I got to Winnipeg and saw water knee deep and deeper all around the city from that year's spring flooding, I just went to the ticket office and bought a ticket on the CNR to Vancouver.

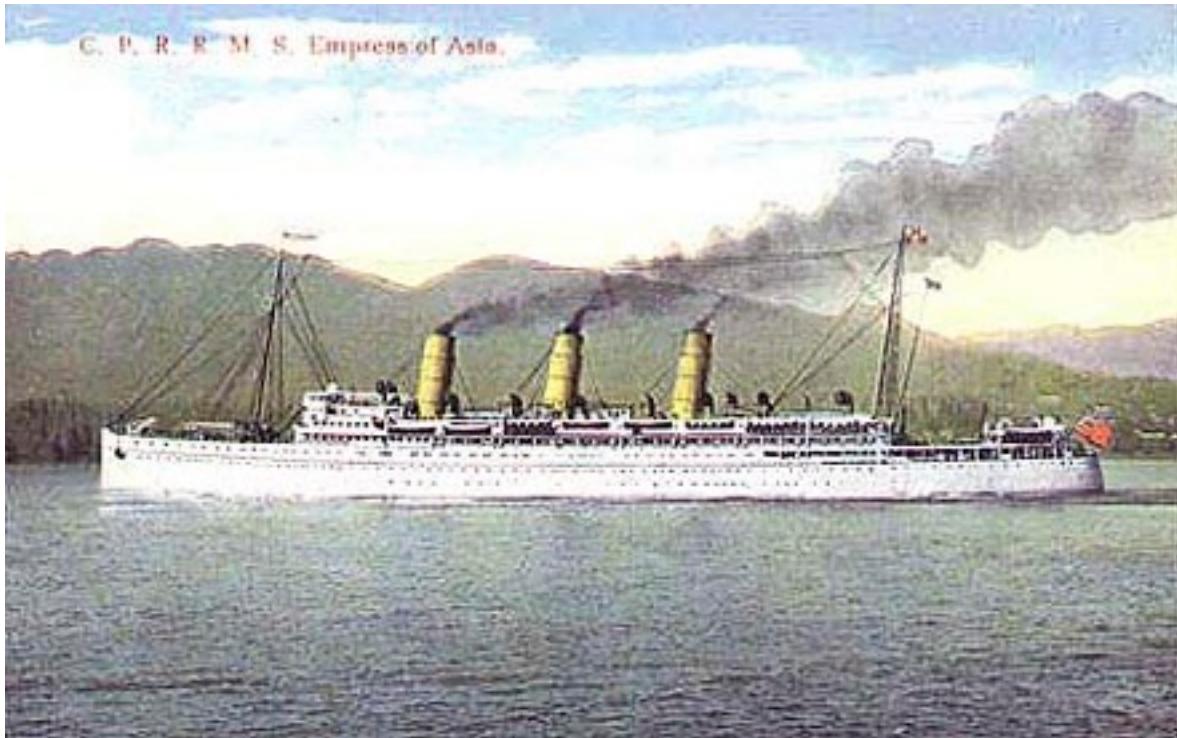
It was quite a long tiresome trip across the prairies until we started into the mountains. I then began to enjoy myself by watching the mountains and valleys go past. I saw several bears, a few moose and lots of mountain goats and sheep. I saw some other animals that I think were elk and a few small deer. But what was of greatest interest to me were the mountains, some with quite a lot of snow up high on them. They were beautiful is the only way I can describe them, also they were very awesome and made a fellow feel how small he really was.

I used to see little cabins made from logs, and I thought I would like very much to spend the rest of my days there. It was there, when I saw those cabins so isolated and independent, that I first started thinking that one day I would like to live that kind of life.

When we were coming into Vancouver, I could smell the ocean before I ever saw it. I got a room up over a nice Chinese restaurant and then went out to try and find my way down to where I could see the ocean. I finally came out on the dock where there was a very large boat belonging to the CPR line. It was the Empress of Asia, a beautiful ship. This boat had just tied up before I came along. I had seen it coming in when I was on the train, although I did not know then that I was going to get such a good look at it.

I was watching the comings and goings of people on and off the boat, the Empress of Asia, and the unloading of luggage. Everything was new and exciting to me and the smells around that dock were wonderful.

While I was watching the boat, a short, husky Scotchman came up to me and ask me if I had a match. I did and I gave him a couple and we started talking.



Empress of Asia Postcard

It appeared that he was broke and looking for a boat to ship out on. We talked for quite awhile, then, as the sun was setting, I ask him to be my guest and have supper with me. We went to a restaurant called the Busy Bee on Hastings Street. In there you could get all you could eat for 45 cents. It was run by some Greek brothers who were always singing Greek songs. After that I always ate there because I could get free halibut, my favorite fish.

In the mornings for breakfast I always had hotcakes as light as down, all I could eat, with butter and maple syrup to help them get comfortable in my stomach. I never drank coffee but always one or two glasses of fresh milk. It was food fit for kings.

I found another place on Hastings Street where I could have a late snack of fresh doughnuts or Boston cream pie and a pint or quart of pure fresh cold milk. Boy it was good.

That fellow, the Scotchman that I met at the dock, stuck to me like a leech and I ended up letting him sleep in my room, and I paid for all his meals. He was an interesting fellow to talk to.

He had been in the English navy and had been in most every port on freighters. It seemed like he would never stop talking. If he got a boat, he said he would get me on with him.

The room I rented over a Chinese cafe was also on Hastings street. This street, at that time, was about the toughest place I had ever seen. There was every kind of clip joint you could imagine on that street, sometimes several that were in the same business. There were lots of brothels with loose women, shooting galleries, pinball machines and slot machines of all kinds, arcades, get rich quick schemes of mining stocks, weird inventions, restaurants that sold drinks at very high prices, pimps and hustlers all over the place, so called beauty parlors for men or women, steam baths, and cheap flop houses.



On Hastings Street, circa 1925

I did not know all this when I took a room there, and when I found out, I took off my good suit of clothes and put on an old suit of clothes and an older pair of shoes. It was amazing how I was not bothered on the streets anymore for handouts of cash or propositions from the ladies of the streets or the fellows with something to invest in. I

let my whiskers grow and soon I was accepted as one of the bums on the street. This made it much easier for me to go into lots of places to see what was going on.

I learned a lot from that experience in Vancouver in how low men and women could sink to depths that I had never thought possible. I was propositioned many times by men, but always turned them away by asking them if they would like their jaw busted.

I went into a cabaret one night, where there was a free show on. There were three young girls on the stage when I went in, with just a G string on, dancing with three half drunk men. I just about threw up my supper at the sight of the nakedness of those girls and the way they were going on with these men. I turned and left the place in a hurry.

When I was back out on the street, I saw a policeman standing at the corner and went over and told him what I had seen, and asked him if this was allowed in Vancouver. He just laughed at me and said, "Son you haven't seen anything yet."

I did not know just what he meant, but if it was any worse than what I had seen, I did not want to see it.

I was down in the dirt and felt rather bad about what I had seen, so I thought I would have something to eat and then go to my room and read a book. I went away out of that part of the city, and when I saw a milk bar and lunch stand I went in and ordered a pint of milk and two sandwiches.

It was a nice clean, warm place and the girl that was in charge of the place, while not a raving beauty, looked wholesome and clean. She was a sort of cheerful girl and very perceptive. We talked while I was eating my sandwiches and drinking my milk. She finally ask me what I was worrying about.

She seemed so interested and friendly, that I told her what I had seen.

She said I must be from the country where people did not behave like that.

When I said that I came from about the other side of Canada from a small town, she said that she was from the country too, quite away out from Vancouver, and that the milk I was drinking came from her father's farm. She said that she had not been in town long and had been so busy that she had not had time to explore the city.

I told her that I did not know very much about the city either, but I did tell her never to go down on Hastings street unless she had someone along with her that could protect her from the people that made that place their home and place of business. Then I told her of the kinds of people and the businesses that were there.

She said that she would never think of going to a place like that, even with a protector.

I also told her what the cop said when I told him what was going on there.

She said that was hard to believe, as she had always thought the police were supposed to stop such things as that.

I told her it was true alright, and that I was never going there again.

We must of talked for two or three hours, and I felt a lot better and told her so, to know that there was at least one decent girl in Vancouver. She told me to come in any time that I wanted to talk again. A little later she closed her store for the night and she ask me to walk her home to where she was staying, which I did.

I felt real good that night after I took her to her place and was walking back to where my room was.

The next night I went again to her cafe for a midnight snack, and again we talked for a long time. She was a very good listener and easy to talk to. I usually am very shy where girls are concerned, but this girl did not make me feel shy at all, right from the start. It seemed like I

had known her all my life and we could talk about most anything, and I was never embarrest or the least bit shy while I was talking to her. She was just a good, wholesome and very kind girl who would make someone a very understanding wife, and a good mother for their children.

I went there for a snack most every night while I was in Vancouver, and stayed until she closed the store, around midnight. I walked her home every night to where she was staying, but I never went any further than the door, and I was never ask in.

One night, I went into her shop for a snack of doughnuts and a pint of milk before I went to my room for the night. There weren't very many customers that night, so I sat there for quite a long time, until she said she might as well close the shop for the night as she did not think many more customers would be coming in.

I then told her good night and thanked her for taking time to talk to me and started for the door.

She told me to wait a minute and she would go with me.

I thought she just wanted me to walk her to a streetcar or to her place, which I had done before. But I was tired that night, and when I got to the building where my room was, we were not very far from her place and I stopped and told her this was where I roomed and that as she did not have far to go to her place, she could find the rest of her way home alone.

She stopped too and turned to me and said, "I need someone to keep me warm tonight and you are that someone."

I told her nothing doing, that when I went to bed I always went alone.

Then she started to swear at me and call me names, and she was not a nice person then, and I did not think I wanted her for a friend. I told her so and said she had better go on to where she lived before a policeman came along and arrested her for a prostitute.

She hurried away then and I went into my room and wondered if there really was any nice people in this city.

When I was first in Vancouver in 1920, I just about got run down by a Stanley Steamer car. I did not know at that time that BC drivers drove on the left side of the road instead of the right side as they do now. I looked each way as I was going to start across the street, but did not see this car coming down the left side of the road close to the curb. I had just stepped down onto the street when I was grabbed from behind and yanked back onto the sidewalk and this Stanley Steamer shot past.

I looked up and there was a husky policeman grinning at me.

He asked me if I was tired of living.

I said that crazy driver was driving on the wrong side of the street.

The policeman started to laugh and said I must have come from the east just lately.

I told him that I had arrived a few days ago.

He told me to be careful and try and watch for cars driving on the left side of the road, as that was the way it was done in BC.

Well, I thanked him for pulling me off the road and told him if he ever came to Ontario, I would do the same for him if I could. He just shook hands with me and told me to try and keep alive, and walked away.

This Scotchman, Alex, that I met and became friendly with on my first day in Vancouver suggested one night that we go for a walk down in Chinatown. We did not get very far until I could smell trouble coming up. There were gangs of young Chinese boys, some of them pretty husky, walking spread out the full width of the sidewalks. If you wanted to pass them you would have to step down in the gutter and walk around them.

We did that several times, then I told my partner I had enough of that and the next time they tried to force me off the sidewalk, someone was going to get hurt. There was another gang coming towards us, and I told him to take one of the middle ones and I would look after another one and we would have room to walk through.

There were four of them coming towards us spread out so that we would have to go to the gutter if we wanted to get past them. That was the way that they had it arranged, but we had other ideas. We kept on walking at our slow walk, and when we were close enough, I belted my man in the stomach, and when his head came forward he got a good right to the jaw that landed him out in the street. Alex followed with his man. By this time the other two had their switch knives out and ready for business. I kicked at my man and got him on the knee cap and as he was going down I got him on the other knee cap.

Alex had polished off his man and told me to run for it, which I did.

Reserves were popping out of most every doorway on that side of the street.

We tore up the street with a flock of young Chinese after us, and when we turned the corner we about run down two policemen who were coming to see what was going on. We told them there was a riot going on about two blocks down, and that the young Chinese were attacking all whites.

The two policemen dashed around the corner and we got out of there fast.

Alex, or Scotty as I called him, had got a bit of a cut on his arm, but I had not received a scratch. We went down to a drug store and got Scotty's arm fixed up. I think it was the surprise of our attack that got us out of there without being damaged more than we were.

This Scotty was a real friendly man as long as I was paying the bills, but when my money was getting low he cleaned me out of everything that was worth taking, and took a ship out of Vancouver early in the morning.

He took a new suit of clothes, my watch and camera, and \$38.00 in cash, all the money I had. He also took my little carved squirrel that I got in trade for some peach stones, years before.

A boat called "Canadian Inventor" had come into harbour the day before. It belonged to the Canadian Merchant Marine Fleet. I knew where it had docked and so I started down along the docks to see if he had got a job on that boat. I had been walking along the docks for a few minutes when I saw a big boat coming down the channel. I stopped to watch it go past, and it was so close that I could read the name on the bow, "Canadian Inventor," and the boat was on its way out to sea. I found out later that this Scotchman that stole everything of value that I owned was on that boat and it had went up the coast to load paper for Detroit, so he was out of reach.

Well, because of that Scotchman I had no money left and nothing I could sell, so I started walking out towards the American border along the railway tracks thinking I might find a job to make a little money.

I had been told there was a shingle bolt camp there that was hiring bolt cutters.

I walked out that way about forty miles, until I came to the camp. It was being operated by Japanese. They had their families there living in small tents. The foreman could talk a little English, and he said only Japanese worked there and told me to leave at once, which I did.

I started back for Vancouver, and on the way I stole some onions and lettuce out of a garden along the tracks. I had no money to buy breakfast before I left Vancouver, and it was now well into the afternoon, and I was really hungry.

It was getting dark by the time I was fifteen miles up the track back towards Vancouver when I came to a road crossing the track. It seemed to point in the direction of Vancouver, so I decided to walk on the road instead of the track. It was easier on the feet. I had been walking on the road for about half an hour when a car came along going in the same direction. The driver stopped and ask me if I wanted a lift, so I said yes, and boy was I glad to get into that car.

The driver of the car was a salesman for Leckies Shoe Co. He ask me what I was doing out walking in the dark and where I was going. I told him about the Scotchman taking my money and things, and about the long walk since morning looking for a job so that I could eat. He gave me a big chocolate bar and a dollar bill, and took me right down to where I roomed on

Hastings Street. My room was paid up for over a month so I did not have to worry about a place to sleep for at least a month.

Next morning I got up early and went for a long walk out on the highway between Vancouver and New Westminster to see if I could get a job somewhere along the way.

I came to where a man was building a house and I went in and ask him for a job. His name was Charley Turner. He said he was sorry that he could not give me a job on the house he was building. He said he was building it by contract and would be finished in about a week, then he would be out of a job himself. However he said I was to go down to his house at the bottom of the hill and tell his wife to give me a big meal, and then for me to stay there until he came home.

I thanked him and went looking for his home.

I found it without too much trouble and met his wife. She was a beautiful red headed woman in her early thirties, and a more kind and thoughtful woman I don't think I ever met.

I also met her sister and her mother, Mrs. Fleming, who were both over for a visit that day.

Mrs. and Mr. Turner had two daughters, one about ten, the other about seven. Mrs. Turner ask me if I had eaten dinner. I told her no. So she got me a big dinner and I cleaned it up real quick. She had been talking and looking at me for some time, and after I had finished dinner she showed me where I could sleep that night, then she said if I would take off my underwear she would wash it for me and have it dry by morning.

She said it in such a matter of fact way that I just said alright and I did.

Where their home was located was in a new subdivision, the street did not even have gravel on it yet. It had a nice high board sidewalk however, and Mr. Turner had a large pile of wood and long pole lengths piled between the sidewalk and the ditch along the road. I ask him if he had a saw. He said yes, so I told him if he would tell me in what length he wanted those poles to be cut I would be only too glad to do it for him.

He said there was a bucksaw in the woodshed and if I would go and get it, he would see about sharpening it.

Mr. Turner sharpened the saw and I cut the pile of poles in two days.

Mr. Turner had bought the lot across the road from his house and expected to build another house on it. The lot was completely covered with good sized alder trees. He said he was going to clear the whole lot of the trees and I could work at that whenever I felt like it. So I worked at clearing trees and trimming them into poles and carrying them out and piling them on the other side of the road.

I had been there about two weeks, when one day Mrs. Fleming, Mrs. Turner's mother, came for another visit. She came out to talk to me where I was cutting wood. She said she needed a man up at Merritt, BC, to operate a little farm that she had just bought. She said she would pay me \$50.00 per month, plus board, if I was interested in taking the job.

I told her I was not a farmer, but that I had worked on farms in Ontario when I was twelve and thirteen. I had never handled horses, but I had always got along with them fine as they seemed to like me. I told her that if that amount of experience was of any use to her, I would be glad to take the job.

Then she started to tell me what to do when I got there, and some of it was a bit strange to me. First she told me what day I



Train on the Kettle Valley Railway crossing Sirnach Creek, c. 1920

was to leave on the CPR in order to make connections at Spence's Bridge with the Kettle Valley railroad to Merritt, as the Kettle Valley railway only run three times a week. Then she told me her house there had burned down, and her and her son, and a

Mr. Varner, the handyman and cook, lived in a log granary. She said there was two beds in the kitchen, and two bunks in another small room, behind a blanket curtain. I was to sleep in one of the beds next to the curtain, the other bed beside it was hers. Her son, a full grown man, was to be sleeping in the bunk in the small room where the cook slept in the other bunk.

She said if the son was sleeping in the bed next to hers, I was to throw him out and make him sleep in with the cook.

I thought this was a rather strange thing to say, but I had no idea just how strange it was until I arrived there and saw the setup inside that log granary.

She gave me ten dollars advance on my wages to buy a ticket and I ask the ticket agent what days the Kettle Valley railway train met the CPR. He said Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I left on Wednesday morning for Mrs. Fleming's farm and got to Spence's Bridge about one in the afternoon. There was no train there and there would not be one going to Merritt until

late Thursday afternoon. There was just the small station building sitting at the bottom of a mountain that had no trees or growth of any kind around it. There were no other buildings to be seen, just a big seven passenger touring car.

A man that had been in the car came over to me and ask me where I was going, and I told him to Merritt to work on Mrs. Fleming's farm.

He said there would be no train until the next day but that I could crowd in with the other passengers, and he would take me to where I could get to the farm.

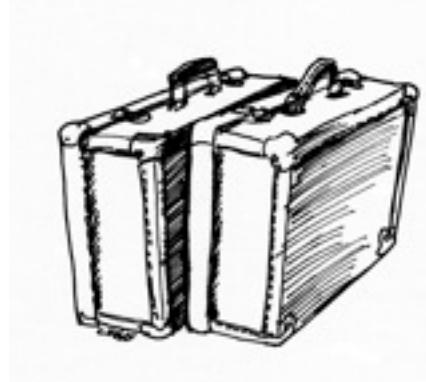
I said I had no money to pay for the ride, but he said to climb in and I could pay later when I got paid.

Well that was quite an experience for me to make that trip in that car

He put my two suitcases in the trunk along with the other passengers baggage and we were off. Two fat Indian men and an enormous Indian woman sat in the back seat. In the front seat there was the driver, a big man, a skinny Chinese man, an Indian girl of about sixteen or so, and myself. The Indian girl sat on my knees for about half the trip to Merritt. I do not know which of us was the most uncomfortable, but I sure know I was very relieved when she finally got out of the car.

After an hour or so we stopped at an Indian Mission and hospital where there was a road going into the bush alongside the river. The driver told me to walk up that road and the first building I came to would be Mrs. Fleming's farm. It was getting dark then, so I hurried down the road carrying my two heavy suitcases with me until I came to a bridge over the river. The river was in flood and about 60 feet of the road on my side of the bridge was under water.

I did not know what to do, so I just put my suitcases down and sat on a stump and looked at the water.



Soon a horse and wagon with a big man driving crossed the bridge and came through the water to where I was sitting. He stopped and ask me where I was going. I told him and then he said he was Mrs. Fleming's son and was going to see the nurses at the hospital. He said he would be back in a few minutes and take me across the water and up to the house.

I had watched when the wagon had come through the water how high the water had come up on the wheels and I thought if I put on my high rubber boots that I could wade across to the bridge.

I got my boots out of my suitcase, put them on and was able to get to the bridge without getting wet. I went up to the house and a dog came at me, but I guess he knew that I was harmless. He barked a few times then came up to me wagging his tail.

The door of the house opened and an elderly man with grey hair and beard held a lantern over his head and ask what I wanted.

When I explained that Mrs. Fleming had hired me to work there, the old man told me to come in. I went in and he told me his name was Ed Varner. He told me to sit down and make myself comfortable and he would throw a meal together for me, which he did.

I had not eaten since morning so I did full justice to the meal he set before me, which was real good. I told him about what Mrs. Fleming said about me sleeping in one of the beds in the kitchen next to her bed and ask him what he thought about it.

He said I would have to make up my own mind, he did not want to get involved.

I thought about it for a moment and then said I would sleep in one of the bunks if he had no objections and leave the bed beside Mrs. Fleming's bed empty.

We talked for a short time while we washed the dirty dishes, then went to bed.

The son, Howard, came in as it was getting daylight the next day.

I sure would have had a long wait at the river if I had waited for him.

Mrs. Fleming's son, Howard, woke me up at five in the morning and told me to take the dog and bring in the cows.

I told him I was not hired to herd cows, so he would have to get them in himself.

He started to act tough but it got him nowhere as I had my instructions from Mrs. Fleming that never, in any way, was I to help her son unless she told me to. She was paying me my wages, so that was how it would be.

He was pretty mad but I could see that he had been a spoiled bully and he would back down if I could get him to see that I was working for his mother and not him.

Mrs. Fleming spent most of her time in her big house in Vancouver, and she only came out to this little farm when she wanted a rest and fresh air. At the time I worked for her, she had been married four times in her 64 years. She was a tall slender Irish woman, with a quick temper which did not hold any grudges, a heart as big as a cabbage, very kind and considerate, could swear like a mule Skinner and ride a horse like an Indian. Both her parents died on a cattle ranch

in Alberta when she was near sixteen years old. She run the ranch after her parent's death and turned it in to a big prosperous affair. She sold it when she married the first time and bought a hotel in Edmonton. Her husband died in the fire when the hotel burned down about twelve years after. She then went to the coast, to Vancouver, where she bought another hotel. Shortly after that she married again. She had three daughters from her first husband and a son, Howard, from her second husband. She divorced her second husband and married a third time, and then he died.

About a year or so before I met her she married for a fourth time to a useless bum, from what I was told, and run him off from the little farm where I came to work with a shotgun, and she told him if he ever came back she would shoot him on sight.

She sold her hotel in Vancouver for a good price and had a grand home built along the highway going to New Westminster, where she spent most of her time.

This Mr. Varner, who looked after her farm where I went to work, had been a friend of hers for a good many years. He had worked in the bush camps and sawmills in BC most of his life since coming to Canada from Ireland. A few years before I went there to work he had an accident in a sawmill. He was riding the carriage that takes the logs to the saw, when he rode too far and lost very near all the toes off both feet and was pretty much crippled for the rest of his life. Mrs. Fleming gave him that job as caretaker of her little farm at a good salary out of the goodness of her heart. He had nothing much to do, just cook a bit, feed the chickens and milk the goats when they had no hired hand.

Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Fleming's daughter, told me most of this, and Ed Varner told me quite a bit too.

One day when Mrs. Fleming was out at her farm for a couple of weeks, about the first thing she did when she got her breakfast was say that she was going to ride up into the mountains to see how her horse herd was getting along and I was to ride along with her.

There were two saddle horses in the barn and she told her son to saddle both of them right away. Her son got up to go out and as he went out the door he had a big grin on his face.

I got suspicious right away.

We went up to the barn and Howard brought out a small horse that looked like it was asleep. Mrs. Fleming told me to get into the saddle and she would see if the stirrups were the right length.

I knew I was in for trouble right away, but I climbed on and pulled the horse's head up.

He took about two steps and bucked and I landed on the manure pile.

The old lady had a very straight face when she told Howard to shorten the stirrup a bit, as, she said, they were too long. She told me when this had been done, to put my feet solidly into the stirrups and I would be alright.

Well I tried it again, and a buck later I was in the manure again, with the horse standing there asleep again.

The old lady walked around the horse looking it over and feeling the saddle straps, then told her son to tighten the cinch as she thought it a bit loose. He did so and she said it will be fine this time, everything is in good shape now.

The horse decided he would show me something new, so he stood up on his hind legs and started falling over backwards.

I was out of that saddle in a hurry. I never knew I could move so quick.

The horse came down on his side, then stood up and went back to sleep.

I turned to the old lady and told her now that she had her fun, how about us going to look over the horses in the mountains, then I started walking up the road towards the bush and the mountains. In a minute or two her and her son caught up to me and she told me to go back and cut some more wood. She said her and her son would check out the horses.

Mr. Varner was sitting on the sawhorse when I arrived back at the woodpile. He said, "I see you are all in one piece. You are a pretty lucky fellow, that horse gave you a soft time of it."

I said that I knew I got off pretty easy trying to ride a professional bucking horse.

He ask me how I knew that, and I said the horse had told me a few days before I tried to ride him.

The old man said, "I'll be damned."

One Sunday, when I was working for Mrs. Fleming, I went over to do a little exploring of a big cliff about two miles or so from the house. I came across a little spring of cold water that came out from under this cliff and as I was thirsty, I decided to have a nice cool drink. Just above the spring was a ledge on the side of the cliff, and after I had a cool drink, I happened to

look up when I was back standing up, and there was a big gray looking cat's head looking down at me.

When I told old Mr. Varner about it, he said it was a mountain lion.

It just laid there and looked at me but did not move. I did not think it would attack me so I slowly backed out of there very carefully and when I got into the bush, I took to my heels and I do not think I ever run so fast before in my life. I did not stop running until I arrived back at the log granary where I was living and I was about all in.

I really was scared, no fooling, and I never went near that spring again for a long time.

That cat must have had a good feed not long before that morning and was in a very pleasant mood, lucky for me.

Then there was another time when I was up at the bottom of that same mountain, when I came across an abandoned mine. It still had the tracks and ties in it and I decided to go in and explore it. I had no light but the sun was shining straight in it and I thought there was enough light to see what it was like inside.

It was quite a long way in on a gentle slope and I had no trouble at all with just walking in. It went in a lot farther than I had expected. I had arrived far enough down the tunnel so the entrance looked about the size of a small window, when I heard a slight noise down in the end of the tunnel in the darkness.

I turned and looked that way and there was two big green eyes looking at me.

The light from the entrance to the tunnel was reflecting off them and they sure looked very big. Then there was a sort of purring noise, which told me to get out of there, that I was intruding on someone's private home, which I lost no time in doing.

I do not know for sure what it was, but I suspect it was my friend the big cat. That was another experience that could have been pretty messy if I had hesitated at all about taking the warning.

There was another time when I worked at the Fleming place in the early 1920s that Mrs. Fleming told me to hook up a team to the wagon and go into the goat pasture where there was a load of poles that the man before me had cut for firewood. I did so and had just started loading the wagon when I saw the old billy goat walking across the field towards me. I knew what to expect, so I got a piece of a limb off a tree about two foot long and about two inches thick. It was dry and hard.

He was about six feet away when he put his head down and charged.

I stood where I was until he reared up on his hind feet to hit me, then I stepped to one side and brought the stick down on his neck just back of the ears, and he dropped like he had been shot.

Mrs. Fleming saw the whole thing and came running into the pasture and started cursing me and calling me names.

I took it for awhile, then my Irish got the best of me and I cursed right back at her and called her a few unpleasant names.

She stopped talking and just stared at me with the strangest look on her face. When I stopped calling her names she just looked at me for a few seconds, then told me I was the first person who had ever stood up to her and gave her as good as she sent since her first husband had died, and of all things, she thanked me for bawling her out. She said I had killed her billy goat but it was worth it to meet a young man with guts enough to stand up for his rights.

I told her to look behind the wagon, which she did.

The billy goat was up on his feet, rather wobbly, but still alive.

We went around to him and I scratched his head a bit and he seemed quite friendly. I told Mrs. Fleming I would have no more trouble with the goat from now on, then she said not with her either. I did not apologize for what I had said, neither did she.

Just before my month was up, I told her I would be leaving at the end of the month as I wanted to go to the prairies and learn all about farming. She was an understanding woman and made no objections. At the end of the month she paid me the \$40.00 left in my month's wages in cash. I told her that \$30.00 would be more than plenty for what little work I had been able to do, but she insisted on me taking the full amount she had agreed to pay me, saying that it had been a pleasure to just have me around the place, and the work I had done repairing fences and buildings and tidying up around the place had more than made up for my lack of knowing very little about farming as it was done in BC.

We parted the best of friends and I often thought of going back for a visit, but never did.

In the early 1920s times were much more contented and friendly than they are now. Merritt was a very small, easy going, friendly little village. I went in there lots of times just for the walk of four miles and to see and talk to the people.

One time the Indians had shot a big deer up in the mountains and were having a potlatch and dance just across the river from where I was living at the time. Two of them came over and invited me to come over and join in the fun, which I did.

When I left Mrs. Fleming's place in the late summer of 1920 to go to Calgary and try my hand at prairie farming I was 19. I first went to Penticton, where I stayed overnight at a very nice hotel. While I was in my room, the window was open, and I heard some music coming from down near the lake. I felt very lonely, so I just had to go down and listen to it. There was a dance floor down there and a dance was going on. I think everyone was having a good time, but I felt more lonely than ever. I guess it was the nice music that made me feel that way, as some of the music they played was very familiar to me.

I just sat on a bench and drank it all in until the dance ended about two in the morning. I went right to bed after that, but was up again at four-thirty in order not to miss the boat going up to Sicamous Landing where I could catch the CPR for Calgary.

That morning, it was a beautiful ride up Okanagan Lake to the landing.

We stopped at several other little places along the lake. I remember one place we stopped where an Englishman was trying to put through a phone call to someone that did not understand what he was saying. He must have been new over from England, because I could not understand a word he was saying at all. Other people were gathered around listening and a lot of them tried to keep their faces straight, but some could not make it and went down on the boat where they could laugh without embarrassing the Englishman.

He was getting redder in the face by the minute and starting to shout into the phone when the captain of the boat came along. He was an Englishman too and seemed to understand what the man was trying to say, so he took the phone and talked for a few minutes and got it all

straightened out to this other Englishman's satisfaction. I do not know how the poor man got along when there was no one around that knew what he was saying.

I made it in time that morning to catch the train and met a very nice gentleman on the train, a Mr. Bell, who was going to Calgary too. He had been to Vancouver visiting his sister and her family, and a daughter who was attending school there. He had a big basket of lunch with him and insisted that I help him eat it, which I did. We talked a lot on our ride to Calgary and he invited me to stay at his place. His wife had died sometime before, and he was a tailor by trade and had a tailor shop in Calgary.

I thanked him for his offer and told him that I would like to get a room down in town where I could look around for a job on a grain farm.

He said if I was short of money, he would be glad to loan me some until I got work.

I told him I still had my pay from the last place I had worked and thanked him for his offer and his trust in me.

He took me out that evening to a special place of his that he said he went to every evening when the weather was fine to watch the sun go down behind the mountains.

I can tell you, it was something to see. I do not have the words to really describe the beauty of it, and something else that I would say, the majesty of the way the sun slowly sank behind the mountains, painting the other mountains around it with such beautiful colors. I am completely color blind, but I know what I like and what I think is beautiful. That experience has stayed with me until this day.

When I got to Calgary, I went down to 9th Ave. and got a room at the Homestead rooming house. It was operated by a man from back east, Mr. Kinsley Cockerel, an Ontario man. He charged 25 cents per day and 25 cents for the use of the bath. It was nothing fancy, mostly elderly men that worked for the city or the CPR yards. There were always cribbage games going on in the evening, and to just sit and listen to those men talk was a treat.

I went out in the morning to the employment office, but being as the Calgary Stampede was on, no farmers were hiring. I went down around several livery barns, but no luck there either. I thought perhaps if I invested in a ticket to the Stampede, I might have some luck, and I did get told by several men to come out to their place when the Stampede was over, and they might have a job for me.

April 28, 1977

Dear Reinhard:

This morning it is raining a soft drizzle, with fog so thick that I can hardly see cars and trucks going past on the highway. While everybody is glad of the rain, it is not the kind of day I

can go outside to do any clean up, so while I have the chance, I had better get to your questions right now.

About finding another home of our own. As I said before, I would like to once again be living on my own with my wife out in the country I love so much. So I am now working on two deals about buying a home of our own for my wife and I. The one that is most promising is in Beardmore, about 100 miles east of here on the TransCanada Hwy. I will type you out the add, so you will be able to see what I am interested in.

Year around vacation home in Red Rock.

5 piece bath, roomy living room, large kitchen,
sun porch, full basement with cement blocks.

Price \$17,500.00 Private sale. Superior retirement property.

I rather like this one as it is just a short ways from the north shore of Lake Superior and is about half way between Thunder Bay and Geralton, where my daughter is employed. It probably needs a bit of fixing up, and my boys say I am crazy to start out in something like that at my age. Maybe I am, as they see it, but not the way I look at it.

I have one more shot in my body to do something that I am sure will be another experience of doing something together with my wife.

I may be a bit crippled and a bit old, but I am not senile and there is nothing wrong with my mind. I do not see as good as I did years ago, but I will just have to move more slowly and

be more careful. My legs are not too good, and neither is my heart, but if I go at it the right way, I think they will back me up this one more time.

The way I look at it is that if a little thing like changing where I want to live is going to harm or kill me, now is the time to find out, not when I am an old man and cannot help myself.

Of course I cannot do any heavy work, and I cannot move as fast as I used to, but I have more time to do a job now, so I can go a bit slower and be more likely to do a better job.

I have been doing some exercises every night before going to bed, exercises that I dreamed up myself, and they are producing very good results so far. The two big lumps, one on each side of my neck that used to try to choke me to death every time I had an anginal attack, have disappeared completely and have not come back. I can now turn my head with ease in all directions without any pain at all when I am having an attack.

Why did I not stop in Winnipeg? When I saw so much water over the land around Winnipeg I did not care to look for a job where I would be wading in mud and water every spring, and it was a very wet miserable day. It just might be that I was looking for an excuse to go and see the Pacific ocean too. I figured that I could always see Manitoba on the way back if I changed my mind about Winnipeg. So I decided to go on to Vancouver, and that was about one of the best decisions that I ever made.

Going down through the Rockies from Jasper to Vancouver was one of the most beautiful pieces of scenery I had ever seen or dreamed that I would ever see. I bought a lot of film for my camera in Jasper and I took a lot of pictures all the way down. When I got them developed and printed in Vancouver they were beautiful. The sad thing about it was that I did not get a chance to look at them very often or show them to anyone, as the fellow that was rooming with me in

Vancouver, Scotty, stole them along with my expensive camera and most everything else that I owned.

I sure would give a lot to have those pictures now.

I saw the Fraser river when it looked like just one long golden river with the thousands of new cut railroad ties that it was taking down to Vancouver. When the train came to Hell's Gate Canyon, the engineer slowed the train down to a crawl to let everyone see the cut railroad ties going down the river through the narrow canyon. It was a magnificent sight, so wild and powerful that it made chills go up and down my back. Once in a while a tie would strike a rock head on and split into two pieces, and I thought of what would happen to a person if they were unfortunate enough to fall into that river and be dashed against one of those rocks.

The train then moved on faster and we left that very dangerous place behind.

I wondered why the train would slow down sometimes when going around a curve in the tracks, but I soon found out when it went around a curve and stopped. There was a great big rock sitting between the rails with a lot of smaller rocks and loose sand around it. If the train had been going fast and hit that rock we most likely would all have ended up in the river, several hundred feet below. But we were very lucky, we arrived in Vancouver none the worse for wear and it was raining quite hard.

I just read what I wrote to you about why I didn't stop in Winnipeg. I really don't know how I got so far off the track in describing the trip through the mountains to Vancouver, but I will try to find my way back to your questions as quickly as possible.

You ask about the people on the train to Vancouver. When I went through Winnipeg on to Vancouver, I had very little conversation with anyone except the trainman. Most of the people

that got on the train at Winnipeg were a work gang going out to Jasper, Alberta, to work on the CNR new road bed they were putting in for the track. There were about thirty or so that crowded into the car where I was and they were a tough looking bunch and quite smelly. They were with us all the way to Jasper and talked mostly in a foreign languidge.

After they got off, the trainman came along and ask each of the passengers that were still on the train, if they would like to have both doors open for a few minutes to air the coach out and we all agreed that it would be a good idea.

After the doors had been open for a while the smell of that work gang had mostly been replaced by the smell of the forests and perhaps I just imagined it, but I was sure I could smell those beautiful mountains of rock. I had no wish to talk to anyone. I wanted to be left alone to drink in those wonderful changing views that I saw as we sped along. I knew this would never happen to me just the same ever again, and I wanted to store it all up to remember and dream over again at my leisure.

Well, I will close now wishing you both the best of luck in your new home. Good by for now and give my best regards to Mrs. Filter.

Good luck and write again when you have time.

Sam.

ps

I have enclosed a portrait sheet for our first born, Lorne.

Family Portrait: Lorne

Lorne was born April 29, 1927, when my wife was just seventeen and we were living back on paper mill row just south of Glen Williams. We had been married a little over a year at the time.

When my wife started giving birth to Lorne she was at home and the doctor and I were both there. The doctor could not deliver the baby, so I had to go down to the paper mill and phone for a truck with a flat bottom, also a camp bed. When it came, we put my wife on the camp bed and took her up to the CNR station, and waited about half an hour for the train to take her thirty miles to a hospital in Guelph, where Lorne was born with the aid of instruments.

He was my wife's first child, and she had a very rough time of it as he was a big boy, well over eight pounds.

I will never forget that trip in the baggage car with my wife moaning in pain, in spite of the sedatives the doctor gave her. It took the train close to an hour to get to Guelph, as they had

to stop several times at places along the way, and it seemed to me that they would never get there.

Dr. MacAllister said to me on the way, "Sam do you not have any feelings for what your wife is going through?"

I ask him what he meant by that crack.

He then told me that I had never shown any expression on my face since my wife had gone into labor, like I had no feelings whatever.

I then ask him if I was to cry or rave around at him, would that in any way make things easier for my wife to stand the pain she was going through.

He told me that I was a pretty hard customer, the hardest he had ever come across.

Well he did not know how scared I was inside, or how I thought that I was going to lose both my wife and the baby, and how torn up I felt inside.

It took me years of effort to learn how to control my feelings so that they did not show to strangers. I done all my crying and showing my feelings when I was a small boy, and it never got me any response, so I decided early on that I would learn to control my feelings and keep them bottled up inside me, and never let anyone know how I felt about anything again.

Lorne was no trouble as a baby, as he was breastfed, as were all our children.

He was almost five years old when we went first to Calgary and then down to the Rainy River District in Northern Ontario to our land there to homestead. He liked to be near the bush, and enjoyed being outside most all the time. In the evening he liked to have me tell him about my travels before I was married, and he was with me a good deal of the time when I was at home when he first learned to walk.

Lorne trusted me completely as a small boy in Georgetown and when we were on the homestead, but seemed to change a lot and get more secretive after we moved to live in Fort William, now called Thunder Bay, in the early forties. Lorne went to public school on what was called Arthur street at that time but is now called Hwy 17, part of the transCanada highway. He had to walk about two miles to the school. Lorne went there until he was near sixteen, then we sent him to a school in Fort William and the next thing we knew, he came home and told us he had joined the air force and was going to Winnipeg for training.

We had no idea he would do that.

We found out later that he had not been going to school in Fort William at all, but instead had been spending all day with some very shady characters. These fellows that Lorne hung around with in the east end of what was Fort William at that time were a real tough bunch. I run into some of them one day when I was in town and Lorne must have forgotten that I was on the midnight shift at the shell plant where I worked at the time making bombs for the war. I walked past a pool hall in the east end just as four of them and Lorne were coming out.

I felt sorry in a way for Lorne when I saw the expression on his face when he saw me. I tried to make it easy for him by saying that I had been looking all over for him, and ask him if I could speak privately with him for a minute or so.

He caught on right away and said sure, and we started to walk away together.

This gang started to snicker and pass jokes back and forth loud enough for us to hear, about me having to wet nurse Lorne. I turned around and walked back slowly towards these bums who were all in a bunch.

I said would they mind repeating what they had just said.

They all said that they did not say anything.

I held up my two fists, right in the front of their faces and said perhaps I should learn them some manners with these. Lorne was right beside me and he stuck out his two closed fists and said here are two more if you should need them, but I don't think you will.

I told these four scum to get out of my sight at once before I changed my mind.

They took off down the street as hard as they could go, without another word.

Lorne got the message without me saying a thing. He said, "and I thought they were swell guys and I have been going around into all kinds of places with them. Boy am I ever a hick."

We said no more about it on our way home and I never told his mother a word about what Lorne had been doing. It would not have changed what had already happened and would have only made my wife unhappy.

We could have stopped him from being in the air force as he was still underage at 17 but did not, as we thought he would be much better off there. At least he would be under very strict discipline and perhaps it would do him good.

I remember once, when he came home on a visit and brought a girl home with him from Winnipeg, Grace Wilson, who he later married, when he was just turned eighteen. After they had been home about a week or so, and I was on the four to twelve shift, they said that they would like to go into town for a few days. I ask them where they were going to stay at night and they said that Lorne would stay at the YMCA and Grace would stay at the YWCA.

I took them into town when I went to work, and began to wonder if they were telling the truth.

Grace was, to my mind, a very experienced girl, and I did not trust her. I knew that Lorne had always been a sort of trusting boy, so I thought I should make a few quiet inquiries.

When our lunch break came, I got on the phone and started phoning all the hotels. The fourth one I phoned was the one where they were both staying as man and wife. They put me through to the room where Lorne and Grace were intending to stay for the night. I told them I would be around about twelve that night to pick them up and take them back home.

I went around to that hotel after my shift, and it had a pretty tough name around town, and they were all ready to go back home for the night. Lorne ask me how I knew where to find him, but I did not tell him except to say that I knew all the time what they were going to do and just where they would go.

When we were out of town on our way home, Grace started to explain why they were staying there together. She said the YWCA where she said she was going to stay in town was full up, but I interrupted her explanation and told her that there was no use in lying to me, as I was just glad that I had got them out of there before the police made their check of the hotels at midnight. I said they were so stupid that they could not have got away with pretending to be man and wife, and would have most likely spent the rest of the night in separate jail cells. I said the police in Fort William were quite hard on that sort of thing.

Before we got home I had them both about scared out of their pants.

Grace said, well we both love each other, and she could see no wrong in that.

I ask her how many other young fellows she had shown her love for by doing that same thing, spending a night in a hotel with them.

She did not answer, just started to cry.

Lorne was not saying much, but I guess he was doing a lot of thinking.

I gave him a lecture on the way home by telling him to remember his bringing up while at home. I told him that his mother and I had always been honest with him and the other children and had always insisted that they be honest with us. I said he had never been punished for being honest, no matter what he had done. But he had been punished when he told a lie. But I said if he thought lying was the better way to live, why go ahead and live that way, it was his choice to make, not anyone else's, but if he lived a life of lying he would have to live it without his mother or I, because we did not believe in lying and would not go along with it.

I had hopes that if I talked to him now, that I could save him from this girl, but I failed, as he married her shortly after they went back to Winnipeg.

I was pretty sure they had planned on going to a hotel as neither one took any clothing and I was pretty sure they would both go to the same place, as Grace had only her purse when she got into the car to go to town with me. They said they would be staying two or three days. Without a change of clothing?

I did advise Lorne to tell his mother that they had changed there mind about staying over night in town, and because I had not told her what I had suspected, they had better not tell her what had happened and cause her any pain.

They never told her, and some months after, my wife told me just about what had happened. It seemed that she did not trust the girl either, and she had figured out just what I had to get them to come home with me that night.

Grace was a very clever and experienced girl. She knew all the tricks. I watched her closely after the experience at the hotel, and I learned a lot about her. I knew that there was no

use saying very much to Lorne. He would be spending most of his time in training in Winnipeg, where Grace could have easy access to him any time she wanted him. I knew Grace had been a big influence in the change in him since he had been training in the air force in Winnipeg. I was about 500 miles away, too far away to do anything about it. Grace was a very convincing talker and I could only hope that Lorne's eyes would be opened in time, which I am sure would have happened, had she not rushed him into that marriage.

When Lorne got out of the air force, he got a job on a newspaper in Winnipeg, The Tribune. He had already married Grace, and wrote and told us about it. Then he was transferred to Vancouver, to The Sun newspaper. Then him and his wife went to Klamath Falls in Oregon, where he worked on a newspaper for a while. He then bought a deep sea boat and went into the fishing business for several years.

In the meantime, his wife had given him a son and a daughter. They all came over to visit us several times and my wife and oldest daughter went over to visit them once.

Two or three years ago Lorne started out driving bus tours all over the States and Canada, and as far as I know, is still doing it.

I never did know how old Grace was when her and Lorne were married. They were very secretive about their wedding, which was held in Winnipeg. Neither my wife or I were told about it until after it was over.

I do believe that Grace was much older than Lorne, if not in years, I think she was in experience. She was a fairly nice looking girl, very quiet, but she sure liked being around men.

While they were down on a visit one time, I happened to be on the midnight shift at the plant. I always came home in the morning from that shift, had breakfast and went right to bed. I

was up again in time for dinner at twelve noon. After dinner I used to go out and cut up wood from a big pile I had brought up from the bush. I would cut it up into stove lengths, then before the frost was out of the wood, I would split it and pile it as high as I could reach against the south end of my workshop to dry all summer

Grace would stay out there talking and keeping me from my work until she got so cold that she would have to go in the house to warm up. I could then get some wood cut.

I noticed a peculiar thing when she was out there. At every opportunity she would always try to get her hands on me. Sometimes it was just a touch on the arm, other times she would grab me by the arm, and as she released my arm she would try to run her hand down my arm or give me a pat on the back.

This puzzled me, because it seemed too familiar for her to do that.

After they were married and came for a visit, she was impossible, so I stuck pretty close to the house and did not talk to her very much.

When Lorne went into the deep sea fishing business, it was at her suggestion.

He was away from home most all the time, sometimes he would be out at sea for as long as two weeks. I think that she planned it this way.

When they had two children, a boy and a girl, she talked him into having an operation so they would not have any more children.

A few years after the children were pretty well grown into adults, he divorced her, as he said he had known all along what she was, and what she was doing, but he stuck it out until the children were on their own, then done as he had planned to do for years.

My wife always sort of took Grace's side, for I never told her all of what I knew about her. I wanted to spare her that much at least.

He divorced Grace about two years ago. Lorne did not tell me why he divorced his first wife, but I think that she was having other men in to visit her while he was hundreds, perhaps thousands of miles away with the bus. I know he would not take that kind of behaviour any more than I would, and it is the only thing that he would divorce her for.

I told him a long time ago that she was not the girl he should marry and I guess I was right.

Lorne is now married to a Korean girl of about his own age, Po, although it was hard to say just how old she was. She had been through all of the Korean war and had really suffered when the North Koreans invaded South Korea. Lorne and her came over for a two week visit after their marriage to help celebrate my 76th birthday.

His wife Po was a very small woman of about ninety pounds and awfully quiet and fast on her feet. She took over all the work of our household, and would not let my wife do any of the work or cooking. My wife and I sure got a good taste of Oriental cooking, and it was good.

Po just idolizes him. They are talking about going back into the fish business with their own store. Lorne will catch the fish, his wife will run the store and sell them.

We like his second wife very much. She is a lovely woman and Lorne is really happy now and we are both very glad for him.

vistaVision Memories

Tally Cleveland

I got quite discouraged about ever finding a job in Calgary after I left Mrs. Fleming's place, so I decided to store my belongings at the Homestead rooming house where I was staying and walk out in the country until I found a job.

I got up early the next morning after the Stampede was over, told Mr. Cockerel what I was going to do, and he said that was a very good idea, so away I went. I got on the CNR tracks going north and walked for near twenty miles or so, and as the sun was hot and I was thirsty, I stopped in a little farm house for a drink of water.

A Mr. Sexsmith and his wife lived there alone. They were an elderly couple and real wonderful people. When they found that I had been walking since six in the morning, they asked me to rest up and stay the night, which I did. In the morning they told me if I waited until a neighbor came home from the Stampede, I just might get on with him. There was a fairly large pile of old railway ties in the yard, so I said I would stay if they would give me a saw and let me cut up those ties for them for firewood. They agreed and I got busy.

It took me three days to cut, split, and pile those ties, and I felt I had earned my keep.

Next morning Mr. Sexsmith said a man he knew, Tally Cleveland, was back home from the Stampede, and as he needed a load of gravel, we would go over to his place and see what we could do about a job. He went with me, and I helped load the wagon with gravel, then went up to the house to see Tally. He ask me if I had any experience with horses and I said I had very little but thought I could learn pretty quick.

He said, "I think you are honest, so go up to the bunkhouse and pick out a bunk. You're hired at \$50.00 a month and board."

Well, I believe I could have jumped over a six foot high fence then if he had ask me to.

Tally ask me where my gear was and I told him at the Homestead rooming house in Calgary. He said that he would get it when he went into town that day. He showed me a team in the barn and told me to harness them up and take them out and hook onto the dump wagon and start cleaning out the corral at the barn and dump it out on the manure pile.

I did this and started loading up the dump wagon.

The boss went away and soon another man came into the corral and started loading from the other side of the dump truck. He was the chore man who had been there all the previous winter, a French Canadian. His name was Johnny Pelky. We hauled out manure all that day until near dark, when Johnny got in his two cows that he milked, then went to gather what eggs he could find and separate the milk.

I unharnessed the team, watered and fed them, then went up to the bunkhouse to wash up for supper.

Mrs. Cleveland did the cooking at the time. When I saw her first when I came over to the house for supper, I liked her at once. She seemed to be quite young and small for such a big

rough looking man as her husband was. They had two children, a boy of about nine at that time called Paul, and a daughter about seven called Jean. Mrs. Cleveland was a very beautiful woman, French by birth, with blue black hair and blue eyes and snow white complexion.

I did not know it then, but it came out later that she was a very unhappy woman. It also came out that her husband was an alcoholic and a woman chaser.

The boss had went to town in the afternoon I had started to work for him, and he brought out my gear that night about midnight, so I was all fixed to stay for a long time. He also brought out two more men and said three more and a cook would be out on the train the next day.

Next day, the train came at about nine in the morning and the boss went up to the station and brought the men down to the farm. At noon we had our dinner in the cook car, and was that new man the boss brought down a good cook. How he could get such a dinner ready in the little time which he had to do it I will never know, but it was a dandy dinner. He said it was not much of a dinner but he said he would give us a real meal for supper, and boy did he ever. I ate until I near busted open and got up and left the cookhouse, leaving all that wonderful food behind that I could not find room for.

I never knew that cook's last name. He told us to just call him Joe. He was French Canadian too and had been a bush cook all his adult life.

Joe the cook would take a job in the spring, summer and fall on a big grain farm, then go to work as cook on a big cattle ranch or in a bush camp in winter. He liked to cook for thirty or more men. He would not cook for a small crew unless there was a chance that it would grow much bigger as time went on. I have seen thirty-five men eating at the table at one time in the morning when Joe was serving hot cakes, and I never saw a man having to wait for hot cakes to

come off the griddle. I do not know how he did it, for he seemed to be about the slowest moving man on the job I ever saw. The only thing I can think of is that he had every move planned and his cooking down to a wonderful system from his years of experience as a cook.

I was the flunkie around the camp that first year when, in the fall, a woman and her two grown daughters came down from the north with a team and a wagon with all they had in the world in the wagon. Their father had been killed in the Peace River country when a horse he was shoeing kicked him in the head. They were on their way to Calgary looking for work. Our cook had quit a few days before to look for a bush camp to work in during the winter, so Cleveland hired them for the rest of the season as cooks. The girls were sixteen and nineteen years old and real pretty and healthy looking girls. The young men swarmed around them, but the mother soon put a stop to that.

When I went down to the irrigation ditch to get a tank of water for the horses, three times a day, and bring up supplies from the store, the girls used to ask me if they could ride down to the store with me. I always told them to get their mother's permission and then they could.

At first their mother said no, but later she said yes, but only if both girls went.

One day, when I took the groceries into the cookcar and the girls were outside somewhere, the mother ask me if I was to be trusted with her youngest daughter, alone, on the way to the store and back, as the oldest girl did not want to go.

I just told her that she would have to decide that for herself. I said that I liked both her girls, but that I also respected both her and her girls very much. I said they had a rough time of it when she lost her husband and the father of the girls, and that she still had a big load to carry. I told her that I had no intention of adding to her load by marrying one of her girls, but instead would try to protect them whenever possible from the other men on the crew.

She thanked me for saying that. She said it lifted a load off her mind.

The next morning, when I made my first trip for water, I had the company of the sixteen year old. I think that she went down with me most every load after that while I was flunked. Once in a while I would treat her to a cone or pop when I went in the store to pick up the supplies, but I did not make a habit of it.

I think she was a good girl, well brought up, and a good companion on that slow trip back up those four miles of hills. I do not know how she found so much to talk about, but she talked steadily all the way down and back, and she had a way of drawing me into talking back. I think that I talked more to her on those trips than I ever did to anyone before. We argued about things, and of course she had a mind of her own when she thought she was right.

She said she wanted to be a nurse and was going to try and get into one of the hospitals when they got to the city. She said she did not care much about boys, and did not think she would have very much time for them if she went into training for a nurse. It seems her sister had a boyfriend back up in the Peace River country that she hoped to marry someday, and that she intended to go back up to him when she had a bit of money saved from when she got work.

They were real nice people and I missed them very much when they left for town at the end of the season.

Anyway, the boss got all the new men he had hired busy on overhauling the haying outfit and started cutting hay the next day. He had a hay meadow about one and a half miles long and about half or three quarters of a mile wide. The CPR irrigation ditch past through his property, so he got his water free. He got the water on the meadow in the spring to start the hay growing,



*Shorty & Johnson, at the Cleveland farm
when I started there, 1921*

then shut it off in time for the ground to dry up by haying time. He usually cut around 35 to 50 tons off his meadow, and it looked like the meadow would provide a good crop this year as well.

The crew were cutting hay for two days when the boss told me to take my team out and rake hay next morning as soon as the dew was dried off. I had never raked hay before and I told the boss this, but said I could give it a try. There really was not much to raking it in windrows, but when it

came to bunching it in piles for the men to load on wagons, that was something altogether different. After a few tries though, I got the hang of it and was soon doing real good at it.

The first day at raking hay, when we stopped to go in to dinner, the boss had went into town earlier on some business and left this fellow called the Swede to mow alone. This fellow, the Swede, hung back a bit while I started to unhook my team from the hayrake by unhooking the tugs first and was going around in front of the team to let down the neck yoke. He came over to me then and told me I was doing it wrong and should let the neck yoke down first and then the

tugs. It did not seem right the way he said it, so I went on doing it my way, and when I had the neck yoke down I drove my team up to the barn.

After dinner, when the boss was back, I asked the boss about which was the correct way to do it, and he said my way was the right way and wanted to know why I ask.

Now I do not like to carry tales to the man I am working for when I have a difference of opinion with one of the other employees, but the Swede had given me some very dangerous advice. Had I followed it, and had the team been frightened into running away while still hooked to the hayrake by the traces, I could have been caught in the hayrake and been badly hurt, if not killed. I thought the boss should know about it and take what action that he thought was needed to prevent a future accident with some green man that would believe that the Swede was telling the truth.

After I had told the boss all about it, he told me to hook onto the Swede's mower and try my hand at mowing hay. The Swede did not come out to the field in the afternoon and when we found him gone when we came in that night, we knew the boss had let him go.

When the men found out what the Swede had told me about the proper way to unhook from a hayrake, they said I should have beat hell out of him before the boss fired him. They said they liked a joke as well as anyone, but that was real deadly and not a joke at all if it put a person's life in danger.

Well we finally got all the hay cut and into the barn with three big stacks along the corral walls for the winter feeding of the cattle and horses. Then the summer fallowing started, with some six and nine horses to a plow.

During my first fall at the Cleveland place I went with my team and a low iron wheeled wagon to pick rocks and stinkweed and fix fences while I was waiting for the plow teams to get enough land turned over so I could start to harrow after the plows. I cleared two big fields of rocks and stinkweed, then went up and started in on a place the boss leased about three or four miles west. I got some awfully big rocks off the first field and no one knows yet how I did it. Some of those rocks would weigh between five and seven hundred pounds, and the boss and some of the men ask me who was helping me load them on this little wagon. I told them that I did not have anyone helping me, but it was my secret how I got them into the wagon.

When I had a big one to load, I would dig a trough on each side of the rock deep enough to let the back end of the bed of the wagon rest on the ground, then I would put some pieces of plank down and pry the rock up the planks into the wagon. The horses would then pull the wagon out of the two grooves and we had another big one loaded. When I had it where I wanted to unload it, I would take the tailgate out of the back of the wagon and take my bar and pry it out the end of the wagon. This way I got rid of a lot of rocks that had been a problem for years for the cultivation of this field.

Pretty soon I had caught up on all this kind of work and could then go at the harrowing of the summer fallow to keep the weeds down so there would not be very many the next year when this land would be planted to grain. I was given my choice of two more horses from a herd of about thirty of all ages and dispositions. First I chose a big young Clydesdale mare that was unbroken to harness, then my second choice was a big Sorrel gelding with what is called two

glass eyes, and that is what his eyes were like. The team of geldings I had been using on the wagon made up my four horses for the harrows.

The harrows were twenty feet wide and I had a cart to ride on behind the harrows. I fitted the two new horses out with collars that fitted them real snug, and hid their two new pads under my bed in the bunkhouse. I had gotten the new pads when I seen how some of the horses the other fellows were driving came in at night after a day's plowing. I knew there was a reason for the pain these horses were in, and that I would have to work it out myself if I was not to have my horses in the same shape as theirs.

The two new horses were a bit skittish on the way down to the field where I had set up the harrows the night before. After I had gotten them hooked up to the harrows I had a bit of trouble getting the two new horses to go ahead. As soon as the collar would get to putting a little pressure on there shoulders, they would stop and start to back it up. But I had placed the two geldings that I had on the wagon before in between them, and they sort of set an example for them when I told them to get moving.

They finally saw what was wanted and away they went with only a little bit of trouble once in awhile.

When I stopped to rest them the first time, I happened to look up on the hill where the bunk car was, and there was the boss with a pair of field glasses watching me. I never let on that I had spotted him, but went on back down the field.

I stopped twice going up that half mile field and twice coming back down. I had to take it easy on those two new horses as they were sweating a lot. It would be a bit hard on them for the first two or three days, until they were used to the work, but I would not push them until I

thought they could take it. I think they were getting to know just where the rest periods in the field were, for they would stop when they were about half way up or down the field. I would always tell them to stop just before they would stop on their own, so that they would sort of know that I was watching and thinking of them and so would have all their attention on me, waiting for me to tell them to stop and rest.

This went on for three days, and on the fourth day their shoulders had hardened enough so that there was room to put on the collar pads I had hid under my bunk.

When we got up to the usual place where we had always stopped they kept right on walking because they did not hear me tell them to stop. They kept right on going until we turned around at the end of the field, then I told them to stop, which they did. I went around in front of them and backed them up a step, and brought their collars forward on their necks, so the air could get in behind the collar and cool their shoulders.

I gave them ten minutes rest instead of five, then we were off again.

On the way back, they did not even hesitate when they came to where they usually stopped before, but went on to the end of the field, turned around and started back up the field until I told them to stop. By the time I had that field harrowed they could go up and down the field and stop at each end without me ever saying a word. I never had to urge them to go faster, as they always went as if they were in a hurry to get to the other end of the field so they could have their ten minute rest.

When we went to the next field, which was a mile long, the first trip up it they went from one end to the other without stopping on their own, but when they turned at the end, I told them

to stop and they did. They had been getting twenty minutes of rest when traveling one mile, now they were traveling two miles on twenty minutes of rest and did not seem to mind at all.

If I had pushed them when I first started the harrowing they would not have made a mile with twenty minutes of rest, but instead would have had sores on their shoulders, and the top of their necks where the collar had worked back and forth on their soft wet shoulders and necks.

When I had been working at Tally Cleveland's place for a few days, I saw a badger running up the road one night, and decided to dig him out. When he saw me coming with a pick and shovel, he tried to run back the way he had come on the grass alongside the road. When he saw that I was getting too close for comfort, he started to dig.

I got there a minute or two afterwards and I started to dig too. I thought that I could catch up to him pretty quick, as I would stop digging and listen, and he seemed to be very close and I thought that I would have him in a few more minutes.

Well this went on for hours, and I kept thinking that I would have him most any minute now. I kept on digging and so did the badger. After quite awhile, he started going deeper, and when I was down to about five feet deep following his tunnel, I decided I was licked and gave up trying to dig him out.

I had followed him for about 35 ft. or so and was about five feet deep at the end where I quit digging. I could not hear him any more, so he was either resting, or had gotten so far ahead of me that I would never catch up to him no matter how hard I tried.



Badger

It was near one in the morning and I had been digging for about five hours. I had spent a hard five hours work learning a lesson that I was never to forget, that no man can ever outdig a badger once he gets going good.

I had just one more experience with a badger while I was in the west working on

the Cleveland place, but this time I did not try to dig him out, I just grabbed a long piece of baling wire, made a noose in it and planned on taking him alive. I saw him start to dig near some old buildings, but he had not seen me yet.

I got my noose all ready, then I run over to where the badger had started to dig, and as I arrived he turned around to fight. I dropped the noose over his head and pulled it tight, then he fought until he choked himself unconscious. I then took the wire off his neck and put it on his leg, snug but not tight enough to stop the circulation of the blood.

I then stood there until he recovered, and then started across the field to where the camp was. He fought me most of the way and charged me several times trying to bite my legs, but I had thought of that beforehand and had fastened the wire to a small pole and was able to keep him away from my legs. He finally gave up trying for my legs and walked along real quiet and tame.

When I got to the camp everyone came out to see the badger and ask me how I was ever able to catch him alive, and did I use a trap, and how did I get the wire on his leg without him

biting me. I told them that I just put a little salt on his tail and he stuck his leg out for me to put the wire on and now we were good friends. They ask me what I was going to do with it, and I said as soon as I got a pair of wire cutters, I was going to let him go. I said I had just brought him over to show the ones who had never seen a badger up close, what they really looked like.

One of the fellows got me the wire cutters, then I put him up on the top step of the bunk car and with the badger's head hanging over the edge of the step, I cut the wire around his leg and he fell to the ground about two feet below.

He just lay there for a moment looking around and taking everything in, then he got onto his feet and made straight for Shorty, one of the men.

Shorty started running and came up the steps into the bunk car on the run, with some of the other fellows close behind him. The badger started after another fellow, and he made for the cook car which was closer, and in a very few seconds there was not a man outside at all, and the one badger had put the run on the whole crew and had the place outside to himself. He run around smelling everything but did not go near the horses at all.

The last I saw of him was when he started to dig a hole where some gophers had a colony and dug himself into the ground looking for a meal.

A badger is not a large animal, it only weighs about 40 or 50 pounds, but is about the bravest fighter I think that I have ever seen for his size. He was not the least bit scared of all those men around him and was quite willing to take them on one at a time, or all together in a bunch. He put the run on them all and made them seek cover, and I was one to take cover also. I would not want to tackle a badger when he was free and willing to fight, not at any time.

After what I saw that day, the way that badger stood up to the whole crew, not giving an inch, I have admired him ever since for his willingness to carry the fight to what he thought were the enemy, and for the brave fighting heart that was inside of him. That he was willing to take on such immense odds amazed me, and I felt like cheering for him.

I was asked afterwards why not kill him for his fur, but I said no way would I ever do that.

There was a young fellow called Jacob Ganzevelt, about sixteen years old, who was working at the Cleveland place every year that I was there, who was very much in love with the young sister of the boss.

Her name was Geneva Cleveland.

Jacob was a very tall boy for his age and as thin as a toothpick. He was very shy and tongue tied as far as Geneva was concerned. He liked working around machinery and always looked after the separator in threshing time and drove a binder in the cutting of the grain. In plowing time when summer fallow was the job of the day, he always drove an old tractor. He was the only one that could keep it running.

Him and his family lived in a little old frame house away down at the southeast end of a big slough on Cleveland's land.

When he was not working, he was following Geneva around wherever she went.

He was always dirty and smeared with grease and oil, and really looked a mess. Geneva was always dressed in fresh clean clothes, and was neat and tidy all day and looked very pretty

and was a great tease when around where the crew was working, or on a Sunday when they were working on their machines or horses in the barn.

Jacob, or as everyone called him, Jake, was always around somewhere close by, just being eat up with jealousy.

It was very plain to see that the girl was just torturing him by being very attentive to one of the other young fellows who was quite good looking. Jake could not talk to her without getting very red in the face and very embarrest, and this seemed to give Geneva a great deal of satisfaction.

Several times when Geneva would come over to the old barn where I was the only person that was caring for the horses, and she tried to use me to get Jake upset. I told her that she was making a big mistake, but she just laughed and said she could not stand him being so dirty.

Well, when I got a chance one Sunday to talk to Jake alone, I told him what she had said, and ask him why he did not keep himself cleaned up and get his hair cut, and as he had quite a growth of down on his face, I told him to shave every morning. I said if he would get his greasy clothes washed at least once a week, and have a good wash every morning down in the irrigation ditch, and keep his hair cut and shaved, perhaps Geneva would like him a bit more. I told him to not follow her around like he did, or to be around where she was so much.

I said that if he would not chase her so much, perhaps she would start chasing him.

He ask me if I really thought so, and I told him that it would do no harm to try. I told him that Geneva thought she had him all tied up in a little package, and it was up to him to show her that he was a free man and could go his own way if he so desired. I told him that all the fellows

were laughing at him and saying that he had no mind of his own, and that Geneva could lead him around on a leash just like a little poodle.



I could see him getting madder all the time, and knew that I was getting through to him and getting him stirred up. I told him not to be mean or mad at Geneva, but just to get cleaned up and stay away from her, and treat her just as he would the bosses wife, with respect and kindness. No more making calf's eyes at her, and I told him to take more interest in his job and less in Geneva. If he needed any help or someone to talk to, I was always available, and that I considered us to be friends.

Irrigation Ditch Where We Bathed

He said he was going to go home and get a hair cut, but he did not have a razor to shave with.

I said I would loan him mine if he would bring it right back when he had shaved, as I would need it in the morning. He said he would, so I went up to the bunkhouse and got it for him, along with some soap and aftershave lotion. I gave him a piece of toilet soap, and told him to have a bath in the irrigation ditch before he went home. I ask him if he could swim and he said no, so I said I would go down to the ditch and see that he did not go out too far and get tangled up in the weeds in the ditch.

I went down with him and went in and had another bath, as I already had one before breakfast. I scrubbed his back real good and gave his long blond hair a good scrubbing too.

When we were through and were laying on the grass to get dried off, he said that was the first bath like that that he had ever had, and he felt wonderful and clean and was going to have one every morning.

I told him never to go into the ditch when he was alone, so he agreed to be there early in the morning, and we would have our bath together until he learned to swim.

Well, when I saw him on Monday morning, I could hardly recognize him. His hair had been cut off quite short and he had on a complete outfit of clean clothes, and his shoes were even shined. We peeled off our clothes and went into that very cold water at about five in the morning, and when we came out, I know I felt wonderfully refreshed and Jake said that he thought he had been missing a lot by not being clean.

He had brought my razor back and I started to tell him what he could expect to receive in the line of kidding from the other fellows when they saw his changed appearance. I told him they would make a lot of remarks about his appearance, but he was not to let them bother him, just to say that he was just trying to set an example for them and let it go at that. If they carried the kidding on for several days, the only way to stop it was to call the man that was doing the most of it outside and give him a working over if he could, and if not, he would have to take a licking, but it would put a stop to the kidding if they knew you were ready to fight if they went too far.

We went into the bunkhouse and I started to shave.

There were only two other fellows in there, Red and Johnson, and they started in on Jake right away.

I went on shaving and I could tell that these two fellows thought they were going to enjoy themselves at Jake's expense. I had finished and was washing off the soap from my face, when Jake got up off his chair that he had been sitting on and said to Red that if he felt that way about it, to come outside and back it up with his fists.

Well I guess Red thought he had an easy one in Jake, so he started out the door with Jake behind him. The other fellow, Johnson, started to go out too, but I stepped between him and the door and told him to stay inside unless he wanted a fight on his hands. He looked at me and thought better of it and went back and sat back down on the bed.

I went to the door where I could see what was going on and was surprised to see Red down on the ground with Jake standing over him, telling him to get up and fight like a man. I heard a bit of a noise behind me and stepped to one side and turned just as a fist slid past the side of my face. I swung around to my right and my left fist connected with Johnson's jaw. I had given him a good trimming the second day I was on the job there that year and now he got another.

Red would not get up and fight some more, so Jake came in to see if I needed any help. Then Red came in and started washing his face and said to Jake, "you have broken my nose, but I ask for it and there are no hard feelings on my part, will you shake on it?"

Jake said he had no hard feelings either.

Red then told Jake he packed a hell of a wallop and that he would remember it when he next thought of trying to be funny.

Johnson was back sitting on the side of the bed holding his sore jaw, not saying a word. I ask him if he was satisfied it was bad manners to try to hit a fellow from behind and he just nodded his head.

The other men were coming up from the barn now and were starting to wash up for breakfast. They started in on Jake about his changed appearance and he just grinned at them and said nothing.

Red held his nose and told them to watch out and be careful what they said to Jake or he would bust their nose for them the same as Jake had done for him when he got out of line.

We had our breakfast and the boss took Red into town to a doctor to have his nose taken care of.

The funny thing about this affair was that Jake and Red became the best of friends and Jake, while he did not forget about Geneva, he just treated her like a kid sister and became more talkative and sure of himself.

I never seen him ever again wipe his greasy hands on his clothes. He always carried a big rag in a pocket on his coveralls, and after he had been to town and bought himself a razor and shaving supplies, he was always shaved and was clean and tidy about his clothes and person.

Jake told me that when he swung his fist at Red that he never expected to hit him so hard and the shock was just as great to him as it was to Red. He said he did not know anything about fighting but he could wrestle pretty good. He said that they had been wrestling around on the ground and Red had broke his hold on him and got to his feet and was coming at him swinging his fists up and down and Jake said he just hit straight out at him as hard as he could and his hand felt as if he had broken it. He said Red went down and said his nose was broken and he had

enough. Jake said he felt very sorry that he had hit him so hard and that he would never hit anyone like that again.

I told him he would have to go into town when he could and take a good long course in the art of boxing if he did not want to ever hit anyone that hard again. I said that I knew from experience that when the other fellow knew that you were pretty good at boxing they were not so anxious to fight and would usually pull in their horns. Their knowledge that you were a fairly good boxer usually kept you out of a lot of fights, so it was a good thing to be able to back it up if they insisted on fighting with you, so I had found out from experience.

After I had the harrowing all finished that year, and the rocks and stinkweed all taken care of on the Cleveland place, we started getting things in shape for the harvest. I remember quite a bit about repairing binder canvas and replacing worn parts that fall that got me a binder when we started cutting the grain, and \$2.00 more in my day's pay as a skilled binder operator.

I cut grain for Tally Cleveland for three seasons and helped to thresh it. Then I wanted to see more of the country and meet new people, so the fall of 1922, after the threshing was over, I left the Cleveland place and took a job with another fellow, a German, Herman Pensloff, down near Claresholm, in the southern part of Alberta. I used a Duck Foot cultivator for the first time at the Pensloff place to loosen up the stubble land for next year's seeding until the ground froze. I was getting a dollar a day and board for each weekday. On Sunday he ask me to go up in the

foothills further south, where he had a herd of horses and help him brand and alter a number of young male horses.

He said he would pay me the regular dollar a day for working on Sunday.

When Herman Pensloff ask me to go with him to brand some horses, his 14 year old grandson, who was pretty good with a rope, came with me, along with the team and wagon that I took up with the equipment we would need, while the boss went up in his car. The boy brought his own horse and tied it on behind the wagon and rode on the seat beside me. He told me a lot of things about the boss on the way up that was in a way quite enlightening.

He said Herman was not his real grandfather, as his grandmother had been a widow with a married daughter when Herman had married her for the farm she had. The boy also told me that the last hired man that Herman had knew how to make whiskey, and that him and Herman had a still down in an old building near the river, about eight miles or so from his farm. The police had found it and the hired man had left the country before the police could catch him, but Herman was coming up for trial in about two weeks.

The boy also said that Herman had a habit of beating up his wife when he had a few drinks of his moonshine, and that the boy's father had went over twice and gave Herman a good licking, which made him stop the beating of his wife. The boy also told me that his father always had to be on the look out for Herman coming over with a gun to kill him, as that was what he threatened to do the last time he gave Herman a licking.

When we got to the place in the hills where the horses were, there was a house and some old sheds and two corrals. The boy and the boss got on their horses and went up in the hills to

round up the horses we were going to alter, while I took my .25-3000 Savage rifle and went looking for some prairie chickens or rabbits.

I got two nice fat chickens before they got back with the horses. It was about two in the afternoon, and we started right in to work on the horses.

After a couple of hours, there was just one big year old colt left to work on. He was a beautiful young animal, grey in color, with his head held high in a proud and graceful manner as he run around the corral, dodging the boy's rope. At last the boy got his rope around the colt's neck and we got him down on the ground with me sitting on his head to hold him down while the boss branded him. When the red hot iron got near the colt's hip, he kicked out with the leg that did not have a rope on it, and knocked the hot iron against the bosses leg, at the same time dumping me off his head.

I grabbed the colt's ear before he could get on his feet and was able to get back on his head and hold him down.

The boss then came up to the colt's head and jumped on the colt's shoulder with both feet and broke it's left front leg. He told me to get my rifle and shoot the colt but I refused, so he went and got the rifle and killed the colt.

Tears were running from the boy's eyes, and I must admit that I felt the same, not so much for sorrow for the death of the colt, for he would suffer no more, but at the stupidity of the boss and his dirty cruel nature.

We left and went back to the farm that night, and on the way back I shot two big jack rabbits.

Next day we started to haul straw that the boss had bought from a farmer about four miles away from his farm. The road was covered with drifts of sand so we had four horses on each wagon. Sometimes, while coming up that road with a load of straw, our wagons would break through the sand to the original road underneath, and we would have to put the eight horses on each wagon to get the wagons out.

I broke a fork handle while putting on a load that day and the boss told me I would have to pay for it.

When we had all the straw hauled, the boss told me he would have to let me go as he had no more work for me to do.

I reminded him that when he hired me at the employment office in Calgary that he signed a contract to pay me a dollar a day until spring seeding started, and that was what he was going to do, even if he had no work that I could do.

He came around the table in the kitchen and swung his fist at me, but missed me and hit his wife square in the mouth. She fell to the floor and for a moment I thought he had killed her, but she rolled over and got up and went to the phone and called the police while Herman chased me around the table trying to get a crack at me.

I tipped a chair over in front of him, and as he fell to the floor I got straddle of his back and got his right arm around to his back and started to press it up to the back of his head. That soon took all of the fight out of him, but I kept him there on the floor until the police arrived and

put the cuffs on him. I was not taking any chances with him after I had seen what he did to that colt.

When the police got there, he told his story, saying I had attacked him, but his wife told the police that was a lie, that I never tried to hit him at all, and that her husband was the one who had hit her when she tried to stop him from striking me.

I told the police about the contract that Herman had signed in Calgary, and about him not paying me for three Sundays that I worked, and about him charging me for a fork handle I had broken while hauling straw for him.

They said he did not have to pay me for the Sundays, but he could not deduct the fork handle from my wages, and he would have to pay me a dollar a day for every working day until he started seeding in the spring.

Herman asked me if we could not make a deal of some kind to let him off the paying of me until spring seeding started, and I told him that perhaps we could.

I said if he would put the price of the fork handle back on my pay, and pay me for the three Sundays like he said he would, and if he would write out a cheque for the full amount and have the money at the bank before the train arrived at five in the afternoon going to Calgary, I would sign a paper showing that I had quit the job, and that would let him out of paying me a dollar a day until the seeding started in the spring.

He was so tight and miserable he did not even want to do that, but the police advised him to agree and so he said it was a deal.

He wanted me to help him load a tank of wheat before I left for town with the police, but I said I was not working for him anymore so could not help him load the tank of grain. I got a

ride to town with the police and they said Herman was coming up for trial in a few days and that he better have a thousand dollars in the bank to pay his fine or he would not be doing any seeding in the spring.

Herman got his tank of grain in and sold it and had the money in the bank when I went around to cash his cheque before the bank closed for the day. He was waiting there in the bank as I cashed the cheque and he wanted me to go to a bootlegger and buy him a drink, and I said could not afford to do that.

I went and bought my ticket to Calgary, and a book to read, and I sat in the station to wait for my train.

When I got to Calgary, I called up Tally Cleveland the next day and found out he was in town at his mother's home. I called on him there and he told me to go out to the farm and give old Johnny Pelky a hand until he came out in the spring, and if I needed tobacco or anything to go up to the store and get it and charge it to him.

I went out on the train that night and Johnny was there with a team and wagon to meet me. After we had got back to the farm and had taken care of the horses, Johnny went up to the house to get supper ready and I went up to the bunkhouse to put my things away and then went over to the house.

Johnny had a nice hot supper of flapjacks and bacon and eggs ready, with lots of hot coffee with sugar and cream. We did the dishes and when all was clean and tidy we went over to the bunkhouse.

Johnny was still talking a mile a minute. It sure made me feel good to here his part English and part French way of talking. When I worked there before, I had got so that I understood him very well when he got going like that. I could see he was very happy to have me back as we had been good friends before. I know I was happy to hear him spouting his mixture of French and English once more, also to know that he had missed me while I had been away.

Next morning, after doing the barn chores, we took two wagons with racks on them and brought up two loads of straw and spread it around on the ground in a sheltered pasture field not so much for the cattle and horses to eat but for them to lay on at night. We fed them hay in the feed racks around the corral, and as we always would have them full they had no need to eat the straw. There was very little snow on the ground yet so they would go out on a warm day and eat a lot of grass.

May 15, 1977

Dear Friend:

It was with great pleasure that I received your letter today. It was the bright spot in an otherwise dull time over the weekend. My daughter and her son did not come home over the weekend, and I did not win anything in the Ontario lottery. The lottery was late in starting and the broadcast broke down several times before it was finished. Then, the Hydro had trouble with low water levels somewhere and the power was off for some time. As if that was not enough, we did not get our daily paper on Monday or today.

It seems like troubles come in bunches.

I see by a western paper I get that Calgary is going to ration water. That was a surprise for me, reading that. I thought with two rivers running through the city, the Bow and Elbow rivers, they would have plenty of water. From what I read, I would say that I would most likely get lost in Calgary if I went there now.

That is all the bad news so far, and it is now out of the way, so I will try and dig up some cheerful news about what is going on around here.

My wife has received another baby boy to look after, and boy, is she ever busy. He is a month old Indian boy and has almond slant eyes so I think he may have a bit of the Orient in him too. The other little one that was premature and that had an operation for a knotted intestine is doing fine now and has put on about four pounds.



My Wife and the Month Old Indian Baby

Well, I guess I had better start answering your questions now if I can. I see you have some dandies for me.

About Lorne. When Lorne was in Oregon working in deep sea fishing, he would usually answer my letters about three to four weeks after he had received them. He was very poor at finding something to write about, except when he was in the fishing business. Then he would write and tell me

all about his boat, how far out on the ocean he went to fish, what kinds of fish he caught and whether he had a good catch or a poor one. He would tell me about the gadgets he had on his boat for finding his way out and back, whether the weather was good or bad, and how much he received for his catches. He sent me some pictures of different fish, and of his boat and different fishing grounds.

He never had much to say about family affairs though, or how his two children were doing in school.

After he got out of the fishing business and started driving the tourist bus, he stopped writing altogether. He said when he was here on a visit one time that he just did not have time to write, and after he had filled out all the papers that had to be filled out at the end of a tour, he just could not sit down and write a letter. However he did phone quite often and would talk a long time with his mother when she answered the phone.

I was left out of that as I cannot hear on the phone very good.

Your questions about Lorne are very hard for me to give a definite answer, as he has been away from home since he was seventeen and he is now fifty, and in all that time I have seen him very little. Also, in the time he spent with his first wife, Grace, he changed considerable from the boy I knew. All I have to give an estimate of his character is the way he talks now, and what he says in his letters when he does write to me, which is very seldom. I know he had set very high ambitions for himself when he became a man, but I doubt he reached them because he was easily talked into things which were not too good when he got in bad company.

And as he grew older he became quite secretive with me and his mother, especially with me. Just after he joined the air force, for example, when he came home on his first leave, I knew right away that we had lost him completely as far as affection was concerned for me. He respected me, but there was no more confidences, and if he did not want to answer some questions that I ask him, he would manage to change the subject we had been talking about.

The next time he came home and brought his girl friend Grace home, I had my answer to what had changed him and knew he was not our son anymore.

He was still respectful and pleasant to talk to, but he seemed to always be thinking before he gave an answer to any of our questions, and I found out later, before they went back to Winnipeg, that a lot of his answers were lies.

Hopefully all this has changed now that he is married to Po.

About Old Johnny Pelky, and Joe the cook. Both were very good friends of mine.

Johnny did not drink, but Joe did go on some wild benders when he was not out on a job. He never drank on a job that I ever knew of, and he was a darn fine cook. Joe the cook ended his

life drowning in a water barrel in Stavely, Alberta because he was so drunk one night he fell into it by accident and could not pull himself out. I was at a small farm northeast of Edmonton owned by Joe the cook at the time, right near a settlement of French Canadians making their living by fishing in this lake when I heard about him drowning. Joe had offered me his farm and everything on it, if I would go up and look after it for him and give him a home when he was too old to work.

Of course, I was not ready to settle down at that time, I was just 24, so I refused his offer to stay at his place, and it did not matter after he died. Stupid me. I could have got a pretty good farm for little or no money, and I could have built it up and become quite well off.

That was the second time I missed out on making a small fortune for myself.

How did Old Johnny Pelky end up out west? Old Johnny had come home from working in a Quebec bush camp because of a bad tooth one time. He was going to let it rot and fall out and go back to work in the camp, but when he got to his cabin and found his wife in bed asleep with another man, he just turned around and walked out and went to the next town where there was a dentist and had his tooth taken care of, then he went back in the bush to work for the rest of the winter.

In the spring, he went to Alberta and had never been home since. He had never been to school in his life, so he could not write to his wife or his daughter. I had many a long talk with him when we used to sit in the bunkhouse on bitter cold nights when a blizzard was going on outside, and we played poker for pennies with a soft coal fire going. I was smoking my pipe back then, and Johnny had his cigarette going.

We both felt the same way about women being of loose morals, so I guess that this is one of the reasons we got along so good together.

About Geneva Cleveland. At the time that I first met her, she was not quite fifteen. She was the only sister of the man I worked for, Tally Cleveland. Geneva had real black hair, very dark eyes and very white complexion. She was very shy and kept close to her mother most of the time. I think Geneva had a crush on Jake. And Jake sure had a crush on Geneva. But when we were threshing Jake never washed or changed his clothes until the threshing was all over, and he sure was a dirty, greasy sight, and because of that, Geneva gave up on him and got herself a nice, clean looking, high school student for a boyfriend when she was going to high school in Calgary. Poor old Jake took it pretty hard as he was very slow to catch on to what it was all about.

You ask about the anginal attacks I get. Before I try to explain how these anginal attacks occur and what they are like, I will give you a description of some other troubles that I have with my body, which may or may not have something to do with these attacks.

From working and breathing in chemicals at the beaters when I worked for Great Lakes Paper, I got indigestion and used to suck a lot of sweet aids to control indigestion, from which I became a diabetic. Also, my hearing was badly affected from noise while I worked on the paper machine. I got sulphur dust in my eye one windy night and had to have two operations on my right eye to stop the water from getting stuck in it due to some grains of sulfur blocking the drainage ducts in my eye. After I was pensioned off and then went to the hospital for the operation on both hips for Osteoarthritis, I came out of the hospital crippled in both legs and very weak. I regained some of my strength, but had to go back to the hospital for a hernia operation. While there I insisted on a complete check up, and I insisted on being told the results of the tests.

According to the doctor, I had a damaged heart valve, a ruptured diaphragm, the check valve between the stomach and the throat is damaged and no longer works, I have a deafness in both ears and, of course, I am a diabetic.

Outside of these few minor things, my body is in good condition, except I cannot walk without canes or bend at the hips.

Well, those attacks start at the spot where I think the diaphragm in my chest is ruptured. My throat starts to close and I have quite hard time to get air into my lungs. Some days I have several attacks that I can stop if I can get an Isordil pill into my mouth and under my tongue and it melts and I can swallow it before the attack gets to my elbows.

I carry this little bottle of a hundred pills in my shirt pocket all day wherever I am, and at night I have it sitting on my desk beside my bed where I can reach it in a hurry if I have an attack. So far I have never had to use it at night but it is always there if I need it. Perhaps that is why I sleep so good.

I used to have to wake up at night to turn over on my side after I had been sleeping on the other side for about an hour or more. Now I sleep on the same side all night without ever waking up unless nature calls. When I do change sides, I go right back to sleep.

I have the big 30 mg Isordil and the 40 mg Inderal pills that I take when I have time to get to the bathroom for a glass of water to wash them down. The 30 mg Isordil are a little bigger than a dime, and sometimes they get stuck in my throat, and then I have to wait until they soften up and I wash them down with another glass of water.

I think my liver and pipes are in good condition, for after I drink a glass of water I have to get rid of it in about half an hour.

A severe attack leaves me pretty weak for about ten minutes, then I am back to normal.

Do not worry about me, my friend. If I am going to make it, I will, and if not, worrying will not give me another minute, so do not worry. Look on the many years that I have enjoyed in my life and do not forget that my wife says I am going to live to reach 100 years.

I believe her, but sometimes I wish I did not, for then she will be tied down to looking after me later on, and that will not be an easy job. She has had a hard job all her life, and I would like to see her have a few years of leisure.

Well my friend, I think it is time to give you a rest so I will sign off for this time and will be waiting patiently for your next letter. By now, when you receive this letter, you and Mrs. Filter will be as busy as a cats on a hot stove working in your own home, so I will say good-bye for now and may you find lots of happiness in your new home.

With best wishes to you both and a happy home,

coming from your friend,

Sam

Family Portrait: Laura

Laura, our second born, came to us February 18, 1929. Dr. McAllister of Georgetown was attending in our own home on paper mill row, with me as his assistant to deliver our first daughter. That was the first birth that I had ever assisted at.

She was a lovely little girl with dark hair and dark blue eyes. I took her downstairs in a little blanket and oiled her whole body in front of the kitchen stove, then wrapped her up in a warm blanket. When the doctor had left, I took her up to her mother and she breastfed her.

I took care of everything and did all the washing. I took a few days off work from the mill to care for my wife and baby girl, then when my wife was able to get up and take care of the baby, I went back to work driving the team at the mill. We lived there until I lost my job at the mill, and when I could not get another job because of the depression, I traded my interest in the property I had bought on paper mill row to Mr. Reed for the deed on 180 acres of land up in Rainy River District in northern Ontario so that my family and I could homestead there.

Laura grew like a weed and soon she was going to school in the Rainy River District with her brother Lorne, and later on with her brother Ben. Then in the early forties, I sold our homestead and we went to live in Fort William, now called Thunder Bay. Our children went to public school on what was called Arthur street at that time, but is now called Hwy 17, part of the transCanada highway. They had to walk about two miles to the school.

When Laura finished public school she went to the College in Fort William. Laura did not do very good in the College, as she had to stay in town with a family there and work after

school for her keep. She had to wash the dinner dishes when she came home from school, make all the beds in the house, then vacuum the whole upstairs and downstairs, and take care of three small preschool children at the same time. As soon as she got home from school, the woman of the house had a lot of work laid out for her, then her and her husband would take off in their car and she would not see them again until around eleven at night. She did not have time to study at all during the week, and when I brought her home for Saturday and Sunday, she was so tired that all she could do was sleep most of the time.

They did not have bus service for the children from the country back then where children can ride to and from school and be home every night in their own bed.

Laura really did not make any friends while at school. She could not invite them to where she was staying because she was too busy looking after the children and doing her work. She could not go out to see anyone for the same reason. All this proved too much for her, as she had no time in the evening to study, and so fell behind in her classes and failed the first year.

She wanted to leave the school and train for a nurse, or go to work at something, so I got her a job as a shell inspector in the shell plant on the ground floor right across the room from where I was operating a lathe. This was when the second world war was on full. She just loved that work and the noise and riding to and from work with me every day.

She was a real pretty girl, and it was not long until a lot of the young boys who worked there found excuses to go past her to the washroom. That was fine until some of them started to get real fresh with her. I could see all that went on, so when one boy got too fresh one day and got hit with the hammer that she stamped shells with and then swore at her, then went into the washroom, I shut down my lathe and went into the washroom after him.

This fellow was bragging to two other fellows in the washroom what he was going to do to my daughter when he caught her alone.

I grabbed him by the shirt in front with one hand, then punched him several times in the stomach with my other hand until I had knocked all the wind out of him, then I slapped him hard back and forth on each side of the face until he was crying like a baby. Then I reached for a piece of soap in a soap dish and rammed it into his mouth and told him to chew on that and let him go.

This was all done so fast the other two just stood there gawking, and when I let him go they came for me, both at once, which was a bad mistake. They got in each other's way and I could just pick them off easy, one at a time. They had no skill at all at how to really fight, and before long they were trying to get out the door which I was blocking. I was not ready to let them out until they had learned that it was dangerous to bother my daughter.

I kept them there punching them hard until they were all telling me they had enough. The first fellow was in it now trying to help his two friends out, but getting some bruises himself instead.

I really was mad and wanted to learn them a lesson they would not forget in a hurry. I guess I really wanted to hurt them too, as they were all tough kids of about seventeen or so from the slums in the east end of Fort William.

If they got a good beating perhaps they would respect the women and girls more who were doing their share to help win the war and get it over. There were a lot of young girls and young married women working in there, and it seemed to me that most of these tough young

punks thought it was open season on them. So while I had the excuse, I thought that I would put a little fear into them and make them show a bit more respect to these women.

When I thought they had enough, I gave them a bit of a lecture on how they were going to behave towards the women and girls from now on, and I told them they knew what to expect if they stepped out of line. They went out of there like whipped puppies and I guess they past the word around because a lot of respect was shown to my daughter after that.

After she was through at the shell plant, she went to work in the Sanatorium and trained for a nursing career. She lived right there at the hospital and I would go around and get her every Saturday night and take her back Sunday night.

When Xmas came around, I went in to get her, and as I knew where her room was that she shared with three other young trainees, I started down the hall. As I was passing a door to a room I thought I heard her voice, so I stopped to listen, then I heard Laura say "let me out of here." I opened the door and saw a man in white coat and trousers trying to throw her on a bed. I was in there fast and grabbed his shoulder and swung him around and socked him right on the button.

He went down like a log.

I ask Laura what was going on, and she said she was passing in the hall when he had stepped out and ask her if she would come in and have a look at a patient that had just come in. This young fellow was a student doctor from McKellar hospital over there to help out over the holidays, so she went in. When she saw that he had been drinking and that there was no patient in the room she turned around to go out, then he grabbed her.

I said I guess he will not try that again.

He was still out on the floor, so I checked his pulse and it was alright so we left and went down to her room where she told the girls what had happened and ask them to look in on this fellow once in a while to see that he was alright.

One of the girls told the head nurse what had happened, and after he had come to he was sent back to the KcKellar hospital where he was kicked out for good.

Laura worked there for quite a while after that and did not have any more trouble.

Then she met George Klages at a dance one night. Soon after that they were married. At the time she met George he was in the Navy. She was going on nineteen when she was married. It was just a quiet wedding at the parsonage, with George's brother as best man, and his sister as bride's maid. His mother was there, but his father's legs were badly crippled from an accident on their farm, and could not be at the wedding.

My wife and I were both there, along with two girls from where Laura worked.

Laura would not have a church wedding as she said I could not afford it at that time, which was true. I did however give them a little one room house that I had built on my place, and I paid for moving it down onto their piece of land they had bought.

They bought a piece of land down in Robyn village, about nine or ten miles from Fort William, and soon started to build a little bigger house, a five roomed affair, that his brother and him could finish off. I was, at the time, building a workshop on my place at Little Falls on Corbett creek, and when they ask me to go down and help build the house, I did so. I left my own building job at home and went down and framed his first house, and when I went back to work on my workshop, I found that the studding had most all warped out of shape and I had to start all over again.

I had to go down once in awhile when they run into a problem and help them out, but altogether they did a pretty good job.

I did not get to know his family too well as they lived about twenty miles out in the Slate River District. We met them once and awhile in town, but never went for a visit, or they never came to our place for a visit. I was busy every minute at home that I had to spare, except in the spring when I would take a few hours now and again to go fishing in the Kam river.

George ended up working in the Great Lakes Paper where I did, so I used to pick him up each day or night as he was on the same shift as I was.

After about a year or two they bought another piece of land in another part of the village, of about 80 acres, and decided to build a much bigger and better house.

They still live there, just the two of them, as their children are all married.

They had six of them, three boys and three girls. I used to go around at twelve at night when I came off work and pick up her first son when he was just a baby and take him home for a few days when she had a lot of work to do and was very tired and about all in.

Laura was a foster mother for years for the Children's Aid Society. She has given that up just lately and has been in the greenhouse business for years growing flowering plants for sale and has done real good at it. Her husband has been on the local council for several years and in the real estate business for quite a while. He is still employed at the Great Lakes Paper mill as a plumber and will be pensioned off in a few years. Two of her sons have good jobs with the government, and two of their daughters are registered nurses.

Laura has a very nice home and she is a good housekeeper. She was planning on her and her husband to sell their big home and buy a smaller home in town, since, with her children all

married and in homes of their own, they did not need a big house. I guess she did not remember how it was with my wife and I when our children got married and had homes of their own.

vistaVision Memories

I Could Have Been Rich. Again.

The boss, Tally Cleveland, came out to his place near the end of winter, about the middle of March of 1923, and brought out two more men, so we started mending harness in the bunkhouse and getting things ready to start seeding in April.

As soon as the frost was out of the ground and it started to dry up, I started to harrow the ground to be seeded. I had one big field finished and another started one day when I looked up at

the sky along the horizon and saw a big storm coming. I drove my team to the end of the field where the gate was and started unhooking my horses as fast I could.

The drill teams in the other field, along with their drivers, were already on the run for the barn.

I got mine all unhooked and was soon running for the barn too. By this time the big cloud was right overhead and the wind started blowing real fierce, then the snow came. I was less than 100 yards from the barn but could not see it. The horses knew where they were going though, and they squeezed in the barn door to their stable.

I shut the door and started to get them separated and into their stalls. They did not panic, as I was talking to them all the time. After awhile, they seemed to know they were in no danger and as soon as I started to take off their harness they calmed right down. I had filled their manger with hay before I went out in the morning and they started eating, and then all was right with their world as far as they were concerned. They were too wet to be brushed so I went over to the big barn to wait out the storm. I found my way there by keeping my hand on the side of the small barn, for I could not see two feet in front of my face, the snow was so thick.

When I got to the big barn there was still an awful tangle of horses in there. There were eight four horse teams all in a bunch, with each team of four horses fastened together with bit straps, and were they ever in a tangle. They had just been driven in there through the big double doors, four abreast, until the eight teams were all in, then the doors had been closed to keep the snow out.

I started to help them get the tangle straightened out but could see no point in trying to separate each team. As soon as I caught hold of a horse, I unsnapped the strap holding his head

to the next horse and he made right for his stall. I did that to several, then the other fellows got the idea and did the same.

As soon as each horse was free of his neighbor, he went into his own stall because he felt safe there, and he would start eating hay right away. It only took a few minutes to get them all in their stalls, with the end of their lines still out on the alley floor. I worked the straps with the drivers unharnessing the horses and tying them up, then we tried to figure out a way to get up to the bunk car or to the bunkhouse. The wind was whirling the snow around the building with such force we could see no buildings of any kind, although some of them was as close as ten feet or less.

I said if we get three ropes off the saddles in the harness room and tie them together, it will give us 150 feet of rope. I said they should tie one end to the barn door handle and one end to my belt and I will try to reach the bunk house.

I told the other men that when I got the rope tied to me and the porch railing, they can all hang onto the rope and get to the bunk house. I said it was best that I go as I was more familiar with the locations of all the buildings than they were, and for one of them to be sure to keep a hand on the rope so that he could feel when I jerked the rope and had found the bunkhouse.

I wrapped a piece of old canvas around my face and neck, and one of the men tied a handkerchief around it to keep it in place. I said when they come up they had better pull their coats up over their face and button it, because that snow was just like buckshot, and when they got out in the open between the barn and the bunk house it would really hurt if it hit their eyes or any part of their face.

When all was ready I checked the knot on the rope end on the door and on my belt and started out. It was not too bad until I past the end of the barn, then the wind knocked me over into a snow drift. I managed to get on my feet and started off again, but this time I was braced for the wind and managed to make slow progress. The path from the barn sloped upwards towards a road that went back of the implement shed before passing the main road, then the path again sloped upward to the steps of the bunkhouse veranda.

I got to the road after wading through several big drifts, then crossed the road and ran smack into the centre of the veranda. Standing there I could not see the front of the bunkhouse four feet in front of me. I crawled up on the porch and pulled in the slack on the rope, and jerked it twice. Someone jerked it back so I tied it real tight to the railing of the veranda and waited for the men to start arriving.

I did not see them coming and only knew they had arrived when someone spoke to me near the edge of the veranda. I counted them as they went into the bunkhouse and all had arrived safely. I then went in, and what a relief it was to get in out of the howling wind. No one knows what it sounds like unless they have heard it, and once they have heard that sound they will never forget it.

I have seen quite a few blizzards on the prairies in the years that I was out there, but never again anything near like that one.

It kept up for three days and two nights and we woke up on the fourth morning and water was running everywhere. A Chinook had come in over night and started the snow melting. In about two days, you could see very little signs of the blizzard. The cattle and horses had all come through it pretty good as they were protected very well from the wind by the big haystacks at the

end of the barn and the storm fence the boss had been wise enough to provide for just such an occasion as this.

I worked for Tally Cleveland the second time that spring and summer, and in the fall of 1923, when the harvest was over, I was on my way again seeking experiences. This time, I went to work for Sam Brown, down near the Turner Valley oil fields. Sam Brown used to have a blacksmith shop in Georgetown when I was a boy. I used to spend some time there watching him shoe horses, until he moved away. I never did know where he went until I met him in the employment office in Calgary. He had had an accident to his right hand and could not use it, so he was in search of a hired man to do his fall plowing, and hauling his grain to the elevator. He hired me at \$35.00 a month and board.

His place was twenty miles back in the hills and about two miles from the oil wells.

The next morning his wife and him were going into the village of Black Diamond, their nearest post office, and they said that I should try and dig out as many of the several telephone poles they had on their property as I could while they were away. There were twelve poles across the field where I was to plow, and they had been put in before the road allowance had been surveyed. The phone Co. had put a new line up the road allowance to his house and he wanted this old line of poles out so that he would not have to always work around them.

I had a new way that I had invented for getting fence posts out of the ground and I thought it might work on these poles.

I took a shovel and a heavy crowbar and started to work, and in two hours I had all those poles out and dragged up to his barnyard, and in a nice neat pile. I dug down along one side of the pole as deep as I could, then went around to the opposite side of the pole and stuck the bar into the pole about six inches below the surface of the ground and put a block of wood I had with me under the bar and pried upwards. The pole loosened and came up about six inches, then I stuck the bar into the pole again lower down and pried up again and kept repeating this until the pole fell over out of the ground. After I had the hole dug on one side of the pole, it only took about five minutes or less to pry it out of the ground.

When Sam and his wife came home, I was chinking the cow stable with cow manure.

When he saw the poles were all out and up in the barnyard, he could hardly believe it. He went down in the field to see if he could find out how I did it, but I had filled in all the holes and packed them down so he got very little satisfaction there. That night at the supper table he ask me how I did it, but I told him it was a secret as I had invented it myself. I said anyone could do it if they would just do a bit of thinking.

He never gave up trying to find out and I never told him until the day he fired me.

I plowed two fields for him before the ground froze too hard to plow, then we went to a neighbor's to get the loan of a 150 bushel grain tank to haul Sam's grain to the elevators.

He ask me one night after supper if I would like to buy his little farm for \$1,500.00. I could make a down payment of \$500.00 and pay the balance off at \$500.00 per year, at 3 per cent interest. As soon as all his grain was in the elevator I could take over the farm. There was a five room frame house, a log horse barn, a log cow barn and a log blacksmith shop and implement shed on the property. There was 160 acres of rich black loam, about 40 or so acres cleared and in

crop every year. There were eight horses and six cows with several head of younger stock. All this went along with the house furnishings in the price of the farm.

I had a little over \$500.00 in the bank in Calgary. I did not really know what made me snub Old Dame Fortune for the third time in my life by saying no to Sam Brown's offer, but I did and have regretted it the rest of my life.

About two and a half or three years after I left there, Imperial Oil brought in there No. four well, a gusher that they estimated was gushing about 40,000 barrels of crude oil per day before they got it capped. This well was brought in on the first field I plowed the year I had gone and worked in the fall for Sam Brown.

Again, I could have been rich if I had just said yes to the deal Sam offered me.

That fall, I was hauling grain into Okotoks for Sam, and I had the tank loaded ready to go in the morning when a blizzard came up the night before, and when I saw what it was like in the morning, I refused to go. It was a forty mile trip there and back and I knew I would freeze to death as I could not get off and walk to keep warm. The horses were well fed and were always wanting to run, and with so many hills to go up and down, I would have to stay on the seat of the wagon to control them and the wagon brake.

Sam said if I did not go, I was fired right then and I could pack up and leave at once.

I had a pair of knee high rubber boots that I could not get in my suitcases, so I told Sam I would sell them to him for a dollar, but he said to leave them in the shed as he did not need them. I took out my knife and cut them to ribbons, then threw them in the shed and said he could have them for nothing.

I then told him how I had got the poles out so quickly and he never even said thanks.

I had to walk four miles down the road to the railway, and I waited there to perhaps catch a car going into town. There was a school on the corner that I was going to spend the night in if no car came along. According to the law, Sam had to take me to the nearest railway or pay for having it done, but I did not trust his driving in a storm like was now building up. A car eventually came along and stopped driven by a man named Fisher, who operated a garage in Okotoks. He offered to give me a ride into town, which I accepted.

It was an open touring car, and boy, was it ever cold. We took turns driving until we came to the last big hill going into town. When I wanted to drive, Mr. Fisher said his hands were froze to the wheel and if I would operate the clutch lever he thought we could make it to the town alright. This I did, and when we got to town they had to soak his hands off the wheel with cold water. I saw him in Calgary two years after that, and he had lost all the fingers except the thumb on his left hand, and three off his right hand.

Early in 1924 I got back to Tally Cleveland's place and I worked on Cleveland's farm for the rest of that winter, then went down to work on George Lane's Bar U cattle and horse ranch twenty miles west of Stavely, and about 30 or 40 miles south of the Prince Of Wales ranch at Pekisko. George Lane was a pretty famous cowboy in those days and he was one of the founders of the Calgary Stampede. His Bar U ranch was quite a big outfit when I worked there. I had a job at Lane's ranch as flunky, or chore man. I milked a couple of cows, took care of the garden

and bunkhouse, got in wood for the cook, who was Joe the Frenchman that cooked at Cleveland's grain farm when I was there.

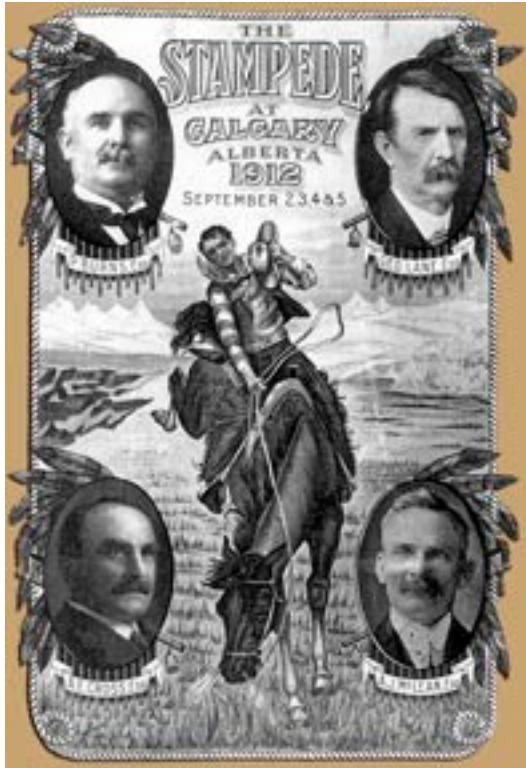
I had a herd of pigs up in a pasture at a pond up in a valley where I had to go each day and fill their feed hopper with grain from a nearby bin. When I had any spare time, I worked on rebuilding a stone wall along the river at a big pig yard and pens that had been washed out in the spring when the river was in flood.

Every night in the bunkhouse there was a poker party going to about midnight. The foreman, Rob McElvried, was a real nice fellow of about 36 or 37, very easy to get along with as long as you did your work. There was a crew of eleven, counting myself, and the foreman and cook.

One night an elderly man whose name was Frank Donahouge was dealing the cards when I got a small straight flush. There were six of us playing and every time it came around to Frank he would raise before the draw. At last no more raises came from Frank and we started to draw cards. I was the third player on the dealer's left, and when it got to me I did not draw any cards. When the betting started, I started raising the bet every round until there was just Frank and I in the game and I had no more money.

The foreman looked at me for a minute or two then shoved over his whole pile of money and said, "bet it all if you have to," then sat back and never took his eyes off Frank.

Frank had drawn only one card and I knew that nothing could beat my hand except a higher straight flush. I had counted the foreman's money and there was over two hundred dollars



*Calgary Stampede Poster
(George Lane in Upper Right Corner)*

in his bundle. Frank bet fifty dollars and I raised him with all I had in front of me. It came to \$152.00.

He thought for a long time, then put in his money and laid down four aces and started to take in the money. The foreman grabbed his hand and told him to wait until I laid down my cards. I laid them down one at a time, a seven high straight flush in clubs.

Frank just looked at them like he could not believe it, then he said, "there is something crooked about this."

The foreman said, "you should know, Frank, you dealt the cards."

The foreman then stood up and told Frank to have his things packed and he would take him into town in the morning because he did not want him in the bunkhouse.

Frank had committed the greatest crime possible in gambling, accusing someone of cheating, and it was only the foreman's quick action in firing him that saved Frank from a real rough beating.

Several weeks before that card game, I had found Frank's wallet down in the horse barn when I was cleaning out the stable when the horses were out, and it was full of money, and some of them were hundred dollar bills. I took it up to the office to the foreman, and he counted the money and there was over two thousand dollars in it. The foreman said, "we will have to keep an eye on him, I think he is a pro card sharp down here to try and pick up a lot of money."

I ask the boss if Joe the cook had ever worked here before and he said yes, several different times. I said perhaps Joe had told Frank about the big games here when they had been drinking together.

The foreman told me to keep my eyes and ears open and say nothing to anyone about finding the wallet until he was ready to give it back to Frank. The foreman held onto the wallet for several days before giving it to Frank, and Frank was like a crazy man spending most of his spare time in the daylight hours looking for that wallet. He never mentioned it to anyone as far as I ever heard.

I do not know exactly what the foreman told him, or how he came to have it, but I do know that he did tell Frank that I had found it in the horse barn. Frank never thanked me for finding it anyway, so I guess he thought that was part of what I was getting paid for.

One fine Sunday morning when we knew the Prince Of Wales was out at his ranch, the foreman proposed that we all go up and make a call on him as his closest neighbours. We all got shaved and went down to the river and had a bath and then came up and pressed our best clothes. Then we went up to the Prince's ranch.

It was around ten when we got there and the Prince came out on the veranda to talk to us. He was so drunk he had to hang onto one of the posts that supported the veranda roof to keep from falling off the veranda.

It was a great shock to me as I had, in a way, always thought a Prince was above that kind of thing such as getting drunk. When he got to me and wanted to shake hands with me, I turned and rode away, back towards where I worked. As I rode away I could hear him asking the others what was wrong with me and what nationality was I that I would not take his hand in friendship.

I do know that as I looked at his swollen and dissipated face, all I could see was that here was a good example of the kind of people who were forcing the freedom loving people of Ireland and Scotland to bend their knee to honor them, so I thought here is one Irishman who is not going to grovel before someone who is less a man than I am.

Perhaps I did wrong, some of the fellows thought so, but it was what I believed and I would never change that belief until someone could prove to me that the English were doing right by persecuting the Irish the way they have.

George Lane's oldest son got him into so much debt when George gave him power of attorney to run his business, the Bar U ranch, while he was in California for his health, that when he came back to take over, he found that he had nothing to take over. Before going south, George Lane deeded over his best ranch to his only daughter and her husband, otherwise the banks would have had that too.

George never got over that. He was down to the Bar U once after he had lost it, and I saw him, and he was in awful shape, a shadow of his former self.

Shortly after he went back to Calgary, he went out from his home one night with a basket of rocks, and threw them through the fine big glass windows of all the wealthy people that he saw. It was a bitter cold night and I bet some of those people knew what it felt to be cold before that night was over.

George was put in what the papers called a nursing home, and shortly after that, he died.

The bank sold the Bar U to a Dutch company, and when the Dutch foreman came out to take over, we all quit right then and there, and went to town with the former foreman in his car.

I went back to work for Tally Cleveland the rest of 1924, and through the cutting of the grain that year. Then I was offered a job on a feedlot in Calgary by the bank manager of the Dominion Bank in Calgary, Bruce Elmore. He was in partnership with his brother-in-law, John McGaky, in a feedlot for hogs. They paid me \$50.00 per month and board, but I can tell you that I earned every cent of it and more.

When I looked the place over, I could see that with a few changes, they could handle several hundred more hogs than they were doing at the time. For instance, it took me half a day to pump enough water with a hand pump and carry it to each trough to water the hogs and leave the trough full of water. With a power pump and a system of pipes into each trough, it could be done in a few minutes. Also, when it rained the yards were like bowls of soup from the pigs wading around in about a foot of pig manure and water.

There were not very many pigs in the yards Bruce Elmore and John McGaky run, about between two or three hundred. There were no outside feeders or any dry places where the pigs could lay and sun themselves. Inside the buildings, where the pigs fed and stayed at night, was a mess of dirty pens, with manure everywhere.

I ask Mr. McGaky how he expected the pigs to do well under those conditions.

He just laughed and said that was the way pigs liked to live.

I said when I was at home and we had pigs we provided a lot better conditions than that for them, and they were a whole lot cleaner and put on weight a lot faster than these were going to do here. I said, if I was going to work here, things would have to be changed a lot, and if he would not authorize them, I would talk to Bruce Elmore, and if he did not agree with me, I would look for another job right away.

I told him to call up Bruce and tell him to come down right away before I started to work.

When Bruce came down, the three of us went through the pens and I told him the way I wanted to do things, and what I wanted them to give me permission to do. Bruce was the man who was putting up the money for the partnership, and I told him why they were going to make very little money this way of feeding pigs. I told them with their investment and space, if it was run in the right way, they could make about ten times the money they were making, and I explained some of the ways that it could be done, if I was given permission to do it my own way.

I said for one thing they were grinding their feed too fine, and it was staying like dough in the pigs insides. I said it should be ground coarser, so that it would be easier to digest. I told them that the grain was passing through the pigs and not half of it was being digested, as they could see for themselves if they examined the manure like I had.

I took them over to where a pig had just dropped some fresh manure and had started to eat it again, and took a stick and showed them the dough like balls of feed in the manure.

They ask me where I learned all this, and I told them we always kept two pigs whenever we could afford to buy a pair of young pigs, and that I always fed and looked after them. I said our pigs always had a dry warm bed to sleep in, and the pig yard was always kept clean, and they always had clean fresh water to drink whenever they wanted a drink.

Bruce then told McGaky that I would be in charge of the pigs from now on, and McGaky would be the buyer to go out in the country and buy up the pigs for feeding.

He did not like that very much, but what Bruce said was law, so he agreed with Bruce.

I said, well, I will be working for you under them terms so I had better get started.

I went and checked the amount of feed in the feeders and as there was no more ground up, I started to grind up the wheat screenings which was fed to the smallest growing pigs. When I had fifty bags filled, I started on the barley screenings that was fed to the fattening pigs, and when I had the rest of the bags filled, I shut the grinder off.

I then got a shovel that was the biggest they had there but was open up the middle and hard to use, and cleaned all the pens inside the building. Then I put down dry bedding. By that time it was dark and I was ready for supper. After supper I went out and started to work on a big pile of scrap lumber near the house and started cutting it up into stove lengths. There was a light fixture out on the road in front of the feed lot that gave me plenty of light to work by.

The next day I ask John McGaky to buy me a new shovel for cleaning out the pens, and to get the bucksaw sharpened and set. He had his father come to the lot and sharpen the saw for me, and he did a good job. Then John went uptown and bought me a brand new shovel. That

same day, I hooked up the team and hauled the grain over that I had ground up coarse and filled all the feeders inside the pens in the building.

After I had been at the feedlot looking after Bruce Elmore's pig business for a week, I was over at a new meat packing house that had been built across the railway tracks on our side of the Bow River. The packing house had never packed canned meat, as the Board of Health would not allow them to use the water out of the Bow River. Inside was hundreds of feet of pipe and fittings, so I knew where I was going to get my new water system so that it would not take me half a day just to keep the pigs in drinking water.

McGaky had two old gas engines in a shed, so I got busy and tried to see if I could make one good one out of the two. I was lucky and got one fine engine that run like a charm. I then poked around until I found enough parts to make a pumpjack, and I was in business. I built a good sized holding tank out of planks at the pump, then pinched enough three inch pipe from the packing house, along with valves and other parts, to put in my water system. After I had it all installed late one night, I started the motor and I had the holding tank at the pump and all the troughs full in less than ten minutes. I knew I could do it faster than that once I had got used to using the system.

The water would go to the trough in the first pen, and by the time I got there it was full. I would shut the valve and go to the next pen and the trough would be full, and I would shut off that valve and go to the next one and so on until all troughs were full. There was no more fighting among the pigs to get a drink because the water came in so fast the pigs could be drinking the full length of the trough instead of having to fight for their share of the five gallons I used to carry in a can.

McGaky had said all along it would not work, or that we would be arrested for taking the pipe from the packing house, but the bank manager partner told me to go ahead with my plan. He said there would be no arrests, as the bank now owned the packing house, and he would take care of that end of it.

Next I talked to both the partners about putting two big covered feeders in each yard so there would be no more crowding inside the building at the feeders in there. The bank manager got his father-in-law, who was a carpenter and lived with him, to come down and build the feeders out of scrap lumber that was piled up in one yard. We finally had two nice big feeders in each yard, then I gave them another suggestion.



The Hog Feedlot, 1925

I ask the bank manager to go to all the dairies and ask what they would sell all there buttermilk for, if we took all they had each week. It would be the very best thing for bringing along the young hogs in a hurry. We managed to get the milk on a month's trial with the right to

a contract by the summer. We would know by a month's trial whether it would be a paying proposition or not.

The milk companies were glad to sell it to him at his own price, as they used to run it and their wash water into the river, except for a small amount that some of their customers bought. McGaky had a 300 gal. tank on a wagon that he brought in from his farm out in the country, and I used to bring that home full of fresh buttermilk twice a week, and sometimes I would have to make three trips.

We had to shovel the feed grain out of the cars into a box on the wagon and haul it over to the feedlot and unload it into the bins by hand, and that took a lot of time to do. So to speed things up, they usually hired an extra man to help when there was two or three cars to unload.

When enough hogs were ready for the market, I used to have to haul them over to the stock yards with the team and wagon. Sometimes American buyers would come right to the feedlot and buy a carload and we would load theirs into a stock car over on the siding where we unloaded our grain. The bank manager had a big scale installed in the yard so that we could weigh 50 or 60 hogs at one time.

I used to smoke a pipe when I went there to work, but I never smoked in or around the building where I ground up the feed. I always had my pipe in my mouth from habit, but I did not go into any of the buildings when it was lit. One hot day when I was grinding grain, I had my pipe in my mouth and although there was no tobacco in the pipe, for some reason I struck a match to light it. It was the first time I had ever done that in any building, and it was the last.

When that match lit, there was a great flash and a terrific bang.

My eyebrows and some of my hair was singed off, but I was not hurt. There was no fire, but also not a window in the grinding room had any glass left in them. It was the grain dust that had exploded. It was a very lucky thing for me that I had all the windows open, and both doors, or it would have been much worse if the pressure of that explosion had have been more confined.

I threw my pipe out the window that day and never smoked again.

There were a bunch of wild dogs prowling around the feedlots out in that part of the country that winter when I was working for Bruce Elmore and John MacGaky. They had killed two young calves belonging to a dairy man near our place, and they were going after some young pigs that were in another feedlot across Nose Creek from our feedlot. The police tried to shoot them but never got one of them.

I had my .250-3000 rifle, which I kept loaded out in the hog sheds. I would look out the windows every morning when I went over to water the hogs and to loosen up the feed in the hopper feeders.

This one morning when there was a little fog hanging about four feet above the ground, across Nose Creek and up on a little knoll, there was a big abandoned two story house with a basement under it. The two cellar windows had all the glass broken out at some time or other. Outside one basement window was a big collie dog and two good sized pups, part of this wild dog bunch.

I got my rifle, and resting it on the window sill, I took aim on the big dog. The distance was about two hundred yards or so.

I took a careful sight on the big dog's head and fired. It dropped and did not move so I took a good bead on each of the pups and fired and got them both through the head, giving them a painless death. Just as I thought I had got them all, another dog's big head looked out the window, and I took very careful aim at it and was able to get it too, through the head.

The boss heard the shooting and came out and I told him I thought I had cut down the pack of wild dogs by four. He did not believe me but called up his friend, Sargent Burroughs of the city police.

When Sargent Burroughs came down, we went over to the house and found four dead dogs with a bullet hole in each of their heads. They were part of the pack alright, but a long way from being all of them. The Sargent said it was good shooting but that he had better make it legal, just in case someone should report it to the Provincial Police. He filled out a card that showed I had been employed by the city police to hunt down and kill these wild dogs. He signed it and I was now, for the first, time a cop.

As we were going back to his car, he said, "you know Sam, I would not want you shooting at me with that rifle of yours. Do you mind if I have a look at it."

I said no he could look at it all he wanted to when we got over to the hog house. He examined it and said he knew what the .250 meant, but he did not understand the 3000.

I said the .250 meant it was .25 calibre, the 3000 was the power it hit the target with, 3,000 pounds.

He said no wonder those dogs never moved after being hit.

I said this gun had knocked a bull moose right off his feet at the first shot, and he did not get up again.

He asked me what I wanted with a gun like that, and I told him it was a humane gun for hunting. Anything, if hit in the right place, would never feel any suffering or pain, and anyone that could not hit their target in a vital spot should never shoot at any game animals or birds.

He said would you shoot like that if you were a policeman and had to shoot to stop a criminal?

I said no, I would shoot for to disable him, not to kill him.

But why would you want a human to suffer and not an animal, he ask.

Well it is this way that I see it, I told him, you intend to kill the animal eventually, or you would not have shot it in the first place, when you shoot a man in line of duty, you do so in self defense or to stop him from getting away from a crime he has committed, and you do not plan to kill him later, and besides there are doctors to ease any pains he has, but the only doctor for animals is death.

While I worked at the feedlot, I learned how to judge the weight of the average hog within two pounds, about one or two pounds closer than McGaky could. We were always having twenty-five cent bets on who would come the closest to the actual weight of a hog. At first I was always handing over the quarter to him, and that was fine with him, but when he had to hand it

over to me that was not so good. I was around and worked more with the hogs than he did, so I had a better memory than him about the size of the different weights of hogs.

I got so that I could usually win two bets out of each three we had until he would not bet anymore.

When other feedlot owners would bring their hogs over to weigh them on our scales, he would make bets with them that I could guess the weight of a certain one of their hogs within two pounds of its actual weight. I would never give the weight within the two pounds then, usually it was within three or four pounds, and the boss would lose the bet.

He soon stopped trying to take his neighbours on what I knew about hogs.

We were now running between 1200 and 1400 hundred hogs, and when I first came there they were only running 200 to 300 hogs. They were making a lot more money, and I had only received a ten dollar a month raise up to \$60.00 per month.

The spring of that year we had a heavy snowfall and one of the outside shelters with a pile of straw on top collapsed. This was in 1925. I hurried over in the morning to see if any pigs were trapped under the collapsed shelter and found three caught, two of them were just stuck and one had a 2 x 4 rammed into his left side. I released the two and then managed to get the third one out and carried him over to the warm cow stable where I made a pen for him in an empty stall. I fed him a big drink of warm milk and some oatmeal I got from the house.

When the bank manager came down that night, he ask me if I could save him, and I said I thought I could. McGaky said to kill him and bury him over in the city dump. The bank manager said if I can save him he is mine to do with as I please. So I looked after him until he was able to get around by himself, but I kept him in a little pen separate from the other hogs.

One day I saw a maggot where he had the 2 x 4 in his side. I got him to lay down on his opposite side, and I got out my knife and started to cut away the flesh where he had been hurt. The hairs on his hurt side came out in bunches when I pulled on them, then I found the flesh was rotten under the hair and skin. I cut the skin away and took out all the rotten flesh and two pieces of rotten bone. I could then see his heart beating.

There were maggots inside his chest that had fallen in when I was taking out the rotten meat, so I went to the house and got some clean cloths, a bucket of hot water, and some disinfectant and a long darning needle. I came back into the little pig yard and he was still laying like I left him. I took the long darning needle and speared every one of those fat maggots and got them all cleaned out of his chest. Then I put some strong disinfectant in the hot water and wiped the whole inside of his chest. I then cleaned outside the sore, getting all the rotten flesh cleared away and the wound washed good with the hot water.

I went to the horse barn and got a new spare can of axle grease and smeared it along the edges of the opening so they would not get dry and cracked. I next went to the cow barn where we kept a lantern and soaked a large pad of several thicknesses of cotton with coal oil. I then got several long strips off a cotton blanket, and after getting the pig up on his feet, I put the big pad of oil soaked cloth over the hole in his chest, then used the strips of the blanket to bind it there

tight by putting it right around his body as tight as I could pull it and tied the two ends together on top of his back.

I hoped it would hold until I could get that hole in his chest healed before any infection got in.

Every day for three weeks I took that bandage and pad off and washed the sore and put on a clean pad soaked in coal oil, or kerosene as some people call it. That pig seemed to look forward to having me fuss with him whenever I had the time. When he saw me coming he would always lay down on his right side, never on his left side.

After the hole grew flesh over it I knew I had won. The coal oil had kept the flies away so they could not get at the sore to lay their eggs to grow into maggots, and the axle grease had allowed the skin to grow over the hole without getting dry and cracking. By fall he could be put back in the pen with other hogs his size and more than hold his own with them.

Bob James, who had a feedlot on the other side of Nose Creek, had his father up from Detroit, where he was in charge of one of the biggest hospitals in that city. Bob told him about me operating on this pig and how he was living and healthy. The doctor and Bob came over to see the pig one day and the pig lay down on his right side so the doctor could examine where the hole had been. He asked a bushel of questions and seemed quite interested in my answers, but what amazed him the most, he said, was how I prevented infection with the pig laying out in the pig yard while I worked on him with the few things that I had to work with.

I told him that coal oil and tar disinfectant were used long before they got more modern ones and had always worked fine. As for the axle grease, it was the best lubricant there was. He said I must be right for they sure had worked for me. I told him not to give them all the credit as

Porky, that is what I called the pig, had helped with his great urge to live, as he always helped in any way he could to make it easier for me to take care of him. He never moved or tried to get up until I told him to, and always lay down on his right side so that I could work on the sore spot.

In a short time after that, the pig was shipped over to the stockyard and sold. They got \$26.30 for him, and that night the bank manager partner gave me that amount, as the pig was supposed to be mine.

Two days after that, I started to clean out the manure that was getting pretty thick in the yards, when Bruce Elmore, the bank manager, came down that night. I ask him if it would be alright if I sold the manure uptown to people for their gardens. He said to go ahead and sell all I could haul on my own time. He ask me what I was going to charge for a load and I told him I thought \$2.00 would be about right. He said he would get me some orders to keep me busy. He got me orders for 62 loads, for which I could not get enough manure in the yards to fill, so I went over to where we had been dumping the manure at the city dump and finished filling my orders from there.

McGaky wanted me to split the money with him, but I said no, I had done the work on my own time, and he had the pig yards cleaned free of charge except for the use of his team and wagon, and if he wanted to fire me to go ahead.

I knew he would not do that. He knew when he had a good worker that earned his wages.

Before I came to the feedlot to work, they used to haul the pigs over in a truck to load them on the stock cars. Not after I showed how they could all be driven over in one bunch, under full control of two men. I had Bruce Elmore get the materials and his father-in-law to help me build a yard and a loading chute along the railway siding. When we were shipping pigs to the States we would get the schedules of the trains that would be going up or down the CPR on that day that we would be shipping pigs, and we would time our loading in between train times.

We would drive the hogs over in carload lots, I would be at the front of the hogs and one man would be behind them to keep them bunched together. We would have a little ground grain in two long troughs at the far side of the pen and after we had got them down to the corner of the old brewery, they would smell the fresh ground grain and rush into the pen. By the time we got the stock car door open and the chute into place, the hogs would have the grain cleaned up and be running around the pen looking for more. We would get one started up the chute, then we would push it along until it was in the car and then we would get out of the chute and out of the way of the hogs that were crowding up the chute into the car. We could load a carload of hogs in about ten or fifteen minutes, without any hard work at all.

When they had been loading them with just the truck, it used to take most of a full day.

May 26, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your letter yesterday and thank you for the compliment about answering promptly. May I return the compliment to you, as I had not been looking for a reply for at least another few days. I want to thank you as well for the nice things you said about the family portraits I am writing to go along with some of my letters.

I am keeping my fingers crossed and wishing Mrs. Filter an easy and quick birth of her child. I believe you said that she was due to give birth in the fall and I sincerely hope that there are no complications whatever. This is a most wonderful time for a woman, so my wife tells me, and we both send our good wishes.

I know when it is all over you will be both very much happier and very much closer together, and in the eyes of both of you it will be the most wonderful baby that was ever born. I know that is the way we felt each time a child was given to us. They gave us a lot of work, and it was quite a job taking care of them until they were on their own, but the pleasure we got from them made it seem like no work at all.

It is a good feeling when your own child puts their arms around your neck and says, "Daddy I love you." It makes you feel that there is nothing in the world you would not do for that little bundle that gives you so much happiness. When they grow up and marry and have families of their own, and they do not give you as much attention as they did when they were

small, they do not love you less, they just have their own family to love, the same as you did, and so do not show their love for you as much as before, but it is still there, never forget.

I have been having some trouble with my doctor, also with the clerk at the drug store where I get my drugs every month. My prescription calls for me to take some drugs every four hours for these anginal attacks. These attacks have increased the last few months so much that I did not have enough of my drugs to carry me through the month. I ask my doctor for an increase and he gave me a new prescription for two of the needed drugs.

The first time the druggist filled them he said he did not think that I needed them, and said he was going to speak to my doctor about not filling the prescriptions anymore. Well he did talk to my doctor on the phone and had the doctor's permission to not fill them anymore. I went to see the doctor and ask him if the druggist was more capable of knowing what was needed than the doctor was, and if he was taking care of my health rather than the doctor who was getting paid for it.

The doctor is a very young fellow, and so is the druggist, so I am getting a new doctor as soon as I can get uptown, one who does not need a druggist to tell him what he can or cannot prescribe for his patient.

Well, my TV burnt out a tube about ten days ago.

My wife called the repairman the next morning and he said he would be out that same day. We had always had him out when we had any trouble with either TV, and he did a good job. I always paid him as soon as he was finished working on the TV. It is only a short drive out here from his shop on the side of the city next to where we live.

He never came out the next day. He had an excuse that he was too busy just then, but said he would come out the next day for sure.

This has been going on now for over ten days and each time my wife phones him he always promises to come out the next day for sure. Meanwhile I have no TV in my room, not that I miss it very much, as I get all the news on my radio. This promising to come out each day and then not keeping his promise is a very good illustration of how people are losing respect for their own words. I have been noticing for years now, how people give their word that they will or will not do things, and then go right ahead and break their solemn promise without even feeling that they have done anything wrong.

I think that I will try and learn that TV repairman a lesson when he does come, if ever.

I have always paid him as soon as the job was finished, but I think this time that I will ask him to wait for his money as long as I have had to wait for his service, and see what he will say about that. I intend to tell him that this is the last trip that he will be making to this house as long as I am living here. I think what he is waiting for is another call or more from out this way that he can take care of while he is out here, and still charge each one with his flat rate of \$10.00 for the trip out, along with his labor and parts charges. That would give him a good profit on all the extra trip charges of \$10.00 to each extra repair call that he can do on the one trip out here, even if I do have to wait for weeks to have a tube changed in my set.

As I said before I have noticed the breakdown in people's character over the years, so that it is very hard to believe them, or know when they mean what they say, or if you can trust them to fulfill their promises. To an old fogey like me, this makes me doubt most every person that gives me a promise, and I do not like to feel that way about people. When I give anyone my word

about anything, I naturally expect to keep it and do. I guess only my death would prevent me from keeping my word to anyone.

Well, I better stop complaining about the decline in people's respect for themselves and others and start to answer your question as best as I can.

You ask if I have any news about that place I was thinking of buying for my wife and myself out at Beardmore so that we could live in a home of our own again. Well, the man that had the place for sale out at Beardmore said he was selling it to another fellow for cash. I had told him I would pay cash if the place was what I wanted, but he said the other fellow had got there first with his offer.

About a week later he wrote me and said the man he had been dealing with could not raise the money to pay cash and if I still wanted the place at that price he would sell it to me. But I told him no because by then I had already started another deal with a elderly couple down in a place called Swastika, Ont. They had 65 acres for sale for \$34,000.00. It had a good house on it with all the up to date things that I wanted, such as electric power, telephone, hot and cold water, three piece bath and a lot of other things. There were about 18 acres cleared and the soil was about a foot deep of good black loam. This was ideal for growing a garden as there were no stones in the soil and the vegetables and small fruit would grow fine in it, especially berries.

Well I wrote and told them that I did not want to buy the whole 65 acres as I would not be able to use that amount of land, but would like to buy the house and about three acres of land, if we could agree on a price. I then contacted the town about this, and I had a letter from the lady in the town office today, and she said that a by-law past by the township forbid anyone selling a small amount of there acreage at any time. The lady said they had been trying for years to get

this by-law changed, but so far had not been able to do it and so could not do what I asked. So the place in Swastika fell through too.

I guess I will just have to keep looking for a place of our own somewhere else.

I will close now and will be looking forward to your next letter. Good-bye and my best regards.

Your friend,

Sam.

vistaVision Memories

The Girl That Was to Become My Wife

While I was working at the feedlot in Calgary in 1925, I bought a new bike for \$28.00. It was the best that money could buy, and I sure enjoyed it very much. From where I was working, it was about a two mile walk to get up into the city proper. I would walk across the bridge over the Bow River to ninth avenue east, and take a streetcar the rest of the way, which would save me

about a mile walk, but I thought I would rather have a bike and then I could get around and really see the city. I did have a lot of pleasure with that bike, and after I came back east when I got married, I brought my bike with me, and it was very handy to get around down there too.

I met the girl I wanted to marry in the fall of 1925, while I was working at the feedlot. Her family lived in a house they rented just across from the feedlot, and I met my wife one time when I sold her family a little of the buttermilk I was hauling for the pigs.

My wife used to hire herself out to look after children before we were married, and when my wife was taking care of the Geros family's two small children, I could get down to see her in a very short time on my bike. It was about three or four miles to the Geros's home way out in Elbow Park, where most of the well to do people lived. There usually was not much car traffic on the streets out that way at night as it was a residential district, so I could make pretty good time there and back.

I went out there one night when there was quite a high wind blowing from the south. It was a hot dry wind. I was going along the street, taking my time when I happened to look at a house that was about four blocks from where I was going. I thought I saw smoke coming out of an upstairs window, so I turned around and went back to have another look. Then I was sure it was smoke, although there was not very much of it.

I let my bike down on the grass between the street and the sidewalk and went over to the house and rang the doorbell.

A middle aged man came to the door and ask me what I wanted.

I told him that I thought I saw smoke coming out his upstair window on the north side of his house.

He ran into his house and in a few minutes he came out with his wife and three very young children, leaving the front door wide open. I guess when that fresh air got to the fire it really took off, as flames started coming out of the window and I could hear the sirens coming from the city.

I got my bike out of there and moved it down into the next block to the south, and then I went back, but there was nothing I could do as the roof of the house was burning by then. When the fire truck arrived and got their hose going there was no way that they were going to save that building, or the next three to the north of them in that block. They must of called for more help because two more trucks arrived very soon as the fire spread to the other houses to the north on that block.

It was that night that I made up my mind that I would never live in a city or a big town, with houses so close together as I watched those four houses burn to the ground in such a short time.

The fireman gave up trying to try to save any of them and gave all their attention to stopping the fires from spreading to the next block.

When things had cooled down somewhat, I went down to the Geros's house to see if my intended wife was alright, and found her out on the lawn with the three children she was looking after all dressed warmly, and with the baby in her arms. I told her the danger was past and she had better go inside, which they did.

I stayed there until the Geros's came home.

Mr. Geros, as usual, was well under the influence of drink, but was in a friendly mood. He offered me a drink which I refused, telling him that I did not drink.

I did not like my intended wife to be living there with a drunk like that living there too. I talked to Mrs. Geros about it after he had gone to bed, and she said he was perfectly harmless and was a very good natured man and not at all hard to handle when he was in that condition. She said he always wanted to lay down and go to sleep when he had been drinking, and was always sorry the next day.

The girl that was to become my wife lived with her parents just across the CPR railway tracks from where I worked when she was not away babysitting. The house they had been living in uptown in Calgary had been sold, so this was the only decent house they could rent at that time. The manager of the brewery just across the road from it had lived in it, and when the brewery had closed down, he had moved uptown, and the house had been empty until my wife's family rented it.

My wife's maiden name was von Matt, and they came over here from Switzerland in 1909. Her mother, her two brothers, and her went back for a visit to Switzerland just before the first world war started and were trapped there until after the war was over. They came back to Calgary in the late summer of 1919.

I was about two months or so away from becoming 25 years old when I ask my future wife to marry me, but I had known her for about six or seven weeks before that. She was sixteen when we were married on February the eighth, 1926, on my birthday when I was 25 years old.

I guess it was love at first sight when I met her. I really do not know for sure, but whatever it was I knew that she was the girl I would marry and no one else. There was something clean and fresh about her that drew me to her, that I could not have resisted if I had wanted to, which I did not want to.

As far as I was concerned she was just a child of sixteen, although she did not think so. At first, I treated her as I would a child, but soon found out that offended her, so I started to treat her as an equal and we got along a lot better. I was coming up to my twenty-fifth birthday very soon at the time, and it seemed hopeless that she would ever want to marry an old person like me. I treated her with respect at all times, never taking any advantage of her youth, or in any way forcing myself or my company on her.

From what she told me later, the other fellows that she went out with, after a few dates, wanted to get real fresh with her and paw her all the time.

I never did try to kiss her or in any way try to be familiar with her. I kissed her for the first time the day we became engaged. After that, she would not go out with any of the other fellows that she knew.

When we talked about getting married, I wanted to wait for a year or so until I had enough money saved up to start a home of our own, but she insisted that we get married on my birthday, February 8 of the next year, just a few months away. My wife was catholic, and when we talked it over with the priest, he was in agreement with her.



My Future Wife at 16, 1925

Well, I had to change my plans about staying in Calgary, as jobs were very hard to find at that time. I was working at the feedlot where the pay was good enough to meet all my expenses, but where I could save very little money. I decided that I would have to go back east to Georgetown, where I knew I could get a job on a paper machine at good wages, but it would be inside work in a hot stuffy building, and I had come west to get away from all that, saying that I would never work inside again, ever.

Well, things change and you have to change with them. Besides, my wife to be agreed with me about going east to get a better job so we could eventually buy a house of our own, so it was decided.

She said that I could go down first and get a job and a house, then send for her as soon as possible. She said her brother Max would go down on the passenger train and meet me in Toronto, and board with my mother while I was getting the job and the house.

I talked to Bruce Elmore, and I ask him if he could get me some cars of cattle to take east and save me paying out around \$75.00 or so for railroad fare on the passenger train. He said sure, and ask me when I wanted to go.

I told him sometime late on the day I was to be married, February 8th.

He said to be ready to go that night at about ten, as there was two cars of cattle being shipped to Montreal that night, and I could take them down as far as Toronto.

Well, we were married in the morning about ten in St. Ann's Church in east Calgary. It was a very small wedding party and went off very smoothly, and after, my wife and I had lunch uptown. I then took her to her home, and I went over to where I lived and started packing my things as I was suppose to leave that night with two cars of cattle that were going to England. I would have to go around to the company who was shipping the cattle and get my papers to show that I was going with these two cars.

That day, I was very glad that the wedding ceremony was over and that the beautiful girl by my side was all mine to take care of and provide for during the long years ahead. If I had known what misery and suffering she was to go through over the years, I do not think I would have felt so happy.

I knew that I could provide her with a good home, and that I would work hard to get it. I had always been able to get a steady job wherever I went, and had worked at it as long as I wanted to. I did not dream that there would be a depression like we had in the Hungry Thirties, or that a person could not even buy a job at times, or that I would have to work ten hours a day at 5 cents per hour to try and feed a family of five. Lots of times I did not have any kind of a job, even at 5 cents per hour.

That afternoon, we went to my wife's home and said good-bye to her folks there. Then my wife, her brother Max, and I went to a good show, and from there down to the train. When we got there I found that I had three other fellows for company, and we were to have a coach to ride in.

The train pulled out right on time at 10 pm, and I was on my way back east, alone, after over five years in the west, leaving my wife of a few hours behind to come down much later.

I felt pretty bad about it, but my wife seemed to be her usual happy self.

Second Movement

Windblown Melodies

vistaVision Memories

Pat and Mike

I came back to Georgetown on February the 8th, 1926, and my wife came down in July of 1926. We had no money except the little help her father and mother could give us.

When I was coming home from Calgary, my new brother-in-law, Max, had left Calgary on a passenger train about the same time as I had left on the freight with the cattle. He arrived in Toronto before I reached Georgetown and was waiting for me to come to Toronto and get him and take him to Georgetown with me. I had not wanted him to come down so soon, but my new wife's family insisted, so there I was, stuck with trying to get a job for him as well as for myself at that time of year, winter, when jobs were very scarce.

He was staying at the King Edward hotel in Toronto, the most expensive hotel there was in the city at that time.

When I got home to Georgetown, I phoned him and told him to come up on the next train and I would meet him at the station. I then took him home and introduced him to my family.

My mother said he could sleep with me up in my old room, but he would have to pay her \$10.00 per week board, which was quite a bit at that time. His money was getting low, so was mine, so we went uptown the next day and we finally got him a job in the knitting machine factory at two dollars a day, to start with.

I lived for a few months in my mother's house, only until I got my own home, and that was the end of living there or even going there for more than a day's visit.

I may be barking up the wrong tree about the way my family felt about me, but when I came home from the west, after being away for five years, nobody seemed especially glad to see me. Also, my big box of tools that I had been several years in getting together before I went out west were all gone. The box had been locked with a lock that could not be picked, so someone had pried the hinges off the back, getting the back off the box, and taking the tools out.

One night when my brother and his wife were over for supper and all the family was having supper, I told them that I had found my tools all gone from my tool box, and the back of the box had been broken. I said I was not going to ask anyone if they knew what had happened to my tools because I knew that not one of them knew anything of how the box got broken open, or who took the tools. I said I knew that not one of them would tell a lie, and that each one was perfectly honest. I said the house had always been haunted by a ghost that no one ever seen or heard. I told them that things like this had happened to my things before when I was away, and I had expected to see my valuables gone when I came home.

I told them that, along with the tools, just about all of some two to three hundred records had been taken by the same ghost, and he must have been a very busy ghost while I was away. I

said the next time I go away, I will not be back, or neither will any of my family, so the ghost is welcome to anything I leave behind.

Well, when I finished my little speech, there were some pretty red faces at the table.

No one spoke for some time, then everyone started to talk at once about everything except what I had been talking about.

When I first came back home to Georgetown and mentioned that I did not have a job lined up and would have to get one, the smile left mother's face and did not appear again until I had a job and was working steady. Mother had enough money coming in to support the family when I was away, along with some I sent her from time to time, but when I got home, mother wanted her board money right away. By that time, both my oldest sisters and my brothers Stan and Joe were working at steady jobs and paid board. Mae, Annie, and my brother Joe were working in the paper mill, while my brother Stan was working for J.B. MacKenzie Lumber Co. in Georgetown.

Dad had a job in the paper mill again, this time firing the boilers in the boiler house. Mother would also get a bit of his wages. By the time I got back from out west, she had learned how to handle him better. I do not know what kind of an agreement they made, but I can make a pretty good guess. Mother had stopped having children every year or two by then, and I think she was treating dad pretty much like a boarder who had to pay his way rather than as a husband. You see, the house and land were all in mother's name, so every payday dad gave his cheque to

mother to cash and she gave him back his spending money for the next two weeks, and sometimes, when he was short before payday, a bit more for gas and oil for the car. But that was it for him.

The spring of 1926, shortly after I got back to Georgetown, I got a job driving the team at the old Barber paper mill, by then called the Provincial paper mill, and I quickly saved a little money. Then, when I had enough for the downpayment, I bought the house my wife and I were going to live in, after the owner got the Mackies, the family that were renting it at that time, out.

Mr. Tom Speight owned the house I bought for my wife and I to live in, and he had bought it from John Willoughby years before. I made a deal to buy it off him for a thousand dollars, and paid \$50.00 of a down payment, the balance to be paid at the rate of \$10.00 per month at three per cent interest, but I would not buy it until he got the Mackies out of the house. He finally got them out and they moved down into the west half of the double house next to the paper mill. They were a very dirty family too, and I had quite a job to clean the house up after they moved out.

This house that I bought on paper mill row was not far from my mother's place. And I went to work on that house at once. The Mackies had been burning green wood in the winter, and the brick chimney was leaking out creosote all along the bricks of the chimney. The upstairs smelled of creosote too, so I tore out the whole chimney and had the two Bullivaunt Bros. build me a new one. I watched closely how they did it, and I was sure glad, years later when I was on the homestead in the Hungry Thirties, that I did.

The creosote had leaked along the ceiling in the upstairs room, so I tore out all the plaster on the walls and ceiling, cleaned everything up good, then put wallboard on the whole room.

Upstairs, I painted both rooms white with oak stain for all floors and trim, also for the stairs. It sure looked nice when it was finished. I then cleaned the whole house from top to bottom, scrubbing the walls, ceilings, and floors with lye soap and disinfectant and water.

On the east side where the window had been, I installed a door. The reason for that was that the water tap was outside on the east side of the kitchen. To get water, you had to go out the west door, walk around the kitchen to the east side, get a pail full of water and carry it around to the door in the west side of the kitchen, then into the kitchen. I do not know whose stupid idea that was, but I decided to change it at once. I had to work on that for over two weeks before it was finished.

I built a nice porch on the east side over the door and closed it in about four feet high on two sides, with the wall of the kitchen making the wall on the third side. The south side of the porch, I put in a set of two steps down to ground level. This left only a walk of about six feet to the tap outside.

My next big job was to get the water into the house, and I started on that right away. I dug a ditch from the tap to the wall of the basement about six feet deep to have it below frost level. When I came to the basement wall, which was composed of stone and mortar, I chipped a hole through the wall big enough to let the water pipe through.

I then started digging another long ditch to the back of my property where it was all gravel. I got a big wooden barrel from the paper mill and bored it full of one inch holes in the bottom and all around the sides and buried it as a septic system for the house like I done for my mother's house, years before. I also installed a sink in the kitchen, now that there was a place for the waste water to drain to.

There was an old small building at the back of the lot that I moved up closer to the house where I could keep my tools and some dry wood. There also was a garage on the place that I used for a wood shed for awhile, until I got an old Model T 1/2 ton truck, then it was a garage.

I noticed when I had work to do, none of my four brothers or my dad ever gave me one bit of help when I had a hard job to do. I was putting in about eighteen hours a day at my job at the mill and at home, working hard and steady. I spent two hours in the morning taking care of my team and getting them ready for the day's work, then right after I had my supper in the evening, I would go down and spend a few more hours taking care of my horses until I got them back into shape. Mostly, I only would spend an hour on them at night unless it was raining, then I would give them two or three hours.

On Saturdays, I usually hauled two or three loads of coal down from the railway yard to the mill boiler house, the wagons held about two ton of coal in each wagon. I would have to load and unload it myself as the outside gang usually had Saturday off. Then in the afternoon I would stay in the barn and mend harness, change the caulks in the horses shoes or if they needed new shoes or their hooves needed care, I would take them up to the blacksmith and have them taken care of. Quite often I would have to take out the floor in the horses stalls that were getting chewed up by the caulks in their shoes and put in a new floor.

There was always work for me on a Saturday, especially around the barn.

When I first took over the team, the barn was overrun with hundreds of rats.



*Me and My Little Terrier,
1926*

One Saturday when I had been up to the storage bin to see how much feed oats was in it, I went back down to where the horses were, and forgot to close one of the lids on the storage bin. The next Saturday I was going to mend some harness and I had taken my little Terrier dog down with me. I went up to check the oat bin before I started on mending the harness.

When I looked in the bin, it was dark with all sizes of rats.

There were new born rats, some of them dead and some of them still alive, right up to old gray ones. My little dog jumped up onto the top of the bin and when he saw all those rats, he jumped down in amongst them and he was a real expert at

killing them. He would grab a rat by the neck just back of the head, bite down on it and throw it over his left shoulder into a corner of the bin. He was so fast that no rat was ever able to bite him. It only took a few minutes to kill them all and when he had checked them and was sure they were all dead, he jumped back out of the box and sat on the top with his tongue hanging out and looking at me as if to say, how do you like that.

Well I went downstairs and got an old five gallon can and went up and gathered all of those dead rats up and I counted every one. There were 168 of them. I watched after that when I put the horses' grain in their feed boxes, but it was a long time before I ever saw a rat feeding there again.

I got the house I bought on paper mill row in fair shape and when my wife first come down from Calgary in the summer of 1926, my wife's brother was already living with me in our new house. It was plain to see at once that my wife did not want him there, and neither did I. I was getting fed up with having him hinting to help at everything that I wanted to do, but he knew nothing about it but thought he did and insisted on doing it his way, and that usually ended up in a disaster. I did not want to get tough with him as it would hurt my wife more than it would hurt him, so I just kept quiet and boiled.

He finally got fed up with us after about three months, quit his job at the knitting machine factory, and went back to Calgary by the end of 1926, and we sure heaved a big sigh of relief. My wife and I were finally able to get things done the way we wanted it done, and the place began to look more like a home and not just a rented house like it looked when we first moved in.

Well, that first year in our new home, our first summer there, we had a nice big garden in front of the house of near an acre which I had plowed up, and I had it all in and growing before my wife came down that July. I did most all of this work on Sundays and in the evenings and boy, was I ever busy.

The strange thing about it all was that none of my family ever came over to help, except one of my young cousins of about nine or ten years old. He was always underfoot though. I guess he tried but he sure was not much when it came to using a shovel.

Early in 1927, after we were in our own home on paper mill row, and just about settling down to getting used to one another, my wife's mother came down from Calgary for a visit. She was only going to stay for a week or so, but my oldest brother Tom, who partly owned the house

between my place and my mother's, talked my wife's mother into buying his interest in the house he had. So she stayed there with us while my wife's father and brother were coming down by car from Calgary to live in that house.

There were no highways at that time, and no road at all from Winnipeg to Fort William in Canada, so they went around through the States to Fort William, then they worked unloading grain cars in Fort William until they had enough money to take the car and themselves on a boat to Port McNicol, and then they came by road down to where we were living.

Then my troubles really started.

My father-in-law was a very hard worker, and a very clever man at any kind of repair work with wood. He did not speak very good English so could not get a job at his trade of wood working or making furniture by hand. My dad could not get along with him at all because he did not drink. My mother could only get along with him when she wanted something fixed free of charge.

My mother did not like any of my wife's family because they were catholics, and she did all she could to show my wife's family that they were not welcome to live beside her. I had to settle several disputes between them, and it was usually my parents or brothers or sisters that was in the wrong.

I tried very hard to keep my wife's mother from buying that place from my brother Tom, but they wanted very much to live close to there only daughter. But after about a year of the father being unable to get a job, he went back to Calgary and got his job back at the CPR Ogden shops. I sold his car and I helped him pack their furniture and get it all shipped back to Calgary, then Max and his mother left and went back there too.

By then they had paid several hundred dollars to Tom on the house, but they just walked out and left it, and my brother took it back and came there to live again for awhile.

When my wife came down to Georgetown to make her home with me she did not know the meaning of a lot of English words and my parents and brothers and sisters had a field day with that. And there was another, bigger problem.

My family were Protestons, and my wife and I were Catholic.

I was a Proteston until just before I turned seventeen. My Grandfather Allen and uncles on my father's side asked me to join the Orange Lodge at the time. When they ask me to put my hand on the bible and swear that I was 18 years old I refused. I told them I would not be 18 years old until the 8th of February the next year, so I was not going to swear to a lie on the bible.

They told me it was perfectly alright and to go ahead and lie.

I walked out of that hall over in Glen Williams and never went back.

When the priest that would marry us in Calgary told me it would be better, if I was going to take up a Catholic girl for my wife, to become a Catholic myself, I did.

My brothers gave my wife a hard time at first, making fun of her mistakes in using the wrong English words, and to a certain extent, so did my sisters. But after they had known each other for some time, they got along a lot better. Most of them did anyway. But that religious problem did not get any better over time. My family disliked all Catholics and never did change their minds about it.

My grandfather Allen was the worst of the bunch. At the time, he and my grandmother were living with my parents just two doors away, and when I was at work my grandfather would come over and talk to my wife for hours.

He would always get out before I got home.

When my wife was pregnant with our first child these talks about religion would affect her very strongly, as she was a good Catholic. Sometimes when I came home her eyes would be red from crying. I ask what she had been crying about, but she said she just felt like crying and did. One Saturday when I had nothing to do outside with the team, I stayed in the barn and took care of the harness. I needed a pair of pliers, so I slipped up the back way to our house to get a pair. The back door of the house was open with a screen door that was closed. I could hear my grandfather talking to my wife and he was telling her how rotten he thought the Catholics were.

Well, I just went red and I went in quietly and was standing by the front room door listening. My grandfather was sitting in our big rocking chair with his back to where I was standing and my wife was just sitting on the couch wiping her eyes.

I went into the room.

My wife saw me first and her face turned pale as she got up off the couch and came towards me. As she passed my grandfather's chair he reached out take a hold of her and said, "you realize how rotten the Catholics are."

I was around in front of him in a flash. He tried to get up out of the chair and I shoved him back, and told him to stay there, that I had something to say to him.

I told my wife to sit down again on the couch and calm herself down. As I turned to help my wife down on the couch, my grandfather started to get out of the chair again, and I told him if

he got out of that chair before I told him he could, that I would knock him down to the floor with my fist.

He sat down and kept quiet.

When my wife had calmed down, I turned to my grandfather and started telling him what I thought of him and his lies about his religion and his lies about the Catholic religion. I told him that he was the lowest kind of a liar and his religion stank to high heaven, and so did he. I told him if he ever talked to my wife like that again I would break his neck and take pleasure in doing it. I told him to never enter my house again or I would give him the bum's rush right off the end of the veranda. I said he must never speak to my wife again, except in the politest terms, and never lay his filthy hands on her, or any of our children when we had them. I told him to stay out of my sight as I would not be responsible for what I might do if I saw him near me. Then I told him to get out and stay out and never come back.

I followed him to the door and told him he was the most filthy man that I had ever met. I found out that night when I came home from work that he had went over to my parent's house and told them that I had thrown him out of the house and called him filthy names. My grandmother told him he was lying and to tell her the truth of what happened and why.

He told them more or less the truth in his own way, and my dad and mother came over to get our side of the story. I told them what I had said and told them that I meant every word of it, and if I ever found him in my house again, I would throw him out on his ear, so if they did not want him to get hurt, keep him away from my house and my wife.

I said that she could very easily lose her baby with that old man talking in the way he was when I came into the house. I told them that he had been coming over sometimes twice a day, and if it did not stop, there was going to be serious trouble very soon.

He never came over again and I was polite to him any time I met him, but I never forgave him for his filthy lying tongue.

My grandmother was a Queen in my opinion, and I do not know how she lived with him for so long without braining him with a club of some kind. I do not think there was another woman in Glen Williams that ever did as much good as she did and was so well liked as she was. When she was able to walk good, she looked after most of the sick in the village and was always on call when a baby was coming into the world.

In later years, she had trouble walking and did not get around very much, and her son Bill talked them into selling their home and coming to live with his family. After he had got all the money they had received for their home off them, he started them going from one family to another amongst their married children.

They never had a home of their own again after they sold their house.

Grandmother was welcome in all their children's homes, but not their father, so my mother got stuck with the both of them most of the time.

It seemed like the families that had grown up children or no children at home at all did not want the two elderly people all on account of grandfather Allen, but the two families that had lots of young children at home, my mother's family and cousin Alf's family, always had the two elderly people shoved off onto them.

One of my uncles got grandfather Allen a light job of sweeping floors in the coated paper mill in Georgetown and drove him back and forth to work each day. That did not last very long though, as he kept looking up under the tables where the girls worked counting sheets of finished paper for to see up their skirts. Things got so bad that the girls complained to the manager and said if he did not get him to stop it they were all going to quit their jobs.

The manager let grandfather Allen go instead and that settled things right away.

I do not know what was wrong with my grandfather, he was past seventy-eight at that time, but he sure was hung up on sex and filthy insinuations.

I have never met a man quite like him in my whole life before, and I was very much ashamed of his behaviour. Something like that is bad enough in younger men, but in a man as old as my grandfather it was very disgusting and embarrass me quite a lot in front of other people.

I have never told any of this to anyone else, outside the family, but it has been eating at my mind for many years, and now that I have put it down on paper, I feel much easier and at peace with my grandfather's memory. It is a big load off my mind, and I think now I can at last forget about it. He was that kind of man. I do not know why, perhaps he could not be any different. I do know that made me hate him and made me feel sorry for my grandmother, who had to live with that kind of man, as she was a wonderful, kindhearted woman and did not see anything wrong with anyone's religious beliefs.

I think that I take after her quite a lot, as I feel in same way as she did about religion.

When I got the job at the paper mill in the summer of 1926, it was driving the mill team at four dollars per day, but no pay for looking after the horses on Sundays or holidays.

Each horse weighed a little over a ton, but they were in very bad condition due to neglect by the man who had been driving them before me. I had the mill manager get a couple of sacks of bran and a ton of carrots, then started to get the horses in shape.

I brushed them good morning and night, and when the water warmed up in the river, I took them down to the river each night and gave them a good scrubbing with soap and lukewarm water. It was not long until I had their hide under the hair clean of dirt, and the horses started eating and working better.

When I first got them and they were pulling a load of paper up the hill, their heads were pretty low and bobbing up and down. In about two months they had shaped up and when they were pulling a load up hill then their heads were up and they were pulling like they meant to go places in a hurry. By the middle of that first summer back home, they had to have new collars made for them as the ones they had were getting too small. When it was wet and I had to back heavy loads inside for unloading, they started breaking the backing up traces, so new heavier traces had to be made. By the fall of 1926, when I would take them uptown to the blacksmith shop to get new shoes, people would stop and admire them and their harness.

I always kept their harness and big collars oiled and shining, and the brass fittings on the harness polished until it sparkled in the sun. By the end of that first summer, they were in wonderful shape and full of life.

But there was a fly in the ointment.

Both horses were geldings and were called Pat and Mike. When Pat was castrated, only one testicle had been removed. Because of that, he was always looking for a chance to bite Mike on the neck. If he thought I was not watching him, he would jump at Mike and try to get hold of the back or top of his neck.

Mike was no fool and was always trying to make him miss.

One time, when we were going down the River Drive hill with four ton of bales of scrap paper on the wagon, Pat jumped at Mike and got his foot stuck against the neck yoke. In the struggle to get his foot down off the neck yoke, he shoved the neck yoke off the end of the wagon pole, the only means I had to keep the wagon on the road. I had the brake set as hard as it would go, and it was holding quite a bit as it started to smoke. The wagon pole was scraping along on the road hitting the horses on the legs, so they started running down the hill.

When the wagon would start to head for the ditch on either side of the road, I would pull the horse next to the ditch over into the middle of the road, and that would again aim the wagon

down the centre of the road. It seemed a long time before we reached the level road at the bottom of the hill, but it was really less than a minute.

With the brake shoes on fire and all my weight on those good strong lines, the horses soon stopped. I got off the load and unhooked a tug off each horse, then went



around and lifted the wagon pole up and put the neck yoke back on, then went around and rehooked both tugs and we were ready for business again.

I did not know that the mill manager in the office had been watching when I started down the hill, and he saw Pat jump at Mike and saw the neck yoke come off and how we got safely down the hill. When I went into the barn at noon, the manager stopped in on his way over to his car. He ask me why that horse behaved like that and what we could do about stopping Pat from trying to bite Mike's neck. He thought if I carried a good whip with me all the time, and gave him a good hard whipping every time he jumped at Mike, that would cure him.

I told him it would not do one bit of good to whip the horse and would only make him turn mean and run away every time he jumped at Mike in order to get away from the punishment of the whip. I told him if he would come to the back end of the horse I would show him what caused Pat to attack Mike every chance he had.

The manager said, "he might kick me, and with them heavy shoes on, he could break my leg."

I told him the horse would not kick him when I was there, so he came into the stall. I took his left hand and I put it up between Pat's legs at the back, onto a large, slightly long lump. I said there is the cause of all Pat's trouble.

He said, "what in the world is that?"

I said it was a testicle that had not been removed when he was gelded, so he is half stallion and half gelding, and the only way he will ever live to an old age is for that testicle to be taken out.

He said, "well I never heard the like before and I do not believe it."

I told him to get the Vet down Sunday and have him examine the horse and give his opinion.

He said he would and the Vet confirmed what I had said, and he said the horse could die most any day if he kept on acting the way he had been doing.

About three weeks after that I came down at five in the morning, as usual, to take care of the horses and found Pat dead in his stall.

I really felt terrible because I liked him very much and he really liked me when he was not on a tear. He was always quiet in the barn and easy to take care of. He was a good and willing worker, and I think they both appreciated the care I gave them. Mike missed him very much too, and did not seem to like any of the horses they brought there to take Pat's place.

They had tried several horses while I still drove the team, and were still trying to get a horse to match Mike in size, when Jimmy Clark took the team away from me by undercutting my wage by a dollar a day.

I really did not like that skunk taking care of Mike, but there was nothing I could do about it.

Jimmy did not last very long until he was laid off and the team sold. The company already had one truck, so they bought another to do all their hauling with trucks.

When I was driving the mill team there were quite a few young men like myself working there. Clarence Armstrong was one of them, and when he came to work on the paper machine

with his brother Jack, there was only one man in the shipping department, and so Clarence was transferred from the paper machine to the shipping department and was there as long as I worked there.

Clarence liked to grab the girls in the cutter room, which was in the next room at the west end of the No. 1 machine room.

My oldest sister Mae worked on the cutter machine at the time, along with a cousin of hers, Beatrice Norton. One night the girls had to come back to the mill and work overtime until ten that night.

When Clarence came in to get a truckload of paper for the shipping room, which was in another building, he would always try to run his hand up under my sister's or her cousin's clothes when they were standing one at each end of the load of paper that Clarence was putting on his truck. The girls had to keep the paper square at each corner as it was put on so that Maude Armstrong, the counter in the finishing room, would have no trouble in counting the sheets that went into one bundle. When Clarence put a bundle of paper on the load, the girls would start to square it up with rest of the pile, then Clarence would try to get his hand up under the girls clothes.

I watched this from the door of the machine room, then I went over and told him that he had better leave my sister and her cousin alone. One word led to another and he finally agreed to come in a half an hour earlier next morning and we would settle our argument then. He was bigger than me and about thirty pounds or so heavier, but I was confident that I could take him quite easy.

He came in a lot earlier than he said he would and he very near caught me napping as I had my back to the door when he came in. The winder boy was facing the door and he could not control his face very good, and as I looked at his face I felt a gush of cold air on my legs. I took two steps past the winder boy before I turned to see who had come in the door letting in the cold air.

It was Clarence with a short piece of one inch pipe in his right hand.

As he rushed at me with this pipe up over his shoulder ready to strike, I pivoted on my right foot and kicked him in the groin. He started to go down, but the winder boy, who was quite a husky kid, caught him and kept him from falling to the floor.

Clarence was shouting filthy names at me and holding his groin.

I swung a left hand punch at him, forgetting the ring on my second finger. My finger and the ring hit him on the right side of his face, right along side of his nose, and made a deep cut in his cheek and up the side of his nose. When he put his hand up to the side of his face and saw the blood on his hand, all the fight left him, and all he wanted to do was get away from me, and I chased him out the door.

Then Ernie Forgraves, the bosses brother-in-law, stuck his big arm out and knocked me to the floor and then got his knee on my chest and his hands around my throat and stated to choke me. He said he would let me up as soon as I said I would quit this fighting.

I could not speak as he was choking me to death and enjoying himself. I suddenly went all limp, and I rolled my eyes upward and kept them there until he let go of my throat. I then brought my right knee up into the small of his back as hard as I could. He fell over on his face

on the floor and I got up on my feet. He started to get up but two good kicks in the ribs put a stop to any ideas he had about getting up.

Clarence's brother, big Jack was making a beeline for me and I knew I was in for more trouble. He was a very fat man with a big stomach sticking out in front, an ideal punching bag and very tempting. When I got up close enough he started shoving me around with his big stomach and calling me names that I did not like. I got pretty mad at him for his name calling and, because big Jack also liked chasing the women at the mill, I yelled at him that married men like him should leave the mill women alone and be satisfied with what they got at home.

Well that got big Jack even madder at me, but I remembered what my uncle Al had told me one time, years earlier, about where to hit big men like this when you wanted to put them out of action. So I stepped back about a foot or so and then swung my fist at him as hard and fast as I could, not at his jaw or big stomach, but at a spot just below his heart.

I was really shocked at how he just collapsed and lay there without moving.

I was not through yet though, for when I looked towards the door I saw Tommy Hempton coming in the door, and I knew I was in for more trouble. He was another Irishman that drove the big team before me, the team that Tom Armstrong had always driven before he died.

When he got to where I was standing, he ask me if I meant him when I said that married men should leave the mill girls alone and be satisfied with what they could get at home.

I said yes, I meant him too, and I ask him what he was going to do about it.

He looked at me for quite awhile and then ask me what I knew about the married men here in the mill.

I had already noticed that he was always hanging around my sister Annie, who also worked at the mill, too much, and both he and Annie were already married. Annie even had a little girl at the time, with her husband, Don Forster. And Hempton had a wife and two children of his own. So I told him that I knew enough and could prove it for to wreck his family and a good many more, if I chose to do so, but I was not going to expose them. I told him I wanted him to stay away from my sister, and if he did not, I would take some kind of action that would be both painful and effective, and he would be unable to bother any more girls when I got through with him. I told him he could believe it or not, but I meant every word of it. I would take care of him just as I promised.

I did not know at that time that I was too late to prevent what had already happened between him and my sister Annie.

Hempton knew the cat was out of the bag then, for when I went to his home looking for him a couple of days later, his wife said he had deserted her and the children and she did not know where he was.

And Annie too had disappeared at the exact same time as him. Annie had told her husband that she was going to the movies uptown one night and never came back home.

The odd thing about all this was what happened at my mother's place when Annie disappeared at the same time as Hempton. In a funny way, it reminded me of what had happened when I confronted my family about the tools that were missing from my toolbox when I got back from out west. Nobody said a thing about it, and Annie's name was never mentioned again for as long as I was there. When my family got together, they all talked about everything, except, of course, my sister Annie.

As far as my mother and father and brothers and sisters were concerned, when Annie left her husband and disappeared it was as though she had died.

While I was driving the team at the paper mill and hauling the bales of old magazines and books down to the mill to be recycled into fine writing paper, I used to pick out of the bales and bundles of books some books for to take home to read. Once a whole boxcar load of books from a library in Toronto came into the siding. I would have liked to take the whole car load home so that I would have a lot of reading for a good many years. This car load of Dunn & Bradstreet books came in with the hard covers torn off, and these books held the key to the ratings of every business in the world, large and small.

One day, I found a hard cover that had somehow been caught in a cord that had been tied around a bundle. I took out my pocket knife and cut out the piece that had the symbols on it for reading everyone's financial wealth and credit rating in the world. The book was about five or six inches thick of very thin strong paper and was in very good condition. I spent many hours reading that book and I got a lot of surprises about the amount of wealth that some local businesses in Georgetown had, and their credit rating.

There were new books being issued every so often, so those old books would not be of much use now, but they were very interesting reading for it showed me that most businesses in Georgetown were doing quite well. I also found some old medical books that gave me a lot of information, and there was about every kind of magazine that was published. I used to be able to

get magazines with serial stories that I could read the whole story and not miss an issue. I had magazines all over the place in piles at home, waiting for when I had time to read them.

When I had read one I kept it in a pile by itself, and when I had read a dozen, I would tie a cord around them and take them back to the mill for recycling.

June 10, 1977

Dear Friend:

I was very glad to receive your welcome letter yesterday. I look forward to receiving your letters very much, and they do a great service to me as they stimulate my mind to bring back memories of days long gone by. I can sit here in my chair quite comfortable and safe, and wonder how I ever survived all the experiences that I went through in those long years. It is like living them all over again. Some of my experiences were painful, but mostly they bring back many pleasant and happy times, also some very lonely feelings.

Mostly now, when I remember them, I would not have missed any of them. I think they gave me a push in the way that I was to live my life, and I have no regrets really about the way I

have lived. I would have liked to have had a better education, but when I think it over, I believe that I got a much better education from my experiences than I would have from books.

Well, I have some good news. I have a new doctor now, Dr. Gordon. I think he is going to be interested enough in me to give me good medical help when I need it. For example, I have a spot with a sort of scab on it on my left temple and I have had this spot for quite awhile. Dr. Gordon looked it over, then gave me some ointment for it. That is more than the last doctor I had did. That spot is lately getting an ulcer on it and has been there for nearly a year. Also, in the lobe of my right ear there is another spot that appeared there about the same time as the one appeared on my left temple. This spot started to bleed recently, then formed a scab over it. It has me worried too because that scab grew and grew until it stuck out like a moose antler and eventually got broke off when I slept on my right side. When I woke up in the morning my pillow was a mess of blood.

This has been going on for near a year and my other doctor did not even look at it, so along with his lack of interest in my medical troubles, I nearly bled to death.

Well, to Dr. Gordon. He gave me a thorough examination, then told me to go and see Dr. Remus, a surgeon, the father of the doctor that operated on my hips in 1970. Dr. Remus made an appointment for me at the emergency ward at McKellar Hospital for 9 am, when he will operate and remove both spots and stitch me up. He said they were caused by me being a diabetic.

Well, I do not believe that as I have been a diabetic for over ten years now and those spots have only recently appeared. If they were caused by me being a diabetic, why did they not appear sooner?

At least now they are being taken serious and being seen to, which is a step in the right direction, I think.

I had better get to your questions, or this letter will never make it into the mail.

I can understand your being puzzled about why Pat died like he did. I was too until I had a long talk with the Vet one time later when I was into his office to get some ointment to try and heal the cracks in one of the horses backs. The Vet explained how the one testicle affected a horse and what usually happened.

While Pat was in poor condition, as he was when I took over the team, it did not bother him very much, as he was working very hard and getting little or no care. When I took over, I gave them the very best of care, spending extra hours cleaning and getting a sort of scurf off their hide under the hair. I fed them at regular hours, and when hay was delivered, if it was not of a good quality, I would not let them unload it. All I had to do was to walk around a load and smell it to know whether it had been only half cured or put in the loft when it had been rained on and was a bit moldy. That kind of hay is no good for a hard working horse. Then also I fed them carrots by the ton, also bran and good Napolean oats. When oats were brought there, if they were not good in my opinion, I had the authority to refuse to let them unload them. I checked everything those horses ate, and they responded wonderfully to plenty of good feed and extra good care. So as Pat built up strength and stamina, he also built up a need for what a stallion needs most as a stallion. But had no means of getting it. He was only half stallion, so except for certain times, he could be completely controlled. When he could not be controlled, he would try to take out his frustrations on Mike, the other horse. This of course gave him no relief from what was building up inside him from good feed and good care. The day had to come when something

had to give and it did. According to the Vet, the one testicle Pat still had got so swollen and big that it burst and he bled to death inside.

When I found that out, I blamed myself for his death and have ever since. If I had not taken such good care of him perhaps he might have had a few more years of life, but then I ask myself if he would have wanted the kind of life he was having before I took over, or would he rather have had the short time of perfect health and strength that he had under my care before he died?

Then I think of the other side of the argument and it eases the feeling of guilt that I have about the early death of that fine horse. I told the superintendent several times to have the vet come down to the barn and give the horse a shot of dope and remove the testicle, but he said it was not needed. I ask the Vet about this, and he told me if that testicle had been removed that there was a good chance the horse would have lived many more years to die of old age. It seems a shame that a good animal like that had to be wasted, just because a penny pinching boss wanted to save a few dollars, when really he was throwing away hundreds.

I have a love for animals that makes me hate anyone that wastes them, or abuses them. That is just like abusing a helpless baby or an old person.

About my wife and how we got along. My wife's first name is Hildegarde. We had lots of arguments before we were married, with me listening most of the time and her doing the talking, and it was not long before I was able to read her like a book.

I found that she was a good clean girl, mentally, and with very high standard for telling the truth. If I ask her a question, she would tell me the truth if she did want to answer me, and if she did not want to answer, she would say nothing at all. I have never known her to tell me a lie

in all our years of married life, and for that, I respect her highly. She has often told me the truth that hurt me very much when we were having an argument, but while it hurt me quite a bit, I still respected her courage in telling me. I could see it was her nature to tell the truth, no matter how much it hurt, and I thought then that this might be the best partner that I could choose to spend the rest of my life with, so we were married.

I have never regretted one day of it, and if I had it to do over again, I would marry the same wonderful girl. She was a bit giddy like most girls are at 16, but I could see that she had a good set of principles that she was living up to, and that made me very happy. I really did not have much hope that she would marry me however, as I was near nine years older than her.

One time after we were married, I ask her why she consented to marry me. She said that there were several reasons that she thought I would be a good husband to her, when compared to other boys that she had known. The first one was that I had never in any way, tried to maul her around as the other boys did. Another reason was that she had watched how hard and steady I worked at the feedlot, which was just on the other side of the tracks from where she lived. Another reason was that I always treated her like a adult person, where most of her boyfriends treated her like a silly kid.

She told me one time that some of the boys that she went out with used to agree with everything she said and that she hated that. She said I was different, I would argue real hard with her and not give in if I thought that I was right.

She said she had learned more useful good things from me in the few months before we were married than she had from all the other boys in the years that she had known some of them. She said she had watched the way I controlled a hundred or more pigs when we were driving

them across the railway tracks to load them in the cars and that she was impressed by what she saw. I used to snap a ten or twelve foot strap in the air alongside the pigs when I wanted them to turn in the opposite direction. Her or her family had never seen pigs controlled like that before, without ever having to touch them, and they were amazed that it looked so easy.

How did I get along with my wife's family? I got along fine with her parents and brothers and all her relations here in Canada, which are quite numerous. Her parents and brothers liked me because I was a worker, not a talker. My wife and her family are a very honest people and will not lie to save anyone's feelings. I respected that about them.

Where did they work? Her father was working at the CPR shops in Ogden near Calgary at the time, three days a week. I was working at the feedlot at the time, and when she got to know me, I will always say that my wife had more faith in me than I had in myself. Of course, this was just before the depression that took the backbone out of people and, as it turned out, it did not pass me by.

Yes, I had about three hundred or more records, when I left to go west, but only had less than fifty when I came home. And the ones that were left were not the kind of records I had left behind either. I paid \$1.00 per record for a double sided 12 in. and 85 cents for a double sided 10 in. record. I had a complete set of Enrico Caruso records that are priceless now. There was Louise Gravuire, a baritone, that cut some beautiful records of the deep south in the States. I had several of Chauncey Olcott, an Irish tenor from Ireland, and Norma Bays, a lovely lady singer from Ireland. I had some Hawaiian records there that you never hear anything like them now. I have tried to get some now but have had no success. I had some very good band records, and

lots of male and female singing records, and a lot of quartets and choirs. They were all gone when I got back to Georgetown, and no one at home knew where or how, so they said.

Well I guess that is about it for this time and I hope that you will write as soon as you can. Do not worry about being late writing, as with all the things you are interested in, and all the things you have to do to get ready for the arrival of your baby, I know you do not have much time to write, whereas I have plenty of time and get great pleasure from your letters and from answering them.

Your friend,

Sam

Family Portrait: Ben

Robert Benjamin Allen, our second son, was born in Calgary, March 2, 1930. As a small boy he was very particular about being clean and tidy. He was very careful to keep his clothing clean and free from damage of any kind. He was not an aggressive boy, and was very

sentimental and could not stand the sight of blood. When he was a young boy, he did not like me to shoot deer for food when we were on the homestead. He never went out on a hunt with me like Lorne did.

When he grew older he had a very agreeable personality and could make friends very easily.

As Ben grew older we came down here to Fort William to live, and he changed somewhat as he got to know people. He went to school in Arthur street school until he was through there. I was working in the aircraft war industry at the time, and I got him a job there in the same department where I worked. After the war was over and I was working in the brickyard at Roslyn village, about 10 miles west of Fort William, I got him a job in the brickyard.

There were some other boys his age working there, and he got quite friendly with one of the boys who was a close neighbor of ours, Alan Wing. This boy told him that he was allowed to keep all the money he earned for himself and did not have to pay any into his parents for his keep.

When Ben got his first pay from the brickyard, he wanted to keep all his pay for himself, and I would have to supply his meals, bed and clothing. He was getting about fifty dollars a week, so I told him he would have to pay his mother \$10.00 per week for his meals, bed and washing, or else find another place to live.

This upset him very much and he said he did not see why he had to pay in his money when young Wing did not have to do it.

I told him to ask Mr. Wing, who worked with me as a partner setting and unloading bricks at the kilns on piece work.

I guess he did, because the next day he quit his job and went into town and got a job driving a taxi cab. Then he went to live with a Dutch family in Fort William and they charged him twenty dollars a week for board and room. Of course, he brought his washing home for his mother to do. Then he went to a loan company and tried to get a loan to buy a car, but they would not give it to him unless I backed his note. I had just got a loan from another loan company to buy some more lumber for the new house that I was building at Corbett creek at the time.

Ben chased me around town the next time I was in town, and when he caught up to me he ask me to go up to the loan shark and back his note. I went with him and told the loan shark that I had a \$300.00 loan at this other company, so I could not back my son's note. He said he could fix that alright if I would back the note. He would pay off the note to the other company, then he would take up my note for \$300.00 and I could then back my son's note for another \$300.00, which was the amount he needed to get this car.

Like a fool I did so.

The dealer who sold this lemon of a car to my son had really taken him.

The car cost seven hundred dollars, and the boy would have to pay fifty dollars a month on the balance. The car run good for a day or two, then the trouble began. He took the car back to the dealer's garage to get it fixed and it was there for over two weeks. When the car was ready to go, Ben brought it home and said it was running fine now. The next day in the mail I got a bill for a little over \$100.00 from the garage for repairs. Ben had been in the garage working on the car every day it was in there.

I refused to pay it, and I told him to not pay any more payments.

In about a week we got a letter from a bill collector, to pay up on the garage bills and the payments, or the car would be repossessed and Ben would be taken to court for the garage bill.

I went in the next day to see the bill collector and I had a long talk to him. I told him the whole story about the car and said Ben was not going to make any more payments on the car or pay one cent of the repair bill. If he wanted to take it to court, go ahead and we would give him a pretty good fight and would win.

He thought it over for a while, and then reached for the phone and got the dealer on the phone and told him what I had said, and he then told the dealer that if it went to court he, the dealer, would be sure to lose, as the boy was under age and I had not signed no papers, so neither the boy or I could be held responsible for the car repairs, and that the boy would return the car in the morning, and if the dealer did not return his down payment, the boy's father was going to sue in court for the return of his money that he had already paid.

When the cheque came through the mail for the \$350.00 that Ben had paid in down payment and one monthly payment, I told him to sign the cheque and give it over to me, which he did, and I gave him \$50.00.

I said, "we are now square."

He says, "what do you mean?"

I told him that I had guaranteed that he would pay back the three hundred dollars that he had borrowed from the loan shark, and that I was going to go in on the way to work and pay it.

He ask me if I did not trust him to do that, and I told him not past the first used car lot.

He got quite upset about that.

By this time, after working on several other jobs, I had started in the Great Lakes paper mill. I was trying to get him in there, as he was working for a cartage Co. and the job was pretty heavy work. In the meantime, he had been borrowing my car to court a girl named Caroline Turk, away out near Hymers, a village about 50 miles from Fort William.

They finally were married, and then Ben joined the Navy and was moved out to Esquimalt in BC. He made one trip on a destroyer to Hawaii, and another up the coast of BC.

When he got back to port he went to the hospital and was sick for quite a long time, then he was given a medical discharge from the navy. They paid his and his family's fare back to Thunder Bay.

He rented a house out on the Scott Hwy, not far from where I am living now. My wife and I bought them about a hundred dollars worth of groceries and personal things they needed and took them out to their house. It was a nice little house but had been built on timbers sitting flat on the ground. The timbers had started to rot and the house was beginning to settle on one side. There was about forty acres of land, and there was also a small barn.

About a week after they were out there, Ben came home one day and ask me to back his note again for \$500.00. He wanted to buy that place for \$ 4,000.00, which was a very good buy. I talked it over with my wife and we decided to back his note.

We got the cheque for the money and went to the lawyer's office to complete the deal. I might say here that I had given the property a good looking over, and what I saw I was not very pleased with. The well had no water in it. The house had settled enough to make most of the doors hard to open or close, The soil was hard white clay, and the garden the owner had there was very hard and dry and was not doing good at all.

I pointed this all out to Ben and told him that it was not the best place in the world. I began to feel that he would like to back out of the deal.

When we were in the office and were ready to sign the agreement of sale, I ask the lawyer if I might read the agreement before signing. He handed it to me and I found it was not exactly as the owner had said. He said there were 40 acres of land, but in the agreement it read forty acres of land less 12 acres of a gravel pit that had been sold to the township. That meant that Ben would be paying \$4,000.00 for 40 acres of land, but only getting 28 acres.

I ask the owner about that, and what he was going to do about it.

He said the price was still the same, take it or leave it.

I said we would leave it and ask the lawyer for my cheque back.

He started to give it to me, but Ben reached for it, and I took it right out of his hand and said I would take care of it. When we got out of there, I went directly to the loan shark and paid off the note.

He later bought a house and big lot on the Twin City Cross road and still lives there. He went back to work for the cartage co. and worked there for a good many years, until he went into the trucking business for himself.

He has a family of four girls and one boy.

I think he was too generous to others he wanted to be friends with. If they admired something he had, he would give it to them.

I had a nice .303 Savage repeating rifle that I brought down here from when I was on the homestead. When he was older, Ben used to get it to go hunting in deer season. I did not catch on to what was going on until I jumped a big buck deer one day in 1951 when I was bringing in

my horses. I went down that evening to Ben's home to get my rifle back, as I would like to get that big buck for meat as we were out of meat. I ask Ben for the rifle and shells, he said he had loaned it to his brother-in-law at Hymers.

I said we could drive out there and get it as I wanted it for tomorrow.

We went out there and this fellow said he loaned it to a neighbor that was out spotlighting deer that night.

We went to the neighbor and waited for about three hours for him to come in with no deer. I got my rifle back and on the way home I told Ben I was not loaning him my rifle anymore.

About two years later I traded it to him for a 410 shotgun for partridge.

He sold it to a friend for \$25.00. I paid \$85.00 for it.

He is a good son, but he will take from me to give to a friend any time. He mixes with people well and is well respected in the community, but he sure is an easy mark from some of the people that he has become friends with.

His girls are all married and come home and bring their families, just like he used to do. His son is still at home and is in the trucking business on his own now, I hear. Good luck to them both.

vistaVision Memories

The Blind Old Man on a String

All the floors in the house I had bought for my wife and I to live in on paper mill row were made of white pine and never had been painted. My wife had to scrub the kitchen and front room floor every day as they marked up very easy. Scrubbing is a very hard, back twisting job. I know because I did a lot of it when I was a young fellow. So my next job after my wife came down to our house from Calgary was to get two gallons of light paint, and then scrub all downstairs floors until they were clean, and when they were real dry I painted them all. This took me about three weeks of my spare time at home in the evenings and on Sundays, but I finally got it done.

The next thing on my list was to get a big congeolum rug for the floor in the front room, and a dust mop, and a wet mop for washing the floors.

I think my wife appreciated these last two items the most, as she would not now have to get down on her knees to wash the floor in the front room and could take up the dust in all rooms without having to get down on her knees with a cloth.

I remembered how my mother had to struggle putting clothes out to dry on the old clothesline she had, so I decided to put up a pulley clothes line from the back porch to the garage, about sixty or seventy feet away, so that my wife would have an easier time drying her laundry. I put a wooden cross bar near the ceiling of the back porch and got the blacksmith, Jack Davidson

at the paper mill, to make me two rods and thread them for about a foot on one end of each rod, on the other end I had him form a long hook that would go through the eye that is on the line pulleys. I had bored two holes through the cross bar and put a nut and washer on each side of the cross bar on the rod, so that after I had the clothesline installed, I could tighten them up whenever they started to stretch and hang down to low.

It worked fine and saved my wife a lot of work by not having to use the clotheslines that were there when we moved in. In fact I took those lines down as soon as I had mine working good.

In all this, my dad would sometimes come over to watch. All the time I was doing this he was giving me advice on how to do it and what he thought I was doing wrong, but I gave no heed to what he said.

I did notice that he never offered to do any of the work to help me.

Then, in 1927 when Lorne was born, I made a indoor clothes dryer for the winter so my wife would not have to go out in the cold like my mother had to do to hang up the damp clothes. I got a long straight 2 x 4 and really polished it until was as smooth as it was possible to get it, then I bought some small pulleys and hooks and a very long piece of sash cord. I put two good sized hooks in the ceiling of the kitchen with a pulley on each hook, and more hooks and two pulleys on the wall. The two hooks and pulleys on the wall were in direct line with the two in the ceiling. When all this was put together and the two hooks were in place for holding the rope, one for to hold the 2 x 4 close to the ceiling out of the way, the other to lower it down to a level where it would be handy to load or unload the wet or dry clothes. I also made her a wash stand that she could put two tubs on, one for the washing of the clothes and one for the rinsing, with

the wringer on a crossbar in between them. That was, of course, before we were able to afford a power washer.

We managed to buy a second hand one about a year later for \$10.00 from Mr. Tom Speight, the man that we were buying the house from. He overhauled it until it was good as new and would not take any pay for overhauling it. It was a good old wooden washer with an electric motor, and did my wife ever enjoy doing the wash after she got over the fear of it.

In 1928 our neighbour, Mrs. Mackie, was dying of T.B. but did not know it at that time.

The Mackies had been living in the house I bought for my wife and I before I had bought it, and they had moved next door when I bought our place. They had six children, three boys and three girls. The oldest girl was about fifteen when we first moved into our house, and the oldest boy was about twelve. The next oldest boy was around ten and was a bit simple and could not talk very clearly. All the rest of the children were very bright and sharp.

When I went to work at the mill driving the team, I got John Mackie as a helper on the team and wagon work. He was a good steady worker, did not drink or smoke, and loved his family very much. He was a Scotchman and his wife came from a fisherman village in England. When she was taken to the Sanatorium in Weston just outside of Toronto to die, John got word one day that she was near death and wanted to see him and the children once more.

No one that John ask with a car would take him down there, so I offered to take him and his six children down in my old Model T half ton truck that I had just bought. They all piled into

the truck and I made them all as comfortable as I could. I put two old truck cushions each in the back for John and the boy and two of the smaller girls, and the big girl and the two year old baby boy sat in the front with me, and away we went. It took us about two hours to find the place.

I first got lost near Weston, as I had never been there before, and ended up in the Swansea golf club house grounds. They directed me to the Sanatorium, and I sat in the old truck with the kids while John went up to see his dying wife.

The children were not allowed in to see their mother.

We sat there for about two hours in the hot sun. I did not have very much money, but I sent the oldest girl across the street to get us all a bottle of pop and a box of chocolate cookies. We ate our cookies and drank our pop and waited.

Finally John came back walking very slowly, his head hanging low and sad and got into the back of the truck and we were on our way home. He did not say much the whole way back, even though the Mackie children were all asking after their mother.

I guess there was not much he could tell them.

We got home in less time than it had taken us to come down, and everyone was tired and hungry. John wanted to pay me, but I would not accept any pay. I told him that I did not take pay for helping out a friend in time of trouble, and it had been a pleasure to have been of some help to him when everyone of his other friends had turned him down in his time of need.

The next day at work he told me that he would never see his wife again, as the doctor had told him that his wife would not live more than another day or two.

A few days after his wife had died, an official of the Children's Aid Society came down to the mill and told John that they wanted to talk to him about taking over his children as wards of

the Society and adopting them out to good families. He told them that he would not do that. Instead he would get a housekeeper and raise them himself. The man told him that the Aid would be watching, and if the children did not get the proper care, they would take his children from him through the courts and he would have nothing to say about it.

He told me all this when he came back on the job and ask my advice about just what he should do.

John's oldest daughter had been staying home from school to look after the small children, so I told him the first thing he should do was get a housekeeper and send Violet, his oldest daughter, back to school. Then he would have to see that his children were kept a lot cleaner, and they would have to be kept better dressed in clothes that he bought them that would fit them, not in hand-me-downs from the neighbors.

This was in 1928 and my wife and our baby son Lorne were away visiting her family in Calgary at the time and I said that when my wife and Lorne came home, I would talk to her and see if she would take care of the ones that did not go to school while he was at work. If my wife would look after the small ones he could let the housekeeper go and that would save him some money that could be spent on new clothes. Another thing, I told him that when he went to town to do his shopping, he must take all the children with him, then the Aid could not say that he was leaving them at home unattended.

He went uptown that night and managed get a housekeeper, but she was not much good as she was lazy and drank and smoked, which I knew the Aid would use as an excuse to take John's children away from him. I knew that John's oldest daughter would be able to leave school that summer holidays if she wanted to, so when my wife came home I ask her if she would look after

the two little girls that did not go to School, and the older boy that was kind of simple and did not attend school very regular, until the summer holidays. My sister Mae and her husband had already adopted the baby boy by this time.

My wife said that she would be glad to look after them that were still at home to help out until the oldest girl, Violet, could come home and keep house for her father and family. They were still living in the same house with his daughter as housekeeper when we left Georgetown to go to Calgary in 1932, to live with my wife's parents for the winter before going down to our homestead in the Rainy River District in the spring of 1933.

John Mackie is dead now and so is Violet. Violet died having her first child, after she was married. Billy, the one my sister and her husband adopted was all alone the last I heard about him, as my sister and her husband have both been dead for sometime now.

That Model T 1/2 ton truck that I bought in 1928 and which I used to drive the Mackie family to the Sanatorium in belonged to the Department of Public Works in Georgetown. I got it, along with a new battery and a new radiator, for fifty dollars from Harold O'Neil who had a car agency on Main street in Georgetown. I did not have a license to drive at that time so he delivered it, along with the new battery and radiator, to my house.

When I first bought that old truck, I took it all to pieces, cleaned everything good and put new rings and bearings in it and got it in good shape for the road.



*My Mother and
Baby Lorne, 1929*

A young fellow that had left his wife and children down at Milton and was working up in Georgetown came to my house one night when my wife was on her visit in Calgary to ask me to drive him down to Milton for to see his wife and family. He said he would pay me five dollars for the round trip. This was in 1929.

I told him I wanted the money before I took him down there as I had to buy gas before we could go.

He said he would have no money until he got some from his wife when he got down there.

I took him down there and he had quite a fight with his wife and her family before he was ready to leave. I told him I wanted my money now as I had to pay back the money I borrowed to buy gas to bring him down there.

He said he did not have it, so I told him he would have to walk back as it was only fourteen miles, and he would have lots of time to think over about lying to me and whether it was worth it or not. I said I would give him ten minutes to get the money or he would have to walk.

He said he would ask his wife for it and walked across the road and up onto the porch.

The door was closed but the top half was glass and the light shone out on the porch. The man stood there for a few minutes and then started back across the road. I started my truck and got out of there real fast, with him and another fellow running behind trying to jump into the back of the truck. I was able to pick up speed quick so that they were soon left behind.

I was telling my dad about it the next day, and he said he knew the fellow well and that his wife had thrown him out and would not take him back. Dad also told me that he had worked

the same trick on several people to take him down there, and if they said they would not take him back, him and his brother-in-law would beat them up until they agreed to take him back, and if he went to the police they would really work him over.

I expected him and some of his friends might call on me, but I was ready for them. The years that I worked in the paper mill, off and on, from when I was around fourteen until I was nineteen, and then again when I got back from out west, I had had lots of troubles with some fellows I worked with, and I had learned how to handle myself in a fight. They never did show up though.

I found a Mormon Bible one time in the bales of old books I used to haul down to the mill from the railroad station, and I read the whole book cover to cover and we kept that one for years until I gave it to a Mormon family when I was up on the homestead the first time. They did not have a big one like that, and when they admired it so much, I thought that they should have it.

I also found a book with the hard covers still on it that was printed in 1416 and was called the "Credo." The type used and the spelling was a sort of old English, and had me puzzled for a long time but I finally was able to make sense out of it and was able to read it, but only very slowly.

I thought this book might be worth some money as it was very old, so when I was in Toronto later with an uncle, I took the book down to a book store that bought and sold rare editions. The man in charge wanted to take it into the back of the store to look it over, so my

uncle and I went with him. He tried to stop us from going with him but I reached out quickly and took the book away from him. Then he offered me ten dollars for it, but I told my uncle that we would go and look for another store where we could get a fair deal. The man then said he would pay one hundred dollars and no more for the book, so we walked out.

My uncle asked me when we got outside why I did not take the hundred dollars.

I said that when that man would jump from ten dollars to a hundred in one jump, that book was very valuable and might be worth several thousands of dollars.

I said after we got back home that I would write to the Toronto Daily Star and ask them for the name and address of a reliable and honest old book dealer, one that they could recommend. When I got home I did write to the paper and they did send me the name and address of a reliable dealer.

I got all ready to go to Toronto to see that book dealer, and I went upstairs to my room to get the book, and it was gone.

I searched the whole house but never did find it. I ask my wife if we had any visitors since I had been to Toronto with my uncle, and she said just some of my brothers and sisters and my mother had been over while I had been at work. Then she said that my uncle had been over one day for a few minutes to get some books to read and said he would bring them back as soon as he had read them. He had been visiting his mother, grandmother Allen, over in the Glen for about two weeks or so, so I jumped on my bike and went over to my grandmother's place.

My uncle had left for Hamilton the next day after he had been over to get the books to read along with the Credo book.

I told my grandmother all about what happened but ask her not to mention it to anyone, but when my uncle next came up to see her, for her to study him and see if he was flashing money around and to let me know when he was there if she could.

She did and I went over and there was quite a house full of relations when I got there. I ask my uncle how much he got for the book and he said he did not know what I was talking about. I then accused him of stealing the book, telling the time and date of the day he stole it, and told him if he did not turn all the money over to me that he had received for the book that I was going to swear out a warrant for his arrest for stealing it.

He said that he only got one thousand dollars for the book, but when I ask for the name and address of the person that had bought the book, he finally admitted that he had received fifty five hundred dollars for the book. I ask him how much he had left and he said about three thousand or so. I said that I wanted him to take the first train out in the morning to Hamilton and I wanted to receive a cheque within three days for every cent he had in the bank or anywhere else and if I did not get it, I was going to swear out a warrant for his arrest.

Well I did receive a cheque for thirty-six hundred dollars in the mail, but when I took it to the bank in Georgetown they said they would have to check it before they could cash it. I went up to the bank the next evening and as soon as I saw the bank manager's face, I knew something was wrong. He took me into his office and told me the cheque was no good as my uncle had closed out his account at the bank the same day as he had written the cheque. The police in Hamilton had a warrant for his arrest for issuing a false cheque and were looking for him but they never did find him.

He left his wife and two children in Hamilton to fend for themselves and no one never heard from him again, until he was killed in an accident in Oregon USA. This man was not really an uncle of mine or even a son of my grandmother. He was an orphan raised in an orphanage over in the States somewhere. He had lived in Canada most of his life and when he married one of my grandmother's daughters, my grandmother took him right into the family and always called him her son.

He sure was a likeable man, very pleasant to talk to or listen to, but he did not like to work for money, he would rather gamble or pull a fast deal if he thought he could get away with it.

When I got older I used to feel sorry for his family for while he did not drink like my father did, he gambled away any money that he ever got hold of. His wife and children were as bad off as my family was in the early days of my childhood. He was always on the make for a fast buck, even from his own relations. I know he got money from my grandmother lots of times, for he seemed to always visit her just before she got paid for doing the washing for some of the more wealthy neighbours, and he always was there when the boarders paid their board money. I do not remember him ever doing one bit of work around grandmother's home, such as cutting wood or working in the garden or even helping her with pumping water on wash day, or carrying it in and putting it on the stove to heat.

I have seen that big man sit out in the shade of the back porch and watch grandmother and I pump water and carry it into the hot kitchen and lift it up and pour it into the boiler on the stove. We would be both sweating from the heat and getting quite tired and still he would sit there telling us what a great man he was going to be some day. In a lot of ways he was just like

my grandfather, my father, and my brother Tom, lazy and full of hot air, and not much good to anyone.

Many times when I was older, especially after I was married, I often felt like telling my grandmother a few facts of life about my grandfather that I had learned over the years, but I knew if I got started there was no way of knowing where I would stop, and I knew grandmother would be more hurt than her husband would, so I just kept quiet.

Grandmother was a good Christian woman and worked hard for everything she ever got. She raised a family of five boys and two girls and I believe, from what I heard, that she worked and raised them all without very much help from her husband. She was a midwife at a lot of births of other children and was highly respected by everyone in Glen Williams, but neither her husband nor any of her children was ever much help to her and she, like so many other women at the time, had a pretty hard life because of it.

Those years when I was driving the team at the paper mill, I had to slide down the bank at the back of our home in the winter time when I went down to the barn at the mill to look after the horses. When I came home, I had to climb up the slippery bank on a rope. I had to go down and up four times each day. When my wife's parents still lived down in the house next to us, my father-in-law built me a set of steps out of some old scrap lumber that I had and installed them down the bank so that I could get up and down more easily.

The neighbour that lived in the last house next to the mill, Scotty McNiven, went and told the boss of the mill, Ed MacWhirter, that I was carrying things up these steps from the mill at night and that I stole the lumber from the mill.

The boss ask me about it and I told him why the steps were there and that I was not stealing anything from the mill, and if he thought I was, he could give me my time right then and get another driver for the team.

He said he did not believe I was stealing anything but that I would have to take the steps down and bring them back to the mill.

I said I would take the steps down if he insisted, but I would not take them back to the mill as the lumber that they were built from had been from lumber that I bought and paid for, so it belonged to me and was going to stay on my property where it belonged.

He said it could cost me my job if I kept the lumber, so I told him that was fine with me. I would keep my lumber and he could have my job. I knew he had been bragging around town about what a good job I had done with the team, getting them back into shape and taking such good care of them that they were a team anyone could be proud of, so I was not worried very much about him taking the team away from me.

He told me that I had two days to take the steps down and to bring the lumber back to the mill.

I told him I would take the steps down, as the steps were on mill property, but I would not take them down to the mill as they belonged to me, and if he was going to get another teamster, he had better do it right now.

He backed down and said that I could keep the lumber but the steps would have to be taken down before the next day.

I had explained to him about it being so hard to get up and down that bank, especially in the winter, four times a day, every day in the year, but he was a stubborn man and he also got a lot of beer from Scotty's wife whenever he wanted it, and as it was Scotty who had told him about the steps being there on mill property, I guess that he thought that the free beer would be cut off if he did not make me take the steps down.

I never did forgive the boss for making me take them down and he knew it.

When I was putting in improvements to the house I had bought on paper mill row, I used to go over to the sandpit that was located in the upper end of Glen Williams to get sand and gravel for cement. There was a farm right by that sandpit that had an old man who was blind. I felt very sorry and unhappy for him. His son had a wire stretched out for him to hold onto and follow to the outdoor privy, to the barn and wood pile, out to the gate at the road and to a shade tree where there was a comfortable looking old arm chair. The sand pit was not far from the house he lived in, and so I could watch him getting around quite easily from where I was loading sand.

I thought that was a very sad sight.

Here was a man who had no doubt worked hard all his life on his farm to raise and provide for his family, and now in his declining years when he should have been free from all

work and responsibility to enjoy his remaining years as he wished, he was instead tied down to some wires as the size of his world, which he could not see. When he should have been enjoying the remainder of his years, he was groping his way along a few wires, and confined to his own backyard as long as he lived.

It did not seem right and I hoped at that time that I would never be like him.

But here I am, crippled, going blind and deaf, and unable to get around much more than he could.

There was one thing that I did not like about working in the Barber paper mill after I was married and was driving the team there, and it was the Superintendent of the mill at the time, Ed MacWhirter. He had worked his way up to that job from the job of winder boy when he was a young fellow in different paper mills. He was a very bossy man and did not seem to have very much education, outside of knowing about all there was to know about making fine papers. He also had a lot of relatives in good jobs in the mill office and they made sure he usually got preference when there was a better paying job available.

When I was still taking care of Pat and Mike in the evening, I found out that he, like so many of the men there, had another weakness. He liked other men's wives.

He had a garage for his car just about twenty feet or so back of the barn where the horses were stabled. Across from the garage was the end house on the row of houses there, owned by

Scotty McNiven. Scotty had a son and daughter, the son was about ten and the daughter was about eight.

He also had a good looking wife.

I often saw the boss come down in the evenings when Scotty was on shift, just as it was getting dark, and go down through the mill on a trip of inspection. When the boss came up from the mill he would go over to Scotty's house, and many a night he was still there when I finished taking care of the horses, about nine or ten o'clock.

I began to notice that the children were always allowed to go to the picture show on that particular night, and the show was not over until around ten. And they had about two miles or more to walk home from the show at that time, so they would be gone until almost eleven.

One Saturday afternoon when I was in the barn mending harness, I went up in the hayloft, which was level with the boss's garage, to shovel oats over to the spout that took them down to the bin where the horses were, and as it was a very hot day, I opened the doors where they put in the hay, and I saw the boss and McNiven's wife in each others arms in the back of the garage, kissing.

Another Saturday when the Toronto Exhibition was on, I saw the boss stop out in front of the barn and then Scotty's wife came around the end of the barn all dressed up in her best clothes and quickly got into the car, and they went across the bridge and up the big hill. There was only her and the boss in the car. Scotty was on the day shift that day.

It used to bother me when I would see things like that going on as I thought the boss should not be using his position to impose himself on an employee's wife just because he could put her husband out of work.

One day when I came home for supper, my wife told me the boss had been up to see her and said he had just wanted to make her acquaintance and to tell her that her husband, me, was doing wonderful with getting the team back into shape. The next Saturday when I was working in the barn, he came to the barn on his way to the garage for his car, and start telling me about what a wonderful wife and little son I had. This was during the summer of 1928.

We talked for awhile and then I told him that I would appreciate it very much if he would stay away from my wife as I did not want folks to talk about him and my wife like they were doing about him and McNiven's wife.

He blew up right away and said it was just gossip, that people had nothing better to do, and if I passed it around he could always fire me.

I told him he need not bother to fire me as I was quitting as of that moment, and as for gossip, I said I had seen plenty of this myself between him and Mrs. McNiven and that was no gossip. I said I had told no one, as it was none of my business, but my wife was my business and I wanted him to stay away from my home. If he had anything to say to me he could always see me on the job as I was here seven days out of a week.

He cooled off and left, and I did not quit right then, but after that he never came near my house again. He made several attempts to go and see my wife while I was at work, but I had fixed that. When my wife saw him turn into our lane, she took our son and went over to my mother's home and stayed there until he had gone back to the mill.

He finally gave up trying and then was when he started giving me a hard time on my job. I did not have to work the team on Saturday, as the yard men always had Saturday off. I might have to sometimes haul down one or two loads of coal from the siding if it looked like they

might run short of coal in the boiler house. Sometimes I would take the team up to the blacksmith to have new shoes put on them, or mend harness in the barn, or perhaps haul some garbage out to where they burned it.

When I went to the blacksmith shop to have the horses feet taken care of, the boss would watch me go and come back and then say I took too long. I was supposed to have all Saturday afternoon to get the horses feet cared for and new shoes put on, as there was nothing else to do as the outside gang did not work on Saturday afternoon, but as far as the boss was concerned, that did not matter.

I felt like quitting lots of times, but I liked the horses so much that I did not want anyone else to take care of them as I knew they would never spend the time on them that I did.

I took my truck out this one evening in the summer of 1930 to try it out on No. 7 highway, towards the west and as it was getting rather dark when I got to the highway, I put my lights on. I wanted to see how the old Ford would run at highway speed, which at that time was 35 miles an hour. I pushed that truck up to 45 and went up the highway several miles with the old Ford running real smooth. Then I decided to go up the next sideroad on my right and turn around and go back home.

When I got to this sideroad, I saw another car coming down the road to the highway going pretty fast. I dimmed my lights and turned into the side of the road. There were deep

ditches on both sides of the road, and the other car did not dim their lights and were in the centre of the road.

I got as close as I could to the ditch and tried to squeeze past, but the fenders on my truck rubbed the side of the other car. I stopped and went back to where the car had stopped and found that it was a new Flint car.

There were four people in it, all men and all drunk.

One of them was my boss, Ed MacWhirter.

I ask the driver why he did not dim his lights and what gave him the right to the middle of



My Truck and Family, 1930, in the Glen Cemetery
the road while passing another car.

He said he was not in the centre of the road.

I said the tracks of his car showed that he was well over to my side of the road, and his lights were still on high beam.

My boss stepped out of the car then and said, "there is only your word against four of us and you have been drinking."

I said, "I do not drink and you know that, but you have all just come from the bootlegger just up the road aways, and your driver is the one who caused the accident."

The boss says, "well you are the one that is going to pay for it anyway, and I will deduct ten dollars from your pay each payday until it is paid."

I said, "like hell you will," and got in my truck and drove away.

About two weeks or so after this, I got a letter in the mail from one of those fellows from Lansing, in Michigan, USA, for a repair bill of \$80.00 for the scratch along the side of their car.

I took it down to the mill and showed it to the boss.

He said, "well you will have to pay it as we are four witnesses and you have just yourself. You will not get very far in court and you will have court costs to pay as well."

I then told him that there would be a lot of dirty linen washed in the courtroom if it went that far to try and get that money out of me, as I did not have any money and when I lose this job after washing the dirty linen I will not have any money then either to pay court cost or them liars over in the states.

I was talking about him and Scotty McNiven's wife and he knew it.

He said, "well I will tell you what I will do, I will pay them for getting their car fixed and you can pay me a little at a time as you see fit, and that way no one will have to go to court."

I thanked him for his offer but told him he knew that the other driver was the cause of the accident by not dimming his lights and by driving in the centre of the road, and from drinking, and it was only because I was sober and knew what I was doing that had saved some of us getting seriously hurt or perhaps killed. I said they all should be thanking me for preventing a

serious accident instead of trying to shove the blame onto me and gouge me for the cost of that small scratch along the door of their car.

He said he would write and tell them what I had said and see if they would change their mind.

I had several letters from the man that owned the car over in the States, but I just threw them in the waste paper basket and forgot about them.

After that, I noticed that the boss did not come over to the barn as often as he used to on Saturdays when I was mending harness or putting in a new floor in one of the stalls. Then, a few weeks later, when he took the team away from me and gave them over to Jimmy Clark, he just stopped me on the road and said that Jimmy Clark would be looking after and driving the team from now on, starting the next morning.

I just said OK and drove on.

He never told me why he was turning the team over to Jimmy Clark, and I did not ask. I had to find out from other sources that Jimmy was doing it for a dollar less per day than I had been doing it.

I found out a long time after that that he was sorry that he had given the team to Jimmy from one of the boss's daughters that I had gone to school with. She said her dad would have offered me the job back, as Jimmy was not doing as good a job as I had been doing, but he said he knew that I would not accept it, so he had not offered it to me, but had instead bought another truck and sold the team.

June 21, 1977

Dear Friend:

I was very pleased to get your letter in this morning's mail.

Well, I went to the emergency at MacKellar hospital and had two operations performed for those spots on my head by Dr. Remus since I wrote to you last time. One was on the left side of my temple to remove a growth that was there. It has healed up quite well. The other operation was at the edge of my right ear to remove a growth that was there. This operation has, so far, four days after it was performed, not been a success.

On the night of June 13, 1977, it bled quite a bit on my pillow while I was sleeping. I had been sleeping all night on my left side, with the area of the operation on my ear away from my pillow. On the night of June 15, 1977, it again bled while I was sleeping on my left side, and the blood stayed down in my ear until I got up in the morning and then ran out of my ear down the side of my face, and there was quite a lot of it.

When my wife came up to my room that morning, she near fainted when she saw the mess I was in.

On June 24, 1977, I have an appointment to go to the Emergency at McKellar hospital and have the stitches taken out of both areas of operations.

I wonder if this is wise.

If the operation near my ear bleeds with the stitches in, what will happen when they are taken out? Right at the edge of one side of where the skin and flesh was removed by my right ear, there is a large artery that goes to the brain. Perhaps this artery was nicked when the flesh was cut away and that is what is leaking blood.

I am worried about it, and I do not think the stitches should be removed until the doctor who performed the operation has had a very long study of it.

From my past experiences in the hospitals, it has always been a nurse who has been the one to remove any stitches that I have had from an operation. I think I should refuse to let anyone remove those stitches until the doctor who was the one that put them in looks the operation over real careful. I would not like to go home, after all the pain I have suffered, and then bleed to death just because of someone's careless work.

Now that I have made this decision, I feel much more easy in my mind about the whole thing.

I have not forgotten how I became a very badly crippled man after the operation on both my legs by lack of the doctors who were in charge of my case to give me the proper attention that was due me in an operation of that kind. I ask questions, of course, but I just got answers from them all that I would be as good as new, after I had been home for a month or so.

I have been home for over seven years, and I am no better off now than the day I left the hospital.

Now, in the case of my bleeding ear, I am going to have answers that make sense and if the doctor did nick that big artery, I am going to know about it, and if I do bleed to death, he is going to have to pay my wife for it. This time I am not going to take his word for it, and I will leave instruction with a reliable lawyer what it is all about and what to look for if that artery has been damaged by the operation and should it some night, while I am sleeping, bust wide open and drain all the blood from my body.

I sleep alone in a room by myself, and I never get up until I have had all the sleep that I want. No one ever calls me in the morning or ever comes in to see if I am alive, so I sometimes sleep until noon if I have a bad night with my anginal attacks. Perhaps I am making a mountain out of a mole hill, but that bleeding has me worried. There is so much of it when it happens and it sure makes a mess out of the pillow and makes a lot of work for my wife to get them clean again.

Doctor Gordon, my medical doctor, says my diabetic condition was the cause of those spots in the first place, but I doubt it. I have been a diabetic for over eleven years now. I think myself that they were caused by the thousands of pills I have to take over the years for diabetes, anginal attacks, water in my legs, pills to settle my stomach from the effects of these pills and many more, some of which I did not need, such as pills to make me sleep, pills to quiet my nerves, special kinds of Aspirins, and bottles of medicine to keep me in good condition. I believe that I had prescriptions for twenty-one different kinds of drugs and pills over the years.

My three daughters have worked in hospitals and two of my daughter-in-laws also. By asking them about all these pills and drugs, I found out that most of them were habit forming, and I cut the list down to five that I really needed and were essential to my good health.

All I really want now is to live long enough to be able to find the kind of home that we can be able to agree on, and to see my wife moved in it with all the comforts a home should have, with nothing for her to worry about, then I won't mind going on to whatever awaits me.

This finding a home of our own again is always on my mind.

I have not found anything yet that both my wife and I can agree on, but I am keeping my eyes open for the kind of a place I am going to buy and just as soon as I can find it, I will buy it and move in and no one will ever get me to part with my own home again.

Now, to your questions.

About Ben. Ben and his wife were married in town at the parson's house. His wife's family used to live somewhere out near South Gillies village, about ten or twelve miles further out of town than where I am living now. I do not know for sure, but I believe they came from Ireland or their forefathers did. Their name was Turk, and they had rather a large family.

I cannot tell you very much about Ben's children either, as they were rather small when we left to go up to Rainy River for the second time in the mid-sixties. I never saw much of them until I used to come down to the hospital, and by that time the eldest was married and had a child of her own and the next oldest was engaged to be married that year, the others are all married now. Only the boy is still at home and not yet talking about marriage.

They were all nice little girls when they were small, what I saw of them, and what I saw of them when they were adults, I was well pleased. None of Ben's family comes over for visits very often now that my wife and I are living fairly close by again here at Pat's place. And of course my wife and I have no way of going over to visit them.

Ben's wife sometimes drops in for a few minutes to visit with my wife, but very seldom ever comes into my room to see me.

I guess it is because I do not hear very good now, being completely deaf in one ear. I suppose it is embarrassing for them to have to keep repeating everything in a louder voice when I do not hear what they say, but it is also very embarrassing for me to have to ask them to repeat what they have already said.

About that woman, Scotty McNiven's wife, that the boss of the mill was fooling around with, I know for a fact that she was not only playing up to the boss, but also to other men when she had a chance.

Their house was quite close to the paper mill barn where there was a tap for town water. She used to come down there in the evenings when I was there taking care of my horses to get a pail of fresh water, while her husband was on the night shift. She would talk to me for an hour or more, asking me all kinds of questions about myself and my wife and her family.

I gave her very short answers and in time she got disgusted with me and stopped coming down for water. She had a son of about thirteen or fourteen who could have come after any water that she needed. She was always all fixed up in nice clean clothes and makeup and the smell of her perfume was really overpowering, putting the smell of the horses and barn to shame.

Another time, when my parents gave a party and dance when my oldest brother, Tom, was twenty-one, I remember her and her husband came to the party, along with a lot of other men and women from the mill. She spent all her time trying to talk only to the men and ignoring the women and her husband.

It was very plain to see that she dominated her husband, and he seemed to take it for granted that she knew she could behave like that and get away with it.

I also saw her at a New Years ball once that was held in the Town Hall every year. I watched her behaviour there and was so disgusted that my wife and I left before supper was served. My wife was only seventeen at the time and all the way home she kept asking me why a married woman with two children would act like that. She was very upset for weeks about it, as she was very religious and believed in the marriage vows

I understand that not long after we went to our homestead in Rainy River, that the McNiven family broke up, the father taking the two children with him to a farm near Peterborough, and the wife going away to Toronto.

Yes, you are right, I have had some hard times in my life. I have also worked hard most of my life, and that has had it's costs.

For example, I have had two heart operations, one on each side of my body, and one in the diaphragm of my chest, all caused by heavy work. The doctor said when he checked me out the last time that I also had a damaged heart valve, and another valve going from my neck to my stomach that was also damaged from lifting and carrying too heavy loads on my shoulders. He told me that I was too old to be operated on these things, so I would just have to try and live with them. He said that I would not survive either operation.

Now, if I had only had a bigger body that I could have built more muscle on, I would have never had these troubles, but my body was so small that I could not get any more muscle on it no matter how much I tried. Of course when I was much younger, I did not think about the fact

that I was asking my body to carry heavier loads than it was built for, so it gradually broke down.

If I had been smart I would have paid attention to the first warning when I had my first rupture.

Oh well, a person can always see their mistakes when it is too late to do anything about them, so I guess I will just have to live with them now.

This diabetic trouble I now have gave me years of warning, but I did not go to a doctor until it was too late. I just ate Tums, the worst thing that I could do, to get relief from what was bothering me, and ended up with taking pills the rest of my life and being cut off from the food that I enjoyed.

About that old truck I had in 1930. I got that Model T truck while I was still driving the team for the paper mill. I paid fifty dollars for it and the dealer gave me a new radiator and a new battery also. It had what was called balloon tires, just like new, and was in very good shape. There was no speedometers on Ford cars then, you just had to guess at how fast you were going.

My truck had just three speeds, low, high and reverse. When you started to go ahead you first held your low and high pedal in neutral with your right foot, then you released a lever at your left hand and advanced it forward as far as it would go where it would lock in place. Then as you pressed down with your right foot on the low pedal you advanced your spark and gas levers that were mounted on the steering post and pressed the low pedal to the floor. When the car had gained top speed in low gear you took your foot off the low pedal quickly and the low pedal would fly back putting the car into high gear. To gain the speed at which you wanted to go, you advanced your spark and gas levers until you had attained it. You controlled the speed of your car with these two levers at all times. In later models they had an accelerator on the floor.

My old Model T would do about 45 miles per hour when in first class shape, but I mostly traveled at about 40 miles per hour, although the speed limit at that time along No. 7 highway was only 35 miles per hour.

I could not get a license to drive until I had drove a car at least five thousand miles, so I ask the town clerk how I was going to drive a car that far if I did not have a license to drive. I told him I had drove a lot farther than 5,000 miles when I drove a car in Alberta the five years I was there.

He ask to see the drivers license I had in Alberta.

I told him you did not have to have one to drive a car there. He was surprised and took me out for a test run.

We went for a ride around the block and up the main street and back to the office. He wrote me out a license and I gave him two dollars for it and away I went with my Tin Lizzie.

I met that clerk uptown one day and he told me I was an awful liar. I ask him how come. He said they did have driver's licenses in Alberta.

I said I did not know that, I had never seen one and I had been driving the bosses car in and out of Calgary for about four years, and when I worked at the feedlot, I drove their half ton truck around the city many times and was never asked for a driver's license.

He walked away shaking his head.

There was a very interesting program on TV last evening called "Man Alive" entitled "The Formula." It was about breast feeding of little new born babies and formula feeding of new born babies.

I have not been so shocked at what I heard and saw for many years. I cannot understand why the laws of different countries allow things like this to go on. The big companies that push their products in all these undeveloped countries the way they do for profit are actually getting away with murder, in fact it is being done right here in Canada and the States too. The suffering and deaths are enormous.

The people in the underdeveloped countries are mostly uneducated and cannot read the instructions on the package which are printed in English and so they do not mix the formula properly or under sanitary conditions, so the baby dies. They were doing fairly well when the mother breast fed them, but the mothers were worked on by experts to change to the formulas, so these big companies could make more money.

It is a colossal crime against humanity and the governments of every country should make an effort to put a stop to it.

I do not have enough education to put down on paper what is boiling in my mind when I see things like that going on against poor ignorant people, who are just trying to survive. I think that companies that will legally commit mass murders just to make a profit should be put out of business and spend the rest of their lives locked up in jails where they belong.

These babies cannot fight back and so they die from the hand of the mother who is sending them to an early grave at the orders of some big company who will make a profit from their death. I get so mad when I hear and see this going on, and I know that I am helpless to do what should be done about it, as these big companies most always pick on the people who can not fight back because of ignorance.

For most of the first year in a child's life it needs what only a mother's breast will provide to grow up strong and into a normal child. No formula has as yet been devised that will provide what a mother's milk does, and many experts have admitted that, but still the slaughter goes on, as the companies greed is never satisfied.

In the civilized and educated countries, a lot of the mothers are to blame, as they consider their figure comes first before their child's right to nature's way of feeding, and there is no excuse for them doing this if they are healthy and have the breast milk to give to their baby when it wants it. Too many women say that breast feeding would interfere with their every day life.

Then why have the baby at all?

We have two children here from the Aid, one is the boy we have had for over a year now, and the other is a little Indian baby about two months old I think, and of course we have Pat's son, Dan, here too. That means a lot of work for my wife to look after three children, two of them helpless babies. My wife is getting old like me now, and I think it is too much for her, but she will not give up the two Aid children.

Oh well I guess it will all work out alright, at least I hope so.

It makes me feel pretty useless when I am not allowed to help with anything, but I suppose they think that the best way I can help is to do what I have been doing for nearly two years, nothing. I am doing that so well now that I am getting used to it, and it is no bother to me at all.

Well, I had better stop now while I can still fit this letter and the vistaVision memories all into one envelope. I hope Mrs. Filter is well and that you are well too. I imagine you are both looking forward to the arrival of your little baby this fall. Write back soon.

Your friend,

Sam

Family Portrait: Mary

Mary was our second daughter, our first child to be born on the homestead. Mary was born on September 29, 1933. Her middle name is Ruth. She arrived with only my wife and I there to welcome her. The other children were in another room in Harry Benjamin's house, where we were living since the spring of 1933, before I built our own log home. She was a plump, healthy baby, and when I had cut and tied the cord, I wrapped her in a blanket that I had kept warm by the wood heater we had going along with the cook stove to keep the house nice and warm. I then took care of my wife.

A word here about how brave I thought my wife was to trust me to deliver her of this child. She did not want any of the local women there because of the ideas some of them had about delivering a new born infant. She knew that I would follow her instructions to the letter,

and she also knew that I had taken all precautions against any infections. When we knew the baby would arrive that night, I scrubbed the whole floor with hot water, soap and disinfectant, and had trimmed and cleaned my nails right off close, and I had all the baby clothes disinfected and wrapped in a sterile cloth. We also had a sterile sheet for the bed and sterile bandages for my wife.

Mary grew into a pretty little fat bundle all that winter and was never sick or had a cold. She was a lovely little girl, with blue eyes like me, and she had very blond curly hair and a clear white skin.

The next spring, the spring of 1934, I had our log house built on our land and we moved down into it. Mary grew like a weed and only got in one year at the school there before we moved to Fort William in 1940. She then went to the school on Arthur street where she did good until she started to high school in Fort William. They had a bus service by then, so she was home every night. She graduated and took up a course in nursing at the MacKellar Hospital Nursing School.

She had to live at the hospital and that is where she met the bum that she married, Robert Williams, in 1951. He was a telegraph operator at the Kakabeka CNR station. He was quite a boozer and woman chaser, and Mary did not find that out until years later, after they had three children.

When she was home on a visit one time, she ask me what she should do about him, and I told her that the next day we would go over to Port Arthur where there was a very good family counselor who could talk to her and advise her. I said I did not know just what to tell her, as there were the children to consider.

The next day, the counselor would not let me stay in the room while they were talking, so I waited out in another room.

On the way home I ask Mary what she had said, and she told me that the woman had told her just what to do, and she was going to do it.

I could not get anything more out of her except she ask me not to mention to her mother just where we had been.

I found out quite a long time after what the woman had told her to do.

When she went back to her home, she found that her husband had brought in another woman and said there was no room there for Mary, so she could get out. Mary told him she would be only too glad to get out and take her children, if he would promise to not contest a divorce and would pay for it. He said that the only way he would pay for a divorce was if she left the children with him.

She had told the counselor that his word was no good, and the counselor had advised Mary to take along a small tape recorder and get everything he or she said on tape. Mary had done this, so she applied for a divorce and, as she had expected, her husband said that she had deserted him and the children, and so would not agree to paying for the divorce.

When Mary's lawyer introduced the tape as evidence, Mary got her divorce and her husband had to pay for the divorce and also support the children. Mary had the right to see her children any time, or they could come and visit her at any time. Her husband was tied down to providing a good home for them, under the watchful eye of the Children's Aid Society, and he had to either marry the woman he had there or kick her out. This woman already had two children of her own.

The woman wrote to me one time and ask me to help them out with some money.

I still have the letter.

I told her I did not get her into this mess, and that she was the one that had broken my daughter's marriage, and she would have to live with the results.

Her husband was drinking quite heavily and had another woman on the string at the time, and his present wife was finding out just how it felt, as Mary had found out before her.

Mary is now married to a bank manager in Winnipeg and has two children from him, a boy and a girl. She is a great little worker, and when she comes down here to visit, she just takes over the management of the house. She buzzes around talking a mile a minute and working all the time. She is very neat and tidy, and they own a lovely home in Winnipeg.

The big ambition of her life now is to grow about every kind of flower there is.

I gave her a catalogue of flowers and she prizes that more than the best book in her library.

Mary is a very warm hearted girl, always sorry for those that are not as fortunate as her. She likes going to the stores and looking for bargains, and she sure knows one when she finds one. She takes good care of her two children by her second husband, and sends him off to work as neat as a pin.

Her first husband learned her to drink and smoke, but she has kicked the drinking habit, but the smoking habit is much harder, she says, to get rid of, although when she was here for a visit for two weeks or so last spring, I only saw her smoke three cigarettes all the time she was here. It used to be that you would hardly ever see her without a cigarette in her mouth.

I think she is a little too strict with her two children, especially with her daughter, as she is practically a full grown woman at the age of going on fifteen. She is much taller than her mother, and is quite an athlete at school, plays all the games the boys do, and from what her mother says, is real good at it.

When she used to come for a visit when I had the full use of my legs, she was always around me helping out in her own way. When I was splitting wood, she would be piling it and doing just as good a job as I could. When the pile got to be higher than she could reach to the top where I had piled it before, she went and got our short step ladder and climbed up that with every armful of wood and piled it. When I was working in the garden hoeing, she got another hoe and watched how I was doing it for awhile then she started in to work too, and she did a first class job. I had never seen such a girl that liked to work the way she did. She was only about eight at that time, and I used to take her fishing every time I went, and she sure enjoyed that a lot.

Her brother was just about the opposite of her. He did not like to do any work unless it was with something he was inventing, or the drawing of pictures of jet planes or some weird pictures that you would see in comic books. His mother sent me down some of his drawings and they sure were fantastic. When he was here on a visit with his mother, he would do nothing for himself, always asking his mother to do it, and of course she would always jump and do it.

One day, when I was talking to her alone, I told her that she was spoiling him and making a sissy out of him, and it was not fair to the boy to bring him up depending on her to do everything for him.

Mary was quite shocked about what I had said and said that she had not realized just what she was doing, but now that I had opened her eyes, things would be a lot different for her son.

And were they ever. I saw it right away the next time they were all down to our last place in Rainy River for a holiday. When that boy wanted to get something done for himself, he just went and did it without asking his mother.

I ask Mary how she had managed to make such a change in him.

She said that she had told him that his sister was doing her own things without ever asking help from her or anyone else, and she ask him if he was not man enough to do as good as his sister was doing. She said that right away he started to do everything for himself, which took quite a load off her shoulders and she thought it would make a better man out of her son. She thanked me for opening her eyes to the way she had been drifting to make a spoiled brat out of the son that she loved so much.

He was a different boy altogether when he was at our place after that. He was always asking my wife if she had anything that he could do for her when he was there after I came back a cripple from the hospital. Like mowing the lawns, or going out to get the mail at the mail box a quarter of a mile out at the highway. The girl had always done that before when she was here. They would argue some about it, then this new kind of brother would go out with her and bring in the mail together.

Mary seemed to be much happier and more full of life after the boy had started doing things for himself and even helping her with her flower bed and garden in the spring and summer. He also kept the driveway and sidewalk free of snow in the winter without having to be told. Mary is so proud of him, she is always telling me about the little poems and stories he writes to his mother.

vistaVision Memories

The Hungry Thirties

The first time that I went up to the armories for rifle drill was when my wife and my two children were in Calgary visiting her parents in 1930. My wife was carrying our third child, Ben, at the time, and he would be born in Calgary in March of that year. I remember I placed second in target shooting on my first try with an old army Lee Enfield .303. That was a big, heavy gun, but I still got a score of 94/100 against some pretty good shots. It was too bad that one of my younger brothers, Joe, who was also shooting that day, had to get smart that night and put a real regular issue high power shell in his friend's shell tray. We all were using target ammunition, and when that young fellow fired off that regular issue shell, it made everyone jump. The bullet went through the target and pierced the sheet metal behind the target and ripped a great long piece of wood off the back of the building and I guess it ended up in the bush about two hundred yards from the building.

That put a stop to any more rifle practice in that place, as the inspectors from the army were up, and when they examined the bunker and saw the damage that bullet had done, they put a stop to all rifle practice there and it was never started again.

I had been looking forward to the next time we had rifle practice to get a 100 score as I knew I could do it when I was more familiar with that heavy rifle. I had been used to high power light game rifles, and that was my first experience with a real heavy gun. When I had shot jack rabbits on the prairie with my .250-3000, Savage rifle, I had always got them through the head, so I did not see why I could not get a 100 score when I had got the feel of that heavy rifle when shooting at a target, but I never got the chance to find out. No one had ever got a score of 100, so the records had shown, and I had looked forward to having a try at it, but my stupid brother had cut me off from that with his smartaleck trick on one of his pals.

After the rifle drill was over on the shooting range, we would play hockey on the hardwood floor of the drill room for perhaps an hour, then we would go in another big room where there was heat and take different kinds of guns apart and put them back together blindfolded. It had to be done with the touch sense in practice, so that you could do it in the dark if it was ever needed.

Then we were supposed to have coffee and eat the lunch we had each brought with us, as we listened to the captain of the group talk about different methods of doing things while under fire in active service.

The first and only time I was there things seemed to go wrong, not only by my brother acting smart by putting a regulation shell in his pal's ammunition dish, but by the man who made

the coffee by boiling it in a lard pail and then straining it through a dirty handkerchief that he had been blowing his nose in all evening.

I got up and took my bicycle and went down to my own home, where I had a hot pot of coffee on the back of my heater in the front room of my house. I am really not a fussy person, but seeing that fellow strain the coffee through his dirty handkerchief sure turned me sick at my stomach, and after that, I did not want anything more to do with that bunch of men.

In the spring of 1930 I decided to finally sell the bicycle I brought home with me from Calgary. I had a truck now, so I did not need to also have that bicycle. I found a young boy down in the Glen who had admired that bicycle but who did not have enough cash to buy it off me outright. So I sold it to the boy on time, giving him a few months to pay the bicycle off.

Boy was he grateful for that.

The boy tried in every way he could to show that he appreciated me selling the bike to him in such a way that he could use it while paying for it. After he had it paid for, he had figured out the interest on the price of the bike while he had been paying for it, and he wanted to pay me the interest, which was very little.

I told him that in our agreement, no interest had been mentioned so there was no interest coming to me.

He put up quite an argument, telling me I was not a very good man for business. He said that he felt that he owed me the interest for letting him take his own time in paying for the bike, so he said I should take it.

I told him again that he did not owe me any interest and not to go giving his money away like that and to stick to the agreement we had made.

He thanked me again and as he left he said he thought I was a poor businessman but he admired me for being an honest man.

Well I felt about ten feet tall to have a young boy of 13 say that to me. It showed me that the young generation coming up had their set of good values as well as some of them having values that were not so good.

The last I heard of that boy was that he was well respected in Georgetown and had a good job in the Bank of Montreal after he had graduated from high school.

It was not long after that until I was laid off from the paper mill, along with several other men, as the Hungry Thirties was just getting started, and I never had another steady job after that, until years later, in the fall of 1946, when I got taken on at the Great Lakes Paper mill up in Thunder Bay.

By 1931 I had a wife and three small children to feed and look after, and no job. I had bought our house down on paper mill row when times were still good, just after I had started to work for the paper mill driving their big team of horses. Every year I had a big

beautiful garden, with no weeds or bugs in it, so I always had a bumper crop of everything that I had planted. When I lost my job at the mill I got my truck and started out selling produce from my garden. I sold all I could pack into it every other day and took lots of orders for my next trip.

There was another man who had a monopoly on selling from door to door, Sandy Campbell. He was rather well liked around town, but his prices were quite a bit higher than mine, and being as he had lived there in town for forty or fifty years, he knew most everyone.

Now I have no proof of this, but I think he went to the town council to have them pass a by-law that sellers of vegetables would have to have a license to peddle from house to house.

Anyway Bill Marshal, who was the town police by that time, stopped me one day while I was uptown selling the produce of my garden, and ask me if I had a license. I told him no, I did not have one. He said I had better get one as the council had passed a by-law that I had to have one before I could sell from house to house.

I ask how much did a license cost, and he said twenty dollars.

I told him that I did not have twenty dollars, that it was taking all I could get to make the payments on my house, pay my water rates and taxes and take care of my family. I then ask what would happen if I continued to sell from house to house without a license.

He said he would have to arrest me and the judge would give me the choice of paying the fine or going to jail.

I ask him what the fine would be and he said that he understood it would be a hundred dollars or three months in jail.

I said he had better arrest me now as I was not going to get a license because I did not have the money, and I would not pay the fine for the same reason. I told him that if I went to jail

for three months, the town would have to feed and support my family, pay my light bills and water bills.

I said I was paying my own way now and providing for my family by selling produce from my garden, but if the town had to keep my family for three months over a silly by-law like that, there would be trouble with the taxpayers.

At that time there was no Welfare in Georgetown.

Bill Marshal said he was on my side, so he would advise me to go and see the Mayor before I made up my mind about what to do.

I told him most of these vegetables had been ordered and paid for and I would have to deliver them as promised, and I was going to deliver them to the people who had paid for them unless he was going to arrest me right now.

He said to go and deliver them, then he said, “and before you see the mayor, I will give you a tip. The milk man, baker and butcher, they all sell their produce from door to door, and none them have a license, but I did not tell you this.”

He turned and walked away, and I went and delivered my vegetables.

That night I went to see the Mayor at his home. His name was Leroy Sale, but most people called him “Andy.” I don’t know why. That night after I had told him my position and what I thought about me being the only one requiring a license to sell my produce, he told me to go ahead, and do business as usual, and I would hear no more about it, and I never did.

With the Depression on full force and me with no job and no money, I could not keep up the payments of my house by just selling produce. The payment for the house was \$10.00 per month with two dollars a month for water and about three for Hydro. Then there was the matter of the interest.

It was hard times for me and my family, so I traded my house in Georgetown for some prime land up in the Rainy River District in northern Ontario. I made a deal with Mr. Reed, the hardware store owner, to trade me his 180 acres in Rainy River District for my interest in the home I had in Georgetown. At least I would have the deed to 180 acres of land for what I had spent on my home in money and work.

We had no money at the time, so we could not move up to the Rainy River District and our land right away, so we moved out into a house in the country that I got for \$5.00 per month rent, and I was to spend the rent money every month on shingles until I had enough to put a new roof on the kitchen that leaked in several places.

There was an apple orchard, some berry bushes and a small barn on the five acres of land that came with the house.

Altogether there were seven rooms in the house, a cistern and a closed in back porch. The house had been built by a carpenter for his large family several years before and had a good dry, full sized basement. It had a well, but it was dry when we came there. I tried to deepen it, but when I was working down at the bottom, soil started breaking off the sides of the well near where I was working, so I got out of there in a hurry and never went down there again. Measured on a rope it was about 92 feet to the bottom, and it was all through gravelly soil.

We ended up carrying our water to the house in buckets from a spring fed stream about 400 yards away. Right next to that stream, on the south slope to the stream, was a big stone house that was in an awful mess. A farmer had received it from an old bachelor as pay for taking care of him before he died. It had a good roof on it, with six rooms in it, but not much of a basement. It had quite a large orchard and altogether there was 15 acres, more or less.

Across the road was a bush belonging to a Mr. Lindsay. It was overrun by big black and grey squirrels. I had an old single shot .22 rifle and those squirrels kept us in meat for squirrel pies as long as we lived there. I did not like killing them as they were very interesting to watch and used to come over to our place in the fall to eat apples off the ground and sometimes off the trees. There were lots of hickory nut trees around there too, but the nuts were all very bitter and we could not eat them, but the squirrels seemed to like them.

Squirrel Pie

Ingredients:

*2 squirrels, skinned & gutted
1 16 oz. can mixed vegetables
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup self rising flour*

*1 teaspoon salt
1 10 oz. can cream of mushroom soup
1/2 cup margarine, melted*

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Wash squirrels well inside and out with warm water. Cut into serving pieces. Put squirrel into a kettle, add water to cover 2 inches and add salt, heat to boiling. Reduce heat, cover tightly and simmer until meat falls off the bones. Remove squirrel and set broth aside. When cooled cut meat from bones into bite sized pieces. Mix together vegetables, broth and squirrel meat in a casserole dish. Mix buttermilk, margarine and flour together and pour over top. Bake for 45 minutes.

The farmer that owned the place said he would sell the big run down stone house to me for \$1,000.00 and I could work for him at \$15.00 a month to pay it off. There would be no interest charges and he would pay the taxes until I had paid for the place, then I could work for him to pay back the taxes to him. Also he said he would supply me with milk and vegetables while I was paying off the place, and meat whenever he killed an animal for his own use. He said we could start to clean out the house any time we wished, then move in and start to work for him.

I thought he was a fine man and I meant to show him how I felt about it by working real hard for him.

Boy was I ever a fool.

That farmer did not have enough work for me to earn that \$15.00 every month, so I had to look around for whatever work I could find to pay him.

I would not let my wife do any cleaning of that rundown house until I got the filth off the floors, walls, and ceilings and I worked like a dog with water and lye and soap my mother supplied to clean that place.

I went once a week to town to get a hand out of a few groceries from the town council. A big fat lady who I do not suppose had ever been hungry in her life, or had ever done any hard work, handed out a few miserable groceries like they were made of gold.

That farmer down the road who wanted me to buy his run down house gave us a quart of milk a day that he could not sell and gave the rest he could not sell to his two dogs and a flock of cats. Sometimes the milk was sour, but we drank it anyway as it was sometimes all we had to fill the hole in our stomachs.

I never felt so low as I did when I saw those condescending looks on the faces of that farmer and his family when they gave me that quart of milk. The same look was on the face of the woman when she gave me those few groceries, as though it my fault that I could not get work of any kind.

Next January, when I was milking cows for a neighbor farmer, I found a goose egg one day in the hay barn. It was a very cold day and I wrapped it in my sweater and took it home as pay for my first day's work. Down at my mother's home she had some hens to set, so I took the egg down to her and she put it under one of her chickens. I did not think it would hatch, but it did and we had a fine young goose. After it had hatched out, my mother brought it out to our place and told us that we would have to look after it ourselves.

Well we did, and the children made quite a pet out of it.

Every night, it would park itself at the bottom of the steps going up onto the back porch, and it would be there in the morning. It was the best watch dog a person could ever dream of owning. If anyone was at our gate going to come in, it would make an awful racket until we would come out of the house to investigate. When a car would go past, he would not make a sound, but if it stopped he would sound his alarm.

There were a lot of skunks that used to be all over the place before we got that goose. After we had him, he learned the skunks that their place was down in the orchard, and not up around the house or barn. He was also a good guard for the children as they were all rather

small. If they went out of the yard or away from the house without there mother or me with them, he would fly around them making an awful racket until one of us came out and took over.

When we went down to the creek, about four or five hundred yards from the house, he always went with us, along with the children. After we had filled our pails from the creek, the children and the goose would go into the water in warm weather and really splash around and enjoy themselves.

I remember the first time we ever tied him up when we all went down to visit my mother one afternoon. This was in the summer of 1931. I should have known my mother better than to go for a visit in the afternoon, because that was the time of day when she had always taken a nap as far back as I could remember. Anyway, we tied a long rope to one leg of the goose and then tied the other end to an apple tree where he could always be in the shade while we were away.

When we got down to my mother's place we had to wake her up from her nap.

I could see that she was upset, so we did not stay very long.

When we got home, there was no sign of our goose.

We looked most everywhere except in the right place. We thought perhaps somebody seen him tied up and thought it a good chance to catch him. I went over in the long grass to see if the rope had been cut and found him all tangled up tight in the rope.

He was completely played out from struggling to get loose.

I untied him and he could hardly walk.

I learned a lot that day about geese, and in the next day or two.

While tied up helpless on the ground, he could not have a bowel movement. Now a goose has to have a bowel movement at least once an hour or what is in the bowels will start to dry up from the heat of their body, and we had been away for about three or four hours.

I did not know this at the time, but when he continued to walk around slow and give funny sounding squawks, I thought something very serious was wrong.

The only medicine we had was a little box of Dr. Chase's Kidney and Liver pills. I opened his mouth and I nudged one of the pills down his throat but I could not get him to swallow at first. Then, finally, he did swallow.

We sat down on the ground for about ten or fifteen minutes, perhaps longer, when all of a sudden he got onto his feet and started running down the road toward the orchard. I tried catching him but could not.

Believe it or not, as he was running around, that goose went with relief, and was he ever happy. I thought he would never stop squawking.

There was a gray trail splattered over the road to the edge of the grass. It sure must have been a great relief to the goose to get his insides working again. I learned that day that there was always something new to learn, and that Dr. Chase's little liver pills will work on birds just as good as they do on humans.

I can see that old goose in my mind now, the way he behaved when he got rid of that block that would surely have killed him.

I finally quieted him down and he sat back down on the ground in front of me.

Before he got into that trouble with getting tangled up in the rope, he had not gave me very much of his attention, he spent more of his time with the children. After I had struggled

with him to free him of the rope, and when I shoved the pill down his throat and he got rid of his misery, he was always very close to where I was. If I was leaving home I had to scold him and send him back home a few times when he would start to follow me when I went away to town or went looking for work, but he soon learned to stay at home when I said no, good and loud.

If I would sit on the front porch step in the evening he would come and wiggle around until he put himself between my shoes, and there he would stay until I got up and went into the house, then he would go to his favorite spot along side the steps where they joined the porch.

We could not kill him for Xmas that year, in fact, I gave him to a neighbour the next year when we left for our trip to Calgary where we stayed for the winter with my wife's parents, until we went down to our homestead in the Rainy River District.

I ask my mother what they did with the goose one time and she said they just kept it as a pet until it died of old age. No one in the family would kill it, and they all said that they would not eat it if someone did kill it, and my mother and grandmother said they would not cook it, so old Sam lived on until he was well past eleven years old.

After the Hungry thirties really got going there was a lot of people looking for work around Georgetown, and I also made the rounds to farms in the country, to the stone quarry, and to every factory and store in town. Sometimes I would get a delivery job from a store that would maybe get me a quarter. The man in charge of the freight would, once in a while, give me a dollar for helping him unload a boxcar of heavy goods, or I could sometimes get a job unloading

40 or 50 tons of coal at the Provincial Coated paper mill, at the rate of ten cents a ton. When I unloaded coal I had to spend a good part of what money I received to get the coal dust out of my clothes and off my body.

Those were lean years, hard and hungry years, and they were especially hard on my wife who had to find enough food to feed our children, three at the time.

I worked on several farms at 50 cents a day in haying at harvest time, sometimes for two days at a time or longer, depending on how much crop they had to take off. One fellow that I worked for hired me for three days at a dollar a day milking cows at five in the morning, and cleaning out barns and pig pens until the hay was dry enough to bring in. Then we would work until after dark and milk the cows after we took care of the horses. We would then have our supper and I would have a quart pail of milk to take home for my family for all those extra hours of killing work.

I had between four and five miles to walk before I would be at home. Often I would not get home until after midnight. I would have to leave home about three-thirty in the morning in order to get on the job at about five to start milking the cows.

This farmer was milking twenty-two cows at that time, and it was all done by hand milking. I had to have the milk strained and chilled and ready to load on the milk truck when it came to pick up the milk at seven in the morning. That farmer always made money while I was working there.

His hired girl for housework always helped to milk the cows when he did not have a hired man. At the end of three days, he had all the hay in the barn and he would have no more work for me until he cut his grain, so he said I need not come back in the morning.

I ask him for my three dollars.

He said he did not have any money right then, but would pay it to me the next time I came to work for him.

I said I needed it now, and if I did not get it right away, I would have him in small claims court the next day.

He said he had five dollars, and I told him I would take this to town and bring him back the two dollars in the morning, as soon as I had got it changed. He said he did not think I was to be trusted to do that.

I then told him that he thought it was alright for me to trust him to pay me three dollars that he owed me sometime in the distant future, but he would not trust me for a day with two dollars? I said he would hear from the small claims court the next day, and started to leave.

He gave me the five but had me sign a paper that I owed him two dollars.

When I walked back out to his farm the next day, close on to five miles, I would not give him the two dollars until he gave me the paper I had signed. He said he must have mislaid it in the house somewhere, and for me to give him the two dollars, and when he found it he would stop in at where I was living and give it to me.

I told him I was not born yesterday, so I would keep the two dollars until he found the paper.

He started to look through his pockets again and found the paper and gave it to me.

I gave him his two dollars and told him I would not be working for him again as I did not want to have to earn my money twice like I had this time.

I can say truthfully that no horse that I took care of and worked ever had a sore on his neck or shoulders while he was in my charge, and I am not bragging. I love horses and all animals, but horses in particular, and never liked to see them abused, but I saw some things on farms where I worked at the start of the Hungry Thirties that made me sick at the stomach.

It is a good thing that most all farmers do not use horses anymore but use farm tractors instead. If they abuse the tractors through ignorance and lack of care they will have to pay for it out of their own pocket, whereas if it were a horse, it would have to suffer and keep on trying to do the job it was told to do, or it would be beaten with a whip or anything that came handy.

There was a farmer that I worked for, just before I went to Calgary for the winter and then up to the homestead in the Rainy River District, who had a balky horse on the grain drill. This was just outside of Georgetown.

This farmer carried a blow torch with him on the drill, and when the horse refused to go, he would light the blow torch and burn its back end. When I was there one time working for him, a rainy spell set in, and of course the farmer could do no seeding until the fields dried up. He told me to take the team and haul out a big pile of manure onto another field that he was going to plow when he was through seeding.

I went into the barn and got the old gelding and this balky horse harnessed and went out and hooked them onto the wagon. I then got into the wagon, but instead of yelling at them to go like the farmer did, I made sort of a hissing sound.

The old gelding started off, then the balky horse, after hesitating for a moment, walked off too.

I drew up at the manure pile and put a little manure on and drove out to the field and unloaded it and came back without the horse balking once. I then put on about half a load and tried that, and they walked away with it without a balk. The next time I put on all the manure that would stay on the wagon, and away we went.

I saw this farmer that used a blowtorch on his horses watching me from the kitchen window of his house, and I expected him to be out asking questions pretty soon.

I was loading the next load when he come out. He wanted to know why the horse would pull for me and not for him.

Then I explained it to him. I said that horses have feelings the same as people. You treat them bad, they behave bad, treat them kind and gentle and they will be willing to do all they can when you ask them to, but never be cruel to them for you cannot win with cruelty, but you can win with patience and kindness.

He ask me if I thought the horse would haul that load out if he was up on the wagon and took the lines.

I told him it would not move if he spoke to the horse, but if he would come into the barn, I would show him how it was done.

We went into the barn and I showed him how to make that hissing noise. I had him practice until he was pretty good, but I told him never to speak to the horse in a rough tone of voice, and not to speak to him at all for several days until he got used to having him around working with him, and to always speak in a very soft and quiet voice when around the horse. I

told him the horse had a lot to forget about with the torture of the blowtorch, and it might forget in a short time and it might never forget.

He had got pretty good with making that hissing noise, so we went out and he got up on the load and made the hissing noise and the team walked away with the load. He stopped them by pulling on the lines like I had told him, and started to unload the manure.

When he got enough spread there, he wanted to go ahead a bit, but he forgot to hiss and the team would not move, so he started yelling at them. They still did not move the wagon so he jabbed the bay horse with the fork and it then moved them all around the field. But the lines had been loosely wrapped around the stake at the front of the wagon box, and they came loose and fell down in between the horses, and the horses took off.

The old gelding could not run very fast, but he was doing his best.

They came to the gateway where they went into the field, came through it down the lane, and when they went past the manure pile the farmer jumped off onto the manure pile and the team and wagon went down the farmer's driveway and out onto the main road.

As they made the turn onto the main road, the wagon tipped over and rolled down a small bank taking the horses with it into a wire fence, where the horses got hung up until we got down there and got them loose. The farmer had stopped his swearing and yelling by then and was very quiet for a change, but I thought he would be letting go again soon.

We tied the horses to a fence post and between the two of us we got the wagon back on the road. Nothing had been broken and the horses had been scratched up a bit, but that was about all. The farmer said he would go up and get another horse to put with the old gelding to haul the wagon back up to the manure pile.

They soon calmed down a lot, so I said lets try him on the wagon again, and I will drive.

I told the farmer if we got going not to speak a word until we were both out of the wagon. I hooked the team back on the wagon and we both got in.

I hissed at the horses and they started away just like nothing had happened.

When we got up to the manure pile, we both got out, and the farmer says "you had better put the horses in the stable."

I said that is not wise, the thing to do is for me to go on hauling manure, just like nothing had happened, and they will soon forget all about it. He had carried the fork up when he found it along the road, so I started in loading the wagon. I hauled several more loads before dark and had no trouble with the balky horse at all.

After I had taken care of the horses and washed up and went in for supper, the farmer said he was going to take that balky horse back in the bush in the morning and shoot him.

I said that he would lose quite a bit of money if he did that.

He said if anyone would offer him fifteen dollars he could have the horse and be welcome to it. He had been paying me just that much, 50 cents a day, so I said I would take him up on his offer and work for him for a month to pay him for the horse. He said it was a deal and his son, daughter, wife and hired girl heard him.

At the end of a month's hard work, he refused to either give me the horse or the money, so I took him to court. My mother loaned me the two dollars that I needed to do this. When we had our hearing I told about how that farmer had used a blow torch on the horse, and how I had got the horse to work for me, and how the farmer had even been able to get him to work by doing it the way I told him to do.

The farmer had to pay me fifteen dollars and the court costs, plus one hundred dollars for cruelty to the horse to the Society for Prevention Of Cruelty to Animals. After that, the Society kept a close watch on him.

One Sunday, in the summer of 1932, when we were still living down south, a few months before we left for Calgary to spend the winter with my wife's parents, we went for a picnic in my old half ton Model T truck out to a place I had spent a lot of time as a boy. My wife and I sat in the seat of the truck with my wife holding Ben, the baby, on her lap. Lorne and Laura were riding in the back of the truck sitting on an old seat out of a car. We did not travel very fast as it was rather a rough road, but was beautiful country out through the way we went. We finally arrived at this small field along the road. I stopped the truck and got out and opened the gate into the field, went through, then closed the gate. I drove across the field over to the edge of the bush. In about fifty feet or so into the bush was a nice cool stream that flowed through the property. The stream was only about a foot deep in most places, and I had caught quite a few good sized trout in that stream when I was a boy.

Lorne and Laura got out of the truck and began to explore right away.

We got the cloth laid out on the grass, and the grass was short just like a lawn due to the cows that was pastured in the field. My wife set out the food that she had prepared, along with the cool drinks in gallon jugs that we placed in the water in the stream.

It was shady and cool in there under the trees, and the sound of the stream passing by was very relaxing. The water in the stream was quite cool as it came from springs not very far away from where we were sitting.

Lorne and Laura finally came back and we all had our picnic lunch. Right after lunch Lorne wanted to go in the water to learn to swim, but I told him to never go into the water after eating a meal for at least two hours or more.

Well him and Laura went exploring again, and my wife and I took off our shoes and my socks and her stockings and let our feet dangle in the cool water. It felt very good and refreshing. In about a couple of hours or so, Lorne and Laura came back all hot and sweaty, so I had them sit down for awhile and rest until they cooled off. Then I told them to get their shorts on and they could go in the water.

My wife said she was going to put on her bathing suit and go in and for me to keep an eye on baby Ben.

Lorne and his mother went out to where the water was deep enough for him to learn to swim, and she would hold him up with her hands around his middle, while he splashed away with his hands and feet. Laura had not got any further than just putting her feet in the water and sitting on the bank of the creek.

I had Ben sitting on my knee and he was restless, so his mother came over to see what was wrong with him.

Lorne, who was left over near the other side of the stream, must have thought he was a good swimmer by now, so he threw himself flat on his stomach in the water and started splashing with his hands and feet.

After a few moments, I looked over and the water was so clear that I could see him laying on the creek bed moving his arms and legs very slowly. He had his head under the water and was not trying to get out, so I knew he was in trouble. I lay Ben down rather roughly on the grass and got into that stream fast and over to Lorne and got him out of the water in a hurry.

As I walked over to the bank I held him under my arm with his head down and the water he had down in him started to run out. Before I got to where we had our blanket set up he was coughing and making a great fuss, so I knew that I had been in time to prevent this from being a very sad day for my wife and I.

After he had coughed for awhile and brought up a good deal more water he seemed as good as new.

The first thing he said when he was able to speak was, "dad did you see how good I could swim?"

Well I did not know whether to laugh or cry, so I did neither. I told him it was not too bad for his first try alone but he was never to go in swimming alone again unless I was there to coach him, and he would have to promise me that he would do that until I told him that he was good enough to go swimming alone without me.

I will say that as far as I know, he kept his promise to me and became a pretty good swimmer.

Late in 1932, my wife's parents ask us to come up to Calgary and stay the winter with them before we went to our land in Rainy River. They thought I might be able to get a job in Calgary, or on a farm, so we could have a little money saved up to get started with when we did go to our land.

They sent down enough money for my wife and the three children to take the train to Calgary, and I would start out ahead hitching rides on freight trains going west.

It took me 6 days to get to Calgary riding freights.

I rode one to North Bay, then went down to the police station and ask if they would tell me just where I could catch a freight to Calgary. The man at the desk took me in to see the Chief of Police, and was grinning when he told the Chief what I wanted to know. The Chief dismissed him, then said, "it is a long time since I saw you Sam."

He was Chief of Security when I worked in the paper mill at Iroquois Falls, years before. Jim Williams was his name and I knew him as soon as I came through the door.

I told him my story and why I wanted to get to Calgary before my wife and family arrived there, and he said he could understand that. He did not need to ask me if I had any money, but instead he said he had been just ready to go out to supper and would I join him.

We went to a place that served a very good meal, and then he went over and talked to the woman behind the counter. When we were through and he went to pay for the meals, the woman gave him a good sized paper bag. We went out and got in the police car and he drove away outside the railway yards to where there was a switch, then a single track going west.

He said I should wait behind some piles of ties, and that when a freight train came out of the yard going west, it would have to stop to open the switch and close it to the main line, and

then I could get on, but to get off about a mile out of the yards at Winnipeg and walk around the Winnipeg yard and kind of get up on the west side of the yard and wait at the ramp. He gave me that big bag that he got from the woman at the restaurant and said it was a bit of lunch, then hurried over to his car and drove away.

I waited there about an hour before a train came, listening to coughs and conversations among the ties. There were a lot of fellows, and some girls, that were waiting for a ride as well as me.

The train came out real slow and a brakeman came out and opened the switch and the train started moving again. I waited until an empty stock car came along with the door open. I then climbed in and found that I would have lots of company.

After the switch had been closed again by a rear brakeman, the train started to pick up speed. I raked some dry straw into a corner and sat with my back to the wall and went to sleep.

I woke up with someone trying to get his hand in my pocket. I got my arm around his neck and my other hand under his chin and darn near twisted his head off. He could not yell as I had his air pretty well shut off, but he did wriggle a lot. I hung on until he stopped wriggling, then let go.

He lay there for quite a while without moving, then come around and started to sit up. I grabbed him around the neck again and pulled him over to where I could whisper in his ear and said it would be no chore at all to toss him out the door while the train was going full speed, and if he came to this end of the car again, that was what would happen to him. I let him go and he crawled back to his end of the car and stayed there until we made our first stop, then they all left the car I was in and I guess they got in another car with a more friendly passenger.

When we stopped in Sudbury, there were quite a few Provincial Police on hand with dogs, also some RCMP officers, to see that no one left the train to go into town.

After we got going again, the next big town we came to was Sault Sainte Marie. There was another smaller town that we went through before we came to this larger town, but we went through so fast I can not remember the name of it.

On the first Sunday after I started riding the freights out to Calgary, when I had made it to the marshaling yard at Sault Sainte Marie, there must have been over two hundred people waiting there to ride on the freight. I found out there would be no freight going until about midnight, so I begun waiting for a ride and got a ball team together and played baseball to pass the time. I never did find out who won the game though, because I pulled out of the game, being pretty tired from having traveled in a freight that far already.

As I was walking past the caboose of the train waiting to pull out west, the door opened and a brakeman came out and ask me if I would like some soup.

I said I sure would, so he told me to come in and have some.

He said they had made more than the crew could dispose of, and I was welcome to it.

I soon got rid of the soup, some bread and butter and about a quarter of an apple pie. I thanked him for his kindness, but he just said these were tough times for a lot of people and the soup would only have been thrown out anyway if I had not come along to help him get rid of it.

He then wrapped the big soup bone with still lots of meat on it in some paper and told me I could chew on that when I got hungry.

When I got back to where the head of the train would be when it left, I found a group of six fellows squatting around a fire that they had a five gallon can hanging over on a pole. I ask what they had in the can and they said it was a vegetable stew, without meat, and it would be their one meal for the day. I unwrapped the big soup bone I had and told them here was the meat they needed to make it fit to eat if they would pick off the pieces of paper that was sticking to it.

They sure got the paper bits off it in a hurry and added it to their stew. They invited me to help eat the stew but I told them about the brakeman feeding me and giving me the bone.

They said they had always believed that trainmen were an unfeeling bunch of men, but guessed they were not all that way.

That was my second experience with a kind-hearted trainman.

When the train left there that night, there were several hundreds of people on that freight. Four flat cars were crowded to the danger point where some might be crowded off. The train stopped some time after at a water tower and near all the passengers got off and went into the bush for the night.

I stayed on the train until it arrived outside the Port Arthur freight yards, early the next morning. I got off the train while it was still moving through the freight yards and started to walk up to where the road crossed the tracks.

June 30, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter yesterday, and I thank you for excusing my mistakes in missing the letters that I aim at but do not know that I have missed until I check over the typing I have done. I can only tell you that I have completely lost the use of my right eye now, and the left one is not far behind. However, I will stop making excuses, and wasting typing space.

I was finally up to the doctor to get the stitches taken out of my temple and my right ear. Some of them hurt a bit when the Doc was taking them out, but not anything to get excited about. When I had been to my medical doctor, Dr. Gordon, he said these growths that were on my temple and right ear, were caused by me being diabetic.

The surgeon who did the two operations told me a different story about what had caused them. He said that they were skin cancers caused by too much exposure to the sun.

I can not understand how that could happen, and I told him so. All this year and the year before, I was very seldom outside the house, as my legs were giving me quite a lot of trouble.

He told me that it did not have to happen last year or the year before. He said it could have happened ten years ago or twenty years ago, but was triggered off by the large amount of pills that I was taking every day. He said that the possibility of skin cancer had been laying there dormant for perhaps years, and when I took so many different kinds of pills, it had awakened the disease and it started to grow.

He said that I would have no more trouble with those spots that he cut off, and perhaps those two spots were all that would appear, but I must keep a close watch on my body for other eruptions, and as soon as I found any, I was to come in and see him at once.

I had not believed that being a diabetic had anything to do with those spots, as I had made enquiries from the Diabetic Foundation, and they had told me that as far as they knew, no one had ever got those kind of spots from being a diabetic. I had been suspicious of those pills for a long time, that they would eventually have some sort of a bad side affect on my health, so I was not surprised very much when the surgeon told me that the pills were the cause of these skin cancer spots appearing on my face.

Oh well, I guess there is not much I can do about it, except to keep a close watch to see if any more of them appear. The doctor says they are not dangerous unless they are left too long feeding on a person's outer skin. He says they become dangerous once they get through the skin and start to work on the flesh under the skin, that is when you are really heading for a lot of trouble.

Well I have spent most of my life outside in the sunshine and rain and snow and cold, and I always thought it was a very good, healthy way to live. No one ever told me that there was a

combination of pills or drugs that, along with lots of sunshine, would ever cause skin cancer. It just shows that you can learn something new most every day.

I am also learning new things about the little boy that we are taking care of for the Children's Aid. He is just about two years old now. He used to be what I thought was a very contrary and stubborn cry baby if he did not get his own way. Now that he has the whole house to run around in, and I mean run, as he very seldom ever just walks, he has turned into a very pleasant little fellow to have around. He and I are getting to be very good friends. He can open the door to my room now and he comes in to visit me right after we have breakfast. He is quite content to sit on my knee at my desk, and scribble on the pieces of paper that I give him. He admires everything on my desk, and at first he always tried to take everything into his own hands, but I would just shake my head at him and he would pull his hand back and not try to touch it again.

I play silly little games with him, and he seems to enjoy them a lot.

When my wife comes in to take him out to feed him or get him ready for bed, and he happens to be on the floor when he sees her coming, he runs to me and tries to climb up on my knee. He seems to feel safe there. When he comes into my room in the morning, while he can not talk yet, I have learned him to say "Hi" as a greeting first thing in the morning, and he never forgets to say it when he first sees me.

I think it was my wife that learned him to call me dad, some time ago.

Those are the only two words that he can speak clearly so far, but now that he seems willing to learn to talk, I am going to put in more time trying to learn him more. He has such an attachment for me now, and he wants to be with me so much, perhaps he will be more willing to

learn from me. My wife has her hands full as it is, so if I can keep the boy occupied for most of the day, it will take a great load off her shoulders and give her more time for other things.

You ask about the Hungry Thirties. When you work ten hours a day at real hard work for five cents an hour, or 50 cents a day, and if the need arose, overtime at no pay at all, you begin to believe things cannot get any worse. You change your mind when you find that you cannot even get a job at 5 cents per hour, then you know you have reached bottom and that it can not get worse.

I worked at haying for those wages from six in the morning until ten or eleven at night some days for 50 cents and I know what it is all about. When I hear of what the unions are asking for wages now I wonder if they have all gone crazy, along with the storekeepers who are also gone crazy with their prices.

I remember when you could buy a good big building lot for \$25.00 and have a five room bungalow built on it, complete in every detail and ready to move in for \$5,000.00 and you could pay it off at \$10.00 per month, just like rent if you could not afford higher payments. Now it will cost about \$40,000.00 for just a good lot, and another big \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00 to get a house built on it.

I tell you, people are just going crazy, right through the whole system.

I said right when inflation started and I still say it, if war time controls had been clamped on like they were when the war started, things would be back to normal now and everybody would have been working. They could freeze prices when a war started, why can they not freeze prices when inflation starts? We are being attacked the same as if a war were on and the same precautions should have been taken.

Lots of people would not have liked it, they did not like it then, but so what.

With unemployment up to around one million, there is bound to be a crash sometime soon, unless the government, and the people, along with the unions, wake up and be more realistic in their thinking. Business, government and labour will have to get together and cooperate fully to lick our problems. The people of Canada will have to do their full share in bringing this country out of the mess we are in.

I wrote to several newspapers when inflation started to raise its ugly head and suggested that prices and wages be frozen at once. I never saw my letters in those papers. I also wrote to the prime minister and to members of parliament, but got no answers. If my idea had been carried out, our export business would have been tremendous, for we could of competed with lower prices on everything we exported, and perhaps in this way helped other countries to control their rising costs of production. We did it in war time, I could see no reason why it could not have been done before inflation got out of control. I really think the governments of the country were too much concerned for their political hide, and not concerned about the people who voted them into power to run our country in an honest way.

About who I worked for when I lost my house. I worked anywhere I could get work, which was hard to find. I worked for several farmers for 50 cents a day. First there was Mr. Bessie on the farm next to where we were living out in the country. He paid me \$15.00 per month that worked out to 50 cents per day as I worked on Sundays too. Then there was the farmer that I worked for, for \$1.00 per day for 10 to 12 hrs a day. He was to pay me \$1.00 a day for as long as haying lasted. Every night after we were through haying for the day, I had my supper then went home. Shortly after I got home, his regular hired man would bring us a ten

pound pail of fresh milk. I had in mind that this was a gift for the children, or so the hired man told me. When I finished the haying at the end of two days the farmer gave me \$1.00.

I said he had made a mistake, that I had worked for two days at a \$1.00 per day and I wanted the other dollar.

He said he had sent down two pails of milk at 50 cents a pail, so I had only \$1.00 coming, which he had paid me.

We had quite an argument but I did not get the extra dollar.

He had a good apple orchard, so I took my dollar out of that orchard one night when the apples were ripe. I took the apples into town the next day and traded them for a pair of shoes for my oldest boy and 25 cents in cash. With the 25 cents I bought two pounds of sausages, and we had a good feed out of them, along with our vegetables that I had grown in a bit of garden where we lived.

You ask about milking cows by hand. When the cows were brought into the barn to be milked, or were in the barn in the winter time, they were always well brushed before milking and their udder washed. When being hand milked, which most farmers did at that time, you milked into an open top 12 quart pail. The odd bit of hay, straw, or perhaps a loose hair would get into the milk, so it had to be strained through two thickness of gauze, which took out anything in the milk. Most farmers are very clean about their milking part of the business, especially if they are shipping milk. They have to have the milk cooled to a certain temperature before the man that hauls the milk to the shipping point gets there, or he will not take delivery of it.

You ask about riding the rails in the Hungry Thirties. I had a family to support with the spectre of poverty grinning over my shoulder at all times. I was riding the rails, and that was in

itself dangerous enough, without having the worry of having to ride with some of the toughest looking men I ever saw. I did not dare sleep in a car, unless I was alone. I did not know who to trust, so I trusted no one.

I know there must have been lots of those men just as worried as I was, good men looking for some work to support their families the same as I was. Their families would be in the same predicament as my family if I got hurt if their breadwinner got hurt or killed, and I think a lot of those men were like me, they did not know who to trust, so trusted no one.

I had a very small haversack that I carried on my back at all times, leaving both hands free to protect myself if the need arose. In the haversack, I had soap and a towel, a pair of clean socks, a shaving outfit, comb, a bottle of peroxide for cleaning scratches and cuts, a bottle of iodine, needle and thread, a spare shirt and coat buttons, a pair of cotton gloves, an extra pair of shoe laces, matches in waterproof box, a three in. wide roll of waterproof adhesive tape, a small short scissors, small spools of white and black thread, some black mending wool wrapped around some paper with a darning needle stuck into it, and two clean white handkerchiefs. In my pants pocket I carried a knife with three blades that were real sharp, one handkerchief in another pocket, and in a third pocket I had a small memo pad with a short pencil in it. I also carried a spare pencil in my coat pocket.

There were no hitchhikers on the roads when I went to Calgary in the Hungry Thirties on the freight trains, and riding freight trains was the only way of transportation if you had no money, which most everyone did not. If the police had arrested all who rode on the trains in the thirties they would have had to build a lot more jails to lock them in. There were thousands

riding the freights in those days, and the police just tried to keep them all on the cars until they were out of their district.

It is rotten sleeping in a boxcar on some straw with no blankets and then having to wash in cold water from a lake or river when the freight stops at one. Then of course you have to cook your own breakfast in tin cans, if you have any food to cook. The young people of today that travel around the country can hitch hike and sleep in youth hostels. They can travel in comfort as different from what I had to do as traveling in private cars is from riding the rails. Nobody has to sleep in the ditch today, no matter how poor they are.

I listened in on the talk around a few supper fires and from what I heard, a lot of the men, and young boys too, thought it was a great thing to just ride the freights from place to place. You could pretty well pick out the married men with families by there somber faces, very seldom ever laughing at the other's stories or jokes, in fact they did not say much, having too much to worry about as to where their next meal or their family's next meal were coming from.

They did not have welfare in those days like they have now.

If it was not for welfare and unemployment insurance and family allowance and old age pensions, the same thing would be going on now, only I think that with the high wages and high price of everything, people are living in a fool's paradise, and I think the awakening is not to far away.

About Mary getting married. I do not know just why Mary married her first husband, except she said that she loved him. I thought he was a creep, the first time I saw him. I tried to show her that he was no good, but I guess that was where I made a mistake for she always defended his weaknesses and said that he had promised to reform if she would marry him. She

had just turned seventeen the year before, and she was near eighteen when she married him. I guess she really believed him when he said he would reform and quit drinking. She would not believe me when I told her that he was still having affairs with other girls.

About my operation for Osteoarthritis. They took out both my hip joints and installed metal joints. The pain had always been in my knees but never in my hip joints. I ask the doctor why he was going to operate on my hips when the pain was in my knee joints.

He said that the pain in my knees was what was called sympathetic pain from the trouble in my hip joints that were wore out. I have not had any pain in my knees since the operations, so he must have been right, also I have never had any pain in my hips. But I have had plenty of pain in my thighs and have had lots of water gather in the calves of my legs, which is very painful.

My legs will only support me for a very few minutes now, but that is mostly, I think, from lack of exercise. I cannot do any exercise like walking, for if I do, I have a bad anginal attack, and that is a very painful experience, so you will see that I am kind of blocked off a bit from ever being able to do much walking or work again. However I have worked out a schedule of light exercises for myself before I go to bed that seems to be producing some good results.

I have another exercise that keeps my feet limber and my toes loose. They had been stiff and felt like they were swollen although I can not bend over far enough to see, not even with my glasses on. I sort of rock my feet back and forth by sitting on the side of the bed with my feet flat on the floor, and first raising my heels as high as I can while still keeping my toes on the floor, then raising my toes as high as I can while keeping my heels tight on the floor. This has done away with the stiffness and dry swollen feeling in my feet.

For me, getting back to where I can walk without canes is the greatest prize of all prizes and I am going to win it if I live long enough. Once I can walk normally again, it will not take me long to get back in shape again and then I can find a nice home for my wife and I to live out our remaining years in.

My friend, I think you are putting a great strain on yourself by telling me to keep these letters coming. It must take up a lot of your time to read them and to figure out what I am trying to tell you. Then there are all the mistakes that I make in my poor typing, caused mostly by my poor eyesight. It is hard for me to understand how you can get any sense out of them sometimes.

I must admit to a bit of selfishness on my part for continuing to send you these wanderings of my mind. I get great pleasure in typing them, and going way back and sort of reliving those days when I was a young fellow. Those memories are about all I have left to dream about now, and I often wonder how I ever lived through some of those rough times. There must have been someone who was whispering in my ear to tell me just the right thing to do.

Well good-bye for now and write me when you get the time.

Write soon.

Your friend,

Sam

vistaVision Memories

Riding the Rails

When I got to the Port Arthur freight yards two railway police men came hurrying down the tracks and stopped me. They gave me a pretty hard time for awhile, until one of them took my cap off my head and started to feel it all over. He finally found what he was looking for, then tore part of the lining out of my cap and took out the ten dollar bill I had sewed into the lining for emergency. He said it would pay for part of my ride on the CPR and put it in his pocket and they both walked away back up the track.

I hurried and wrote down both their shield numbers, and a description of them, in the little notebook I always carried with me, also the time. I already had the number of the bill. They left me something that they overlooked in my watch pocket in my trousers, 45 cents.

I walked over to the railway yards in Fort William, and a man there told me there would be a freight going to Fort Frances in about half an hour or so. I wanted to go that way so that I could perhaps go up to my land and see if it was worth coming back there to live on, if I was able to get a job in Calgary and get enough money together to start a farm during the coming winter.

I caught that freight, but it did not stop until it got to the American border at Rainy River, when the RCMP searched the train and took me off. I told them where I wanted to go and they said if I got caught on the outside of another train when it was checked after it crossed the border,

I would be sent to jail in the states for 90 days, and then be brought back over the border to Rainy River. They said the best way to get across the border and get back into Canada was to pay my fare.

I told them about the CPR policemen taking my ten dollars and only leaving me 45 cents to get to Calgary.

The two RCMP officers gave me five dollars between them. I wrote down their names and addresses.

They just smiled at me. I don't think that they believed I would pay it back, but I did out of the first money that I earned. I went and bought a ticket to Sprague, in Manitoba. It only cost me \$1.25 and I believe those two officers knew it and gave me the five so I could get on my way to Calgary. When I paid them back, I gave each of them a new clean five dollar bill that I went to the bank and gave them a ten dollar bill for. I really could not afford to do that, but I thought that type of generous people should get a bit extra, as the bible says to cast your bread on the waters and it will come back to you two fold, or something like that.

At Sprague, there was an RCMP officer standing on the platform when I got off the train. He looked at me for quite awhile, then came over and ask me if he could be of help to me.

I said yes, and I ask him if he could tell me when the next freight train would be coming through going to Winnipeg.

He said he was here for the purpose of keeping riders off the freight trains going to Winnipeg, and if I got on one he would have to take me off and charge me with trespassing. However, he said, if I was still on the station platform when I got on the freight, he could not charge me with trespassing as the platform was there for the public's use.

I got his meaning right away, and when I saw the freight stop at the water tower to take on water I walked down the platform to the end nearest to the engine. When the train was going past at a pretty good speed I grabbed a ladder and started climbing. As the freight car on which I was riding past the officer, he waved to me.

I think he was a pretty good Joe, like all the rest of the force.

When we came to the edge of the Winnipeg yards, it was very dark and raining, so I thought I would just stay with the train I was on and see where it would take me. We went twenty or thirty yards, just about across the whole yard, when the train started to slow down. On the side of my car that had the open door, on the next track, there was a train going in the same direction we were going, but at a bit faster speed. Just then, as I looked back along the train I was riding on, and I saw two lights moving towards me between the cars.

These were railroad security men and I knew I had to get out of there fast. So I jumped out of the doorway and run for the other moving train and caught a ladder and climbed to the top of the car and lay flat on the roof. The train was gathering speed all the time and I knew it must be a long one and perhaps I would be lucky and have a train going west where I wanted to go. It soon stopped raining and I was sure glad as I was pretty wet and near frozen on top of that boxcar and would have to get shelter very soon or I would not be able to move.

The train came to a stop in about an hour or so, but it was still dark.

I got down off the car I was on and walked back along the train until I found an empty car that had the door open. I was lucky to get off the car I had been on, because they cut it off, along with several other cars, and put them on a siding near an elevator. While they were coupling onto the train again I got into another boxcar and found a lot of paper tacked to the walls. I tore off a

lot of this paper and lay down on the floor and tucked the paper over and around and under my body and tried to get dry and stop shivering.

I must have slept a bit because when I next looked out the door, it was daylight and the train was slowing down in a town. I could see that it was a fairly large town as it had several elevators and was spread out for quite a distance. My clothes had dried out a bit and I felt a lot warmer than when I got into the car.

I got out of the car and was walking down towards the rear of the train when a brakeman got down out of the caboose.

He stopped me and ask me if I had been a passenger on his train.

I said I had, so he said I looked like I could use a hot cup of coffee. He then took me into the caboose and gave me a cup of coffee and a sandwich. When I had disposed of that he said I had better get back to my private car as they would be pulling out for Saskatoon in about three minutes. I got back in my car and I had hardly made it when, sure enough, the train started moving again.

I sure appreciated that man giving me that coffee and sandwich. It gave me quite a lift and warned my insides. That was the third time a stranger had been kind to me since I had started to make my way to Calgary.

When I left Georgetown to go to Calgary in the fall of 1932 to join my wife and children for the winter at her parent's place, I had thought I could just get on a freight train and ride right through, without switching around, but I was finding out different.

When the train to Winnipeg I rode in neared the other side of the yard in Saskatoon, I got off because I learned I would have to catch a local train to get to Calgary.

There were two more young fellows there in the Saskatoon yards waiting for a train. An RCMP officer stepped out of a car that drove right up to where we were sitting on a pile of ties and ask us all for our names, where we came from, and where we were going. He came over to where I was sitting alone by myself and ask me to empty out my haversack that I was carrying, which I did. He saw each article as I took it out. Then he turned the haversack upside down and shook it. He then ask me if I was carrying any money. I said some small change. I had already told him where I was going, and about my family coming up on the train within a few days.

He went over to the two boys that were waiting with me and had them turn out their bags, and one boy acted so nervous that he searched him. He found a nickel plated gun in his pocket, so he put the cuffs on him and searched the other boy, then went through the clothing himself that the boy had taken out of his bag. He found an automatic gun in his extra pair of socks and two boxes of cartridges, one in each toe of a pair of shoes. He unlocked one cuff off the first boy and snapped it around the wrist of the other boy, then ask me to return each boys belongings to their bags. He then told me the freight for Calgary would be along in about a half an hour.

He took the two boys carrying their bags over and put them in the back seat of the car and drove away.

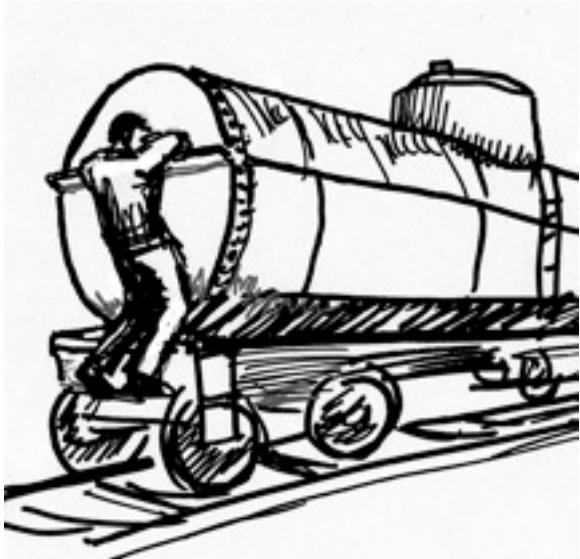
That policeman could have arrested me for trespassing on railway property but he did not even mention it.

I caught the train when it was leaving and I was finally on the last leg of my trip and should arrive in Calgary early the next morning.

When the train arrived in Drumheller, they had to do quite a bit of moving cars around in the yard. When they were ready to leave, they had picked up some coal cars that were loaded, and a tank car. The tank car was the only one I could ride on and be out of some of the wind. There were two girls and two boys that jumped onto the railing at the back end of the tank car with me.

Hanging onto that cold railing with bare hands was pretty cold business, let me tell you. We had been on our way for about an hour or two when the girl next to me said she had no feeling in her hands. Her boyfriend on the other side of her told her he had troubles of his own and he could do nothing to help her keep her hands warm.

I watched her closely from then on, and when I saw her hands start to slip off the railing, I put my left arm around her and caught the railing on the other side and kept her from falling backwards down under the wheels of the cars behind us. I told her to put her hands up under her armpits and press them close to her sides and they would soon be warm again. I said I would prevent her from falling until she could hold on again by herself.



The boyfriend did not like that and said he would take care of me when the train got to Calgary.

When the girl was able to hold on by herself, I took my arm away from her back.

We arrived at a rail station at Calgary and the train would have to stop. As it slowed down, I got off the tank car I was riding on and started walking north up the road. South down the road across the tracks I had seen the lights come on a car as it started moving up the road to the railway tracks. Some of the cars on the train were still across the road, so I crawled through the fence along the road and went west along the edge of a bluff that was there. I walked until I came to the road that went from where I worked before, past the feedlot, and out east to Chestermere Lake, then I went down towards Calgary to where the road crossed Nose Creek with a bridge.

It was about five in the morning and the sun was barely up, so I went under the bridge, took all my clothes off and had a good cold bath and gave my body a good washing with soap and water, then I dressed and walked up to Tuxedo Park where my wife's parents lived, and where I was to meet my wife and family.

When I got to my wife's parent's place, my father-in-law was just getting breakfast before going to work at the CPR shops. We talked for a while, then he had to leave to catch his streetcar to the shops.

I went down to the basement where there was a couch and lay down for what I thought would be a week's sleep, but I got up in less than two hours feeling fine, just as if I had a full night's sleep.

I had a little book that I kept certain information in about my trip, and I found that it had taken me six days and nights and three hours to get there from Georgetown, and that I had only had nine and a half hours sleep in the six days and six nights. I did not know it then, but it was going to catch up with me later on, when I would sleep for a full twenty-four hours on two different times without waking up once.

I went down to the employment office that first morning I got to my wife's parent's place in Calgary looking for a job but did not get one. The next morning, my family arrived and we moved into the big garage of my father-in-law's. We were crowded but quite comfortable for the winter.

In the fall of 1932, when we were living in my wife's parent's garage, the threshing in the surrounding country had been delayed because of wet weather and early snow, but it was drying up fairly quickly, so I phoned out to Tally Cleveland's farm to say hello and see if I could get on there. He said he would need two more men the next day and for me to pick up another man and come out. My wife's brother Max wanted a job, and as he said he could get a lady to drive us out, I took him along.

We were to start to work the next day by ten o'clock, but we delayed that idea for several days while I caught up on my sleep.

When we started at the Cleveland place, the boss had killed a heifer that was in heat the day before for meat to feed his crew. We did not know about the heifer being in heat and we all got diarrhea and could not seem to find out what was causing it. We were still eating meat from that heifer when I found out from Old Johnny Pelky, who was still working there, that the heifer had been in heat.

I told the other fellows what the trouble was and we all quit right then and there because the boss should have known better and that was no way to treat a crew of men working for you, and I walked back to town twenty miles that afternoon and evening.

When we were over the diarrhea, we both got a job on a threshing crew south of Calgary, driving bundle teams. Max was afflicted with spells of epileptic seizures. He had one while coming in with a load and was still under the affects of it when his team got to the threshing machine. One of the men there saw him laying on top of the load and stopped the team. They did not know what was wrong with him, but my wagon was right behind him, so we got him down off the load and I took care of him until the spell was over.

The boss said it was too dangerous for Max to be working with horses, so he said he would have to let us both go, so he took us back into town.

I tried selling subscriptions to a weekly paper to get a few dollars, but it was 1932 going on 33, and everyone was feeling the Depression and did not have the money to spend on reading material. I did get some gifts of food and clothing at one of the places where I tried to sell

subscriptions. Finally, when we had been there long enough to receive relief, I was notified to apply at the Provincial Police department for my food voucher on the first of each month.

A very young fellow made out the vouchers and ask a lot of dam fool questions about how we spent the money, what kind of food we bought and at what store.

I got sick of listening to him, and one day I ask to see the officer in charge of the detachment. As soon as I saw him I reconnized him. He was the man who had been a Corporal in Claresholm when I knew him there, but now was a Sergeant.

He remembered me and ask me what he could do for me.

I told him what had been going on with all the questions I was being ask, and I ask him if that was all needed every time I came in for my voucher.

He said the fellow was just a rooky and had only been on the job for a short time and was trying to make a good impression, and no harm was meant, he was sure, but he would tell him to cut down on his asking so many questions. He said he would talk to him before I went in and I would then see the difference in the way he replied when I ask for my voucher.

When I went in next time I did not have to ask for my voucher, he just looked at me and started to type and fill it out. He just pointed to where I had to sign for it.

My wife, three children and I spent the winter of 1933 in my father-in-law's garage. I knew we had to leave for our land before the spring got very far along as if the snow and ice had completely gone when we got there, traveling in the area would be difficult, due to the bad roads at the time. So at the beginning of April, we got on a train and set out for our land, ready to start homesteading. We only had a small amount of money, most of it given to us by my wife's parents to help us get started.

July 12, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your letter a few minutes ago, and thought I had better write to you right away. I was very glad to hear from you again. We have Dan, our son, and Steve, Tim's son, here with us now, and it is pretty much of a mad house each day when they are around. At present they are away exploring along the creek at the bottom of the hill, and all is quiet.

My daughter was home last weekend, so we both got into her half ton truck and went west of her place, up onto the mountains looking for a home that I might be able to buy for my wife and I.

I very much want to get back into my own home again so that my wife and I can live out the rest of our lives in peace and quiet like we had up at our last place in Rainy River.

It was a big mistake coming down here to live at my daughter Pat's place.

There are mostly paved roads through this part of the country between Thunder Bay and the border with the States. It is a very beautiful country mostly covered with second growth

birch trees. The roads wind and twist around big cliffs and over small streams of clear clean water. There are some places with deserted buildings, and quite a lot of places with nice clean white buildings. Most of the people up here are of Finnish or Swedish descent and they are a very neat and tidy people, and it shows in how they keep their homes.

We found several places that had been advertised in the local Thunder Bay papers, but none that had habitable buildings on them until it was near time to go back home, then we saw it.

This place was a story and a half large house built from big squared logs, beside a paved highway, on top of a hill. It is about a mile from the village of South Gillies, which has somewhere around 200 inhabitants. Hydro and telephone lines pass the property. I could look down from the house to a wonderful view of a large field, like a big hay field, the rest was all bush, and in the distance were the mountains. The house looked like it had been empty for some time as the gravel on the road going into the house had not been disturbed for some time.

We did not know if the place was for sale, but my daughter, from her many years of working for different municipal governments, said she could find out who the owner was and if it was for sale and what they were asking for it. She said she thought from what she could see of the place, that it looked as if one man had been living in it not so long ago, and she thought he was an elderly man and may have went to live in a home in Thunder Bay, or could have possibly died. She said she would find out all about it and let me know next Saturday when she came home.

It is just the kind of place that I have been hoping to find, and it seems to be just what I want, far enough from town so that we can live the kind of life that we like, yet we would be only about twenty-five miles from a doctor or hospital.

I have found that the type of people who would be our neighbors are kind and warm hearted people, but not pushy. As soon as I know if it is for sale and I have permission to go out and really look it over, I will be able to tell you much more about it.

I want to first have a nice little cow, I prefer a Jersey as they are small and very gentle and give milk that is rich in cream and butter fat, and they do not eat as much as other cows. Then I want a pen of about two or three dozen good laying hens, white Leghorns if possible, so that we can have fresh eggs all the time, along with our own fresh milk and good homemade butter.

I may not get around very fast anymore like I used to, but I will be able to take care of them every day.

Also, I will have a big garden with every vegetable in it that we both like, as well as berries of all kinds. Later on, if our cow has a male calf, we can raise it for our meat, and perhaps we can have a pig too. We can always raise a brood or two of chickens each year for to kill in the fall to have meat through the winter, and we might raise a few turkeys for a change of diet.

In the country you can live without spending hardly any money, if you are willing to raise and grow your own food and look after your animals and garden properly. I know from the way we have had to spend money for food since we have been here at our daughter's place, that we should be able to save a lot of money out on a place like that. We did not spend very much money when we were on the homestead on food, as we did not have the money to spend, and we all ate our fill at every meal, and we were all healthy and happy, so now that there are just the two of us with our pensions coming in, I think we can get along fine on a place like that and have a good life.

I feel a lot more ambitious now that I have seen that place and its location, and I really am ready to go out and get back into shape again.

As far as other news goes, Pat has given notice at her job at Geralton a week or so ago, and is now going to night classes at the university in Thunder Bay to get more education about several different things that she is not very good at. There is a job with the goverment that pays about twice as much as she was getting at Geralton and she wants to train and try for that. Her salary at Geralton was \$14,000.00 a year, and she says why should she work for that when she can nearly double it if she goes back to school for awhile.

I wonder what she is going to do if we find a place of our own and move out of her home to live in our own home.

We have had a problem that has been plaguing us ever since we have been down here at our daughter's place. Sometimes our toilet would flush as it should, then sometimes we would have to use the plunger on it. I had been wanting to get a plumber out for a long time to find out the trouble, but had always been out voted because of the cost.

I finally got fed up with seeing that plunger sitting in the bathroom, so I told my wife to call a plumber out. He came out and worked on that toilet for over two hours and finally came up with a plastic bottle in pieces. That cost me \$41.80, but it was worth it as the toilet flushes like a charm now.

When I had our first new house with a toilet in the house at Corbett Creek, one of the children let a wooden toy go down the toilet and block it. I had a plumber come out twelve miles from town and unplug it. He charged me \$5.00 for unplugging the toilet, and \$6.00 for coming

out the twelve miles, a total of \$11.00. The reason I put this bit in was to show you how costs have went up, as if you do not already know.

I have another little bit of personal news.

Lately my legs have started to swell up again and get real hard by the time I am ready to go to bed. I thought I had this problem of my legs swelling up beat with the exercises I had invented for myself. With the exercises I do before bed the swelling would be all gone in the morning and they would be soft again for most of the day. But now something has changed. One morning a little while back, I woke up and when I turned the covers back, the bed was a mess of blood from blood coming off my legs.

I called my wife in, and she got a basin of warm water and washed the blood off my legs. She found a patch on my left leg that was bleeding quite a bit. She dried it off and I told her to put vaseline on it, and then a bandage. She did this, and it healed up nicely. About four days ago, the same thing happened. All my left leg from where the blood had broken out down to my ankle was covered all around with a sort of crust of what I would call little dry pebbles of a sort of brown stuff which was dry and brittle.

Now I do not know what that was, but I do know it was not blood, for when my wife soaked it off in hot water, it dissolved in the water, and the water had no sign of any color in it. I was just thinking, could that be from the enormous amount of pills that I have been taking every day? I take pills for diabetic trouble, Gelusil to settle my stomach, Inderal and Isordil tablets for anginal attacks, also Aspirin first thing in the morning. When my legs swell up, I take a SlowK66 in the morning and another one before I go to bed. Sometimes I take pills to help me fall asleep. That is a lot of pills every day.

I know I need more exercise for my legs, but I cannot go out and walk on the gravel driveway because Pat's son Danny and his motorbike tear it all up and make it too dangerous for me to try and walk on. I can not afford to take the chance of falling and perhaps breaking some bones, so I guess I will have to find more ways to exercise them inside.

I will have to mention this blood oozing from my legs to my doctor and see what he says about it.

Well, my friend I think I had better sign off for now before this letter and the vistaVision memories grows by another sheet or two and I will not be able to get it all in the envelope.

Best wishes to you and Mrs. Filter.

Your friend,

Sam.

vistaVision Memories

The Homestead at Last!

We first arrived in Northern Ontario, in Stratton, in April of 1933 about seven in the morning, my wife and I and three small children, with another due about September, with \$7.15 in our pocket. We had breakfast at the hotel of cold, boiled potatoes, greasy bacon, oatmeal porridge for the children that was half cooked, and bread and butter and coffee.

My wife was 24 at the time and had never lived outside of a town or city before, and here we were, at the tail end of winter in northern Ontario about as far from a city as you can get, without any money, without a house or home to go to, and with her pregnant with our fourth child. No wonder my wife was upset.

I made a deal with a man with a dump truck to drive us as far as he could, and he stopped at the last store before we would get to our land in North Branch, where we bought a 100 pound bag of flour, some yeast cakes, and salt and sugar and coffee.

I had 50 cents left to start on our homestead.

The dump truck driver took us and our supplies as far as he could to get close to our homestead and we arrived at Mr. J.C. Sisco's home, a neighbour of our new homestead, where we had dinner and then their married son Ross, who lived in Stratton with his family, said we could live in an old abandoned house he had on his land nearby until we had our own house built.

I took my wife and children and our supplies in an old sleigh Mr. Sisco had and we went over to that abandoned house. There was no firewood at that place and it was too late in the day to get any, so we all slept in an old bed there and spent a cold and exhausted night. I remember my wife did not sleep so good that night, and I woke up plenty of times too and spent quite a few dark hours wondering if we had done the right thing coming up there.

Next day, things seemed a little more hopeful and Mr. Sisco and Tommy Mundal, a neighbour of his, drove me over to my land with their team so that I could at last look it over. It was about a mile by road but a bit shorter by a bush road.

Mr. Stillman Benjamin lived just across the road from where I later built my house. I went to see him and I had a talk with him and his married son, Harry, and Harry's wife who lived with him. Mr. Benjamin's wife was not living with him as she had left him some time before because of the hardship of living that kind of life.

Mr. Benjamin said he would get some neighbors together the next day to cut and haul me a set of house logs, if I would come over in the morning and tell them how big a house I was going to build. Harry, his son, said I could live in his old house while I was building my house, and as that place was a lot closer to my place than Ross Sisco's cabin, just a quarter of a mile away from my land, we moved into Harry Benjamin's old house for what I thought would be only a few months, but turned out to be the better part of that year.

I went into a swamp near the old house where there was some big fire killed cedars and cut off blocks of different lengths and carried them up to Harry Benjamin's house where I was living. Most of the wood I used for firewood to heat the place, but I also made a big bed for the children and filled a mattress made from jute sacking that we had with wild hay. Then, as we were expecting an addition in the fall, I split off pieces of cedar from the logs, planed them down to 5 x 1/2 in. slats until I had enough to make a baby bed 4 feet by 2 feet by 3 feet high.

People from close by said it was about the nicest baby bed they had ever seen after I had painted it white with some paint I had in my tool box.

Soon after we moved into Harry Benjamin's place, Mr. Benjamin and some neighbours came over to help me cut logs for our own house. At the time there was still three feet of snow in the bush, but I was over to my place before daylight and the two Mundals, Mr. Sisco, Mr. Benjamin and Harry were there ready to go.

Mr. Benjamin ask me how big I wanted my house, and I said as big as I could get logs to build it. I wanted to build a log house 55 x 25 feet, the biggest house around there. He took us to a part of my land where there was a big grove of poplar trees that were about sixty feet high, and we got enough cut and skidded out to an open spot where I could start to peel them that day to build a nice house, not as big as I wanted, at 37 x 27 feet. There was lots of room there to peel the logs, so I got busy peeling them and I had the whole 50 logs peeled in three days.

The first place where I planned to build my house was on the northwest corner of my land, close to the road. I decided to build a stone foundation under it as there were lots of floating rocks right close by. I got a bar from my neighbor and started prying rocks out of the ground. I worked at that for about two weeks, when I thought I had enough rocks for a foundation.

Harry Benjamin had a gray horse and a Bennet Buggy, and we went over to a gravel pit on my land and got three or four loads of sand. Harry also had an old Model T car, and we went down to Pinewood and got two barrels of live lime for cement for the foundation.

I got the loan of a neighbour's horse and cut some fire killed logs to build a small barn for two cows and a team of horses, if I ever got them. Also, I got some seed from the relief officer later in the spring and my neighbor across the road, Mr. Benjamin, loaned me a piece of land for to put in a garden, if I could get someone to plow it. I got Mr. Sisco to plow it and I put all the



Homestead Log House Under Construction, Spring, 1933

seeds in, but there was still a large piece of land that had been plowed and I had nothing to plant in it. Harry Benjamin, old Mr. Benjamin's son that was living with him at the time, said he would put his garden in the rest of it. Between the garden and the work on my house logs and clearing land on my own place, I was pretty busy that first spring up there.

The first year we lived up there I put my land in hay. When I cut the hay later that first fall, I had to work around these big rocks that were all over my place. My neighbor, Mr. Benjamin, said he would come over and drill the rocks for me and blow them to pieces with dynamite.

I thought of a better idea as they were too close to my new house that I was building to use dynamite. I knew all rocks had moisture in them and were cold inside. I decide to break them up with fire. I dug a ditch about a foot or so deep all around each rock. I then gathered up pieces of half burned trees and piled it on the rocks. When I thought I had enough wood on them, I set them all on fire and left them burning all night. In the morning I went out to see what had happened.

A few slivers had flew off some of the rocks, the rest did not look as if the fire had done them much harm.

I went and got a bar and a 12 pound sledge hammer. I came back to the rocks and started to pound on the smallest one. After several blows with the hammer, it broke open into four

pieces and each break was as smooth as if it had been cut with a saw. I went over and tried another one. After a few blows it too broke open.

The next one was a big one. It was perhaps several ton in weight, but the outside peeled off like an orange, and when I got that off, I could see that the whole stone was cracked in several directions. I got my sharp bar and started prying and soon had that rock in pieces that I could roll onto my stone boat that I had built out of logs I did not need for my house.

The others were about the same, and I had all those rocks in pieces that I could handle in less than half a day and my house had been in no danger at any time. We did not have to spend days drilling them and using dangerous explosives to break them up.

I did not have a team at that time, but I hired a neighbour's horse, and with my stone boat, I was able to clean the whole five rocks off there in less than a day and now had a field that I could cut much quicker and produce a little more hay. Eventually, when I got my own team, I pulled all those rocks out to the road and made a good wide entrance coming into my place.

The mosquitoes were real bad that first summer, and we had to keep a smudge of rotten wood burning and we would shove the tub with the smudge under our beds to chase out the mosquitoes at night.

I also had a fairly good gravel pit on my place. When the gravel was put on the road and had been rained on, it would pack real hard and was very much like a cement road. Every time I

went to the store, I would take my wagon along and bring back a load of gravel. It was not very long until I had a good gravel road right in to my house.

In that fall of 1933, while we were still living in Harry Benjamin's old place, and just a week or so before my daughter Mary was born, my wife and I went down to the spring one evening to get water for the next day, and we saw a good sized black bear out in a field eating some oats that had not been cut.

I sent my wife back to the house to bring me a 30/30 rifle that my neighbor had loaned me to get a deer. He had given me 6 shells with the rifle and then sent another neighbor who had no shells for his rifle to get half of what I had, leaving me three. When my wife brought the rifle and shells I got around down wind from the bear and started to get as close as I could. I got to within about 100 feet or so of him, then I would have to go out in the open where he would see me.

He was in a bit of a hollow in the field, and I could see about three or four inches of his back above the level of the ground. It was getting dark rather fast so I took a shot at him and he went down. I jacked another shell ready for firing and waited. Soon he came up on his feet again and started running for the bush. I took a quick shot at him, and he went down rolling towards the bush and crawled into it. I went over to where he had went in, and listened to see if I could hear him.

Nothing.

There was a piece of land that had been cleared back into the bush like a bay there and I went around as the light was fading looking for that bear. The hair on the back of my neck started tingling and my neck felt cold and clammy. For a few minutes I could not see the bear

anywhere, then I slowly turned around and there was the bear, about five feet away from me walking towards the other side of the field.

I took careful aim for his heart with my last shot and let it go.

He dropped right away.

I then waited a few minutes to be sure he was dead, as I had no more shells.

Then I started to walk over to him with my hunting knife out ready to bleed him, when without any warning he raised his head and got up on his feet and made his way back into the bush.

It was now completely dark and I did not feel like going into those dark woods after a wounded bear with only a knife in my hand, so I went up on the bank where my wife was waiting for me, and we got our water and went back to the house.

The next morning I got up early and went down and got old Mr. Benjamin and his dog, then got my shotgun and some buckshot shells and went down and searched that whole strip of woods that the bear had went into. I checked every foot of it but found no bear.

Next spring when old Mr. Mundal, who owned that field, came down to get it ready for seeding, he found the remains of the bear about a half a mile away in the bush on the opposite side of the field from where he had last entered the bush on the north side of the field.

I would never trust the hitting power of a 30/30 rifle again.

My daughter Mary was born in Harry Benjamin's old house later that fall, and before my brother Stan and his wife came up from Georgetown to live with us. I acted as midwife, and my wife had no medical help at all and nothing to relieve any of the pain. I washed the baby and her clothes, cooked the meals, bathed my wife and baby every day, until my wife was on her feet again.

Because of the habits of local women at child birth on the homestead, my wife would not have them near her when it was time for her to give birth to Mary. When my wife assisted at the births of two local babies earlier that year, the local woman that was in charge of the proceedings put old dirty newspapers on the dirty blanket to protect it from any moisture. She did not wash the woman before the birth. She did not wash and scrub her hands. She laid the baby on the dirty newspapers while she cut and tied the cord with grocery store string.

When the baby was lifted off the paper it stuck to the baby's body.

My wife had to take the baby and wash it in warm water, over the objections of the other woman who was there who said it was not necessary to do that. My wife then oiled the baby's whole body with olive oil that she brought from home. About the same thing happened at both the births that my wife assisted at, and she made me promise that I would not have a local woman in the house when Mary was born, and that I would look after her myself. She did not need to have me promise after telling me how those women took care of a birth, I had made up my mind that they would never know about my daughter's birth until it was all over.

I guess those women did the best they could with what they had, but there is no excuse for filth and dirt when there is soap and water around, and the baby deserves to be born on a clean bed when it first comes into the world. How about the risk of infection to both the mother

and the baby? It is no wonder that so many of the babies up there died shortly after birth when they are born under those conditions, and some of the mothers died too.

The three babies that I eventually helped to bring into the world lived and grew up to be healthy and strong. I cannot take any credit for that, it was my wife who should have all the credit, as she told me just what to do and how to do it while she was bringing into the world each baby. She told me what to do after they were here, and she had prepared me for what I should do before they were born.

Everything went like clockwork during the births of the children I helped into the world by me just following my wife's instructions. Everything had been made ready and sterilized before hand, the bed had a clean sheet on it with clean sterilized pads to soak up the moisture and I had carried up lots of water from the spring we had on our property and I had a cold tub of water to put all the bloody bed clothes in to soak while I was taking care of my wife and baby.

At that time we had to carry water about a quarter of a mile from a spring because we had not dug a proper well yet.

I had the house real warm so that neither one would get a chill, as they were all born in cold weather. When my wife and baby were all taken care of I washed all the soiled bedding and clothes that had been used and hung them out to dry.

My wife and baby were always both in a warm, dry, and clean bed, and I had made a pot of fresh hot tea.

I do not know just how Mrs. Sisco found out about my wife being ready to give birth so quick, as our nearest neighbor was a quarter of a mile or more away when Mary was born. It was

a real cold day, but Mrs. Sisco was over for a visit about nine in the morning, and she suggested that I go outside as she wanted to talk to my wife in private.

I looked at my wife and she shook her head, so I told Mrs. Sisco that I had too much work in the house to do, and anyway it was too cold to stay outside.

She did not like that, so she did not stay long after that when I started to iron the things that I had washed the night before. I don't think she had much use for me after that, especially when we had two more children that I brought into the world while we were up on the homestead.

Mrs. Sisco was the kind of woman that thought she was the leader of all the women around there, and had the thought that everyone else was ignorant, and that she should be consulted about everything that went on around that part of the country. She was one of the women that attended most every birth up there that I told you about a bit earlier. My wife had seen her, how she handled a birth at the house across the road from our place, and she wanted no part of that.

When I first went up to our homestead land in the spring of 1933 I was told that tamarack was the best firewood for the winter, and if I could not get that, birch or ash was the next two best heat building woods for to keep a house warm on a cold night. I found them to be good heat producers, but they were too expensive for me. I had lots of dry tamarack on my place and there was lots over on the goverment timber berth that was easy to get.

I burnt tamarack that first fall and winter in our new log home on the homestead, but never again. I had a big old fashioned cook stove in the kitchen and a wood heater in the same room that would take a 36 inch stick of wood. That winter the tamarack was such a hot fire it burnt the grates out of my cook stove and started to burn a hole through my heater's side. When I saw that I went to the bush and cut some big fire killed poplar, brought them home and cut them up for both stoves with a Swede saw. I patched the hole in the heater with a piece of sheet metal on each side with a stove bolt or two to hold it in place until I could get a new stove. The stove grate I repaired with some iron rods I had which I cut to length for the stove. They were 1/4 inch rods so we never had to get a new grate for it.

After that first winter, I always had big piles of poplar or balsam wood cut and dried ready for the winter.

Another thing that was against the tamarack was that it would not hold a fire all night. It would all burn up with very little ashes and before morning, when you really felt the cold, you would have to get up around three in the morning and start a new fire in each stove. With the poplar you could fill your stove up full and shut off the drafts and it would burn all through the night and the house would be nice and warm in the morning.

You see, poplar makes a lot of ashes and it burns from the top down to the bottom of the wood in the stove when the drafts are closed just right. The ashes from the top spread over the



First Log Home Finished, Fall, 1933

rest of the wood as the fire burns down, banking the fire so that it continues to burn just like charcoal is made.

In the morning, you open the drafts and take your long stove poker and turn half the pile of ashes that are black like charcoal to one side and half to the other side. Put a few sticks of wood in and as soon as you close the front door, those black ashes turn red hot and you have a real hot fire right away.

When your first fire is burned down to coals, you scrape it all to the front of the stove clear down to the bottom of the stove, then work the hot coals out of the ashes to the back of the stove then shovel your ashes into a metal bucket, pull your coals to the front of the stove, put in some more wood and you are set until the next morning.

In your cook stove, if you have a grate in it, you just shake the grate a bit and put in some wood and you are in business again. Your ashes all drop down into a box under the grate and you just pull it out and close the little door in front and take your ashes out to your ash pile.

I think that the cleaning of ashes every day is why most of the people up there prefer to burn tamarack, which has very little ashes so that you only clean them out about once a week. I think I prefer cleaning out the ashes every day and having a warm house all night and in the morning, to burned out grates and holes in stoves and just having to clean the ashes out once a week.

It only takes five minutes to clean the ashes once a day, and you do not run the risk of having a hole burn through your stove in the middle of the night and burning down the only shelter your family has from the cold, besides losing everything you own.

I have a real love for all living things, but when some of them have to be used for food or have to be put out of pain or because they are a threat to others, I do it in the most painless and quickest way that I can. I remember once that first year on the homestead when we had a big storm that froze a kitten who we all loved very much. After the storm stopped, and after two days of looking for him, I heard him crying in the bush near the house we were still living in at the time, Harry Benjamin's old place, while I was building our house.

He had been caught in a wolf trap by the right front leg and his leg was crushed and just about twisted off. I looked his leg over and after giving him a big warm meal of all he could eat, I took him out on the step going into the house and took the broken leg off.

All gathered around watching and wonders of wonders the cat purred as nice as you please.

After I got the leg off, I examined what was left and saw that it was a green sort of colour, so I thought I would cut it down to the good flesh, which I did. After I had all this flesh off and it was bleeding, I washed it in some warm water and carbolic acid that we had, and I covered the whole raw place with vaseline and wrapped a bandage around it.

I washed and cleaned it every day for about two weeks or so until it was well healed, then I made a little boot for that little cat out of some soft leather I had and that cat lived for several more years hopping around on three legs, until he died of old age.

That first summer up on the homestead I bought a fresh cow from a neighbour to the west of me, Bill Stang, for \$15.00 cash, most of which I had earned by working at graveling the road in front of our place from our gravel pit. At the time, there were very few roads up in Rainy River District, and the goverment was paying homesteaders like me to work at putting in roads. I also worked hard in my garden and had a good garden that fall, with not one weed or potatoe bug in it. I do not know how many times I went through it with a hoe loosening up the soil and crawling along on my knees pulling out weeds or squashing potatoe bugs, but it paid off.

Harry Benjamin hoed his garden once and then forgot about it. He said the reason I had the best garden when the time came to harvest was that I had the best part of the garden for growing vegetables.

How silly can a man get.

I gave away tomatoes the size of which I had never seen before. The Sisco boys came over with a good sized wash tub and went away with it filled to the top with tomatoes, then, when passing through the forest on their way home, they threw the whole works at trees and went home and said I did not have any tomatoes to give away.

The Benjamin family and mine ate corn and ripe tomatoes all fall off my garden, then Mr. Morford's turkeys came up and got what was left.

I got one of the turkeys with my slingshot so that evened it up a bit.

I had 50 bushels or so of potatoes after I gave Mr. Sisco five bags for plowing the garden. Harry had about a bag and a half off about the same amount of land, little ones about the size of a small egg and smaller.

That fall I had no place to keep all the potatoes I had harvested from my garden, so I carried them a quarter of a mile in bags down to the log barn I built where I kept the cow on my own land. I thought they would not freeze in there, but after one cold night I found some of the ones next to the wall were frozen.

I was telling the Benjamin family about it, and old Mr. Benjamin said I could put them in a root house that he had close to where I grew the potatoes. Harry Benjamin, who now had a team and was hauling gravel onto the road from a gravel pit where I was working, said he would

take his sleigh over to my barn that night, and if I would collect them and bag them up, then next morning he would go over and load it up and take them up to the root house and put them inside.

I did that and was down there till after twelve at night bagging those potatoes.

When I came home from work at the gravel pit the next night, the first thing my wife told me was that all our potatoes in the root house were frozen solid.

I went over to see for myself and sure enough, they were. They had not started to thaw out yet, so I carried them all outside and piled them under a big spruce tree that had branches down near the ground. I cut other branches from nearby trees and covered them so that no sun would shine on them through the winter. When we needed potatoes I would bring a bag home on my sleigh or truck and would thaw them out in a tub of cold water, then chip the ice off them and dry them good and hang them up near the ceiling in small bags.

They tasted a bit sweet, but they were crisp and firm.

I found out later that Harry did not go over and get the potatoes until near noon, and then he drove the team and sleigh over to his place and left them sitting outside in 52 below zero weather for five hours before he took them up and put them in the root house.

It was one way of getting even with me for having a better garden than he did.

That learned me something about Harry Benjamin and it was just one of the dirty tricks he played on me while we were on the homestead. I do not think that he had it in him to act decent, and I was warned many times by other people to not have any dealings at all with the Benjamins, as they were not to be trusted.

That first year we had been getting a relief cheque of \$5.00 a month from Pat Carver, the relief officer, and my wife's mother sent us a little money every time she wrote. Later in the fall, my mother sent me a 6.5 rifle and two boxes of cartridges because I wrote and told her about the poor hitting power of the 30/30 I had borrowed. At the time, I had a .22 rifle for rabbits, that was all, so the 6.5 rifle was very welcome. In early winter rabbits were easy to get with a .22 or even to knock over with a slingshot, or as some call it, a catapult. If there was lots of snow on the ground and the rabbits had put on their white coats, they would just sit up and look at you until you were quite close, thinking no doubt that you could not see them because of their white coats. Of course they did not think of the dark background that the dark brush made behind them. Rabbits were very welcome whenever I could get any that first year up there and they were a delicious meal for the whole family.

My land had been stripped of spruce and cedar by the neighbors, especially by Harry Benjamin, so I went after him about it, but he said he needed the money to feed his family. He said he would show me a good stand of spruce on another vacant lot south of the house of his where I was living until I had mine built, and I could cut and peel that and sell it to the American buyers when they came in late in the summer when stripping season was over.

At that time I did not know the difference between spruce and balsam. I went in there and worked and sweated amongst the mosquitoes and flies for over a month, and I cut and peeled over ten cord of four foot wood.

When the buyers came around, they said that was not spruce but was balsam and they were not buying balsam.

Old Fashioned Rabbit Stew

Ingredients:

3 tbsp flour	2 tsp dried thyme	salt and freshly ground pepper
15 g butter	2-3 tbsp oil	2 young rabbits, cut into 8 pieces
2 onions, chopped	2 bay leaves	6 rashers bacon, in 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) squares
150 g frozen peas	500 ml apple juice	300ml chicken or vegetable stock
350 g carrots, peeled and sliced		

Method:

Combine flour, thyme and a pinch of salt and pepper and coat rabbit pieces. Melt butter with one tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Fry rabbit until golden-brown. Put front and rear leg portions into a casserole dish. Put the saddle pieces on a plate, cover and set aside. Preheat the oven to 340F. Add more oil to the pan and cook bacon until it begins to crisp then add to the casserole dish. Add a dash more oil and fry the onion until lightly browned then add to the casserole and stir until combined. Pour half of the apple juice into the frying pan and stir with a wooden spoon to lift sediment and simmer for a minute then pour into the casserole. Add the rest of the juice and the stock. Add bay leaves, cover and bake for 45 minutes, then add the saddle pieces and carrots. Turn the rabbit portions, ensuring that as much of the meat is covered by liquid as possible. Return to the oven for 1-2 hours. After one hour check the rabbit – the meat should be starting to fall off the bone. Poke the leg portions and the saddle pieces with a knife and if it doesn't slide in easily, return the casserole to the oven. Check again for tenderness and turn the rabbit portions every 30 minutes. When the rabbit is tender, skim off fat with a large spoon. Simmer until the liquid is slightly thickened. Stir in the frozen peas and simmer for three minutes. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and serve.

I was pretty mad but there was nothing I could do about it.

I borrowed a team and transported it all down to my place and decided I would cut it up for firewood for the coming winter rather than leave it there.

Late in the fall of 1933, I bought a wonderful team of small western horses from the storekeeper in North Branch, the nearest little village, which I was to pay for with pulpwood. The horses were small grey Percharons, and I got harness and sleigh and horses for \$150.00. He

had bought them in the spring and at every opportunity they would run away and smash up his wagon and hay stacks.

I used to watch how he and the men that he hired to drive them went about handling them, and it was not long before I spotted the trouble. I wanted that team very much, but I never said a word to anyone about wanting to buy them. Only when I was over to the store and the team ran away with the wagon and smashed the rack on the wagon again did the store owner ask me if I wanted to buy them.

I told him I had not considered buying them, but ask him how much he wanted for them.

He said he paid \$300.00 for them, but would give me the team, harness and sleigh for that price.

I told him no one yet had been able to get any work out of the team, and it did not look like anyone ever would. I said I could not afford to buy a team like that at that price, I wanted a team that I could trust and that could earn there keep.

He ask me what I would offer him for the team.

I said I would cut him \$150.00 worth of pulpwood and tamarack firewood for the whole outfit, horses, harness neckyoke and sleigh.

He argued for quite awhile, but I finally went home with the team and sleigh. I did not need grain for them as I had three big stacks of alfalfa hay in my barn.

Well I got to work on that team right away.

Next morning I cleaned them and fed them hay, and I put the harness on them, all before breakfast. I had my breakfast and took the two horses two blankets that I got with the team, an axe and a Swede saw, and went to where I had been cutting pulp. There were a lot of nice long

dry tamarack that had died from insects feeding on their foliage near where I had been working. I cut enough to make a good pulp rack and went back home and got busy making the rack. I had it finished by night, and got everything ready for an early start next morning at hauling out my pulpwood that I had cut.

I hauled two loads in the morning, which was eight miles to a load, or sixteen miles in the morning. I made two trips in the afternoon, the second trip being rather late. I had it all loaded after dark, and when I started off, the horse on the left who I called Ted and who was the trouble maker on the team, balked.

They could not move the load so I thought perhaps they were on a dry log or some brush. I took about half the load off and they walked away with it. Next day when I went over there to haul some more, I looked at where the load had been stuck and found there was nothing there to stop it from moving.

I knew then that it had been a deliberate balk by the horse Ted.

I stopped there, put the blankets on them, and put on a full load and then went down in the bush and cut a birch switch about eight feet long and dragged it up behind me so Ted would not see it. I got on the load, got my feet well braced and told them to go.

The other horse, Jimmy, went, but Ted never moved.

I came down on him with that birch and then he wanted to go, but I held him back and really laid into him.

He fell into the snow and I jumped off the load onto his back, then I sat on his head and as the birch had broken off to about three feet long, I laid into him with that.

When I thought he had enough I got off his head and quieted them both down and got back on the load and yelled at them to get out of there. Well that was some ride for about a mile through that narrow bush road, with good sized trees along each side, then I stopped them and let them rest and get their wind back.

Ted never balked again and they never run away on me. I could leave them standing for an hour or more in front of the store with cars and trucks coming and going, and they would not move. They had always run away when a car came past them before. It was the horse called Ted that was at the bottom of it all.

When they were out in the pasture I only had to call them by name and they would come running to the barn every time. Ted had learned his lesson and he was the leader, so I never had to use a whip again. I treated them fairly, took good care of them and they knew that I was the boss, so they appreciated the care I gave them and Ted behaved himself. I really do not blame him as much as I blame the way he was handled when the storekeeper first got him. He knew nothing about horses for all he was brought up on a farm.

There is one very dangerous thing in the woods after a wet spell that my wife and one of my girls, the oldest, found out about the hard way. Certain Poplar trees that have fell in a storm or just been blown down by heavy winds, after lying wet on the ground and starting to rot, start to glow when it gets dark if they are wet.

We had a lot of them like that near where our house was built that year.

My oldest daughter when she was about five, looked out the widow one night and saw one of these glowing spots a short ways from the window. The window was open at the bottom as it was a warm night so she slipped out and got a piece of this glowing wood and brought it in. She sat on her bed for a while looking at it and turning it in her hands and slapping at the odd mosquito that got into her room.

When I saw it, I just looked at it for quite a while, then told my daughter to wash her hands as they were rather dirty from handling the wood, and go back to bed. My wife and I washed our hands and after awhile we went to bed.

A few days after that we noticed a dark ring on my daughter, just below her eye, and another on the arch of her right foot. Two days after we saw them first, they were getting so dark that we took her out to a doctor at Stratton.

As soon as the doctor saw them he ask if she had been handling any rotten poplar wood lately.

We told him about the night my daughter had got the piece of glowing wood, so he said those marks were ring worm that is caused by that glowing wood under certain conditions. He said that we will no doubt have several more of them on her body later on, but not to worry and not to let her scratch them. He gave us some sulfur ointment that was quite greasy to treat the ringworms with. He said that he had made up the ointment real greasy so that if the patient tried to scratch the ringworm they would not have much success.

He told my wife to see that there was a good coating of the ointment on the sores at all times and in a week or so they should be gone. He warned us that no one must touch the ringworms as they could carry them that way from one person to another.

Well my daughter had two more ringworms, one on her leg and another on her left cheek. She survived those and you can bet that none of my children ever picked up a piece of glowing wood again.

There were several times we had our pipes and chimney on fire when we were first up on our homestead, but were lucky enough that the house did not burn down. Unless you can keep the smoke from your stove warm until it is out of your pipes or chimney, it will form creosote when it cools off in your pipes or chimney. This creosote dries out during when you have a hot



fire, usually in the evening when you have a good hot fire to get the house well warmed before you go to bed. A spark goes up the pipe when you put on fresh wood before going to bed. That spark smoulders away in creosote as long as smoke is going up the pipes. As soon as the smoke stops and oxygen reaches the smouldering spark, it bursts into flame, and your pipes and chimney are on fire.

I have had fires in our pipes and in our chimney when there was no fire in our stove. A fire cannot burn in your pipes or chimney unless it can get oxygen, and as long as there is smoke or hot gases going up the pipe, it will just smoulder away. As soon as the spark gets

oxygen it bursts into flame with a sort of roar and burns like a torch, melting your pipes which will fall to the floor and set fire to the house.

The best way to prevent this happening is to only burn well seasoned and dry wood, to clean your pipes often in the winter of all creosote by taking them down and tapping each section of pipe with a stick of wood to remove the creosote which is quite dry and hard on the inside of the pipes. Take a scraper of metal and attach it to a long stick, long enough to reach to the bottom of your chimney, and scrape off any creosote that has formed on the inside of the chimney.

Do this quite often and you need have no worries about fire in your pipes or chimney.

A good way to find out if creosote is building up in your chimney or pipes, is to get up on the roof with a flashlight when there is not much smoke coming out of the chimney and look down inside the chimney. The creosote will start building up on the walls of the chimney before it does on the pipes.

While I was away working on the highway between Fort Frances and Kenora the first full winter up on the homestead, my wife was alone with the children at home and the pipes took fire up where they passed through the attic where the two boys slept. She always kept a big barrel of water in the kitchen at the bottom of the ladder going up to the attic in the event of fire. She carried water up to where the pipes were glowing red and poured water, a little at a time, onto the hot pipes, eventually cooling it and putting the fire out inside the pipes. She then sent our older boy, Lorne, over to Mr. Benjamin's for help and when he came over, they took the pipes down and gave them a good cleaning. Also they cleaned the creosote out of the chimney too.

I never left home again to work on the highway in the winter after that.

We had another close call with fire in a little different way one night.

One of our youngest girls had a bad cough and my wife went into the medicine cabinet to get the cough syrup with a lighted candle in her hand. We had curtains on the window next to the medicine cabinet on the wall. The candle got too close to the curtains and they caught fire.

My wife called and I rushed in and pulled the curtains down and smothered the fire out on our bed. I did not dare put it on the floor as there were big cracks in the floor between the boards where they had shrunk when they had dried out. Down underneath the floor was a lot of old dried grass that was there when the house was built. There were cracks between the boards in the ceiling, and the boys bed was right over where the flames were licking at the ceiling when I pulled down the curtains. I rushed up the ladder with a pail of water expecting to see the bed on fire, but we were lucky, no fire.

I was working alone when I was building my log barn late in the summer of 1933, and one day it very near cost me my life. I was very much in a hurry to get it finished, as the spruce was peeling good and I had a small contract to get filled. It had rained the night before, that was why I was working on my barn, the spruce would not peel very good until the afternoon when the sun had warmed things up a bit. I was putting this log up on the wall and I had the wall just about finished. I had the big end of the log up on the top log and had gotten down to go and lift the small end of the log up. I happened to look up at the big end of the log and it was slowly

slipping end ways off the top log. I saw that the small end was in a hole that was full of water and was sinking because of the weight of the other end.

I thought if I grabbed the small end and lifted it out of the hole onto more solid ground the big end would not slide down off the end log. I got ahold of it and lifted it out of the hole and was just letting it down on the ground when the big end slipped off the top log and slid down the left skid and pinned me to the skid so tight that I could not move. I was about a quarter of a mile or so from the house where my wife was, and the barn was between me and the house, so I was in a pretty tight and dangerous spot.



Log Barn on the Homestead

eight feet away from me.

There was a small pole that I had been using to measure the height of the back wall of the barn and it was standing up against the wall of the barn about two feet or so away from me. It was exactly eight feet long. I tried but could not reach it with my hands as I had to reach up and

I saw that the heavy end of the log had come to rest against the ends of the logs that I had already built up on that side of this little barn, and the small end of the log was still in the soft mud hole. The log was gradually settling into the mud hole, and putting more pressure on my ribs, which were hurting pretty bad. My swede saw was hanging on the end of one of the logs that I had already put up on the wall. It was about seven or

over the log that was pinning me to the skid. Then I thought that I might reach it with my feet if I could get far enough under the log by working it around a bit so that I could get closer to the ground. I tried this and was successful in getting two or three inches closer to the ground.

The pain in my ribs was terrific and I knew that some of my ribs had been broken.

I was able to reach out with my leg and hook the toe of my shoe behind the pole and work it towards me where I could reach down and get ahold of one end of it.

I got the pole up in both hands and tried to reach the saw but was an inch or two short, so I took the pole in my left hand which was a bit closer to the saw and reached out with the end of the pole and pushed it through the saw frame. It went through by about three inches. I then barely managed to lift the saw off the end of the log where it had been hanging and worked it closer to where I was until I could use my other hand to hold onto the pole and lift that saw a little more.

I was very glad that day that my arm muscles had been built up so strong by hard work all my life that I was able to handle that pole and the added weight of the swede saw. When I got the saw I cut the barn wall log just past my right hip and when the two pieces rolled to each side, I must have fainted, for the next thing I knew I was laying on the ground with my side hurting something awful.

I went down to the house and told my wife what had happened and that I thought some of my ribs were broken and that I would have to go over to North Branch where I could catch a ride to Stratton and get my ribs taped up. I walked the five miles through the bush to North Branch and was lucky to get a ride right away on a loaded pulp truck to Stratton.

Doc Broughton taped my ribs up and said I had one rib that had a clean break and two that were badly cracked but should mend in a week or two so that I could go out and break them again.

That night I was able to get a ride back to North Branch on an empty pulp truck. It was late by the time I got back to North Branch and I ask the storekeeper if he would take me home in his half ton truck instead of me having to walk the five miles in the dark with several broken ribs through the bush.

He said he would for \$2.50, which he said was only half price, and he was doing that for me because I was such a good customer.

I told him that was too steep for me and that I would walk home the same way I got over here and that him and his truck could go to hell at 80 miles an hour, and that would not be to fast to get rid of such a penny pinching miser.

I walked home and passed out once on the way, but finally got home and was it ever heaven to lay down on the old couch in the kitchen. That was where I stayed for two days and two nights until I got my strength back.

That was the only time that I ever got hurt in all the years that I was homesteading in the Rainy River District, and it happened the first year we were there.

July 18, 1977

Dear Friend:

Your very welcome letter came in this morning's mail and now I have a pleasant time ahead of me answering your questions, and there sure are a few goods ones. I am not sure I can answer all of them, but I will give it a try, so here goes.

About live lime. Live lime is made by burning limestone in a high square stone tube, like an oversize chimney. A layer of wood is built in the bottom of the chimney then a layer of limestone, another layer of wood and so on until the chimney is full of wood and limestone. The fire is then lit in the pile of wood at the bottom of the limekiln, as it is called, and the whole thing starts to burn. It heats the rock so hot, but still retains most of its shape, that it changes from hard rock to a white substance called live lime.

Now here is the peculiar thing about this live lime. After it has cooled off and is taken out of the kiln, it can be ice cold, but put a piece of it in water, and if it is a fair sized piece, the water will boil and be so hot that, if you should spill some on your bare skin, it will scald you. Where you are going to use lime and sand to lay bricks or do any plastering, and are using live lime, you must first put it in a wooden box, then pour some water over it until it stops boiling. Then it is safe to use. If you mix live lime with damp sand, the lime will just crumble into small pieces and will never mix with the sand until it has been thoroughly slaked.

When I was a young fellow we used to get a quart jar about half full of live lime from the paper mill, and go up to where there was a deep place in the river. We would put several stones in the jar with the lime, fill it full of water, screw the top on quickly and tight and throw it well out into the deep water. In a few minutes there would be a big explosion with water rising into the air about six or eight feet. Then the stunned fish would start floating to the top of the water. We would swim out and get the fish into our little gunny sacks. Sometimes we would get a very good sized eel.

Almost all the lime you buy nowadays is slaked lime, as live lime is too dangerous to have around children, and if they tried to taste it they could very well ruin there mouth.

About health care on the homestead. You are right, we were very far from any medical help on the homestead, but when our second daughter was born, I knew what to do and did it quite well I think. After that two sons came to us at different times and I helped to bring them into the world.

Outside of that, my wife and I were the only ones that needed a dentist. We went to Stratton one time where there was a doctor who had been barred from practicing medicine, but could pull teeth. I had several pulled, as did my wife. Our children never had any trouble with their teeth that I could not take care of, and were never sick, except when they got ringworm from the rotten trees in the bush.

One time my oldest boy run a sliver off the floor of the house we were living in until I got my new house built on our property. It went in quite deep at an angle. It happened one night as they were getting ready for bed. I got a basin of rather hot water and let him soak his foot in it until the skin was soft. By that time I had my hunting knife sharpened to a razor sharp edge. I

dried off his foot and set the lamp on the floor so that I could see good, and holding my left hand tight about his leg just above his ankle, I sliced open his heel where the three inch piece of wood had entered. A little blood came out, but as long as I gripped his leg above the ankle, I knew that he would not lose very much blood.

Then with the point of the blade of my knife, I lifted out the sliver.

My wife emptied the basin of water and filled it up with ice cold water from the spring and my son put his foot in that until the bleeding stopped. I dried off his foot, put some Vaseline in the cut I had made, and put a bandage on it. In a few days he was as good as new.

Our children did not seem to get colds, in fact none of us were ever bothered much with colds. They were outside most all the time in cold weather or warm, they ate good plain food, no junk food, had very few candies and seldom pop. They had lots of meat and vegetables and porridge and pancakes with homemade butter and jam for to smear them with.

What was it like living on the homestead, so far from any town? Well, I think we were happier there than we had ever been before or since. We grew a big garden, and there was lots of wild fruit and plenty of meat and fuel practically at your door. Our house was warm and dry in the winter and cool in the summer. The insects were a nuisance in the summer, but you soon got used to them. It was cold in the winter, sometimes as low as 60 below, but it was a dry cold that did not feel as cold as 10 below in southern Ontario. The snow was usually about three or four feet deep in the bush. It did not seem to bother me once I got a trail broke to where I was working.

When I got a team I always kept our road around our house and to the school open after a storm. Our children enjoyed being out in the cold and then coming into a real warm house with

the sun shining in the windows. We had a good well with a pump about fifteen feet or so from the door of our house, we had big piles of dry wood piled in rows a bit further away from the house so that sparks from the chimney would not set them on fire. We had our own milk and butter, and sometimes fresh eggs when the hens started laying. We had no TV or radio for a long time, until I was able to trade some dry tamarack for a new volt and a half radio. We had no bathroom or toilet inside. We all had our baths in a long galvanized bath tub in the kitchen in the winter on a Saturday night, and out in the yard on the grass in the summer.

My wife did her washing by hand in galvanized tubs in the house in winter, and out under the trees in summer.

We had no electric power for lighting or anything else. We used a big Aladdin lamp at night that burned kerosene. We kept our meat and vegetables in a cellar that I dug out under our house. In the summer I only shot small deer or rabbits for meat. If I got a small deer I would give part of it to my neighbor across the road, Mr. Benjamin, as fresh meat would not keep long in hot weather as we had no fridge or ice box. We could keep our milk from spoiling and butter too, by hanging it down our well in a milk can, where it was very cool.

What is a Bennet Buggy? A Bennet buggy is a car with no motor pulled by horses, a product of the Hungry Thirties. Different people had different ideas about how to make one, and some were very weird. As time went on the buggy seemed to standardize as a car body and frame, with tires on the wheels of those who could afford them. Those who could not afford tires and tubes had another way of making ends meet. They would take old tires that still had some tread on them and cut a strip out of the tire where the tread was good. The width of the strip was so that it would fit in tight on the rim. Then they would cut two more strips the same width, out



A Typical Bennet Buggy, 1935

of the sides of the tire, and fit these into the rim, one on top of the other, then put the piece with the tread on top of these two pieces. If the piece with the tread on did not come up above the edge of the rim at least a half an inch, they would put another strip under the piece with a tread on to raise it a half inch or more above the edge of the rim. In other words they had to have a solid tire that would keep the rim from hitting any part on the ground or rocks on the ground or anything that would damage the rubber on the solid tire. Next they would bore holes through the rubber and rim and bolt the rubber to the rim.

Most of them that I saw being made used a belting punch to put the holes through the rubber and then drill the holes through the rims with a hand drill. Those that did not have the proper tools used to wrap wire around real tight to hold the rubber in place, but the wire did not last long.

They named it The Bennet Buggy after the man who was Prime Minister at that time, R. B. Bennet. I saw him just once in Calgary, when he was seeking reelection. He was so hated by most people in Calgary, especially the unemployed, that he made his speech to the people out

from the second floor window in the Calgary Herald newspaper building rather than at ground level. I do not know how he got out of that building alive after he made his speech. The crowd completely surrounded him and meant to rough him up, or worse.

I did not hear much of what he had to say as the crowd booed him all the time he was trying to talk.

About the bear. Bear meat tastes delicious if you get him when he is fat in late fall.

The first thing you do after he has been dressed out and the hide removed, is to let the meat get real cooled off, then remove all of the fat. Save the fat to grease leather things like shoes, harness or saddles. Then remove the paws and the big front teeth from the bear's mouth, as the teeth and the claws are something you can make into a nice necklace in the long winter nights. Then quarter your bear and hang the quarters in a cool place where birds and small animal such as squirrels and weasels cannot get at it. If weasels get at your meat, they will put an awful odor on any meat after they have eaten their fill, but you will not eat any more of that particular meat.

I think bear meat tastes a lot like pork, but there are some who might not agree with me. I would say that the average male black bear would weigh around 350 to 400 pounds, if he were full grown, a female somewhat less. You should get a dressed carcass of about 200 pounds and about around 150 or 160 pounds of very fine meat, after the bones were taken out.

The length of time the meat would last is pretty hard to say. It would depend on how large your family was, and how many visitors you had who stayed for a meal. I never did check on how long our meat lasted. When it was gone, I would just go out and get a fresh supply. Sometimes I did not have to leave the house. I shot two deer from the back door of our kitchen

one morning as they had breakfast in my hayfield by my house. If you want a nice job done on a skin of deer, get an Indian woman. For a dollar or two they do a wonderful job on any skin. I saw some of their work and it was amazing how soft and pliable the work was.

About Mr. Benjamin. Mr. Benjamin's name was Stillman, but most everyone called him Still. After I was down here in Thunder Bay about a year or so after we left the homestead in the early 1940s, I heard that he was in a Senior Citizens Home here. I went up to see him, but I was too late. He had died sometime before I had heard he was down here. I would liked to have had a talk with him and to see how he was getting along. We had our differences when I lived up there across the road from him, but I did not hold anything against him really, not after I got to understand him better.

He was a very lonely old man with very little education. His youngest son, Harry, and his family had always lived off him, and when the old man needed them the most, they never showed up to help him. They just moved back to the States and left the old man to get along the best he could. The other son, Dave, who would have looked after his father, died shortly after we moved down here, so old Mr. Benjamin had no one.

It seems as if the old people are not wanted by their children any more.

Mr. Benjamin came from the States about somewhere around 1902 or 1905. I have heard him say several times that he came from North Dakota. I knew him for about seven or eight years while we lived up there. He had a family of three boys and one girl. His daughter married Tom Pollard, who was part Indian. Mr. Benjamin married his second wife up on the homestead, but she left him because he would not make his son Harry and his wife and three children go and

live in their own home, which was about a quarter of a mile away on the next lot. His second wife was still living when we left there.

About ringworms. Ringworms are a fungus spore that comes, as far as I know, from rotting poplar trees when they are very damp. You can sometimes see them glowing in the dark on a wet night. They cause a ring shaped dark mark to appear on the skin wherever they touch. They can best be treated with sulfur and vaseline or with sulfur and bear or goose grease. If they are not wholly covered with this mixture they will spread to other parts of your body if you touch them with your fingers where they have not been completely covered with the mixture.

Most everyone up where we were had a cure for ringworm so we kept our children free from it when we found out where they were getting it and the cure for it. I will tell you here what the cure we used is, in case you or your children ever get it. You mix enough sulphur with goose grease to form a pliable paste, then apply this mixture to the spot where the ring worm is, being sure that the mixture is well outside the limits of the ringworm. In a few days it will be gone.

As you know I am stalled here at my daughter's place just sort of marking time until I can find the home of my own that I want to buy. Then I will be away again to see what life has to offer in return for a good day's work. Of course I cannot work like I used to work but I think I can do as good a day's work on my own place as the average man can. Sure I am a bit crippled up in my legs but a man does not do all his work with his legs, although they are a great help in getting around when they are in good shape. My mind is alright of course, and it will have to make up the difference in what my legs does not supply.

I keep on with the new exercises on my hips to see if I can get them to bend like they used to before I had them operated on, but they only give so little after a lot of painful stretching.

I am beginning to think that the doctor did not put the metal balls far enough into my hip bones.

I think they are out too far and are stopping my hip joints from working properly.

If that is what's wrong, I guess I am licked unless I have another operation on both hips to have them put in the right position. I have a book about the operation with sketches showing the position of everything, and it looks like if those pieces of metal were left out too far, it would stop my hips from bending.

I may go to another doctor that I have and ask him to have an x-ray taken and see if that is the trouble and if it can be corrected. Perhaps he will not let me have another operation, because of this heart trouble that I have, but it would do no harm to find out from an x-ray if that was the trouble, a botched operation.

I do not think such exercising as I can do now is going to move them very much. Anyway, I better get this letter and the vistaVision memories and a portrait of our son Dan in the mail for you before it gets so big it wont fit into the envelope. I hope all is well with you and your wife.

Write soon.

Your friend,

Sam

Family Portrait: Dan

Daniel, our third son, was born on December 25, 1935, Christmas day, on the homestead. I was the midwife and doctor for this occasion too. He was a fat, healthy boy, very quiet, without much to say, and very loyal. He was very much like me as he grew older, as he could not explain things very good, but he could create them with his hands and mind. He had a happy life on the homestead and was very disappointed when we decided to leave.

When we arrived in Fort William and were living on the old Larabee place, he was too young to go to school, but by the time I had my log house built on Corbett Creek, he started to go to school on Arthur street on what is now Hwy 17, the next year. He did very good there and graduated to Vocational school in Fort William. By that time there was bus service to the high schools in Fort William so we had no problems there.

He had always wanted to get in the Army Cadet School so that he could have a chance at going to college, as he knew that I would never have been able to send him and pay for his education. He was out in Manitoba at the Cadets training camp when I had finally got all the papers and recommendations from the local big shots that would get him into this school and a chance for the college education that he wanted.

Before he had left for the summer training camp of the Cadets, he had put in an application for the football team at the Vocational school in Fort William. When the officer at

Winnipeg received his application for the Cadet school, he sent a plane out to the camp where Dan was training to bring him into Winnipeg for an interview. When Dan got there and was asked to sign on for the full course right through to the graduation from the college of his choice, he turned it down, with the excuse he wanted to play on the football team at the Vocational school in Fort William.

I just could not believe it.

After all the work I had done to get him what he had always told me that he had wanted, he turned the Cadet school and college down flat.

The sad thing of the whole matter was that when he came back from Cadet camp and went back to school in Fort William, they had decided not to put him on the football team at all as they said he was too small. So he lost out on both counts and without asking me or even mentioning it, he quit school and joined the regular Army for three years.

I think that was when his whole personality changed, for when he left the army at the end of his three years, he was a different person altogether.

He had saved his money while in the army, and when he came home he had over \$500.00 in cash. He gave me the \$500.00 to keep for him, but a few days after, he ask me for the whole amount and I never heard or seen it afterwards. He seemed to be withdrawn from me and the family, and he was more secretive and did not always give a very good answer to questions when he was asked anything about his personal affairs.

I stopped asking and told his mother to not ask him either.

He bought an old car and put it in good running order. While working on this car, he seemed more relaxed and happy and played with his small sister, Pat, a lot. After he had the car

running a few days, one morning when I was on the four to twelve shift, a police car drove into the yard and went over to where Dan was working around his car.

Of course I went over too, to see what the police wanted.

It was about an elderly bachelor that lived west on the road about four miles, that had an old car of the same make and year as Dan's was. When the old man came home from being away one time, he found his car had been stripped of parts and he phoned the police.

We went to the old house and the whole place looked like it had no one living there. The bachelor was away at the village getting groceries that evening, and he had to walk, as his car would not work.

I looked the old man's car over and it was much more of a wreck than Dan's had been when he first bought it. And yes, I could see some parts had been taken off it.

The police knew Dan had a car just like it, and of course came down to see it first thing next morning and found the parts.

Dan told the police that a fellow who lived on Arthur street had told him there was a car up on this place just like his, and perhaps he could get the parts he needed there. He told the police that he went around to the place and found a fellow who said he could have the parts if he paid for them.

The police arrested Dan and took the parts and Dan into town.

I got Dan a good lawyer and offered to pay the old man for the parts he had lost from his wrecked car if he would drop the charges. I also offered to give the old man Dan's car.

I drew up a bill of sale for the car of Dan's, transferring it to this elderly man, and I drove over to the jail and explained it to Dan and he signed it. I then took it back and had my son Tim

drive Dan's car up to the old man's place and had the elderly man take it out and try it out so that he could see that it was in good running order.

He did so and was very pleased with it and wanted to pay Dan some money, but I said no that was not in our agreement.

In the end, everyone was all satisfied, Dan had learned a very valuable lesson, the elderly man had a much better car that was in good running order, and the law was satisfied.

I was out \$200.00 dollars for the lawyer, which I borrowed from the Credit Union and would have to pay back.

Dan was a much quieter boy when he come home after that, and we took a walk up into the field where I had my garden one time and we had a long talk. He broke down and told me that it was terrible spending those few days in jail along with all kinds of crooks and burglars that were waiting for their appeal hearings in court.

I ask him what he wanted to do now.

He said that he would like to go to Winnipeg to a goverment welding school and learn the welding business, but he did not have the money, so he said he would love to get a job and earn the money. I ask him about how much it would cost for the course and for his keep while taking the course. He said the course took about three months and cost \$500.00.

He said that he might be able to get a job in Winnipeg to pay for his keep, but I said nothing doing, that would be just asking for trouble in a strange city. I said that I would borrow the money, \$1,000.00 from my Credit Union at the mill, and when he completed his course and got his license and a job, he could pay me back. I said I could have a little taken off each pay and it would soon be paid off. I said I would have to put off the building of a new frame house on my

Corbett Creek property for a while, but I thought that no one would mind living in the original log house I had built there earlier too much.

I got the money and Dan left for Winnipeg. He got his license as a welder and was back in about three months, as he stayed a while longer and took a special course in pipe welding.

When he came back, the first thing he did was join the welder's union. Next day he went to work welding on the pipe construction at the Great Lakes paper mill at \$6.00 per hour. I had been paying off my loan at the Credit Union at the rate of \$30.00 per month. The first pay Dan drew it jumped to \$50.00 per month, as Dan started paying off the loan that I had got for him in my name. Before the year was ended, he had repaid the loan and the \$200.00 for the lawyer I had borrowed when he was in trouble, and he put over \$500.00 more in my savings account at the Credit Union.

I wanted to give it back to him, but he would not take it no how, so when he wanted to buy a lot from me to build a home on after he got married, I said sure. I told him to pick out where he wanted the lot and the size of it and set up some stakes and cut a line through the bush so that it could be surveyed and I would get a surveyor out and survey the lot and give him a deed. He marked out about twelve acres including part of Little Falls.

I got it surveyed and had a deed made out in his name, and when he ask what the bill was, I told him that he had already paid for it with the money he put in my account at the Credit Union.

He argued with me and tried in many ways to pay me for the lot by doing things for me without ever accepting any pay.

He built a little house on the lot, and him and his wife Shirley moved in.

In time they had three wonderful daughters, but never the son that Dan dearly wanted.

I guess he gave up trying as they have had no more children up to now. The eldest daughter will be getting married soon, and it will only be a few years until they are all married.

With the kind of special welding Dan does he is away from home for long periods of time, so he does not see much of his family, but when he does come home from a job, he usually takes his family on a camping trip in the summer and to Skidoo rallies in the winter for a month or two.

He has been called to the States several times to do special welding on pipelines. He likes traveling, and he just came back from a seven month job in Alberta.

He was over for a visit on Saturday and fixed up young Dan's, Pat's son, motor bike so that it would go faster. Young Dan is the son he has never had, and he has learned him all that he knows about motor bikes, and motor bike racing.

Young Dan just thinks the sun rises and sets in his uncle Dan.

I had a talk with Dan while he was here and he was saying that he might give up the special work that he does to stay home with his family more.

vistaVision Memories

Stan

I had another close call when we living up on the homestead the second year we were up there. This was the experience that I had with a big male rutting deer.

I was going into the bush to cut cedar posts and I had to walk along a deer trail about a foot or so wide that had high hazelnut bushes growing right up to each side of the trail. There were strong gusts of wind blowing every few minutes that bent these bushes very near to the ground. I came to one place in the trail where I heard a sort of scratching noise. Being always curious, I stopped to listen. Just then the wind blew the bushes down again, and there was this monster of a deer with his great spread of antlers, about four feet or so away, looking me right in the eye. It seemed that we looked at each other for a long time, but I suppose it was only a few seconds until the bushes flipped up between us again.

Then he came out through the bushes with a crash, with his head down near the ground, but he missed me by about two feet or so.

I took to my heels and made off for the nearest tree that I could climb in a hurry, which was a balsam with lots of big limbs right to the ground.

I bet I went up that tree the fastest anyone ever went up a tree, but I need not have been in such a hurry, for the deer kept on going straight through the bush in the opposite direction. I could hear him crashing through the trees for some time.

At the time I was pretty scared, but in later years, I figured out why he did not attack me.

He was old and very near all gray, and I think his eyesight was failing him, and as I was downwind from him he had not got any scent of me until he had charged at me. Then I think he was just as anxious as I was to get a long way from there as fast as he could.

I was telling Mr. Benjamin about my experience, and he said that he and others had tried for years to get that old deer for his antlers, but never had been able to hit him when they shot at him. He ask me in what direction the deer had gone as he wanted to get another chance at him. I told him he went southeast, towards the swamp down there, so he got his rifle and dog and went down that way looking for him.

That was one lie that I did not mind telling, as Mr. Benjamin was thinking of only killing that deer for his great antlers, not because he needed meat. Anyway he knew that deer would be too old to eat as he would be very tough meat to chew.

The deer had gone in the exact opposite direction away to the north towards the lakes where he would be more or less safe from hunters, and I wished him well and a continuing long life.

There was a great belief by the people up on the homestead that when deer started eating cedar in the winter you could not eat the meat as the taste of cedar was too strong in it. I showed them that if you dressed the deer out as soon as it was killed and washed the insides out with snow right away, there would be no taste of cedar in the meat. Do this before you remove the

hide. I had to prove it to them by giving them meat I had killed after Xmas, when the deer had been eating cedar for two months or more.

It is like I said once before, if you use your brains and what is around you, it is not too hard to survive. Do not be afraid to try something that other people say cannot be done, try it for yourself after you have looked at it from all sides.

One time, I ran into a mother bear and her two cubs on an old logging road while I was on my way to the store in North Branch for supplies. By all logic of the circumstances, that bear should have attacked me at once. Why she did not, I will never know. I was within about eight or ten feet of her cubs, which was much too close, yet she just reared up on her hind legs and growled at me, the two cubs doing the same as there mother.

I don't believe that I even breathed until they got down on all fours again and walked off into the bush.

There were no trees close enough for me to climb, but I do not think that would have helped me, as bears can climb too. I never moved a bit while they were standing there, and as I was downwind from them, I do not think that they ever got my scent, or the story might have been different. Bears do not have very good eyesight, and perhaps that is what saved me from a very rough time of it.

There were a lot of things that happened to us, little things perhaps, but still part of our life and part of my education by experience up there on the homestead.

One day, for example, two of the young ladies from just north of our place had come down the road past my place about two miles or so to pick blueberries on the rocky ridge of my homestead. They had their pails full and were going past Mr. Benjamin's place when an old

Billy goat that he had saw them gave chase. They screamed and started to run up the road but Billy was gaining on them fast. They dropped their pails full of berries and run into my place and climbed a little Jack Pine tree.

The Billy goat stopped and ate all their berries, and then went back into his own yard and lay down under a tree.

I was cutting poplar pulpwood at that time when I had heard the screams and came running out of the bush. I saw the two girls up in the tree crying and went over and helped them down. They were really scared and found their pails and started running for home.

I had a lot of rocks piled up near my gate. They were about the size of my fist. I had got them ready in the event that the goat ever attacked my children. One day I heard my three children yelling and I rushed out to the road. The children were all down in the ditch on our side of the road and the goat was running along the pile of soil that had been taken out of the ditch and piled along the road. I grabbed up several of these rocks and walked up along my edge of the ditch and told the children to get out on the bank and get behind me. The goat then got down in the ditch and was only about four feet away from me when I threw the first big rock. He was just standing there in the ditch looking at me. I could not miss him.

The rock hit him right between the eyes, and down he went.

The children went home, except for Lorne, the oldest of the three.

I watched the goat for a while. I thought I had killed him, but after a while he started to move and I knew then that he had only been stunned. He finally got up on his feet and had a good deal of trouble getting out of the ditch, but at last was able to get out onto the road and go over to the Benjamin place where he had been staying.

Some time later, when Mr. Benjamin was over at my place, he told me that there was something wrong with the goat. He said that it had always went after him when he came out of the house, but now he never bothered him at all. He said Harry's children played with the goat and that is something the goat would not put up with before and would usually try to butt the children. He said now it never bothered any people that came there for a visit or in any way was mean like he used to be.

I listened to all this but said nothing about hitting the goat with that big rock.

We never had any more trouble with that goat.

It turns out that the goat at Mr. Benjamin's place was not actually his goat. The goat really belonged to another man by the name of Turner who had come over to ask Mr. Benjamin to go up to One Sided Lake to net some pickerel while they were spawning, and when he would not go, Turner and his wife and family camped right there for several weeks in Mr. Benjamin's front yard, living off him. Mr. Benjamin finally got fed up with him and his family and goat and two sheep living off him and told them to go back to their own home, or he would kill the lot of them, starting with the goat and sheep.

Turner did leave there, but he came across the road to my place and told me Mr. Benjamin had thrown him out, along with his wife and their six children, goat and sheep. He wanted to come in and stay overnight, saying they would leave in the morning.

I said no they could not even enter my house.

Turner wanted to know why so I was honest and told him.

I said his whole family had head and body lice and we did not have them and did not intend to have our home infested with them.

They said they had nothing to eat at their home for their children or themselves.

I told them we were the same way when we first came up here to live, but my wife and I both worked hard for what we had and we kept our house and family clean and that was the way it was going to stay. I told them all to go over and sit on some benches we had under the trees and I would get them some food.

My wife and I went in the house and we got a clean gunny sack and wrapped two big loafs of fresh baked bread in paper and put it in the sack. We had part of a good sized roast of venison, it was wrapped and went into the bag too. My wife packed about two pounds of homemade butter into a jam tin to go into the bag, along with some potatoes, carrots, three big turnips, some onions and two cabbage. My wife then filled a ten pound honey pail with fresh milk and put some coffee in one paper bag and some sugar in another. We had an extra box of Quaker oats so we put that in the sack too, along with about a pound of brown sugar.

I loaned them a two wheeled cart to take the bag home in.

On the way home they passed the Tiebold homestead. Mrs. Tiebold told my wife sometime afterwards that the Turners told her that Mr. Benjamin threw them out, and that we were just as bad because we would not let them come in or give their children anything to eat, as they had nothing to eat since the day before.

That is all the thanks you get from trying to help certain kinds of people.

We had another job of cleaning our first three children that went to school in the Rainy River District of head lice when another family moved into a homestead just east and a bit north of our place. They had a boy and two girls of school age too, and they all had head lice. Pretty soon all the kids in the school got them and was there ever a war about that. The only things they had to combat them was coal oil and fine tooth combs.

The store keeper at North Branch soon had to order more fine combs and of course made a profit on them.

Most of the mothers got together and took combs and coal oil over to the mother of these kids and showed her how to clean their heads the first day. Then they went over the next day and washed and boiled all the bedding and clothes in the house and told the woman that she would have to keep at that for a week or more every day, until all the nits had hatched out, before their family would be free from them. They said that one or two of them would come over each day and help her with the washing, which they did.

When everyone was finally clean of lice, they had a party at the school to celebrate and I never heard of any more lice while we were up there.

During fall of the first year I was up there, my brother Stan and his wife came up to live with us in an old Dodge half ton truck. My brother was out of work down in Glen Williams at the time, and being as I was an older brother, he believed that I would take care of him and his wife. This was when the Hungry Thirties had really got going, in 1933-4, and work was hard to

find anywhere. Because there were not many roads in northern Ontario at the time, they had to go around through the States to get to our homestead, and they got there in time to have Stan help me with the building and finishing of my first log house.

I was thirty-four then and I think he was twenty-two.

My brother was there to help me, as he said, but I never felt so frustrated and mixed up in



all my life. I had my log house all planned out in my head the way I was going to have it built, although I knew nothing about building log houses, but he just about drove me nuts with his suggestions of how he thought it should be built. For example, we had the walls all up and the pole rafters in and braced and were ready to put the sheeting on the roof. I had decided to dig a hole under where the floor would be to store our vegetables in the winter, before we put in the floor joists and laid the floor. That way I could have room to work and could throw the soil right out the opening where the back door would be.

*My Brother Stan Helping
to Build our Log Home*

My brother tried to insist that we get the roof on first and the floor in before I dug the hole for the vegetables.

I told him he could work on the roof and I would dig the hole and build a room for the vegetables while there was no floor in the house.

He argued the rest of the day but I just kept on digging and throwing the soil out the doorway hole in the log wall. Finally he got fed up and went back up to the house where we all were living on Harry Benjamin's land.

I kept on digging the rest of the day until I had quite a big hole in the ground about twenty foot square and four feet deep. I worked at it until it was too dark to see anymore.

Next morning I was down there at about six in the morning and had a rack built for the floor of this hole so that we would not bring up soil on our shoes when we went down to get vegetables. I also dug a hole in one corner of this square storage space, about two feet square and about three feet deep, so that any seepage water would run into the hole and we could pump it out with a small cistern pump that I had. By the time my brother got down there that day I had the rack for the hole made and installed and fitted into the hole and had started to build the bins to hold the vegetables.

Another thing we could not agree on was what to use for rafters for the house.

He wanted to use the few two by fours that we had salvaged from the old house we tore down on the second homestead I had filed on a little ways down the road from our place. I said that we should save them and use poles instead.

He said there was no way that we could use poles and get a straight roof.

I got some poles and started notching them until I had two that would fit perfectly against the ridge board I had set up where the centre of the roof would be, then I nailed a two by four along where the bottom of the roof would be, and made notches in the bottom of the poles so they would fit tight to the two by four with about two feet or so overhang. It was no trouble at all to cut the rest of the rafters for the roof and have them fit just as tight.

I almost forgot the most important part of putting up these rafters. Before I put the two by fours along the bottom edge of the room, I put good sized logs across the house for ceiling joists and laid the two by fours on top of them and spiked them down solid to the ceiling joists.

By doing it this way, the weight of the roof would be pressing straight down instead of shoving towards the outside of the walls and letting the centre of the roof sag in time.

I had to argue all the time with my brother about this, but I insisted I was right.

When I was up there for a visit after about thirty years since I had built this log house, the peak of that roof was just as straight as the day that I built it. And there was another thing that I noticed about other log buildings that had been built since we had left there, they had all copied my method of putting on their roofs, so you will understand why I always built my houses after that alone, without the help of anyone. When help was offered, I always managed to be able to turn it down.

By late that first fall in 1933 on the homestead, I had my own place pretty much finished, and we all moved out of Harry Benjamin's old shack and we were living on my homestead in our new log house. My brother and I got a few days work on the road just before Xmas and I got a check for \$5.00 from the relief officer, Pat Carver, to feed four adults and three children, and out of that money we also had to buy clothes. When my brother and his wife had been with us for a few months, my brother helped me dig a well eight feet deep and drill it another twenty-two feet with a three inch auger. We had no lumber at that time for cribbing so, since it was winter and everything was frozen rock solid, we just kept it covered over.

Next spring, it all caved in when it thawed out.

Stan stayed with us all that winter, and late in the fall of the next year I told him of an abandoned homestead with a neat little log house on it that he could file on, if he wanted to set up on his own. I helped him get the place and drilled a well for him and got him started at cutting

pulpwood. Then, when the store owner in North Branch wanted a driver for his pulp truck, I recommended my brother, and he got the job.

He was given the job of building our new school house, before he got the job as truck driver, by the two other trustees on the school board. I voted against him getting the job as builder of the school as I knew, after he tried to help me build my log house, that he did not have the ability to build it.

As soon as he got the job of builder he bought 160 acres of land from the school board.

Now, there was a motion on the school books that had been voted on and become law long before we came up there to live. This law said that anyone owing the school board money could not receive pay from the school board for any work they did for the school board, until they had payed off what they owed to the school board.

When my brother had been working for the school board for a week building a shed to keep tools and supplies in, he ask for his pay for a week's work. He still owed \$250.00 for the land he had bought from them, and when the other two trustees were going to pay him a week's wages while he still owed for the land, I said no, they could not pay him, or it would have to come out of their own pockets.

I said I wanted my objection to paying my brother entered in the minutes of the meeting so that I would not have to dig into my pocket to pay part of that week's pay. Then the two trustees would not give my brother the week's pay, so he said he was quitting the job right there and would go to Fort Frances and hire a lawyer to collect the money, and we would have to pay the cost.

The two trustees then wanted to pay him the money, but I again said no.

I said I would go to Fort Frances and see the school inspector and the crown attorney and get their opinion of what to do about it. I did this, and their opinion was that the only way we could pay my brother for his week's work, was for him to return the land to the school board, giving the school board a signed release from the agreement of sale. Then we could pay my brother, otherwise the two trustees would be responsible for any money paid out.

We received a nasty letter from my brother's lawyer.

We sent it to the crown attorney. He sent us back a signed release on the land agreement with my brother for the land he had bought from the school board, and then we paid him.

After that, I saw that the storekeeper in North Branch gave him the truck driving job, and my brother and his wife built a little house across from the store and drove truck for the store keeper for several years.

My brother spread stories to the neighbours about how hard he had worked to help me, and how I had cost him the school building job and from then on most of them were against me and my family. They ask me to tell them just what the trouble was between my brother and me, and I told them that was none of there dam business.

Then, when we worked on building the new school, everyone owed years of back taxes, so we passed a resolution that everyone would have to work out their back taxes at \$2.00 per an eight hour day before they could receive any cash pay, and if anyone still owed taxes after the school was completed, we would hire a tax collector to collect the balance that was owing.

In 1934, when the school was built, Mr. Jim Sisco and his sons, who all thought my brother was a snow white saint, still owed taxes, so the collector collected every cent they owed

including the costs of collecting. I was in charge of seeing that this was done, so I was the one who was the black devil after that as far as the Siscos were concerned.

I did not really mind for myself, but some of the bigger boys were abusing my two boys and one girl that were going to school. I went over to the school one morning, and had the teacher, Miss Tompkin, come outside where I told her what was going on, and ask her if I could go in and speak to these boys.

She said I could and we went in and I did speak to them.

There were four of the boys who were the leaders in this roughing gang, and I really went after them good. I told them that not only were they cowards and bullies for picking on my small children, but if they did not stop it at once, that I was going to their fathers and tell him what was going on, and if their fathers did not give them a good beating, I would give their fathers a real good beating until he had whipped them good. If they did not think I could do it, they would find out for sure by bothering one of my children just once again. I told them that was all I had to say and I meant every word of it and would do exactly as I had said.

They never bothered my children again, in fact my oldest boy, who was at that time about seven, became good friends with some of them.

During the spring of 1934, as soon as the snow had gone and the ground had dried up, I started clearing a piece of land that had been grubbed out by fire right near our house several years before. There were a lot of big poplar trees that had been burnt off at the roots and had

been blown over by the wind, along with many big birch and balsam trees. There was a lot of second growth poplar trees that had grown up amongst this tangle of trees and it was very hard, dirty work to clear this mess up and put it in piles for burning when it was dry.

About a week after I had started clearing the land, word had come into our district that the goverment had given our part of the district two thousand dollars for to put a road of three miles up past my property, and the neighbor whose land adjoined mine on the south was appointed foreman of the job.

When he went around to gather up a crew to work on the road at a \$1.20 a day for eight hours work, he did not give me a job. I went down and ask him why I was not being allowed to work on the road as the road was going right past my land.

He said that I had plenty of work to do on my land and would be too busy for to work on the road.

I told him that I would be starting to work the next morning when the other men started on the job, and if I did not receive the same pay as they did for every day I was on the job, that I was going to beat hell out of him until I did get it.

He said he would have something to say about that, but I ask him if he wanted a sample of what would happen to him if I did not get the job, I could give him one right then. He backed down and told me to come to work in the morning.

I found out later that the reason he did not want me on the job was that he had intended to give his big son a job on the road, and as he was allowed to only hire one man from a family and only from each family in our district, he thought that by me being a newcomer that he could leave me out so that he could hire his son and I would not know anything about this business of

one from each family. I had been told by the neighbors that he was a very slippery man to have any dealings with, and he was a sort of favorite with the party that was then in power that ran the government in our part of the country.

One day, just after we got started, the temperature dropped and never went up above 60 below zero. It was a dry cold but it sure had a bite to it if you did not keep moving or did not keep the fire going in the gravel pit. The first day that it was 60 below, the team's ears started to freeze and they had to be put back into the barn and we could not haul any gravel. This went on for three days. Our gang of loaders stayed in the gravel pit for half a day, then went home, but we got paid for a full day.

Mr. Benjamin and I had to walk about five or six miles through the bush to get to the gravel pit where we built up a big fire out of pine stumps. When the teams would bring the sleigh into the gravel pit to where they were going to load them, we had green poplar poles laid across the road where the sleigh would sit while we were loading it, so that the team could get a good start when it was leaving the pit.

I used to watch one young fellow by the name of Jewet, who had an old skinny team when he would start out with his load. He had a big blacksnake whip about six feet long, and he would start whipping his horses before they even started to pull the load, and he kept on whipping them all the way out of the pit.

To me that seemed awfully cruel and was not needed at all.

Quite often the horses would have blood dripping off them at the end of the day.

I could not stand by and see this going on, so one day I went over and ask him if he had to whip them like that every load they took out.

He told me to mind my own business and started to curse me.

I told him if he whipped them horses once more, I was going to whip him.

He said why not try my luck now at giving him a whipping, and the fight was on.

It really was no fight at all as he knew nothing about boxing, but he did know how to kick and gouge. I tripped over a lump of frozen clay and fell to the ground, and he right away tried to kick my ribs in. Then was when I made up my mind to really give him a licking he would remember for a long time.

I carried the fight out to a more level place in the pit and proceeded to give him a beating that he deserved. When he had enough and was crying for me to stop, I did and then told him I would show him how to take his team out of there without a whip.

I went around in front of the team and talked to them so that they got to know the sound of my voice and petted them a bit, then picked up the reins and told them to get out of there. They hit their collars and scrambled out faster than they ever had before. As soon as they were up on level ground. I stopped them and went around and talked to them and petted them some more.

By then Jewet was up by his team with his blacksnake whip.

I went over and told him to give me the whip as he would not need it anymore, if he used his team the way I had and was kind and considerate of them. I said they would pull hard until they dropped, if he would only talk to them in a quiet tone of voice and throw the whip away. I said I would take the whip and keep it for the rest of the day so that he would not be tempted to use it on the horses.

Well, he gave me the whip and the team went out of the pit with no trouble at all for the rest of the time that we were hauling gravel. The best part of it was that Jewet would never carry that whip again, and his sister later told me, a year or so later, that he had cut it into pieces when he got home that day and burnt it in the stove in his house and warned his numerous brothers what he would do to them if he ever saw them abusing the team again.

We got to be pretty good friends after that and he wanted to know how I knew so much about horses and other animals.

I told him that he could learn the same way that I had, if he would only consider animals as living things with feelings like our own. I said treat an animal with kindness, and most all of them will respond to this in a way that is hard to believe until you try it yourself. They will do most anything to please you and they learn very fast, if you give them a chance and do not abuse them. There are times that you will get a balky horse or a contrary cow, but with patience and kindness you can change them all around. There are times when you have to be strict with them, until they learn that you are in control, but never beat and abuse them, just out think them.

We cleared the right of way for the road and dug the ditches with pick and shovels and got the grade for the road in for the three miles of road. When the inspector came up to look the job over and saw that we had built all the culverts out of logs, he said he would see if he could get us some more money to put the first layer of gravel on the road so that the clay in all the fills we had made would not wash out.

The inspector was able to get another fifteen hundred dollars out of the goverment for gravel for the road, and the nearest gravel was on some homestead land that I had filed on not far from my place the first winter that I was up there, so I made a nice bit of money out of that place,

and was that money ever needed by my family that year. I got that extra homestead land for just two dollars because the former owner had not fulfilled his homesteading duties the year before my family and I moved up to Rainy River.

Still, the extra goverment money did not go far enough to finish the last half mile or so of the road, so we donated our work free and the truckers donated there trucks free to finish the road. A record of our time and the number of yards of gravel that was hauled in these donations was kept, and when the goverment heard about it, everything and everybody was paid for these free donations. I thought this was a very good of the goverment at that time.

Of course there was an election coming up that year.

I made two hundred and some dollars out of my gravel pit at ten cents a yard and I got a little more than that in wages.

Somehow word got around about what I made on the gravel deal, and a lot of people got quite sore about it and were not a bit backward in letting me know what they thought about it. However myself and my family came first, and I intended that it should stay that way.

When I was working on the road that year, I was always up at daylight in the morning and clearing land before I went to work on the road, and after supper in the evening I would be out clearing land as late as eleven at night. I cleared about fifteen acres near the house that year and had a neighbor come over and plow it all up for me that next spring.

That second spring up on the homestead, I put in a fairly large garden on my own land and sowed the rest to turnip and clover. But the rabbits were so thick that year that they started eating everything off as soon as it came up out of the ground. I had ten rows of beans along the side next to the bush. They were about an eighth of a mile long. The rabbits ate most of them off in one night. I replanted that ground with beans, and as soon as they were up through the soil I sprayed them with Paris Green poison. In a couple of days they had their first leaves so I sprayed them again.

Next morning when I went out to look them over I found twenty-two rabbits laying dead. I gathered them up and took them down to the edge of the bush and put them on a pile of brush and partly burned logs, but did not try to burn them that day as the wind was blowing towards our house, and it would make an awful smell around our home if I started the fire then.

I decided to wait and see which direction the wind would be blowing in the morning.

When I got up next morning the wind was blowing from the north, which was the way I wanted it to be blowing, so I went down to where the rabbits were and decided to set fire to the brush pile. Imagine my surprise when I got there, to find that the rabbits, all twenty-two of them, had disappeared.

I looked around and was not long in finding the answer.

There were bear tracks in the ashes on the ground all around that brush pile.

I had piled the brush out on burnt over ground that the grubbing fire had burnt over so that the fire would not get into the bush and burn good timber that I wanted to cut for pulp. The ashes were quite thick there and the tracks of the bear showed up quite clear. There were the tracks of a large bear and a lot of small tracks that could have been made by one or more cubs.

The wind blowing from the north had no doubt carried the scent to the south into the swamp where the bears usually were, and they had come out for a feed.

How they could have gotten rid of all those rabbits I will never know.

One night that year another son of Mr. Benjamin slipped across the border into Canada from the States, and came up to live with the father across the road from me. I heard later from Harry that he was about two jumps ahead of the sheriff for a break and entering job down in the States.

He was a sneaky looking character.

Soon after Mr. Benjamin's other son slipped across the border I was down along the south alfalfa field of mine waiting to spotlight a deer as we were out of meat. Two yearling deer came out to eat and I took a shot at one. When I got the light back where they had been, one was still standing there. I shot at it, and again when I got the light back to where he had been standing, I found that he had moved just a little bit. I shot again and when I got the light back there he was not in sight. He had moved just as I shot and I thought I had the bad luck to miss him twice.

I could not understand it as I am a very good shot with a rifle and usually hit what I shoot at. I went over to where the deer had been and found two dead deer, the first two I had shot at, the third one was gone. I bled them, then went up home to get the team and a scot to bring them home.

Just as I was going in the house, there was a lot of screaming from down in the bush where I had shot the deer. Mr. Benjamin came running over and said my dog was killing a deer and that he was going to shoot it. I took him down to my house and showed him my dog was in the house playing with the children. I said it must be his dog, and seeing as he had wanted to go down and shoot my dog, I said we would go down and shoot his.

I got my shotgun and some buckshot, he took his rifle.

As we came close to the bush his dog came out in front of me, and I shot and killed it. It was a big police dog which he never fed, he just let it get its own food by hunting in the bush. On several occasions it had taken food from my children and Harry's, and I was looking for an excuse to get rid of it. We hunted around in the bush with a lantern and finally found the other deer that I had wounded when it jumped over a brush pile. The dog had eaten most of the left hind ham off it as it had tried to crawl under the roots of a tree in the creek bed.

I got my team and Mr. Benjamin helped me load the two deer onto the wagon. I gave him one of the deer for helping. I hung my deer up and put away my team and went over to help Mr. Benjamin hang up his deer. Him and the son from the States already had it up and were skinning it. I said seeing as they had their deer hung up and did not need my help, I would go back and dress out my deer.

It was quite dark when I started back home, and I had only gone a short ways, when I felt as if someone were following me, but I could not see anyone when I looked back.

When I was going in my road, I had to pass through where the lamplight shone across my road. When I passed through this light, I stopped and watched it. Very soon the brother from the States came through the light, and he had a long hunting knife in his hand. I reached down to a

pile of culled seven foot cedar posts that were too small in diameter for the dealers to buy, and got one, then stepped to the side of the road where I could see this fellow against the light across the road.

When he was going past me I gave him a good belt on the arm that was carrying the knife.

He dropped it and started to run back across the road to Mr. Benjamin's house.

I picked up his knife and went across to the house where he was inside with his shirt off looking at his arm. My fence post had left quite a bruise.

Old Mr. Benjamin wanted to know what it was all about, so I told him. He did not believe it, or if he did, he did not have much to say. I told this son of his if he ever set foot on my land again he would meet a full charge of buckshot. I told him to remember what their big dog looked like after one charge of buckshot.

The next day, when I went to North Branch to get the mail, I went to the nearest phone and called the RCMP and told them about this fellow being in Canada. I did not like doing this, but he was a threat to me and my family, and perhaps to other people's as well.

Two Mounties came up the next morning and took him across the border and turned him over to the sheriff. There was quite a write up about it in the Fort Frances paper, but my name was not mentioned, for which I was very thankful.

One year our hens started to disappear and after watching for quite a while I saw a big, what I thought was a hawk, swoop down on a hen and kill it. I rushed over quickly and it took off without the hen. I knew it would be back so I tied the hen down with some wire to some tree roots where the hen was laying and set three wolf traps around the hen. I went over to the hen house and watched through the window for a short time until this bird came down and walked right into a trap.

Now I was faced with a very tough problem, one that would go against both vows that I had made when I stopped trapping fur bearing animals. It was that I would never trap animals and kill them for their fur for money, that they were doing no harm and had as much right to live as I had.

This was a bit different in a way though. This bird or birds was taking food from my family that they needed. There were lots of partridge, mice, and rabbits this bird could feed on. Now that they had found it was easy to kill a hen or chicken, they had already killed half my flock, and they would wipe them all out unless I broke my promise to myself.

After I had thought it over for awhile, I decided that we needed the hens and eggs more than these birds did, so I decided to destroy the bird.

I went over to my trap and found this bird was a young eagle instead of a hawk as I had thought it was. I put it to death as painlessly as I knew how by breaking it's neck and then I reset my trap. I then took the bird down to show my wife what had been getting our hens. I had just come out of the house to go and bury it, when I heard a disturbance up where I had my traps set. I went up and there was one of the parent birds in a trap.

He was a big fellow and fought me for awhile before I could get ahold of him and break his neck like I did the other one.

Two days after, I caught the second young one and disposed of him. I had my traps set there until the first snow came that year but never caught the other one.

We never lost another chicken in all the years we were up there after that.

I felt pretty bad about destroying those eagles, but I felt that I had no other choice. If I had the money I would have sent them down east to a bird lover that I knew and had her release them down there, but I did not have one cent in my pocket and no way of getting any at that time. If I had known what I know now I could have sent them collect and this lady would have been real honored to pay the cost in order to save the lives of those wonderful birds.

I remember one time when the storekeeper in North Branch came over to my place down in the bush where I was cutting poplar pulpwood, and he ask me to go over to his place to look at a cow that had just given birth to a calf. He said the calf had been born for over ten hours, but the cow had not cleaned out the afterbirth yet.

I told him it must be grown onto the inside of the womb, and he would have to go in with his hand and loosen it, or the cow might die.

He said he could not do that and that he did not know how.

I said I would go over and do it for him, it was no problem.

I went over and did the job but told him the cow should not be bred again as part of the womb had a large growth on the inside, and the afterbirth had grown to that. I had got all the afterbirth out in one piece and showed him where it had been attached to this other growth. I told him I had no idea what this other growth was as I was not a vetinary.

He just thanked me for what I had done and let me walk back home five miles through the bush.

August 8, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter a few days ago and was very pleased to hear from you and have read it over a few times now to make sure I got everything that was in it. I sometimes miss things because my eyesight is so bad, so I usually read your letters over several times.

My son Ben came over to take my grandson uptown with his cousins, and the two of them talked over in the kitchen for an hour or more. My wife had been trying for about a week or more to find a way for me to get up there for to see my doctor about my legs, so she asked my son if he would have time to take me. He said he would, so my wife got on the phone and got the doctor's office and was very lucky to get an appointment for tomorrow, August 9th at 11 am. Usually I would have had to wait about a week or more for an appointment, but my wife was real lucky this morning.

My legs have been breaking open and bleeding more lately, especially my left leg, and I have been getting quite worried about it. It is not at all painful, in fact I do not know anything about it until I get up in the morning and see the blood on the bedclothes.

About every two days, if I do not have a good hot bath, a sort of scurf begins to form on my left leg and sometimes I get little clots on my right leg, but not very often. It too has me a bit worried, as my brother-in-law, Joe Sevlin, had the same kind of scurf, and after a few months he died. They amputated both his legs below the knee to try to save him, but he died about three months later.

I don't mind dying, but I would like to die with all the parts complete.

I have been thinking about what might be causing this scurf to form, and just the other day I read an article in Reader's Digest about how some old TV sets are giving off some sort of radiation which might be harmful. I sit in front of an old black and white TV quite often and I wonder if this is what is causing the bleeding and scurf to form.

Well, we will see what the doctor has to say when I see him tomorrow.

Also, my legs are not getting any better for lack of exercise. They are still quite sore most days and swell up much of the time.

We have a good gravel driveway about five or six hundred yards long that I could use in good weather to exercise my legs on, but usually I cannot use it. Pat's son Danny uses it to practice on his motor bike and tears all the gravel loose with the bigger stones on top. I tried walking on the lawn but the grass was full of stones that had been thrown off the road by the fast startups of the motor bike. It is too dangerous for me to walk on because if I were to fall, I would be in real trouble with breaking my bones.

I am now limited to the twenty or thirty feet of sidewalk beside the house, but I can only go out there when the little boy we are looking after is in the house as he has his playpen near the sidewalk, and every time that I go out there, if he is in his playpen, he screams his head off for me to take him for a walk. I cannot do that as it keeps me busy just trying to walk myself with the aid of my two canes. So I am pretty much penned in the house where I can not get very much exercise.

I have a lot of time to think now, and when I start to think about something and get a bit of a glimmer of an idea, I keep after it until I can prove it will or it will not work. For example my wife brought a jar of fruit in to me and ask me if I could twist the lid off it the other day. I tried it and could not move it at all. Then I thought of a narrow strip of emery cloth that I had under the pad on my desk. I got that out and wrapped it part way around the metal top with the rough side to the surface of the metal edge. I then gripped it with the help of my hand and my fingers and twisted and the top came off as smooth as if it were greased. Now I keep that small strip of emery cloth under my desk pad and it has come in handy for tight lids many times. I had

been going to throw it in the waste basket many times but had not done so as I thought it might come in useful for something sometime.

Just last evening my wife brought in a little chair for the little boy to sit in when he came into my room and she ask me if I could think of away to put four round plastic protectors on the four legs of the chair that were square on the ends, so they would not damage the carpet.

I told her I would think about it.

I remembered I had a small wood rasp in a bottom drawer of my desk so I got it out and went to work. It did not take me long to rasp off the four sharp corners on each of the chairs legs so that the protectors could be worked on tight to the legs and I will guarantee they will never come off. The little boy has a chair of his own now and everyone is happy.

I had made a mess on the carpet with the wood I had rasped off the legs and I ask my wife to get me her carpet sweeper and I would clean it up. She brought in the sweeper and told me to sit still in my rocking chair and she would sweep up the sawdust, as I had done my share of the work, now she would do hers and she could honestly say that she had helped in making a chair for her little boy.

I guess it was hard for her to change her habit of always wanting to be involved some way in what I was doing as she had always, through our over fifty years of married life, wanted to help me in any way she could. I appreciated it very much and I think that is why I love her so very much, but I was to dumb to have the right words handy to tell her so. I tried to let her know how much I loved and appreciated her by working long and hard as that was the only way I could show her how I felt.

I think that she understood me but I have never been very sure.

I guess that is the best way for things to be between man and wife, each should never take the other for granted, for if that happens, it will not take long for them to lose interest in each other. I am usually tongue tied when it comes to expressing my feelings to the one I love or think a great deal of and so I am rather handicapped and get seen by some as being a person without such feeling for others, Of course this is not so at all, as I am a man with very deep emotional feelings, but I learned a long time ago to conceal my feelings, so I could avoid getting hurt too much.

Well I must start to answer some of your questions if I can.

About deer meat being spoiled after deer start eating cedar. What makes the meat taste of cedar when they have been eating cedar is the cedar already in the stomach. When the stomach starts to cool off the heat from the stomach has to pass through the meat to escape. In doing so, it carries the taste of cedar into the meat and leaves it there. That is why it is very important to take the stomach and entrails out first before you take the hide off, and then wash the body cavity out with snow. The snow removes any odor from the inside of the meat and cools it off at the same time.

That is how I figured it out when the people up there on the homestead told me that the meat of deer was tainted with cedar when they ate cedar browse.

Also I took into account how those people cared for a deer carcass after they had shot it. I have seen them leave a deer they have shot until the next morning before dressing it out. The deer would be stiff and cold, and the meat never tasted as fresh and tasty as one that was killed and had been dressed out on the spot.

About the other place I filed on where I tore down an abandoned house for its lumber. My homestead that we first moved up to was not exactly a real homestead, it was a deeded 180 acres of land that I had traded my house in Glen Williams for, and I had the deed when I went onto the land. That was how, a little later, I was able to file on and get a deed to another 160 acres of land to homestead that had an abandoned house on it, near my original 180 acres. I bought that other 160 acres off the goverment for two dollars. Still, we always called the first piece our homestead because that was where we built our home.

That second piece of land had a good sized log cabin on it with white pine lumber over the logs on both inside and outside walls and on the roof, ceiling and floors. When I pulled it to pieces, I got over five thousand feet of good white pine lumber for my own log house and I also cut a lot of pulpwood, ties and poles on that lot, then sold it for \$50.00 before I left. I also sold a lot of gravel off it at 10 cents a yard, and when the road got there, it was all graveled and the goverment bought three acres from me for \$100.00 per acre.

You do not get any deals like that now and there is no more homestead land in the Rainy River District.

My brother, Stan. Well, Stan and his wife came up to live with us in the fall of 1933. There was no work in Georgetown at the time, so Stan thought he might do better up in Rainy River. He stayed up in Rainy River until the second war, then joined up and went overseas, then he came back and joined the NDP party and moved back down south and is now manager of an Old People's Home in Milton, Ontario.

Things have been very cool between my brother and me since then.

Him and his wife was up once, a while back when we lived up there in Rainy River for the second time, to visit the storekeeper and his family in North Branch. The storekeeper brought them to where we were living, but neither my brother or his wife had much to say to me while they were there, and they left shortly after they had got there.

My brother still has it in his mind that I did not use him fairly in the deal I made for him with the school, back in 1934, to build a new school building, but the law was on our school books and it was there to be obeyed.

I had nothing to do with that law except to obey it, or pay part of his wages myself.

I could not do that as I had already kept him and his wife for over a year, for which I had only received a little help in building the front part of my log house. I had given them food that I got from the relief officer for my children, so my children did not get what belonged to them.

About my son, Dan. He did not have very much to say about being in the army when he came home after serving his three years in it. He had changed, gotten more secretive, and did not show his feelings as much as he had before. He said he did not like it because there was not enough to keep the men busy. They would have to wreck some of the tanks and trucks and other things just so that they would have something to work on and put in the time. He said it was not a well thought out place at Petawawa, and there was too much wasted time with nothing to keep the men occupied.

Now, on another subject, I have thought a great deal, before writing this, about whether you would be interested in what I think about this subject or not. I have quite a bit of proof on my side of the argument, and I would like to have your opinion.

Did you ever stop to think, why so many small children wear glasses? Naturally you would say because they have poor vision. You would be right I suppose, but why poor vision? There must be some common cause for there to be so many of them.

I started going back over my family history to think about this. On my father's side, for example, his parents never wore glasses, then only to read until they were past 65 years old. And it turns out that grandmother Allen breastfed all her children, and her daughters did the same, and none of their grandchildren ever wore glasses as young men and women that I know of.

On my mother's side of the family, her mother lived to the age of 85 and never wore any glasses. My mother never wore glasses until she was near to 60. Mother's two brothers and three sisters never wore glasses until after 60, except one brother who got killed in a railway wreck at the age of 22 years old, and her youngest sister, who wore a pair of fancy gold rimmed glasses. And again, they were all breastfed.

My mother's youngest sister never breastfed her two children, a boy and a girl. She said it would ruin her figure. The girl she had wore glasses before she even went to school.

About my brothers and sisters. None of my brothers or sisters wear glasses, as far as I know, except one who uses them for reading, and I started wearing glasses after I was pensioned off, for reading. Again, we were all breastfed after we were born.

As for my own children, two wear glasses, but one is close to 50 years old, and the other has worked in offices all her life since leaving school, and that probably affected her eyes. None of them wore glasses as children and they were all breastfed.

I have one granddaughter who wears glasses all the time, and her mother did not breast feed her or her brother. None of our other grandchildren wear glasses as far as I know, and they have all been breastfed.

There is a pattern here.

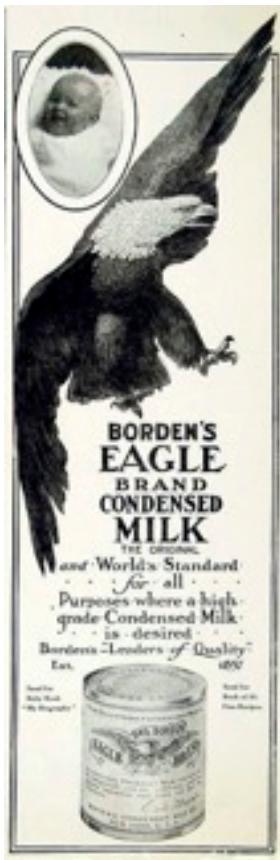
I think that children should be breastfed for some time after birth because I do not think it is good for them to be cut off from their natural food and energy that they have been living on for nine months. You do that with a young animal and chances are it will sicken and die. If it does live, it will be skinny and sickly and never amount to much. I think that there are things in a mother's milk that a baby must receive, and if they do not get it, that could be what is causing so many children to have poor vision.

When I went to school I only saw one child in the whole school that wore glasses, and it was a girl of about twelve whose family had just come over from England. Go to any school today and see how many are wearing glasses. You will see that there are lots.

Why did children not need glasses back then, and why do so many need them now?

I believe it was because they were mostly all breastfed back then and they got the right food at the time nature meant them to have it.

There were very few baby foods on the market when I was young. The only one I ever remember seeing in a store was Eagle Brand baby food. I do not think that babies that are born now and are fed these baby foods that are on the market now are getting a fair deal. The mother that has the natural food for the baby to become strong and healthy, and does not give it to the baby because of some silly idea that it will spoil her figure, is betraying her child's right to what is his or hers. She is handicapping the baby from birth.



1911 Baby Food Ad

When a cow is fresh with calf, humans cannot drink the first few milkings from that cow or they get very sick. But a calf must have it if it is to have any hope of growing up normal. Why does this not apply to a child after just being born?

A baby, as soon as it is born, knows right away where it can get food, and just how to get it. Do you think it would be given that instinct or knowledge if it had not been meant to have it's natural food so that it could be able to survive and be healthy?

By putting a new born baby on an artificial diet as soon as it is born, could not it be missing the one thing that would give it good eyesight, the one thing it could only get in those days of breast feeding from its mother?

My wife and I have been in a position to compare our own babies who were fed with the mother's natural milk, and the Aid babies that have been fed an artificial diet. Our children have never had any serious sickness, and have never been to a doctor. On the other hand, newborn babies from the Children's Aid Society have had quite a few of these artificial foods, and those babies are in and out of hospitals.

Think this over my friend, discuss it with your wife if you wish, and let me know if you think I am right or just plain nutty. I have had this on my mind for a long time, and I know that you and Mrs. Filter are expecting your first little baby soon, so I thought you might be interested. Now that I have tried to explain what I feel about it, I somehow feel much better and can go on to

other things that I have in my storehouse at the back of my head. I have lots of things to write about, this is just one of them.

About what I learned on the homestead about surviving hard times. I do not think it is so hard to survive, once you take time to think and use what is at hand.

When there are lots of berries and you have no money right then to buy sugar to preserve them for the winter, just cook them the usual way, with very little water, fill your jars level full, seal tight and store in a very cool place. When you want to use them in the winter, empty them into a glass bowl and let them sit in a cool place with a cup of sugar spread over them, until most of the sugar has melted into the berries. They taste real good.

You can take blueberries and dry them on a large piece of window screen in the sun on bright sunny days when the berries are ripe. They can be used in bread or in biscuits as raisins or currants and are real tasty if they are soaked in a little warm water, as pie filling.

Meat can be dried in the sun if all fat is removed from it and it is protected against flies and other insects. It can also be smoked by building a little smoke house, then drying the meat with a cloth before putting it in the smoke house and using green birch wood for making the smoke. The fire should be started with dry wood and let burn for a short time to dry the outside of the meat before starting to smoke it.

If you have a cold well or a running spring, you can keep meat fresh for a long time by cutting the lean meat only into small pieces and packing them into gallon glass fruit jars, or in smaller ones if you do not have the gallon size. Pack the meat down tight into the jars that have been sterilized with a round stick with no bark on it, about three inches in diameter. To sterilize the jars, put them in a mash boiler or big kettle and fill it with cold water until the jars, are

covered with about three inches of water and set it on the stove. After the water comes to a boil, let it boil for at least an hour, then remove the boiler from the stove and let it cool. When the jars are cool, pack the meat in tight leaving no air spaces in the meat, put the tops on real tight and sit them in your spring or put them in a box and lower them down to the bottom of your well on a rope.

You can have fresh meat any time you want it all summer if you empty the whole jar and cook it at once. Never leave any meat in the jar, and wash with soap and water rather on the hot side, if you are going to use the jar again at some future time for packing meat. One thing more, be sure and sterilize the glass top and rubber sealing ring of the jar before sealing a jar with meat in it.

You can also smoke fish or dry them in the sun for winter eating.

If you do not have a warm cellar for your potatoes and carrots, just find a nice shady spruce tree with the lower branches close to the ground and put your potatoes and carrots under the tree and cover them over with a tarp with some heavy logs around the edges to keep the wind from blowing off the tarp. Leave them there and let them freeze as hard as rocks. When you want some to eat, bring them in and thaw them out in cold water until there is a coating of ice on the outside. Crack off the ice and prepare them as you would if they were fresh from the garden. The potatoes will have a slightly sweet taste and the carrots will be fresh and crisp. Caution, do not let them stay where it is warm, put them at once into the cold water or they will spoil as soon as heat is on them.

I have learned all this the hard way by trial and error and it was worth it.

Well I must say good by for this time. Perhaps I have forgotten something, if so I will most likely remember it by the time you write again. So good by for now and say hello to Mrs. Filter for me.

With good wishes and happiness to you both.

Sam.

Family Portrait: Tim

Tim was our fourth and last son. He was born July 22, 1939, and I was the midwife, and by then I felt that I was starting to get very good at it. Tim was about two years old when we came down to live just outside Fort William. He grew up at our place on Corbett Creek and went to the school on Hwy. 17. He had to walk about two miles to and from the school.

Tim was a very quiet boy.

His older brother Dan and him were together all the time when they were both small boys, and Dan always protected and looked after Tim. When they were going to school Dan would always see that no one abused Tim, until one day Dan suddenly realized that Tim had grown taller than him. He still always tried to tell him how he should do different things and experiments they were working on in my workshop. Tim would agree with Dan about a way to do something, and then go ahead and do it the way he had figured it out, and quite often it worked out fine that way.

These clashes of personalities were sometimes pretty rough, but both would admit when they were wrong, if the other one could show them a better way to do the particular thing they were trying to do.

I could hear them down on the bottom floor of the workshop when I was up in the top floor doing some work. I never interfered in their arguments at all, I just let them blow off steam and then settle the argument any way they could.

I never did show any favoritism for any of my children. I always tried to treat them all the same. I think if parents keep out of the children's arguments, the children will be able to settle it themselves in time, and I think they will feel a lot more respect for the parents not interfering to settle a dispute.

If they ask you to give your opinion how a dispute should be settled, then look wise and give them what advice that you think is fair to both parties. I have always tried to do this with my children when they ask for my opinion, and I have yet to hear them disagree with what I told them.

In cases like the time Tim and his wife in Tim's car were in a collision with another car, the driver of the other car having been drinking, that was altogether different than a family dispute. The other car hit Tim's car so hard from an angle that Tim's head hit the windshield and made a hole in it the size of his head.

Luckily, the windshield was made of safety glass.

The driver of the other car was a big shot around town, and started to sue Tim for damages. I told Tim who I thought was the best lawyer in town, and for him to get him and I would pay the costs if he lost the case. I gave Tim a cheque for \$300.00 for a retaining fee for the lawyer, and he got busy right away.

I gave Tim a list of the witnesses that Tim told me was there and saw the crash, also the officer that was there on the job and asked the man if he had been drinking, and the witnesses that heard him say that he just had a few beers. I told Tim to tell his lawyer and give him the list of witnesses.

To make a long story short, Tim's lawyer won the case, the other driver had to pay for repairing Tim's car, which cost close to a thousand dollars, and pay all Tim's expenses as well as the court costs.

The driver of the other car had offered Tim two hundred dollars for to fix his car, and when Tim refused to take it, that was when he told Tim he was going to sue him for damages. That is when Tim came to me for advice, and I told him to beat the other man to it and sue him, which he did, and won the case.

The policeman that was there at the scene of the crash tried to get out of admitting that the driver of the other car had said that he had several beers before driving his car into the crash, but

Tim's lawyer made him admit that he had said that. The officer knew that the guilty man had lots of pull around the city and did not want to testify against him.

It saved Tim a lot of money by winning the case and he did not forget who it was that saved him the money. He figured out what I put out and wanted to give me some more for helping him out, but in my opinion, fathers do not take pay for giving their children a helping hand in time of need, at least I don't.

vistaVision Memories

Fire!!

One time, when we were doing some work on the road south of my place, Mr. Morford, my neighbor just south on the next quarter section, was foreman on the job. He liked to talk a lot, telling us how much pull he had with the goverment, not that we ever saw any benefit from it. He did not seem to know how to handle a crew of men though. They did just about as they pleased.

One day, Tom and Joe Pollard, two brothers that lived up the road from my place, got their heads together on a way to have some fun with another man, old Fred Jewet. Fred was the father of the son who used to use a whip on his horses until I showed him how to get them working without having to whip them. Fred was a very quiet man and very easy going, but when he got mad, look out.

Tom and Joe got the wrapping paper from a stick of dynamite, put it around a roll of wet clay to look like a stick of dynamite, and then put in a fuse and lit it.

They eased it into the ditch behind Fred when he was not looking, and when the spark was close to the fake dynamite, started yelling for everyone to run as they pointed at the sputtering fuse behind Fred. Almost everyone but Fred was in on the joke, so they ran yelling, *Fire!*

Fred run like a deer down the road and into the bush.

Most all were laughing at him, including the foreman, Mr. Morford.

I did not feel like laughing though, because it was a very dangerous joke to play on old Fred and I knew it.

Fred finally came back to work but never said a word to anyone.

Things were more or less quiet for the rest of the week, but I had been working behind Fred in the ditch, and I watched him all the time. On the next Monday, just before we were going to stop for lunch, when the two Pollards were working in the ditch just ahead of Fred, Fred climbed out of the ditch yelling, *Fire!* and started running down the road.

Right behind the two Pollards was what looked like a stick of dynamite with a burning fuse sputtering in it.

I yelled at everyone to run and started running myself, for knowing old Fred, I knew that was a live stick of dynamite.

The Pollards said it was just a joke of Fred's to get even and stood there while everyone else ran.

They stood there just a few seconds too long before they ran too. They caught a few fragments of rock in their back and legs, nothing real serious, but if they had stayed a second or two longer they could have been killed or seriously hurt. They learned that day that Fred was a very dangerous man to play jokes on, and I never heard of them, or anyone else, trying one again.

The year after, in 1936, when I was statute labour foreman, I told Fred to work out his statute labour on the road in front of his land and not to work anywhere else no matter what anyone told him, and when he was given the three extra days which the goverment paid cash for, he was to work them out in the same place.

I thought if I kept him away from the rest of the crew and on his own road I would have no trouble.

I went home for dinner each day and on this particular day, I remember I had my dinner and had a bit of time before I had to go back to the job. I went up to the pig pen where I had been putting on some new roofing and was working on that when I looked down from the roof, and there was Fred with a twenty-two rifle pointed at me.

He said he was going to shoot me for lying to him about working on his own road.

I told him I did not lie to him and ask him why he was not working on his road.

He said Joe Pollard had told him that he had been sent over by me to tell Fred to come over and work with the rest of the crew, and that I did not trust Fred to work alone, and that he was going to kill me for lying to him.

I had my hammer in my hand and as Fred started to raise the rifle to his shoulder, I threw the hammer and hit him on the forehead. He dropped the gun and fell to the ground, and I was off that roof and had the rifle before Fred was able to get ahold of it again. I opened it and there was no shell in it. I helped Fred to his feet and finally convinced him that Pollard was lying, as usual, and sent Fred back home to work on his own road.

That night an old barn on the place where Joe Pollard was living caught fire.

People were puzzled about how that fire got started, but not me.

I knew Fred had his revenge on a lying neighbour. I never mentioned it to anyone and I guess it is still a mystery up there. Both Fred and Joe Pollard are dead now, so I have heard, so if it could be proven how it started the guilty party is beyond punishment.

That summer, when we were working on a rock cut on the road past my place, Harry Benjamin went into the bush to relieve himself and came back with female faun in his arms. He thought he had done a great thing by bringing that fawn out to show to the crew, instead he had signed it's death warrant. Once human hands touch a fawn, it's mother disowns it from then on,

and it will starve to death, or a wolf or some other animal will soon get it. Now, Harry knew that, as he had lived up there all his life, but that did not seem to matter.

After about all the men had handled it, I ask Harry what he was going to do with it. He said he was just going to leave it along the road and maybe someone would come along and pick it up for a pet.

I told him that I was going to take it home and feed it cow's milk until it could look after itself, which I did.

We fed it, and we even put a collar with a little bell on it so that no one would shoot it. It

was just a much loved pet by the children, and as it grew older it went with them all over the place. Most everyone around there had been to see it, and most of them said that in about two years it would leave and perhaps never come back.

Well, we all knew and

expected that.

Just before Xmas that year, when there was about two feet of snow on the ground, I heard a shot one night up near my haystacks. I took my gun and a flashlight and went up to see what was going on.



Family & Faun, 1935

I met old Mr. Benjamin coming from my haystacks with our pet deer over his shoulder. I ask him what he meant by coming on my property and shooting that little deer when he knew it was a pet of my children.

He said he was out of meat, and his son Harry was too sick to go out and hunt, so he came over and killed the little deer.

I ask him what he was going to kill after that was gone, one of my cows? I told him his son was just too dam lazy to go out and hunt for a deer because of the snow, and that him and his son were too ignorant to care what misery they caused my children by murdering the little deer that they loved so much. I told him to stay off my property, and I hoped that every bit of that faun would choke the both of them.

I built a scaffold and a salt lick one year on my place, over at the edge of the swamp, back of where my buildings were. I built it early in the summer of 1937 and never went near it, only to put out salt about once a month. When I was in Stratton one time, I saw some rock salt, so I bought some and used small pieces of it to put out on my salt lick.

One night, when the wind was right, just before it got dark, I went over to the salt lick with my rifle and climbed away up into my scaffold, and waited. I had been there only about half an hour or so when a nice buck deer came out with his head held high, sniffing the air. He was very suspicious, but finally could not resist the smell of salt, so he went over and started to work on the salt lick.

Old Fashion Venison Roast

Ingredients:

<i>1 venison roast (3 to 4 pounds)</i>	<i>10 whole garlic cloves, peeled</i>
<i>2 teaspoons dried rosemary, crushed</i>	<i>1-1/2 teaspoons onion powder</i>
<i>1 teaspoon garlic powder</i>	<i>1 teaspoon dried thyme</i>
<i>7 medium carrots, quartered</i>	<i>5 small onions, quartered</i>
<i>1 cube OXO beef bouillon</i>	<i>2 tablespoons cornstarch</i>
<i>3 tablespoons cold water</i>	

Directions:

Cut 10 deep slits in roast; place a garlic clove in each slit. Combine the rosemary, 1 teaspoon onion powder, garlic powder and thyme; rub over entire roast. Cover; refrigerate for 2 hours.

Add 1/2 in. of water to a roasting pan. Place the roast, carrots and onions in pan. Cover and bake at 325° for 2-1/2 to 3 hours or until meat is tender. Remove meat and vegetables to a serving platter; keep warm. Strain drippings into a measuring cup. In a large saucepan, combine 3 cups drippings, bouillon, and remaining onion powder. Combine cornstarch and cold water until smooth; stir into drippings. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Serve with roast. Yield: 8 servings.

I shot him through the head and he never knew what hit him.

When I got home my family was glad to see that meat, as we had not had any for over a week, and we had been living on just vegetables and milk and oatmeal.

My boys and girls liked deer meat, and when there wasn't any, they kept asking me when I was going to get a deer. They never asked for beef or pork, just deer meat. I think they were real homesteaders.

In the early winter partridge would get up in a tree in the evening, and when it was real cold they would dive into the deep snow and tunnel along for a foot or two, dusting the snow behind them to close the hole they had made while entering the snow. They would stay there for the night, safe and warm, but if the top of the snow had hardened during the night, they would stay there until an animal found them or they starved to death.

When I was working loading gravel one winter and had to walk five miles through the bush on an old logging road to my job, I carried a long stick about eight feet long on my way to work. When I saw where a partridge had dived into the snow along the road, I would aim my

Partridge Pie

Ingredients:

4 partridges, cleaned	salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tbsp olive oil	10 thin slices back bacon
1 medium onion, finely diced	2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 sticks celery, finely sliced	2 carrots, cut into fine half moons
1 heaped tbsp plain flour	1-1/2 pint partridge stock
1 lemon, finely grated	1/4 tsp thyme leaves
3 tbsp parsley	8oz chilled puff pastry
1/2 small egg beaten with 1 tbsp milk	

Method:

Place cleaned partridge into saucepan and cover with one inch of water and simmer until meat falls off the bone. Remove meat from bone, cut into bite sized pieces, season with salt and pepper and place in a pie dish. Set aside stock. Remove fat from the bacon and cut into pieces. Fry in oil for a few minutes then reduce heat, add onion, garlic, celery and carrots. Saute until they begin to soften. Sprinkle with flour, cook for a minute, then stir in stock, lemon zest and herbs. Simmer until the sauce has thickened. Adjust seasoning. Pour over the partridge and mix thoroughly. Cool the mixture. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to cover the pie dish. Cut a ribbon from the edge of the dough and press it firmly onto the rim of the pie dish. Brush with beaten egg and milk and place the rolled out pastry over dish. Using a fork, firmly press around the rim and cut off any excess. Prick the top in several places and paint with egg and milk. Bake a 425 deg. F. oven for 30 minutes or until the pastry has puffed up and become golden.

stick about three feet past the hole and in a straight line with the hole and bang it down real hard

into the snow.

I usually got a partridge each time, sometimes two or three, which were made very welcome by my family when I got home that night. I would clean and dress them out after supper and the next day my wife would boil them until the meat came off the bones. She would make soup for the children after she had taken out all the bones, and then she made a great meat pie with meat and vegetables for supper which, when served hot on a cold night after I had been working all day in forty below or colder, was really for me like food for the Gods.

There was one time in the summer when I sent young Ben out to bring our heifer in for to milk her. She was with calf but was always very frisky, and as a calf herself had always been a pet of the children. As he was trying to get her into the barn, she rushed at him, no doubt wanting him to play with her. She had quite long sharp horns, and bunted Ben and knocked him down.

Luckily both horns missed him.

After this happened, I got a good strong rope and got the cow's head between two birch trees that were growing near the barn and tied her up real close and tight. I went to my workshop and got my hacksaw and put a new coarse blade in it and took two new blades with me as spares and went back down to where the heifer was tied up. I then sawed off both horns, about four inches from her head. She fought for awhile, but finally just stood there until I was finished.

Her horns bled somewhat and I happen to look at Ben's face. It was real white, and he was kind of staggering around, very wobbly on his feet. I went over and made him sit down on a log while I put sulphur and axel grease on the cow's horns to keep the flies from bothering her. Then I took her in the barn and milked her and gave the milk to the pigs as I did not think it would be good to drink after that kind of operation.

The cow aborted her calf that night.

I had forgotten all about her being pregnant when I cut off her horns. I was so shook up about how close my son had missed death, that all I could think of was to get rid of those sharp horns before that young cow killed one of my children.

The cow turned into a lovely quiet cow after losing her horns, no more jumping around and playing with the children when they went to bring her in from the pasture. I had always wondered why so many Holstein dairy cows had their horns cut off, now I know. At home, when we had a cow, it was always a Jersey and we raised several from calves, and they had never acted the way that Holstein of ours had.

I knew now that Ben could not stand the sight of blood, so I never ask him or any of the children to kill a chicken, or help when I killed a beef or pig when we were on the homestead.

By the mid to late 1930s, we had a team, a sleigh, wagon, riding plow, harrows, mower and hayrake, everything you need to run a farm properly, and I had an argument with Mr.

Benjamin. I was coming across his field one time when I was returning from the post office at North Branch, when he came out of the bush waving an axe and yelling at me to stop.

I thought there had been an accident of some sort and went to meet him.

When we met, he said he had a good mind to split my head open with the axe, and then he would not lose his home.

I got him cooled down so that he was able to talk sense. Then he told me what he was upset about.

By 1937, word had gotten around that I was well set up for farming, and his son-in-law, Tom Pollard, had been over and told him that the government agriculture representative for the Rainy River District had told him that I was going to take over Mr. Benjamin's 160 acres, as I now had enough farm machinery to operate it as a farm. According to Pollard, the government agriculture representative said that Mr. Benjamin did not own the land, as he had been living on it for 35 years but had never proved up on it, and so they were going to give it to me because I was a real worker.

Mr. Benjamin had known Tom Pollard for near forty years altogether, and he should have known better than to believe him. Him and his brother Joe were half breed Indians, and when they are bad, they are real bad trouble makers.

I told this to Mr. Benjamin. I told him also that he never seemed to learn, and that I had enough land to keep me busy for the rest of my life. I did not want his or anyone else's land, and if that was the kind of friend and neighbor he was, we were through. I then turned my back on him and went home. He was still standing there thinking about it when I reached the fence which was about a hundred yards or more away.

He came over that evening and said he was sorry, but I am afraid I treated him rather cool then and for several times after, when we met at school meetings. I did not know it at the time, but that was the best way to handle him.

We got along fairly good after that, but I never really trusted him or his son Harry.

Harry, for example, stole a bike one night that he was at a dance at the North Branch school house in 1937. He took me down in the bush and showed it to me.

I told him he had better take it back that night and leave it where he had stolen it from, but he said he was going to keep it because the police were not smart enough to catch him.

That fall, his brother-in-law walked up about twenty miles to visit with him, and when he went home Harry gave him the bike to ride home.

There was a dance at the school arena in 1937, and one time a few months later this brother-in-law rode that bike to the dance. The owner of the bike was at the dance too. He knew his bike from the serial number on it under the seat, and he told the Provincial Police about the man at the dance that had his bike.

Of course it all went back to Harry Benjamin, and he was arrested and tried, found guilty and had to pay a fine of \$30.00 and costs, in all \$50.00.

He tried to borrow that money from me, but I would not let him have the money as I knew he would never pay it back. He went to an old Swedish man that got a pension every month from Sweden and got the money from him. He never paid any of it back in the next three years that I lived there before I left for Fort Frances, late in 1940.

That same spring, a bachelor neighbor not far from our place had cut forty cord of spruce pulpwood and had it out on the road ready to haul. Harry went over to him and somehow got

him to loan Harry the pulpwood so Harry could make a down payment on a truck for hauling pulpwood to the mill in Fort Frances. Harry got the truck, and the truck agency guaranteed Harry's credit for gas and oil until he got his first cash for hauling pulpwood, which was paid at the mill every two weeks.

Harry got the cash and spent it on good living for him and his family, and for running around the country showing off his truck to his relatives. He owed over \$200.00 for gas and oil and never made any more payments on the truck.

I came over from the store one day and where the road turned north to my place I saw two men in a car and a Provincial policeman in a cruiser parked at the corner, and I knew they were waiting for Harry. I stopped and told them he was at home, and they had better go up to his house or he would go north on the road and get away. They did that and Harry saw them coming but he could not get his truck and trailer turned around quick enough to get away before they got there. They unhooked the trailer and took the truck back to Fort Frances.

Harry got a lot of driving and no pay out of those forty cords of pulpwood. He and his family had nothing for the whole winter's work after that, and the mill never did pay him for the wood.

Harry tried to steal wood from the Clements, another neighbour up the road aways, but was caught by Mrs. Clement, and she held him there with their .22 rifle until her husband came home. Her husband got a good birch switch and gave Harry a good whipping. Harry went home and told his dad, and his dad went to the Clements and was going to give Mr. Clement a beating. Mr. Clement said if he laid a hand on him he would call the police and charge Harry with robbery

and he would be sent to jail as he already was on a two year suspended sentence for stealing the bike.

Harry Benjamin was married to Katie Olson, a tall good looking blond girl of Swedish parents, and they had three children, a boy and a girl and a baby girl that had been born not long before we went up there. They had moved in with Harry's father so they would not have to take care of themselves and could share the father's relief cheque that he got from the relief agency in Fort Frances.

His father was at that time sixty-three years old. When wood was needed for the fire to cook a meal, Mr. Benjamin had to go about a quarter of a mile to the bush, chop down a dry tamarack tree and carry it back to the house and saw it up and split it and carry the wood into the house. They never got any more wood up until that was all used up. I never saw an extra stick of wood out where they cut up their wood all the time I lived there until I got a team and used to cut them loads of dry trees over where I was cutting pulpwood in the timber birth.

When I had the team I used to cut and haul them enough wood in the winter to do them all year and never got any help from Harry or his father doing it. I suppose they thought I was a fool but I could not stand the sight of those little kids and that woman shivering with cold in the winter.

I often told Harry and his father to come over to the timber birth and knock down enough wood to do them a year and I would haul it home for them, and they would promise to come but

never did. I guess they got to know me well enough that they knew I would see that they had plenty of wood to keep them all warm through the cold winter.

I have often wondered why they did not expect me to cut and split it and carry it into their house for them.

Harry moved away from up there shortly before we left there. He got a job in a garage, but that did not last very long as he was too sticky fingered and was fired for stealing tools not long after he took the job. By then, his wife had left him and went away to Winnipeg with another man, and her parents were looking after her children.

I do not know what became of Harry, but I think that he went over to live in the States where he was born.

His oldest brother, Dave, lived near North Branch until he died there.

Old Mr. Benjamin had one daughter who was married to Tom Pollard, a half breed Indian. Tom went over to live in the States where he was born when the Hungry Thirties were on as they paid more welfare there at that time and Tom was still a citizen of the States.

He made quite a bad mistake by going back, as he could not come back to live in Canada again and he had to work for his welfare cheque over there at that time. He did sneak across the border to Canada but he could not apply for welfare or he would have been deported back to the States. His family was receiving welfare as his wife had taken out papers to become a Canadian citizen and the children had all been born in Canada.

I guess Tom just lived off what they received.

I often wonder about most of the people up there, what happened to them in those hard times.

They were always willing to share what they had with anyone that came along, not that they had very much, but they did not seem to care about working for anything unless they really had to. There were some, of course, that did very well for themselves. They picked the wild fruit and canned it for winter, and some of them had good gardens and stored plenty of vegetables for winter, some had chickens and a milk cow or two. They raised their own feed for their livestock and a good lot of them always had a good supply of dry wood stored under cover for rainy weather and for the winter.

Some put up a good supply of wild meat and fish for the winter too, but they did not know until I came up there and found out by accident that they could have had fresh meat all winter by dressing out their game and preserving it as soon as they killed it.

There were three violent deaths by guns while we lived up on the homestead in the 1930s, and very near another of which I was a witness, along with my brother and Harry Benjamin.

Old Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Morford had been at war with one another long before I went up there to live. One day Mr. Benjamin, Harry, my brother Stan, and myself decided to have a deer drive through a swamp where we knew several deer usually bedded down during the day. I was to take up a stand on a rock ridge on the south side of the swamp, Mr. Benjamin would take the west side, my brother would take the east side along the road, and Harry Benjamin would take his dog and drive through the swamp from the north.

After the drive had been underway for about five or ten minutes and I had been watching where three deer trails came together, I saw movement behind a group of small spruce about six or seven feet high. I watched an opening on the left side of this group of spruce where the trail came out. I was ready to shoot as soon as the deer stepped into that opening.

When it did step into the opening, it was not a deer, but Mr. Morford. It was a good thing that I was not one to shoot before I saw what I was shooting at or he would have been dead in a hurry.

I ask him what he was doing there and if he was in a hurry to die.

When he saw me and my rifle in my hands, he knew he had committed one of the gravest mistakes a hunter can make in the bush, and came close to paying for it with his life. Soon after that we heard a shot and Harry calling us all in. We went to where he was and he had shot an old grey buck that had been wounded years ago in the leg but it had healed and left him a bit crippled.

When they heard how Mr. Morford had tried to get in on our drive and nearly lost his life, Mr. Benjamin and him started calling each other names, until Mr. Benjamin saw that Mr. Morford's gun was pointing at him. Mr. Benjamin told him to drop his gun or he would put a bullet in him at once.

Mr. Morford started to aim and Mr. Benjamin cocked his rifle and put it to his shoulder and was ready to fire.

I was only about a step away from Mr. Morford, and as he was looking at Mr. Benjamin, I took a step over and yanked the rifle out of his hands. Mr. Benjamin refused to hand me his gun and said he had been looking for an excuse for shooting Mr. Morford for a long time.

Harry took the rifle from his father, and they all cooled down and we all went home with our deer.

I never went out hunting with anyone again while we lived up there.

I had a single shot shotgun, full choke, with a 56 inch barrel. One day Lorne took this gun and some shells, and him and young Ben went hunting. I saw them going but they did not see me. I had planned on taking him with me in the fall when he had a little more meat on his bones and explaining how to use that shotgun. You see, it was not an ordinary gun but was a goose gun for long range shooting. Anyway, they came home late in the afternoon with no game. Lorne was acting like his shoulder was sore so I ask him what was wrong.

He said when he shot at a deer, the gun knocked him down.

I said if he had come and ask me about the gun, I would have explained to him that when he fired that gun that he would have to brace himself and hold the gun tight to his shoulder, as tight as he possibly could, or it would knock him down and give him a very sore shoulder.

I told him not to take it out again, and when his shoulder was better I would show him how to use the gun. I also told him never to shoot at a deer, moose or bear with a shotgun loaded with fine shot, to all ways use buckshot. If he had come and ask me before he took the gun out, I said, he would not now have a sore shoulder. I also warned him never to take my high powered rifle out without first asking me, and he was never to take one of the children with him again, and that was a strict order.

I got him out with me in the bush one day after his shoulder was better and showed him how to brace himself and hold the gun tight to his shoulder. I explained how that kind of a gun had more kick back than the ordinary shotgun, and how the shot would hold together for longer range shooting than the ordinary shotgun.

After several practice aims and holds on the shotgun when it was empty I had him put a shell in and, holding the gun real tight to his shoulder, he fired it at a tree. I noticed that he flinched a bit, but the gun just swung him back a little.

He got the idea alright, that the tighter he held the gun the less it would kick.

We finally spotted a partridge about a hundred yards or so away.

I told him to aim at its head and just squeeze the trigger, not pull it fast.

He did and the partridge had no head.

He said that he did not believe that he would hit it at all at that distance when I said he would. Now he was a believer in that gun's power.

I explained to him that the three extra inches in length and full choke bore was what did it. I told him about putting a 2 inch snuff can lid on a big sheet of cardboard and measuring off a hundred yards and attaching the cardboard to a hay stack, and shooting at it with a no. 7 shot shell. All the pellets except two went in that 2 inch lid.

On the homestead we had a little volt and a quarter radio that I got for 8 cords of dry tamarack firewood. It was operated by batteries and the batteries used to last us a year. At night

we could get Germany when Hitler was making a speech in the late 1930s, and we would tune in on short wave, and his speech would come in a lot clearer than a lot of local programs do today.

We used to listen to London, England, when there was a bombing attack on, and it must have been pretty terrible there. We had China and Japan on several occasions. With that little radio, when the batteries were fresh, we could tune in on most any station in the States or South America. As far as I am concerned, give me a little radio like that and a good outside aerial and you can have your television. Just to go exploring around the world at night was an education in itself.

We all enjoyed the radio programs every evening and looked forward to them. My wife listened to all the soap operas in the daytime, and it was much more pleasant for her living up there with that radio. We could not have afforded a radio if we had to have paid out money for it, but this dealer in Emo put an ad in the paper that said he would accept dry wood in a trade for one. I had just got into a good patch of dry tamarack where I was cutting pulpwood about four miles away, over in Rowe township. I said nothing to anyone, I just went over to the store and rode down on a pulp truck to Emo and made the deal, then waited for the truck to come back from Fort Frances and got home late in the evening.

The next day I walked over to where I had been cutting pulpwood, and started to cut tamarack for the radio. It took me most of two weeks to cut and haul out the wood and get it hauled down to Emo. I went down on the last load and told the dealer to come up the next day and set up the radio.

He did, and was my family ever surprised and happy.

I still have that radio. Several people have wanted to buy it, but I do not think I want to part with it. I have been hoping I would someday get a place where I can use it again, but I am very doubtful, unless I can get it fixed so that it does not make all the TV sets in the vicinity go crazy.

In 1939 we had a very bad lot of bush fires in the Rainy River district.

A neighbor had 160 acres on the road south of my place about two miles that he had tried for some years to grub out with fire. He had about 20 acres or so burnt out and it had all grown up to weeds and young brush. It was all real dry and a wind was blowing to the north, so he set it afire. There was a 60 acre lot between his place and the 160 acres I had filed on and where I had a good deal of pulpwood and road ties ready for hauling.

When I saw the smoke, I knew what had happened, so I took my team and wagon and went down and started hauling the wood and the ties out into the gravel pit that was on my land. I had it all out but a few ties and about two or three cord of pulpwood, when the fire got into the tops of the trees in the lot just south of me. I took my team and wagon and got out of there on the run. There was bush on fire on both sides of the road for about a quarter of a mile. I kept the team on the run and we made it into the open with very little to spare. The horses were so scared they run near all the rest of the way to where we lived, before I could get them down to a walk.

There was a valley between the two ridges of rock that I had to travel when I got on the road after leaving my gravel pit. When the fire came over the first rock ridge, it jumped right

over this valley into the tops of the trees on the other rock ridge and burnt the tops off all the trees right down to the road going west across the path of the fire. A short time after that, the fire on the ground came along and was stopped going north by the road. It then turned west and went about a half mile west around the end of the road and started going through the bush towards Mr. Benjamin's house and other buildings. It took a night and most of the next day for the fire to work through the thin covering of scrub bush.

The morning of that day I went to North Branch through the bush for the mail and supplies, and when I got home my family were all gone.

An officer from the Forestry Department had been in and took them out to Stratton until the fire hazard was over.

Several people lost their homes and all their belongings, but we were very lucky, I just lost a few ties that I did not get out of the bush, and a bit of pulpwood. The Red Cross sent me a cheque for what I had lost, but I sent it back to them and told them to give it to less fortunate people than our family.

Old Fred Jewet and his wife moved all their belongings into the schoolhouse in their school district feeling sure that the Forestry Department would not let the schoolhouse be burnt down in the fires.

The schoolhouse was the only building to be completely destroyed in the fires in that district. The fires never came close to Fred's home.

The worst of it was Fred did not get any help from the Red Cross as his belongings were not destroyed on his own property.

Several days before, I had dug a firebreak all around my buildings, from the road through the poplar bush and back to the road again, so that the buildings were completely enclosed on all sides. I had all the barrels, water troughs, pails and everything that would hold water, filled with water and with bags handy for snuffing out any fire that got across the fire break. I had six stacks of good alfalfa hay near my barn, with two water barrels full of water. I got my team and riding plow and went over to Mr. Benjamin's place and started to plow a fire break around his buildings. The end next to the bush was covered with rocks so I could not do a very good job there, but I got the rest of it wide enough to stop a grass fire. I then took my team home and hauled all my machinery down to where I had my garden fall plowed, and then unharnessed the team and turned them loose. I went into the house and got the deeds to my two places, put them in a gallon fruit jar and buried it in the garden, just in case the house burned down.

I then went over to Mr. Benjamin's place to help him and his son Dave when the fire got to the fire break I had made. We did not have long to wait.

I told Dave to start some backfires in front of our firebreak, that it would help kill the fire which came very fast. He got several good ones going while his father and I dug up the places I had missed around the rocks.

It was not long until the fire hit the fire break. It jumped in several places but we soon had them out and the fire was very near out when sparks took off towards the north of his pond. I saw them racing through the bush on Mundal's place towards a group of spruce just north of my barn and haystacks.

I yelled and started running.

When I got over there the fire was about twenty or thirty feet away from my fire break. I had cleared away quite a wide strip of fallen trees and underbrush on both sides of my fire break, so we wet our sacks and watched for sparks. When the fire got within about ten feet or so of the fire break, sparks started falling on our side, and then we were quite busy for some time.

The fire stopped at the fire break and Dave went out of the smoke onto the road, and then he yelled and told his father that the bridge just south of our place was on fire.

Dave and his father went down to take care of that, and I stayed to watch for sparks that were coming from a pile of old ties that had been used for a culvert before a new metal one had been installed. There was very little wind blowing the sparks, so not many of them reached the spruce grove.

Then the wind stopped completely and the only sounds were of the fire burning back in the bush.

I had an idea of what was coming next, so I called for the Benjamins to come on back. They were just about there when a wind like a hurricane lifted bushels of sparks from the burning ties into the bush around the grove of spruce. We were all in there swinging wet sacks at the sparks. Some of the smaller bushes close to the ground took fire as if there was gasoline sprayed on them.

We finally got them all out and were fine, except for a few burns on our hands and clothes. Then came the rain. A downpour for a few minutes, then a drizzle that went on into the night.

I have been tired before, but never as tired as I was that night.

I milked our cow who had been calling for me for some time, kept about a quart for my own use, then let her drink the rest. Then I went to bed, with the bed pulled out where I could face the window to the north, with my clothes on.

I woke up about two-thirty in the morning standing at the window with my knee rubbers on.

A birch tree on Mr. Mundal's place was burning like a torch. I went up to see what was going on and found that the fire had been under where the roots joined the trunk of the tree and the rain could not get at it to put it out. The fire had dried out the bark after the rain stopped and then went up the outside bark of the tree, which will burn wet or dry once it gets started. But everything was under control so I went back to the house and back to bed.

The next day a neighbour, Charley Armstrong, came down to ask me to go in with him with some money and bring home our families. Charley went to a neighbor with a half ton truck, and he agreed to go to Stratton and get our families for \$4.00. Of course I had to pay the cost of the trip as Charley had no money.

When we got to Stratton, there were several Provincial Police and some Forestry men there to see that no one left for home until they said it was safe to do so. When I saw where they had about twelve families of young children and old people staying, I thought they would have been much safer at home. It was an old abandoned school, the school yard was all grown up with dry sweet clover about six to eight feet high all around the building. If a fire had started in that jungle, none of them would have been able to get out of the old building, which would have burned like a torch.

In a field right on the other side of a two strand wire fence was a good sized young bull that could have broke out through that fence at any time. There were no guards around the school, which was about a quarter of a mile from town.

Well, we loaded up my wife and the two youngest ones, and Charley's wife in the front seat with the driver. Lorne, Laura and young Ben got in the back of the truck with Charley and me. We covered the three children in the back of the truck with some horse blankets and started for home.

When we came back through Stratton we went very slow, but it was near dinner time and there was only one Provincial policeman standing by the hotel. He stepped down off the veranda, like he was going to stop the truck, but changed his mind and went back up onto the veranda and into the hotel.

We went on out of town at the same speed until a turn in the road hid us from the town, then we really moved. The three children of mine came out from under the horse blankets. They seemed near suffocated and overheated and were very glad to get out where the breeze would cool them off.

We were home in less than an hour, and of course the older children had to run around like they were out of their mind to see what the fire had burned on our place. I had milked the cow that morning and put all the milk in a milk can we had for that purpose, so my wife got a meal ready and we got everyone in to eat and drink lots of milk.

We went to bed early that night as we had all been very tired.

The sun had not come out that day at all, the weather was warm and a bit damp and foggy. Sometime in the night I woke up and could hardly breath.

I got out of bed and smelled the air and knew what was wrong. Gas.

Heat from the fire had boiled the swamps.

I got a quart sized cow spray we had, washed it out good, then filled it with clean water and sprayed the air in the two rooms downstairs. I then went up to the attic where the two older boys were sleeping, but there was no gas there.

I guess it was just lucky that I woke up when I did or all of us might have died of gas poisoning. That was why the Police and Forest men did not want people to go back. They wanted people to wait until the gas danger was over.

A strong wind came up with the sun the next morning and took it all away, and we were safe.

After that fire, I did not want to stay there and put my family in danger like that again, so I decided to sell up and move. So I set about clearing some more of my land to sell it. The grubbing fires I set were burning in my swamp all that winter, even when there was over two feet of snow on the ground.

There was about 8 or 10 acres all grubbed out for the fellow I sold my place to, Joe Tiebold, in the spring of 1940. The storeowner in North Branch put up the money for Joe to buy it, and we were ready to leave.

We had a lovely male dog, part Husky and part Collie about that time. I had got him from a Russian homesteader up north of us as a pup. I had to tie him up real tight when I altered him,

so that he would stay at home. He never forgot that, and no one was ever able to put a rope on him again. He was our dog and no one else's. He used to make old Mr. Benjamin mad when he would chase Mr. Benjamin's cows out of our hayfields. Then that dog would come back to the road and sit there with his mouth open, just like he was laughing, but he would not cross the road unless I told him, which I would not do. Every school day, he went at the same time, down the road to meet the children coming home from school.

I was glad of that, as bear were often seen crossing the road the children used going and returning from school.

When I went to town, he would walk along behind the wagon before I was out on the road, or if I nodded my head up and down, he would run out in front of the horses, jumping up at their heads and acting real happy. But if I shook my head from side to side he would stay behind the wagon and when I got to the road, he would just sit there and watch until we were out of sight down the road. When I would be returning home, he would always come down the length of our land to meet me.

When we left for Fort William the next spring after the fires, I had to take him out and shoot him, as I thought that was more humane than to leave him there at the mercy of the neighbors that never fed there own dog, and certainly would not feed mine.

He was a one man dog and would never be anything else. I missed him terribly. I think the children only missed him in the evening when we came down to Thunder Bay as it is now called. There were too many new things to occupy their time the rest of the day.

August 25, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter yesterday and was very glad to hear from you again. We have been having very nice bright skies here for quite some time now, and on some days you can just smell the beginning of fall in the air. We are all in rather good health right now and I hope you are all the same.

Well I was up to the dentist a couple of days ago to have a tooth pulled out. It had been bothering me for a month or more. Sometimes it would ache for days, and then for weeks I would not feel any pain at all, so I decided to fix it for good and have it removed.

When the dentist examined it, he said he would not remove it, but instead would kill the nerve and pack the cavity, which he did. He charged me \$25.00, which I thought was a very high price. So far my tooth still aches, my \$25.00 is gone, and if my tooth don't stop aching pretty soon, that dentist is going to have something that will ache too.

I paid my daughter \$10.00 for taking me there and back and waiting around for three hours before the dentist could take care of me.

When I was first up on the homestead and had no money to get four of my front top teeth taken out, I just went up to my workshop and got a pair of slip-joint pliers and pulled them out myself, one by one. It was painful, and it bled a lot, but I got rid of the pain and saved four dollars, which was a lot of money in those days.

I was up to see the doctor since I last wrote to you, and when I told him that the scurf on my legs was likely caused by rays from my TV because I was sitting too close to the front of the TV so that I could see and hear it properly, he did not believe me. He said he had never seen or heard anything like that before. The doctor said that my leg bleeding was likely due to my diabetes and that there was little he could do about it, and that if I kept my leg clean and did not scratch at it, it would likely go away in time.

Well I woke up a few mornings ago and my left leg was bleeding again, right on the shin bone, about half way to my knee. It was not bleeding very much but was bleeding real steady. It must have been bleeding for some time, for when I pulled them back, the sheets were a mess. There was no pain and I had no cut or scratch that I could see when I got my leg cleaned up.

Now I am wondering if that bleeding is being caused by the enormous amount of drugs that I have to take to stay alive.

It has been a bad year so far for the elderly people dying off, every issue of the paper reports four or five people that I know from working at Great Lakes Paper and other jobs passing on, sometimes more, in each issue. They are usually in the eighty to ninety year age group. I suppose a lot of them can now rest from the miseries that they were afflicted with.

I am getting older too, I will reach seventy-seven next February the eighth and I have quite a long way to go yet before I reach one hundred years old, however I think I can make it if I try hard enough.

Yes, I agree with you. I have had a very interesting life and have learned a lot of things from it. But I still say that I missed several opportunities to have been a very wealthy man if I had only acted on the chances that I had. But thinking it all over now that I have lots of time to think, maybe it is just as well that I missed out on those opportunities. I would have not had to work as hard as I did to survive, and so would not have enjoyed working as hard as I did and doing things all alone without the help of money and other people.

I have had my own home fully paid for several times, and I have let myself be pressured into selling them, against my better judgment, so I guess I cannot blame anyone but myself for that. Of course, I could not see that I was gradually being pressured into selling them at the time. I did not think these people could do that to me, but they did and now I am without a home of my own.

I may get one yet before I die, but the chances are getting slimmer every day. If I am lucky I may fool them yet and die in my own home, and then they can do what they please. I will never sell my home again. It is going on to three years, perhaps closer to four, I think, but I have learned a lot in them years about living with your relatives, and I do not think it is the thing to do.

My wife and I have been treated really fine since we have been living here and we have been made more than welcome, but little things do turn up that can cause you to worry and they

build up over the years, and you cannot say very much about them as the house is not your own, so you just have to put your thoughts under tight control and hope for the best.

The bathroom is the one place that worries me most here at my daughter's house, especially in very cold weather. There is the usual fixtures in the bathroom, a bathtub, two showers, one overhead and one hand shower, a wash bowl and toilet and medicine cabinet. There is a heating unit in there also that generates a lot of heat on a cold night. There is a plastic shower curtain that when it is outside the tub, lays right on the heating unit. When it is inside the tub it is away from the heating unit by about two feet or more.

Every time I go into the bathroom after someone has a bath, I find this plastic curtain laying on the heating unit, so I at once shift it over so it will lay in the tub away from the heating unit.

The head of my bed is on the other side of about a four or five inch wall.

My daughter says the plastic curtain is fire proof, but I saw a piece of what looked like the same kind of curtain break into flames after about ten minutes close exposure to a hot surface at a fire drill when I was on the security staff at the Great Lakes paper mill. And I believe what I saw.

I put that curtain back in the bathtub at least once a day, and when Pat and her son are at home over the weekend I put the curtain back in several times. It looks to me as if someone is deliberately taking it out and laying it on the heating unit to prove that it is fireproof.

Can you blame me for worrying with those helpless babies in the house?

I have more than two thousand dollars in things that I bought here in this house that I cannot get insurance on as I do not own the house and I am not renting the whole house. Can

you blame me for wanting to own my own home again where I can get fire insurance and call the shots on the safety factors in the house?

Then of course my daughter and her friends when they are here smoke a great deal, and I am always worried when I can smell them smoking in bed at night and sometimes early in the morning.

When we had visitors in our home over night, I laid down the law to them that there was to be no smoking in bed or in their bedrooms. Some of them did not like it and one time that I smelled tobacco smoke about three in the morning, I found one of our guests smoking in bed, half asleep. I took the cigarette out of her mouth and the package off the night table, along with her lighter, and told her that she could leave in the morning and to never come back again, which she never did.

I do not smoke and I will never allow anyone to smoke at night in bed when they could burn the place down and everyone in it.

Well, on another subject, I have not found any property yet that has come up to the standard where both my wife and I can agree on is the place where I want to build a home of our own again.

Of course with having a new grandchild get here later this fall when Pat will become a mother for the second time kind of throws a monkey wrench into our plans. My wife just loves looking after babies and she is looking forward to helping Pat look after her new baby when it comes, but as far as freeing my wife and I up to look for a place of our own, it makes things a little harder.

Also, Pat has a new job now which she will start in the new year, so she will have to be away at work quite a bit, and her mother, of course, will have to take care of the baby for her for quite a while, so we will have to put our looking for a place of our own on hold for a while.

The arrival of another grandchild is a wonderful thing, but in one way, this is a bit disappointing for me, as I do not think I have that many years left to delay finding a place of our own for my wife and I.

About Statute labour in the Hungry Thirties. At that time, there was very little in the way of roads up there, so the goverment was trying to get roads built by getting the people who lived up there to build them. Statute labour is a tax the Provincial goverment made you pay into the local municipal goverment. You have the option of paying \$9.00 tax or working on roads, ditches or other municipal jobs for three eight hour days. If you work the three days without pay, that is called working out your statute labour. You then can work three more days at the same work, for which you will be paid at the rate of \$3.00 per day.

If someone does not want to pay their tax or does not want to work out their taxes, and they give you permission to work out their taxes, you have the right to work out their three days and be paid for the three days.

The Pollards. Tom and Joe Pollard were born and raised a few miles from where I lived when I was on the homestead. Their father was a white man, their mother was an Indian woman. Tom lived on his father's original homestead, and Joe filed on different pieces of land until he cut off the best timber, then he would let it go back for taxes and file on another homestead.

He got away with that for years, until just before I went up there. The goverment finally cracked down on him and said he had better stay where he was as he would get no more homestead land.

About justice on the homestead. When we lived on the homestead, I found that people there had about the same kind of feelings and done a lot of things that were done the same way in big cities and towns. Their emotions and mental build up worked along similar lines. They loved, disliked or hated in the same way and wanted to get even with anyone that did them a wrong, and some men coveted other men's wives or daughters. Some men were disloyal to their wives and families quite a lot, and I know of one man that seduced his own daughter and went to jail for seven years for his crime.

The case of Bill Stang's death is a good sample of what I mean.

Bill had been a bachelor until he was about sixty-three years old. He used to travel around the country with a stallion breeding mares. He stopped for a time at a farm where the owner had several mares that he wanted to get bred. He also had a sixteen year old daughter that he was working and abusing. She had tried to run away several times but he always got her back and beat her until she was a mess of bruises.

No one did anything about it until Bill Stang came along.

Bill was an easy going fellow, but when he saw the shape that girl was in from her father's continual beatings and abuse, he lost his temper and beat the father up real good and took the girl out of there the next day to Stratton and they were married that same day and went to live in an abandoned log house about three miles from where we were living.

I heard all this from Bill several years after it happened when he told it to me one morning, on a cold winter day, as we went to work at a gravel pit where the goverment was doing a bit of road graveling just before Christmas.

Anyway by that time Bill and his wife had two children, a boy and a little girl. Both had blond hair that was almost white.

Bill had black hair and his wife had dark auburn hair.

The children both had blue eyes.

Bill had black eyes and his wife brown eyes.

After they had been married for nearly three years Bill told me his wife told him that she was pregnant, and he said that he felt very proud that she was going to have a child. When the child was born and he saw it had light hair and blue eyes he said he did not suspect anything wrong, but when the second one was born with the same light hair and blue eyes, he began to wonder and get suspicious.

He said he kept a very close watch on his wife after that and finally saw a young man, a blond, blue eyed man, go to his house quite often when he was away from it.

One night he put the question to her, and she finally admitted that the children were not his and that he was impotent.

She said that she wanted a family and as he could not give her one she was going to get it from a young, strong and healthy man.

Bill told me that he had to agree with her that he could not give her a family, so he said he told her to be very careful that the neighbors did not suspect anything.

His wife gave birth to another blond girl baby and about four months or so later when Bill was out cutting pulpwood in the bush and did not come in for his dinner, his wife went out there to find him. She found him dead beside the pulpwood pile shot through the temple with a twenty-two bullet.

The rifle was on the wood pile with an empty shell in it and there was a note from Bill on a piece of a brown paper bag telling why he shot himself in very good languidge.

This all came out at the inquest which was held in the North Branch school house.

I think most all the people from the surrounding country were there. I know the room was packed full. The crown Attorney was there and some other officials from Fort Frances. Everyone that had anything to say, had their say. Then the note Bill was supposed to have written and left behind was produced and read.

There were several gasps of surprise from some of the women, and the men looked at each other but no one said a word. The crown attorney heard the gasps of the women and looked up for a while from his papers, then ask if there was anyone that had anything further to say. When no one answered he made a little speech, saying that as Bill's wife had identified the writing as Bill's, the only verdict that could be given as the reason for his death was suicide.

Most everyone there knew that the verdict was murder, not suicide, for Bill Stang had never gone to school and could not write his own name.

When he worked in the gravel pit with us and the paymaster brought our cheques around, Bill made his mark on the payroll and the paymaster signed it. I know because I was there several times and saw it happen.

When I bought a milk cow from Bill and paid him for it, I ask him for a receipt. He told me to write it and he would put his mark on it, as he never had went to school and could neither read nor write.

Someone else wrote that note that was found by his body, and it was not his wife, as she had no education either.

This blond that had been coming to her home when Bill was alive stopped coming and one day when I was going to the store for mail and supplies, I always came out of the trail through the bush at the edge of the Stang clearing where the trail ended. Before I got to the end of the trail, I heard Mrs. Stang screaming at someone, so I hurried to the clearing thinking she was in some sort of trouble.

I came to a stop at the edge of the clearing as she was screaming at a man, this blond man that had been a frequent visitor at the Stang house. I could not make out what she was saying and when they saw me standing there they both went into the house.

About a week or so later they came over one evening to our place and said that they had just been married that day and were giving a small party at the school that our children went to that weekend and ask us if we would come.

We said we would only be able to attend for a short time as we did not like to leave the children alone too long with an oil lamp on the table.

Now I knew that this man had said on several occasions while working where I worked when some of the fellows teased him about seeing this woman so much when her husband was alive that he would never marry a homely little woman like that.

What made him change his mind so quick, a guilty conscience, perhaps?

That is the kind of law and justice we had up where we lived on the homestead. It seemed to me that the law did not dig very deep into Bill Stang's death, just as if they were in a hurry to get it all neatly tied up and put out of sight. I have often wondered if they were afraid of what might happen if they dug too deep into them. They certainly could solve thefts and break ins, but when it came to deaths they did not seem to want to spend too much time on really trying to put the evidence together.

I am just an average man with average intelligence, but I could see big holes in the way they operated, and I was amazed at their lack of knowhow.

About more people wearing glasses than they used to. I am going to have to still stick to my belief that the lack of breast feeding has something to do with so many small children having to wear glasses so early in their young lives. I would like to ask that eye specialist you talked to if, to his knowledge, was there ever a test conducted along these lines between breast fed babies and formula fed babies? I grant him that there are more wearing glasses now due to more interest by eye specialists, but have they tried to find out were they breast fed or fed on the formula? I am betting that they never thought of it.

Well, my friend, I think I should close for now, wishing good health to you and Mrs. Filter, and my wife and I are keeping our fingers crossed for the arrival of your first baby.

With best wishes from us both.

Sam

Third Movement

A Chorus of Fields

vistaVision Memories

Corbett Creek

Early in the spring of 1940 we moved to just outside of Fort William, now Thunder Bay. We lived first in the old Larrabee house, in Murillo near what is now Thunder Bay, and I worked for Bill Morrow, who owned the Larrabee farm and the next farm west of it. I had to cut and rake the hay on both places as part of my rent.

I happened to mention one day about working in the feedlot in Calgary, and right away he wanted to go into the hog feeding business in a big way, without the proper set up. He had me build yards out of long slabs of sawed logs, and some feed troughs out of scrap lumber.

The floors in the barn where the pigs would have to be penned at night because of bears around there in the bush were cement, and I told him that the pigs would have to have wooden floors about two feet off the cement floors to lay on.

He said we would just put lots of straw on the cement floors and the pigs would do fine.



The Old Larrabee House, 1940

I told him that was no good as the pigs would only root it around and then wet on it and make it damp and messy.

He said he had farmed most of his life and he knew what he was doing, and went ahead with his idea. He bought 30 young pigs, and most of them were not castrated, so I had to do that,

although he gave me quite an argument about how it should be done. I did it my way, even to one that was ruptured, and when they were all healed there was not even a scar to show where it had been done.

He said that was the first time he had ever seen an operation of that sort that did not leave a big scar.

Bill Morrow owned the store in Murillo near where we lived, and he could buy ground feed at wholesale prices, so he bought a lot of wheat hulls to feed those young pigs, as it was very cheap, but I told him they must have whole ground wheat or they would grow very little in months of feeding, also they would have to have some ground oats and bran, with big pastures where they could get lots of green grass and soil to eat.

He said I was nuts and left it at that.

On his farm west of there, I had been feeding a flock of calves for him on these hulls from wheat, and they had big bellies and little else to carry around. There were several cows that he bought in the spring of 1940, and there was a young Jersey heifer among them that was due to have her first calf. She was very small, so he only paid \$12.00 for her.

Bill had a butcher shop in his store and I knew that heifer would not bring very much for meat, so I ask him if he would sell it to me for a milk cow for my family.

He said sure, after she had her calf.

I ask him how much he wanted for the heifer and he said a month's work. He was paying me at the rate of \$60.00 per month, so I would be paying \$60.00 plus a calf for a cow that he had paid \$12.00 for.

He would not come down in his price, so I said I did not want it at that price.

When we first moved there I had worked three Sundays in his store taking stock, and got no pay of any kind for my efforts. Also he had the use of my new hay mower and rake, also my wagon during haying season, and he had even loaned my mower to a neighbour without asking me if he could.

I got nothing for that except a dull mower blade when the mower was brought back.

When we lived in the Larrabee place, it was overrun with rats and mice and bed bugs.

I went after Morrow to get me some sulphur candles to fumigate the house. He got them for me, and I had all the doors and windows, except one door, sealed up tight. So one morning we got the kids away to school, and the ones left at home, my wife took them and all our food that was in the house over to the big barn. I set all my candles in metal pie plates up on pieces of broken bricks and, starting in the attic, I lit the candles, and when they were burning good and the

sulfur fumes got too strong, I got out of there and sealed the last door. By the time the kids came home from school, the house was well fumigated.

I opened all the doors and windows and gave it a good airing, and we went in and had our supper. The house smelled clean and we never found a bed bug after that.

In the summer of 1941 I quit working for Bill Morrow and went to work in Port Arthur on a distress elevator for holding grain. Then, in 1942, I had bought a hundred acres from Mr. Charles Hill, down on the power line road going to Fort William. It had about 40 acres of hayland, the rest was taken up with bush and the creek, called Corbett Creek, which ran through the whole length of the property. There was a place on Corbett creek that had a small waterfall, so we called that place Little Falls, and I soon started building a log house near there.

I got the land for \$1,000.00 at \$40.00 down and \$10.00 per month with 3 percent interest on the first \$500.00 and no interest on the second \$500.00 until the first was paid off.

I went down there every Sunday and cut down trees until I had enough to build a log house. Mr. Elchuck Sr., a neighbour across the road aways, loaned me his old horse to pull all the logs into one pile where I started to peel them on Sundays and in the evenings. After that, I started building our first house on that land and had it finished after about three months or so.



Corbett Creek Log House Under Construction, 1942

When I finished our log house, I set out to find drinking water. I had dug one well back near a hill where I was sure that I would get lots of water.

I did get water, about ten feet of it, but it had so much iron in it we could not drink it.

I then decided to construct a filter well near Corbett Creek. I dug down about twelve feet or more until I came to solid rock. Then I put in a concrete tile well, four feet in diameter and sat the bottom up off the rock on four cement blocks. I had dug the hole about twenty feet in diameter, so I got twelve yards of crushed rock and built that around the bottom and the sides of the tile well for about three feet. I had dug the hole for the well back from the water in the creek, about twenty feet or so, and I dug a channel about two or three feet wide from the well to the river. I filled the channel with fine sand and also the hole around the tile. I built a double wall of rocks next to the creek so that in high water, the sand would not be washed away.

Then the next big job came up, how to build a dam across Corbett Creek to raise the water high enough so that I would have plenty of water in my well. There already was about three feet of water in it from the present height of the river, but I wanted two or three feet more if



I could get it. There was plenty of broken rock below the falls, so I started to carry those rocks down river about a hundred yards and built a dam with those. It took me months to do that, but finally I had more than five feet of water in my well.

After flushing out my well for four days to get good clean water, I was ready to install my pumping system in my basement so that we could have running water in the new house that I had built.

I put in a little hand pump at the well until I got an automatic pumping system installed in our basement,

Me, My Wife, and Tim, 1942 along with a hot water heater and all the piping, both hot and cold to the kitchen and bathroom, and also a sewage system. When this was all installed and the electric automatic pump connected to the well, I started the motor and tried it out. After I had got the pipes going to the well full of water, it worked like a charm.

When my wife saw that it was working fine she celebrated by having a good cry, because she would never again have to carry in and out any more water. I watched it work for about two weeks or so, and when there were no leaks in the system I went down to the well and took the lid off the top tile which was about a foot above the ground, and took the top tile out of the well then

put the thick plank lid back on the tile that was underneath the top one, about two foot below the surface of the ground. I then put a double thickness of heavy plastic over the cover and covered everything over with soil so that the well top was buried under about two or three feet of soil.

When I happened to tell my neighbor, Mr. Elchuck, about covering the well over with soil. He said I should not have done that, as my pump would not work unless air got into the well.

I tried to explain that if air got into the well in cold weather that it would freeze the water in the pipes and the pump would not pump water. On the other hand, if I made the well airtight, it would create a vacuum when the water was pumped out, which would in turn draw more water through the sand into the well to fill the vacuum.

He could not see this for years, until he built a new house on his property and put in the water from a well, which had the top above ground with just a wooden cover. After it had frozen up several times the first winter, he then put in the system I had by burying the top of his well about three or four feet deep. He has never had his pipes freeze since.

Some people are very hard to convince, they will not believe some things, even when they see them. I have always buried my wells no matter where I put one in, and have not had any trouble with them in winter.

Eventually, I built two houses on the Corbett Creek land, the first log house in 1942, then later on in the 1950s, when we could afford it, a frame house.

I got a ride into Port Arthur where I worked on the distress elevator with a young fellow who was working at the shipyard there for about two weeks. Then I got a better job at the Canada Car where they were building planes for the war.

When I first went to the Canada Car, they were making the Hawker Hurricane planes. They were a fighter aircraft being made for the English. I was getting 40 cents per hour bucking



Family Time at Little Falls on Corbett Creek, 1943

rivets on wing assemblies. Supplies of materials was very spotty at the time, and I would often be sent home in the middle of the week for lack of supplies.

One Sunday a man and a young woman were fishing in the pool below Little Falls on Corbett creek on my place. I went down to see them and got talking to them and the man said he was a foreman at the shell plant.

I ask him if it was steady work and could he get me a job there.

He said that he could, but first I must go to the employment office and ask for a release from the Canada Car job.

I went there after work Monday afternoon and asked for a release. I told them that I had only been getting about three days a week and that as the shell plant was needing lathe men and I was a good one, I would like to work there where I could work steady and get something done to help win the war and to also feed my large family.

The personnel man at Canada Car and I argued for some time, but at last he gave me the release.

Next morning I went to the Canada Car Co. and got my pay, then went over to the island where the shell plant was located and started to work at unloading shell billets, at 45 cents per hour.

In 1944, when Lorne was 17, I got him a job at Mr. Millar's farm cutting four foot cordwood, not far from where we were living. After he had been up there a week or so, I thought that I would go up and see how he had been getting along. When I got down to the bush where he was supposed to be working, he was nowhere around and I could not see any signs that any wood at all had been cut.

I went back up to the house and ask Mrs. Millar where he was, and she said over in the barn.

I went over there and Lorne was milking cows.

I ask why him was he doing that instead of cutting cord wood.

He said because Mrs. Millar had told him to do it.

I told him to sit his milk pail down over on the floor and come with me.

He did and we went over to my old car and got in and started off. He ask me where we were going, and I said home. He then wanted to know what about the Millar's cows.

I ask him if he was getting paid for working at milking cows and he said no. I told him then to let the Millars milk their own cows, as they were the ones who were getting the pay for the milk, not us. I said there is lots of work around home you can do for no pay, if that is the way you like to work, but you were hired to cut cordwood, not to work for your board, you can do that at home. I told him that he could go up tomorrow and get his saw and axe and come right back and start cutting wood for me, and I would pay him cash, the same as Millar was supposed to do.

He agreed with everything that I said.

If I had been on my toes, I would have caught on right then, because by that time, that was not like Lorne at all.

When I came home at four in the afternoon the next day, I ask where Lorne was, and his mother said he had not been home for dinner and she did not know where he was. After I had my supper I took a walk down to where he was supposed to have been cutting wood for us. His saw and axe were there but not Lorne, so I took the saw and axe home.

When he did come home pretty late that day, he had on the uniform of the Air Force with his own clothes in a bundle under his arm.

All that day at work, I had been trying to figure out what he had been thinking about when he had been agreeing with me. I knew whatever it was, he was planning on leaving home in some way, but I never thought of him entering the armed services because he seemed to resent authority.

I think there was something going on between him and Mrs. Millar when he was up there, according to what happened the next summer and early in the next winter.

Mr. Millar worked in the shell plant where I worked at the time, and he rode back and forth with me. We were on the same shift, and he was away from home as long as I was. His wife was a young woman and she had married him at the age of sixteen, when he was fifty-two.

When Lorne was working up there, she was not quite eighteen, and all alone in the house.

The summer after I took Lorne home, they hired another man to help his wife take care of the farm, a neighbor man of about forty who was a bachelor. He worked there right up till a week or two before Xmas, then Mr. Millar, who was working back in the shell plant with me, took sick one night and hired a taxi to take him home. We were on the midnight shift from eleven to seven in the morning, and he left for home about two in the morning.

It all came out much later at the trial.

He got home about two-thirty and found the hired man and his wife in his bed asleep.

He woke them up and kicked the hired man out without his pay.

About three nights later Mr. Millar, who had quit his job at the shell plant, was sitting by one of the kitchen windows when he suddenly fell off the chair bleeding from his mouth.

He had been subject to heart attacks for some time and the doctor said he died from a heart attack. But when the undertaker was preparing him for burial he noticed a very small hole

behind his left ear up in his hair. He probed it and came up with a twenty-two bullet, then he called in the Provincial Police. They got an investigation going and found the fence post in line with the kitchen window and the empty cartridge, also some tobacco spit on the snow, and they followed the tracks of shoes down to the railway tracks and west to the hired man's home.

All along the tracks there was tobacco spit at intervals.

The hired man was charged and convicted of first degree murder, and as far as I know he is still behind bars.

It was a bad marriage right from the start, the girl was not very bright and Mr. Millar had something wrong with him as well, as he was always talking and smiling to himself. He was very quiet and polite, and had met this girl when he was out west harvesting on her father's farm. She followed him back to Fort William and insisted that he marry her or she would make a lot of trouble for him.

Mr. Millar's family lived in Fort William and were highly respected, so he married her. But still there was a bad scandal that they had to live down as most everything came out at the trial.

We had a pet at our home on Corbett Creek. It was a baby crow that two of my sons found under a pine tree up in our bush. It must have fell out of the nest. My wife fed it warm bread and milk several times a day and when the kids were home from school they dug fishworms for it.

I built a little house for it and we put it in there every night and took it out in the morning and it was free to do as it pleased all day long. After it learned to fly it went into the little house by itself each night. I put the house higher up on the outside wall of my workshop so that cats or dogs could not reach it at night.

It used to be a great bother to my wife when she done her washing outside in the summer time in the shade of a tree by the house. We had a stove in the house to heat the water. She had a hand washer that you worked back and forth with a lever and a hand ringer. I made a stand for the ringer and two rinsing tubs with the ringer clamped onto a crosspiece between the two tubs.

The crow used to sit on the ringer and watch my wife washing and sometimes it would just sit there and sleep. Other times he would caw at her like he was trying to tell her the gossip he had heard from other crows.

He would often go away with a bunch of other crows but would always come back at night to his box.

The first winter he left to go south with the crows we did not see him all winter, but he was back again the next spring. We had cleaned out his box and put new straw in it. That summer, towards fall, someone shot at him and he came home in pretty bad shape. One leg was broken, which I fixed up with splints, and I took one pellet out of a wing and three out of his body. I also disinfected all his wounds.

I thought at first he was going to survive, but he only came home to die, which he did the fourth day after he had returned to us.

Most everyone around for miles knew we had a pet crow, and it must have been someone like old Mr. Benjamin up in Rainy River District who shot our tame deer with a bell hanging around its neck for meat just because he was living in the bush, who shot the crow.

To the shooter, it was just something to kill for the pleasure of killing, to our home, it was the long lost and warm trusting feathered friend who was happy to be with us, and we were very happy to have him with us. He was welcome at all times.

In the summer after I had my house finished, a neighbour come to ask me if I would help him put up his hay cradle. I was on holiday from the shell plant at the time, so I said I would if he would come up and cut my hay down to where I was going to build my barn, and I would give him half the hay.

I worked there all through my holidays and we got the hay in without getting any rain on it. He came up and cut half my hay and hauled it home when it was dry, while I was at work each day, on day shift. When I went on the midnight shift, he had his half of the hay in but he did not start to cut mine.

I went down to see him and ask him why he had cut only his half of the hay, and he said he was not going to cut mine because I had not helped him at getting his half cut and loaded. I tried to tell him that I could not help him when I had to work, and if he had waited, like he was supposed to do, until I was on the midnight shift, I would have been at home and been able to

help him if he had not been in such a hurry to steal half my hay without paying me for the work I had done for him.

He said well he was not going to cut my hay and haul it in. I would have to get someone else.

I said that he owed me a week's work and I would get that out of him sooner or later.

About two years or so after that, his mother took sick and needed a doctor. He said she had to have an operation or she would die.

Now this neighbour lived alone on his farm with his mother keeping house for him. The trouble was that he did not have enough money to pay for the operation. So he came to me and ask me if I would loan him two hundred dollars.

I told him I would, but only on very good security. I told him that I had taken his word once, but I would never take it again, so he would have to give me good security on the money.

He ask what security I wanted and I told him two of his cows, and I would pick out the cows I wanted, and he would bring them up to my place and sign a note before witnesses before I would give him the money, and if the money was not paid back on time, the cows would belong to me.

He argued and begged but I stuck with what I had said and he finally agreed.

I went back with him in my car and picked out two young cows, the best milkers he had, and told him them was the ones that I wanted and I would accept no others, and they must be brought to my place when I was home, or else he would not receive the money.

You can see I did not trust him, for he had a reputation of being a pretty slippery customer. I had already drawn up the note he was to sign and made arrangements with my next door neighbor and his wife to sign as witnesses.

As I did not like this man and did not trust him either when he came up with the cows and put them in the barn with my cow, and after I had looked them over very careful and saw that they were the ones I had picked out, I phoned my neighbor and him and his wife came over. I let this man read the agreement, and he found fault with most all of it, but I told him he would have to sign it as it was or no money and he could take his cows home with him.

He ask my next door neighbor what he thought of the agreement and he told him right out, that being the kind of man he was, it took that kind of an agreement to guarantee that he would pay back the loan when it came due with interest or the cows would belong to me. He said that under the circumstances, it was a fair and binding agreement in his opinion.

I was asking him five per cent interest, and the loan could run for only two years, and all the milk or offspring of the two cows would belong to me, and when he paid the loan off he would only get the return of his two cows.

He then let the cat out of the bag. Those two cows were registered Holsteins, and were both pregnant.

I had suspected they were pregnant when I picked them out of his herd, and when I was helping him with his haying. I knew they were heavy milkers as I had milked them several times.

He signed the paper, and so did I, and then I gave him his copy.

I told him that he could not pay off the loan until the two years was up because I wanted to get all the interest off him.

He said that was not right, but I told him he was stealing half my hay the first year that I lived here, and that I was just collecting a little of what he owed me. I said if he had lived up to his bargain, he could have had the money with just a small note which he could have paid any time, but now, some of his own medicine would do him some good.

I had only been on the job at the shell plant for a few days in 1943 when the man stamping the serial numbers on the shells was called into the army.

The foreman of the job I was on came and ask for a volunteer to go in and stamp shells, and when no one wanted the job, I ask for it and got it. The fellows all told me I would be sorry, but I knew that if I was going to get on a lathe at piece work, which I wanted to do very much, I had to get on a job inside.

The stamping job was hard, swinging a five pound hammer for eight hours steady was hard work. But I had lots of muscle in my arms and shoulders from all the work I had done homesteading, and I soon got over the aches and pains in my muscles.

One day, the man that operated the pip machine was called up for service in the army and there was my chance at a machine for piece work. It was hard handling those forty-six pound



*Me, Going to Work
at the Shell Plant*

anti-aircraft shells, but the first eight hours that I was on the machine I did so good that they paid me piece work right from the start. So instead of just getting \$4.26 for eight hours of hard work, I got a little over \$9.00.

I had to lift that 46 pounds of steel into the lathe, cut off the button on the end, take it out and put it on a very sensitive scale and weigh it. If it was overweight or underweight, I had to mark that on the shell so the next operator would not take off too much or too little. Then I would lift it off the scales and put it on a tray on the conveyor.

If you were careful of your speed when you started up with a cold cutting tool, and just gradually increased the speed of your machine as your tool got hot, you could sure turn out those shells in a hurry without a worry about your tool tip breaking. It did not take me very long to learn the tricks of that machine, and when I made a mistake, I only made it once and also learned something from that mistake.

I started in the morning at 7 and by 5 pm I had turned out 603 shells, for \$9.00, 45 cents over double what I made working by the hour. As I got more used to the machine and how to handle it, I turned out more each day. I had passed the 900 mark when they put me on a quota of 700 for 8 hrs then cut it down to 650 until the end of the contract. It was real hard work, but I was strong and liked working for myself. There was some danger in the job from flying chips of red hot metal, but I wore a face shield.

I still have scars on my neck where pieces of hot metal got under my mask. When they hit your flesh they stuck there. When you pulled them off the flesh came too.

All the time I worked in there on several different machines, I never took any time off for idle talk or gossip. I was all for keeping that machine going as fast as it could go. I was there to make as much money as possible by turning out more shells than anyone else. I think that is why, when the next contract was started, I was taken off that machine and put on the nose boring machine right at the head of the line where the shells came out of the cooling room after they had been shaped in the furnace room. They put me on the first machine at the head of the line as they could see that if the man on the next lathe was not going fast enough, that I would squeeze in an extra tray of shells ahead of him and that would make up for his slowness and keep the line moving.

There were two lathes for every operation. The operator on the machine next to me was a young fellow who liked to argue with his inspector when she told him that his shell was getting over or under the tolerance on the gauge. He would never believe her, so he would stop his machine and argue with her until she convinced him that she was right. While he was doing this I had turned out five or six more completed shells. He was always arguing about it, saying I got the best shells because I was closest to the furnace, or that I had the best machine, or the sharpest tools. He never could see that every 30 seconds his machine was not turning, he would lose a shell, because that was exactly how long it took me to turn out a finished nose bore on a shell.

It got so bad that one shift when we came into work, I said that I would trade machines with him for the shift, if he would keep me supplied with shells at all times.

He said he would, and he did.

At the end of the shift I had turned out over 600 shells. He had turned out 423 on my machine. He took a full half hour off for lunch, I took off never more than ten minutes. I had my machine with a new tool in and running hot when he came back from lunch. He then had to spend half an hour to get his tools changed and get his machine up to running best. I had at least 15 shells on the tray and running hot by the time he started.

If one of my shells was running tight and the inspector told me, I would change my setting of the tool as the machine was running and never lose a second. He would always argue. If it was starting to run loose, I would go change it while the machine was running. I kept the cold air hose blowing on the motor and on the brake that stopped the machine as long as the machine was running to keep the motor and the brake as cool as possible and avoid heat from shutting off the motor.

The other fellow did not do that, so he lost a lot of time by having to wait until his motor was cool enough to start up again.

Most times I never allowed an oiler to oil my machine. I did this myself. An oiler usually slopped oil all over where the tool holder slid in and out of the chuck, and this oil gathered the steel dust and slowed down the smooth movement of the tool when it was cutting and when it was coming out. This made it cut a small amount more steel out of the nose of the shell, which would start to enlarge the tolerance of the bore. If you wiped this off with a rag, your tool would cut faster and so take out less steel, so you would not have adjust your tool and run it through the bore again, using up valuable seconds.

I always wiped these smooth surfaces completely clean of oil and dust before I started my machine and gave them a quick blow with the air hose every time I put in a shell. By keeping

my mind on what I was doing I could always make ten to twelve dollars a day and higher when I could get the shells.

The fellow on the next machine was struggling along making eight. Once in a while he would get close to nine dollars in a day.

In 1943 bought a 1930 model A Ford from a fellow that was called into service for \$300.00, so that I had a means of getting to town and back without having to wait until someone else was ready to go. It did not take me too long to pay for it as I did not have any of my pay held back for compulsory savings during the war, as my family was quite large so I was exempted from that.

I had two fellows that used to ride with me just before the shell plant ended their first contract. These two fellows went to the Canada Car the same time as I did and rode with me until late in the spring. They never paid me a cent all the time they rode with me to the shell plant, or to the car works. They used to walk over a quarter of a mile and meet me at the corner when I came along. One morning they were not there, I waited for a short time, then drove up to one of their homes.

The man's wife told me that they had bought a car several days before and this morning, they had went to work in it.

When I got to work I was half an hour late and lost an hour's pay.

One of the men worked in the same department as I did, but I never asked him anything about why he did not tell me he was going to use his own car. In the afternoon he came over to my bench and told me about getting the new car and all about it.



My 1930 Model A Ford

I ask him why he did not let me know that he was going to use his own car. I said it had cost me an hour's pay by him not telling me.

He said he was sorry, but that it did not make sense for us both to drive cars to work, so we should car pool again.

I said no it did not make sense, so I would ride with him and leave my car at home.

He then said I was a better driver so he would leave his car at home and him and the other fellow would both ride with me.

I told him that he and the other fellow owed me \$22.75 already for rides and they would have to pay that before they ever got into my car again, and he would have to pay me the hour's pay I lost by going up to his place looking for him. Then I said I wanted 25 cents per day from

each of them to be paid at the end of each week. If they were willing to do that, I wanted to know by the end of the shift or I would not be waiting for them in the morning.

He did not tell me what they had decided so I did not wait for them the next morning, or any morning after that. I very near lost my right to get gas coupons over that, but I finally got to keeping them and each month I got a new book. I still have some of those coupons. I did not use them up when going to work.

Lots of fellows that did not get as many gas coupons as I did wanted to buy them from me, but I never sold one. If someone ran short of coupons just before the end of the month, I would give him enough to get him gas for just driving to work and no more. Everyone was given enough coupons for the amount of miles he would have to travel back and forth to work, and a few coupons over for his own use. He also had a book of coupons for his own personal use direct from the Provincial goverment, enough to do him for a year if he was careful in the amount of pleasure driving he did.

When that contract was finished a lot of us were sent back to the Canada Car Co. until the shell plant retooled for a bomb and mortar shell contract. I worked in the re-work department where we re-worked parts of the dive bomber planes that they were making for the American goverment. I was paid 75 cents per hour and time and a half for overtime.

A pile of parts would come to the lead hand's bench with the new improvements marked on the card and order form, also with the blueprint code number. You would then go to where the blueprints were kept and ask for all the prints on that part number. You would then go back to your work bench and read all the prints and find out where that part or improvement went, and what had to be done with it, such as drilling a new hole or holes, or some part to be cut off, or

just what was different about it and how you could rework it so that it could be used. If it could not be re-worked, you had to write an explanation of why it could not be used, and then send it and your explanation back to the head of the inspection board.

It was very interesting work and I learned a lot about planes and blueprints.

September 20, 1977

Dear Friend:

I got your letter with today's mail and enjoyed reading it very much.

First of all, I wish to congratulate you and Mrs. Filter on the new addition of a baby girl to your family. The long hours that your wife spent while waiting for your daughter to be born brought back unpleasant memories of when our first child, Lorne, was born. I hope that Mrs. Filter will soon be back to good health when she will really be able to enjoy her daughter, as she

is entitled to enjoy her. I know that you both must feel that she is the most wonderful baby that was ever born. I know that I and Mrs. Allen were that way about Lorne when he finally arrived.

It did not end with Lorne, however, for we felt the same way about each one when they arrived and they were all made to feel that they were very welcome indeed.

I can understand completely how you feel about being burnt out by taking over the housekeeping duties and taking care of your wife and baby girl while your wife is recovering. I was somewhere around eleven or twelve when I started in the housekeeping business when there was a new member in our family, and I was getting very much used to it when the last one arrived. By that time I was working in the paper mill and could not spend so much time at home, but I did most of the big chores when I was on the day shift, before I went to work and after I came home.

Do not fret yourself about taking too long to answer my last letter. I remember you told me that you were expecting the baby to arrive most any day, so I had not been expecting a letter from you for another week or so. However I was real pleased to hear from you sooner than expected, and I am real glad that your new daughter is getting along fine, but I am very sorry to hear that Mrs. Filter had such a hard time of it.

That is usually the way with the first child from what I have heard. When they have a healthy mother, the child is usually a big strong healthy baby that gives a lot of trouble when it is the first one born.

I hope that Mrs. Filter will be back on her feet soon.

As I said in my last letter, we are expecting a new arrival in two months or so ourselves, and this time, it is not an Aid baby, it is a new grandchild from our daughter Pat, our twenty-

second grandchild. We did however receive a new baby about a month old from the Aid. It was a cute little Indian baby, and she is just getting used to living with these strange white people.

My daughter Pat is getting ready to start her new job at the beginning of the new year, after her baby is born, and she was the one that always got my drugs for me at the beginning of the month. Lately she has so much business to take care of in winding down her old job, that she sometimes forgets to get my drugs. Then I have to do without until my other daughter, Laura, has the use of the car and is going into town.

I had the drug store send me out some drugs that they were out of when my daughter went to pick them up, and they only cost 49 cents postage by mail. I decided to have the drugstore send all my drugs by mail after that, and did I ever get a big surprise when I got the bill for the postage. A letter came in the box saying all medicine had to be sent by registered mail so the total cost to bring the box out about twenty miles was \$4.20.

To me that is a lot of money. I guess I will have to see if I can come up with a cheaper way of getting them out here. A little box about 8 x 8 x 6 in. high is plenty big enough to hold all the drugs I get, and I do not think that they need all those newspaper packing, because I tried dropping those bottles, all except the glass ones, on the bare wooden floor of the porch, and none of them broke or even cracked.

I like to make things safe when I send them by mail, but I think they were overdoing it a bit, as safety is one of the reasons plastic containers were invented, because they were tough and hard to break.

Now, to your questions.

Why did we leave the homestead? We had bad fires there in the final thirties and these burnt over places would grow up to weeds and brush in three or four years and would become a fire hazard again. I did not think we would be so lucky when the next big fire came through, so I decided to leave while we could, all in one piece.

Where did the gas come from? The gas from the fires in 1939 was formed from the rain and heat and burning of smouldering moss and leaves, and needles from the evergreen trees. It is supposed to be very deadly when it is held near the ground for any length of time, killing any living thing, like game and birds and people.

About the second world war. When gas rationing and tire rationing came into effect in the second war, you got enough coupons from where you were employed, according to how many miles you lived from your job, to keep you in gas for a month. If you worked in a war industry like I did, then there was a book of tickets that you received once a year from the Ontario government that was supposed to last you for a year. The book was divided into twelve months. When you had used all the coupons for a month, you could not get any gas on the next month's coupons until the first day in the month.

About the houses I built. All of the houses I built, not just the log house I built at Corbett Creek, or the frame house I built there after, but also the log house on the homestead, and the frame house I built when we moved back to the Rainy River district in 1967, or any of the other things that I made, were never made from any plans or sketches on paper, but just from what I saw in my mind.

When the cabinet maker was out from Haggland's Building Supplies to install the cabinets that he made for the kitchen in the last frame house that I built on Corbett Creek before

we moved back to Rainy River District, ask me to let him look at the plans of the house, he was quite shocked when I told him the only plans I had were in my head.

He tried to tell me it was impossible to build a house like that without accurate plans on paper as there were too many things to remember. I told him that I just had a picture of it in my mind, and that I built a house just like that picture.

I said that before I started on any new house, I talked it over with my wife and we decided the kind of house we wanted, and that was what I built. After it was built, if we thought of something that would make things more handy in the house, such as extra closets or, as in the last one I built up at Corbett Creek, when my wife was caring for five babies from the Children's Aid, a table between a cabinet and the wash bowl in the bathroom, I built it. For example, in the roomy basement where the automatic washer was I installed an 18 foot long drying rack that could be raised up close to the ceiling to dry the clothes when it was raining outside. I installed an ironing board that would fold down out of the way, and a outlet for the electric iron and an overhead light, so that she could do all her ironing there and hang it on this same pole that she used for drying wet clothes. This ironing board folded down over the cabinet with shelves in it for her iron, soaps and any other things she wished to put in there. When the double doors of the cabinet were open they supported the ironing board which was on hinges.

Another thing I added after the house was built was a covering for the stairs going down into the basement. It was made out of a 3/4 inch thick sheet of plywood. It worked on a rope and pulley and a counter weight that was concealed in the wall. This was always down so that if anyone left the cellar door open when the babies started to crawl or walk, they would not fall down the cellar steps.

We had one of our grandsons who was about three years old living with us at that time and he was rather careless about closing doors. I put that cover in to be on the safe side, also to be able to have shelves at the end of the opening going down to the basement. I also put in a ladder between two of the studdings in the cellar going up to the attic, where I had a trapdoor operated on the same principal as the cellar door with the counter weight.

We had a front porch on the house of a good size, about ten by twelve, sitting on a cement block foundation. I decided to cut a hole though the wall of the basement into the space under the porch, and make a place to keep our vegetables. I did this and it worked fine.

Then, as we were getting more babies from the Children's Aid to look after and did not have too much room for them, I built an addition onto the back of the house, which was on the south side and overlooked the valley and Corbett Creek. I built it about twelve by twenty feet. I built the bottom part out of cement blocks, the same as the basement walls, and the upper part the same as the main part of the house. I made the room at the top all into one big room and had a folding door between our bedroom and it. This was to be the babies room, and you would have to go through our room to get to the babies room.

We had an oil furnace for heat and a cook stove that burned wood in the kitchen as well as an electric stove. We never had to have the heat turned on upstairs at any time, we would just open the cellar door and the heat would come up from the basement and heat the whole house.

The whole house was well insulated with four inches of insulation in the walls and eight inches in the ceiling. We had thermal windows in the whole house, except the basement where we had storm windows in the winter and screens in the summer. I had a full length chimney

from the basement floor right up through the roof. I built it myself out of insulated cinder blocks and fire proof chimney tile.

It was a good thing that we had a wood burning stove set up one winter. There was a big ice storm and our power was cut off for over five hours, some time around three in the morning. I woke up around four and the house was much cooler.

I tried to turn on the light, but no power, so I dressed and went down to the basement and got an arm full of wood and got a fire going in the stove pretty quick. In the basement part under the babies room was where we kept a week's supply of dry wood at all times, and my little tractor and snow blower in the winter. I had put a hot air pipe through the wall there to keep my tractor warm, so that it would always be ready to go if my road was ever blocked with snow. It was not long until the house was warm, and I stayed up and kept the fire going.

It was Saturday and I did not have to go to work until three in the afternoon. I had the kettle on, and about six in the morning I woke up my wife and ask if she thought we should ask the Elchuck family over for breakfast and to get warm, as they did not have a wood stove and their house was not insulated.

She got up and I phoned the Elchucks over for a hot meal.

The four of them came over and they looked half frozen.

My wife got a good hot breakfast ready, and it was not long until they were thawed out.

Mr. Elchuck was planning on building a new house that year, and he said he had never thought about what would happen if the power went off before, but now he was going to do as I did and have a stove and chimney that would handle wood smoke and fire.

Well my friend I must sign off now as it is getting late in the evening and the cook will soon be calling that supper is ready. I know this is a rather short letter, but when the cook calls, I had better answer the call. So good by for now and the best of good wishes to you and your wife, and of course, little Emily.

Your friend,

Sam

vistaVision Memories

Great Lakes Paper

When the shell plant was retooled and they were starting to train lathe operators, the superintendent sent word to me that he wanted to see me. He offered me a dollar an hour for every hour that I would come over to the shell plant after work and train beginners in how to run the lathes. I agreed to do this, as by then, my family was quite large and we needed all the money we could get.

I used to work eight hours at the Canada Car, then go to the shell plant and work another eight hours as an instructor, five, sometimes six days a week.

When they were ready at the shell plant to go into production, the personnel manager at the Canada Car would not give me a transfer. I told Harry Banham, the boss at the shell plant, and he put the pressure on, and the next day I was back at the shell plant making between \$14.00 to \$16.00 per day on piece work. It was much lighter work than the antiaircraft shells we had made on the first contract. These shells we were now making were 14 lb. bombs, or they could be used as mortar shells. They could really be handled fast and much easier than the 49 lb. shells we made before.

Old C.D. Howe, a cabinet minister in the government at the time, tried to pull a fast one on the employees at the shell plant in Fort William at election time. He came over there one day and had the whole production line closed down and all employees gathered in a big empty room on one of the top floors of the building to listen to his speech. Among other things, he told us if we did not vote for him and he did not get elected there would be no more war contracts for shells or bomb casings.

Well most of us knew that he had no say in whether the war would continue or would stop if he did not get elected, so we held a meeting when the shift changed and voted to vote the way we wanted to, not the way he told us to vote.

That year, he got elected by a very narrow margin, and I do not think it was the small vote from Fort William that did it, but it helped, I guess, to cut him down. I know that most of the employees at the shell plant and the Canada Car were pretty mad at him for telling us how we had to vote if we expected to hold our jobs.

Anyway he became a millionaire out of what he skimmed off the top of that war. He had very little, so the papers said, before the war started. How he got to be a millionaire is anyone's guess but he did not earn it by honest labour that is sure.

I guess most everyone connected with the war effort in the upper crust did pretty well for themselves and came out, if not smelling like a rose, at least pretty well heeled. Money was pouring into the government from bonds and all sorts of donations, and when that was not enough for them they started holding back on a good share of the single man's pay and on a married man's pay if he had less than four children and a wife to keep. I had six children at that time and nothing was held back from my pay, although I was buying bonds all the time on the payroll deduction plan.

In 1945, when the war was over, I got laid off as there was no more war contract work, so I got what work I could around Murillo. I worked for a little while at the brick yard in Roslyn village. Then I worked for most of the year in Baxandales lathe mill. When that job was finished, I got a job on a construction crew building houses and digging basements around what is now Thunder Bay. I worked on that construction crew for most of the winter of 1946, and some of the lots where we had to dig was frozen down five or six feet deep, and the soil had to be pickaxed loose in small pieces and it was real hard work. I quit there soon after when I found an opening unloading grain cars at the elevator near Great Lakes Paper, at 75 cents per hour.

I had been down several times, in the fall of 1946, when I was 45 years old, to the Great Lakes Paper Mill to try to get on there, but did not get a job. One day I was at the gatehouse when two young fellows came in and were going over to the employment office. I had been over there that morning and they said they were not hiring anyone. I told those two fellows what had been said to me, but they went over to see for themselves.

They came back in about an hour and said that they both had been hired.

I went right over and walked into the office and through it to the office of Mr. Mapledorm, the head man who had told me they were not hiring. I guess I must have looked mad for his face went kind of pale. He got up from behind his desk and pulled a chair around and ask me to sit down. He ask me a lot of very personal questions about my age, my family, my work history, then after quite a bit of time past, he ask me if I could come into work at four in the wood yard that afternoon. I said I could and did.



Great Lakes Paper, Late 1940s

When the work slowed down shortly before Xmas, 1946, all the extra men that had been hired that fall, were laid off, but I was kept on. I never knew why, until the man in charge of the woodyard was pensioned off and came to work as a security officer, when I was in security at the mill, years later.

He told me one night when we were talking that he kept me on because he could give me a job to do around the yard and then forget

about it for he knew the job would be done in a satisfactory manner and as quickly as possible.

He said he never had to watch me when I was doing a job, or worry about it not being done well.

I felt pretty good when he told me that. I like to have the work I do appreciated, because I always give it the best I have, and it is very seldom that a man is told when he does a good job on a piece of work.

On the sorting belt in the wood yard where the wood comes out of the big drums after it has the bark peeled off it, there are several men there who examine each stick of wood as it goes past on the belt, to see that all the bark is off before it is ground or cooked into shape for making paper or sulphide pulp. These men have one joke, or used to have, that they try to play on every new man that comes to work sorting wood on that belt.

When sorting the wood, they use a small implement like a pick with a long curved sharp end called a hand picaroon. They turn the wood over with this to examine it, and if it has the least bit of bark on it, they stick this sharp pick into the wood and pull it to the edge of the belt and drop it down a chute to another belt which carries it away to an elevator which takes it up and returns it to one of the drums for further barking.

Sometimes a new man will stick his picaroon too deeply into a billet of wood that he wants to roll over to examine for bark and he can not get it back out. He has to let go of the picaroon handle and it passes down the belt with the log or billet.

One of the other men further down the belt who knows how to get the picaroon loose from the billet of wood, retrieves the picaroon, greases the handle where the operator will have to take hold of it with a sticky black grease that can only be got off the hands by washing them in varsol or gasoline. He then hands it back to the new man, handle first, which the new man grasps and gets his hand all sticky with this black grease.

This was soon stopped.

A sign had been put up saying that anyone found guilty of this offense would be discharged at once, never to be hired again, no matter what the length of their experience was with Great Lakes. After the first man was reported and discharged after 16 years working for Great Lakes, there has never been no more of that horseplay while I worked there. It was a dangerous trick, especially on the side next to the de-barking drums. If a man got hold of a big billet of wood and went to pull it off the belt and his hand slipped off the handle of his picaroon he could fall backwards over the railing behind him and fall twelve or fourteen feet to the ground to death or possible serious injury. Another of their stupid tricks that I saw and reported to the safety steward when I worked in the wood yard when I first went to work for the Great Lakes mill used to be performed by one man when we were taking wood off the big peeled piles in the winter the first winter I was there.

We had a conveyor set up from the wood pile to the main conveyor going to the wood room. We used to put the wood on the conveyor with long handled picaroons, from the big pile. When we worked at this job we would all stand between the pile and the conveyor which was about four or five feet high. As we worked into the pile, an overhang would develop so we had to keep one eye on the overhang and one eye on what we were doing. We never knew when a

slide of that wood would come, and we always had to keep a way clear to get out from between the pile and the conveyor.



The Wood Yard

This fellow I am talking about had a habit of picking out a very small stick of wood and throwing it up on the pile so that it would knock some snow down, then yell “Slide!”

Everyone would run for safety, then he would yell “False Alarm.” The men got so they were beginning to not pay much attention to him.

One night I was working at the end near the motor that operated the conveyor and a neighbor who rode to work each shift with me was about twenty feet or so down towards the middle of the conveyor when this fellow pulled his trick again.

I do not know whether the stick he threw started the slide, or whether it was just ready to let go anyway, but only one or two looked up and I yelled and got out of there on my safety path. That frozen peeled wood came down like an avalanche.

Everyone got out but my neighbor. He was buried in under the overhang of the side of the conveyor under about twenty or thirty feet deep of peeled wood.

The conveyor had broke its chain, so I run and stopped the motor and we all got busy at digging my neighbor out from under the pile of wood. We expected him to be dead, but the overhang of the conveyor had saved his life and he came out fighting mad.

He went over to the fellow that had been throwing sticks on the woodpile and started in to give him the beating of his life.

Everyone just stood around and watched.

When the foreman came there after hearing the slide, and was going to stop the fight, two men grabbed him and held him until my neighbor had finished the job. That man sure deserved that beating, and he got a beauty. He had to be helped into the wood room where it was safe.

The foreman came over to me where I was working to clear the conveyor so we would get going again, and he ask me what was going on.

I told him the whole story and said my neighbor was pretty lucky to be alive, along with the rest of us.

The foreman went to the wood room, after giving orders to clear the conveyor and get it going again. My neighbor was not seen on the job again. I found out that after he had beat up the guy, he had walked off the job and walked all the way home, about twelve miles, and never came back.

The foreman fired the other fellow that got the beating and he never came back.

You took your life in your hands every time you went out to take wood off the peeled piles of wood in the winter. When they were put out there in the winter, they were wet and soon were frozen and icy, every stick in those piles. The piles with the bark on were not so bad or dangerous, but I always disliked going out to those peeled piles, and I am sure many of the other men felt the same way. It way a great day for us all when they started using crawler cranes to recover wood from all those piles.

Several times when they put the crawlers in there, the crawlers got caught in slides and were turned over and buried under the wood, but the operator was always able to get out of the cab and get far enough away so that he did not get hurt. It was not long before they were using crawlers and diesel electric cranes to load and unload cars and trucks and recover wood from all the piles, and then there was no more hand labour.

In 1947, there was an opening in the mill for a beater man.

Several of us in the wood yard applied for it. Two different men had a try at it before I got my chance at it, and I stayed at it for near a year until I was bumped off it when they put in the

self-feeding beaters, by a man who had two days more seniority than I did.



*Late 1940s. Me, Hauling Firewood
in an Old Truck I had back Then.*

During all this time we were living at Little Falls in our log house. Once, just as my wife and I were getting ready to go to bed, we heard a crackling noise in our stove pipes. Right away we knew the pipes were on fire. We just had a metal chimney pipe for a chimney at the time and we could see it glowing in the dark up in the attic. There

was no fire whatever in our stove, but this fire in the pipes had been smouldering for a long time

up near where the chimney pipe went through the roof. As soon as the fire in the stove had burned out and fresh air was coming up the stove pipe instead of smoke, the oxygen had ignited the smouldering fire in the creosote in the pipes, and away it went. I rushed outside and the pipe looked like a big torch or candle, and was it ever roaring and shooting out a lot of sparks.

I rushed down to the haystacks near the barn to get a ladder, but I forgot about the barbed wire fence that I had put up around the haystacks to keep the cows and horses away from the hay. I was running fast and hard and I run right into this barbed wire fence and tumbled right through it. I got the ladder and run with it up to the house. I put it against the edge of the roof and, with a pail of water in my hand, I climbed up onto the roof to the chimney. I had a little saucepan in the water in the pail and I dipped water out and poured it around the base of the chimney close to the roof. I did not try to put the fire out in the pipe, as I thought it would be best to let it burn out all the creosote that was in the pipe now, so that it would prevent it from taking fire some other night when we were asleep.

The big balls of burning creosote were falling on the roof but were just rolling down the steep roof, and off into the snow on the ground. I had learned the lesson well about having a steep roof in the event of a chimney fire when I was on the homestead.

Finally the fire was all burned out in the chimney pipe and I came down off the roof of the house and went inside. My wife had wiped up the water that was on the floor that got there from her cooling the pipes off inside with pouring cold water on them. I got some kindling and started a fire in the heating stove again, and after it got going good I shut off all the drafts on the stove and in the pipe, and then I took off my heavy coat and sweater and saw that the front of my shirt was a mass of blood.

I took my shirt and under shirt off and saw that my stomach and chest were a mass of rather deep cuts. Some were still bleeding.

My wife got a basin of warm water, put some carbolic acid in it, and washed all the blood off. There were two pretty deep cuts that were still bleeding and about seven or eight that were not too deep. My wife patched me up with bandages and tape and we went back to bed.

Next morning I was up at five, as usual, done the chores at the barn and milked the cow, then came up to the house and had my breakfast and went to work at the Great Lakes Paper mill. I was working inside at that time on the broke beaters and it was rather hot down there under the paper machine. As it was winter, we were not allowed to have any outside doors open, so I sweat a lot.

When that salty sweat got into those cuts it sure was painful.

I finally could not work that way any longer, so I got the beater engineer to take charge of my beater while I went to the first aid and got them to take off the bandages and tape my wife had put on, and put on waterproof tapes and bandages.

It sure made a big difference, no matter how much I sweat on the job, none of it got into the cuts on my body.

I left them bandages on until one day the first aid nurse came to me at my beater and told me to come into the first aid room and she would change the bandages. When I finally did get in there and she took off the bandages, she found that all cuts were very nicely healed up. She could not seem to believe how well they were healed as the bandages had only been on three days. However, the nurse put on clean waterproof tape on all of my cuts and they stayed on for about three weeks, then I took them all off and never had no more put on.

After that near miss with the chimney fire in 1947, I decided to build a brick chimney with fireproof tile lining. I had never done any brick work before, but I was sure that I could do it because I had watched the Bullivaunt brothers build me a chimney at our place in Georgetown on paper mill row, twenty years before. So I went down to the brickyard in Roslyn village where I had been working for a little while a year or so before. The foreman and I were pretty good friends and he told me how many bricks I would need to build my chimney from the main floor of my log house up through the roof. He let me pick out the kind of bricks that I wanted and when I ask him how much the cost was, he said to forget it, he was giving them to me as I had more than earned them when I worked there.

I thanked him and loaded them into my old Model A Ford.

It was quite a load, but I got them home without breaking any springs in the old car.

I then went into town and bought the tile for inside the chimney and some bags of cement. I went up to a sand pit and hauled home several bags of sand in the old car. I had bought a bricklayer's trowel when I was in town. I now made a mortar box and I was ready to go.

I had the barrel filled with water that I had carried up from Corbett Creek in two buckets. I mixed up a batch of mortar and carried some bricks up into the house, also a mortar board that I had made. When all was ready I took a bucket of mortar up and put it on my mortar board. I first put a good layer of mortar on the planks of the base I had made in the main room downstairs

for the chimney. Then I started laying bricks at about 6:30 pm. When I had the first round laid, I started to lay a second round when I found out that the mortar had already set hard on the first round, but did not stick to the bricks as it was supposed to do. I took all the bricks apart, cleaned all the hard mortar off everything and started over again.

At ten that night when I had to leave for work on the midnight shift, I still had laid only one round of bricks and the mortar still was not sticking to them like it should. I cleaned the mess up and stood looking at it for a few minutes, then it struck me what was wrong and I had the answer.

When I got those bricks from inside the newly opened kiln, they had never been outside where any rain could get on them. They had been in that kiln since they had been put in there damp and green and a fired hot enough to melt. Some of them had been heating for near a week. There was no more moisture in them, it had all been dried out of them so that when I put the wet mortar on them they at once absorbed it, drying out the mortar so that it would not stick to the brick.

I got a bucket of water and put two bricks in it that I had not as yet worked at where I was trying to build the chimney. The water at once started to boil and was still boiling when I left for work. I went to work quite happy, as I knew that I had found the answer and could come home the next day and build my chimney without a trouble.

When I came home and had my breakfast, I went out and took my bucket, poured the whole barrel of water over my little pile of bricks and did they sizzle and drink it up. I then got another bucket and filled the barrel with water from the creek before I went to bed, about nine thirty in the morning.

I was up at twelve, had my dinner and started in to build my chimney again.

By three in the afternoon, I was through the roof and by supper time, I had the chimney built, flue and all, with no more worries about chimney fires from creosote.

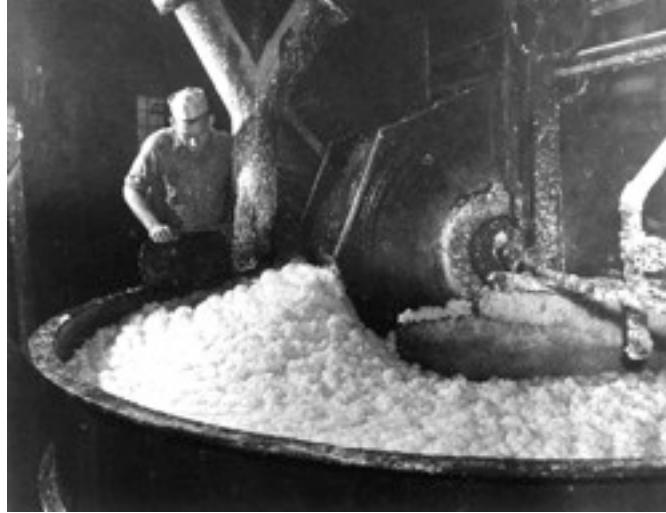
On the broke beaters we had to load the waste paper that came down the chutes from the paper machines on the floor above into the beaters by bull strength and awkwardness. Some of the slabs of paper that they cut off the rolls would weigh three or four hundred pounds if they were having a bad start up on Monday morning. They would sometimes be mixed in with loose paper, right up to the ceiling, and we would have to dig them out with a hook on the end of a long pole. Then they would have to be lifted up about four feet in order to get them high enough to get them into the beater.

It was not too bad when just one machine was having trouble getting going, but when both machines were having trouble at the same time and making lots of waste paper, each of us beatermen had to load our beaters alone.

The day that I ruptured my right side, both of the machines were making a lot of waste paper. My partner on the other beater was an old man of sixty-six. We did not have compulsory retirement at sixty-five at that time, it came into effect two years later. The boss beaterman got a helper from the grinder room for this old man, but being much younger and very much stronger, I had to go it alone on my beater.

I was lifting one of these big slabs up over the edge of the beater when I felt something

give on my right side, and I had my first hernia rupture.



Worker Manning a Broke Beater, 1947

I was off work for a week getting an operation to fix that hernia, then the safety engineer called me back to work on the midnight shift, and I was sent up to the wood room to pull four foot sticks of wood off the sorting belt. I started to pull one stick off, when I felt a sharp pain

where my rupture had been.

I gave my pike back to the lead man and told him that I was in no shape yet to pull wood, and I went down to the office and told the foreman that I could not do it, as my operation was not healed up yet and I would only rip out the stitches by trying.

He took me down to the bark pile and gave me a fork and a wheel barrow and told me to take a pile of snips down to the shredder and make the job last all night.

I took one small load down to the shredder, which was about two hundred yards or so away. When I tried to take these snips out of the wheel barrow and raise them up over my head in order to get them into the shredder, my side was just one big mass of pain.

I went and told the foreman I could not do it and what had happened when I tried.

He said that he had no other job for me and that I had better go somewhere where it was warm and find a good place to sleep, out of the way of the night superintendent and watchman.

I went down to the beater room and gathered up an armful of paper and made a bed on some steel rollers and slept the rest of the night.

At one point, the Superintendent came around behind the beater and found me and woke me up, and he ask me what I was doing there.

I told him about how long I had been out of the hospital, and about the safety engineer calling me into work that night, and about the jobs I had tried to do but the pain was too great and I could not do them.

He told me to keep coming in every night until my side had healed enough for me to go back to work on the beater, but not to try to do any work until I was sure that my side was healed. He said to come in each night to the beater room and if I was able for to sweep the floor I could do that, or just find a comfortable place to rest and sleep and let nature take its time about healing my side.

He said that I would be given full pay for every shift that I punched the time clock.

I thanked him for that, and I always thought of him as a very decent, kindly man after that, although a lot of the fellows thought he was a tough old grouch.

It was not long after I was back to work on the beaters that I got the start for my second hernia.

The trimmers were having a bad night for breaking paper on the old machine, and the tank where the stock went after it was well beat up by the beaters, was full on the old beater. The boss beaterman came down and saw that the tank was full and would soon overflow onto the floor. He brought over a long bar and put it through the loop on the gate between my tank and

the old man's, and asked me to help him to open the gate. He had about two thirds of the bar on his side of the loop in the gate and I had about a third on my side.

I had just taken a hold of my end of the bar when the boss beaterman gave a quick jerk on the end, and I suddenly felt a great pain in my left side.

I dropped my end of the bar and held my side.

He ask me what was wrong and I told him that when he had jerked the bar I thought I was ruptured again in the other side.

I went up to the doctor after work that day, and he said I had a small rupture there, but that it would not get any bigger if I was careful. I ask him to enter it in his files with the date and all details, just to be on the safe side, as we did not have medicare at that time.

That happened in 1947, and I did not have it operated on until 1971.

I worked on the beaters for about a year, then went up to work on the paper machines. I had to scrape rolls on two machines.

To scrape these rolls I had to be bending over them while I was doing the job of scraping them clean. I worked there for several months until one day, I passed out from the smell of the chemicals there and the terrible noise from the suction pumps and boxes. That was before they had noise snubbers on the machines and the howling was very hard on my ears. They had ear plugs for me to wear, but none of them would fit my ears so I could not wear them.

I was over the traveling felt when I past out and a long steel rod across the machine saved me from falling into the moving rollers. One of the machine tenders called for help and they got me down off there before I shook loose and fell into the rollers down below. They got me to the first aid room and they brought me around again.

I could not hear for days after that.

I was sent home, and when I came in the next day, I was sent in to the Personnel Office, where I was told I was not allowed to work at that job anymore, and that I had the choice of taking a job on the Security staff, or going back to work in the woodyard.

I said I would not go back to the woodyard, but would take the Security job. I never regretted that decision and I stayed with it for just about twenty years, until I was pensioned off in 1966.

I found the work rather hard at first because I was not used to the long walk of 16 miles or more, seven days a week, climbing up and down stairs and walking in the dark mostly, but I soon got used to it. My legs and whole body got much stronger over the years, and I was outside in the fresh air most of the time.

At first when I went on the job, there were just two of us at the lower guardhouse, Fred Robinson and I. We had just the two shifts, 4 to 12 and 12 to 8 in the morning. Sunday morning a man from the shipping department made the 8 to 4 rounds until the union put a stop to that.

Then on Sunday, Fred and I would do a 12 hour shift each at time and a half. On holidays we got paid double time.

Fred was a young man of about in his late twenties, and he liked fine clothes and rich meals, and sort of looked down on me, who was married with seven children.

When I would get a new pair of shoes or any new clothes, he would ask me where the fire sale was. I took this for quite awhile and then got tired of this silly sarcastic question and I went after him rather roughly the next time he made one of those silly remarks.

I told him he was no woman's dream man or he would be married by now, and I thought him a rather cheap man to take out his frustrations on me, a happily married man with a wonderful family of both boys and girls. I told him that he was not hurting me in the least, but if it gave him pleasure to think that he was being smart with his snide remarks whenever I got some new clothing or shoes, to keep on amusing himself, but for god's sake get some new things to say, as what he had been saying was old when I was a small boy, and I had heard them many times over the years.

Fred got up and walked out and did not speak to me for several days after that.

I always spoke to him when I came on duty or was leaving when he came on duty. He would never answer me at all.

One day when I was on the four to twelve shift, Bill Renton, who was the Chief of Security at that time, came up and walked around the route with me, and ask me what the trouble was between Fred and I.

I told him all about what Fred had been saying to me whenever I bought new clothing or shoes. Then I told him what I had said to Fred when I got fed up with his sarcastic remarks.

He told me to try and get along with him.

I said that I was trying and that I had never missed a day that I did not say hello to him, but that he had never yet acknowledged my greeting to him. The boss said he had not known about that. I told him that I held no hard feelings for Fred, only I had pride too, and was not the least bit ashamed of my family and that I paid cash for everything I bought and owed no one.

I told him I built my house and buildings myself and ask no one for help.

He said he knew I was a very independent man and a good worker, and he was sorry he could not say the same for Fred, but he said he was going to have a talk to Fred and try and find out what was bothering him.

About three weeks or so later Fred came in early on the ten-thirty bus and was sitting in the watchman's house when I came in from my last round of the day for me. He started to talk like a house afire and very nice too.

I knew right away that he was going to ask me to do something for him, and as it was getting close to time for me to punch out, I interrupted him and ask him what he wanted me to do for him.

He said, "well now that you have mentioned it I would like to have you get me a fresh pail of water on your last trip and put some on to heat so that I can have a hot cup of coffee before I go out on my first trip."

I said I would give it a try and let him know tomorrow when he came on duty.

I went a little early on my last trip the next night and I counted my steps from where I left my route over to the watchman's house, to the wood room and back to the watchman's house and

I put water on to boil, and then went back to my route again. It took nineteen hundred and seven steps and in time, twenty minutes.

When I got in to the watchman's house, Fred was sitting there drinking his coffee as I had about another mile to go after I got back on my route again before I was finished with the trip.

He said, "this coffee sure tastes great."

I told him to enjoy it as it was the last that time I was ever carrying water for him or putting water on to boil. I told him how many extra steps that I had to take and how much later it made me in finishing my rounds and I was not doing it again for anyone.

He said, "well I always get you a fresh pail of water before I leave."

I said that I have never taken a drink out of that pail since I came on the job. I always get my drinking water fresh from the tap in the wood room, and I never make any coffee because I do not drink coffee at all, so I am not carrying any water from the wood room. I said, "if you want coffee before you go out on your first trip, come in on the ten-thirty bus and you will have lots of time to have it." I said that I was always in here at ten o'clock every night when I am on the midnight shift and he can and often does leave right away. But I have yet to see him in here at that time so I can get home a bit earlier.

He looked at me for a long time and then said that he guessed that I was right.

I said for him to not expect me to wait on him like he was someone special. I said I did as good job here as I could but I did a lot more work at home every day than I ever had to do here, and I had plenty there to keep me going without doing extra walking here just to remain on friendly terms with him or anyone else. I said the company was satisfied with the job that I was doing, and as they were the ones that was paying me, that suited me fine the way it was.

Fred said that I sounded awful tough and he wanted to know what he had done to make me talk like that.

I said, "well Fred, if you don't know I will tell you. Here you are, a young man, asking me to walk nearly a half mile to put some water on for your coffee so you can get coffee before starting to work. I have already walked over ten miles and I am tired. I will not do it anymore and have over another mile to go before I finish my shift. All the exercise you really get in twenty-four hours is when you are walking around here for sixteen miles in eight hours. I get several times more exercise at home working than I do here, and all you need to prove what I am saying is to compare your body to mine."

I said, "I do not think that I have an once of fat on my body, but you are starting to get a little tubby below your belt. I am sorry, Fred," I told him, "you ask for me to explain and I have done so. I do not like to beat around the bush. I think people should speak out with the truth and get things cleared up and if possible, have no hard feeling."

Before I went home that night, Fred said he would think over what I had said.

When he came in the next night, he was in early and was sitting drinking coffee and seemed quite pleased about something. He started off with telling me that he had thought about what I had said all night long while he was making his rounds and had decided what I had said was the truth, and that he had been very selfish to even think of asking me to do those things for him. He said he felt very ashamed that he had been so narrow minded as to expect me to carry water for him and go out of my way so far to do it. And he apologized for those remarks that he had always made when I bought new clothes or shoes.

From then on we got along very well together and when there was an opening on the lower gate for a gateman, he was the man next in line for it. He talked it over with me, whether or not he should accept it or not.

I pointed out that he would get no exercise on that job and his health would suffer unless he spent a few hours in a gym several times a week.

He said he would take the job and sign up at a gym for three times a week.

Well the gym did not last very long and Fred started to put on weight very fast. He was found asleep on the job at night several times, so was transferred to the new Kraft mill gate shortly after I was pensioned off, almost twenty years later.

Eventually Fred was given an early pension at the age of fifty-two and let go from the mill.

October 7, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter yesterday and was very happy to hear from you, and was also very pleased to hear that you, Mrs. Filter and Emily are also getting along fine. We are in very good health here except for, of course, me.

My eyes are really much worse now, and I have to type much slower as the letters keep jumping around so much that I have quite a hard time getting them to go where I want them to go. I have been planning on seeing an eye specialist, but so far I have not found transportation to get to town to see one.

An eye specialist told me the last time I was in the hospital that I was going blind and would be totally blind in less than ten years. This is the fifth year since he told me that, and I am beginning to believe that he was telling me the truth. He also said that there could be nothing done to prevent it.

Well enough of my troubles as I guess that you have lots of them of your own without me adding to your burden.

This morning started with a light fog, just before the sun came up over the trees. Soon after, the fog was burned away and the trees shined in all their glory of fall colors. The air is very cool today and the squirrels are scampering around from tree to tree, chattering away to one another.

It is good to be alive on a morning like this, despite all the troubles I am having.

I like getting your letters and the questions that you ask, as they stir up my mind about things that have been buried for years. I think the mind is an amazing piece of machinery, the way it can store things away and then bring them out whenever you want them. I usually think about something that I wish to remember, and if it does not surface in a few minutes, I go on to thinking of other things, and eventually it will pop up when least expected, as clear as the day it happened. I have really never seen it fail, if what I wanted to remember was really important. That is why I used to like having a room of my own, like I did in my last house in Rainy River. I could go in there and think and not be disturbed.

Here, in my daughter's house, I have a room of my own, and when just my wife and I are here all alone with the babies from the Children's Aid, it is fine, but when Pat and her son Danny are at home, there are a lot of visitors and phone calls to disturb the quiet of the house, and it is a bit harder to concentrate.

It is a strange thing, but the Aid babies can all be crying as hard as they can when I am at my typewriter, but I never really hear them, but when visitors are talking to my wife in another room I can hear most of their conversation, and yet I am partially deaf. I cannot figure that one out.

You ask about the doctor I told you about that pulled my teeth out. Well, my teeth had started to ache very bad. I expect they had cavities in them, so rather than suffer with them, I had them pulled out. The man who pulled them out was about between 54 or 55 with dark brown hair, about 5 ft. 10 in. tall and would weigh about 160 or 165. He called himself Dr. Broughton.



Me in my Own Room in Our Last Home in the Rainy River District

started building a frame house, and the money from my bonds gave me a fairly good start. That was how I got into the house building business, and when they were built I would sell the first one with a piece of land and then build another one on the best of my land. Then, in the mid 60s, I sold that one for what was a rather good price at that time and moved to Rainy River District to retire in where I built my last house, which I also sold against my better judgement and went to live with my daughter here in Thunder Bay.

You ask about sending me too many letters with too many questions. Well you do not need to worry about that. I get lots of letters and I enjoy answering most of them. In fact, now that I am retired and getting two pensions, I do not think you would believe how my mail has increased by people and companies who write lovely letters wanting to help me get rid of my money.

He had been disbarred from practicing medicine. Any case that came to him for medical attention, he took to the doctor in the hospital, but anything such as broken bones or wounds of any kind, or dental work, he did himself. When pulling teeth, he gave me Novocaine, I think he said it was.

About the houses that I built all by myself. As soon as the war was over and I had a steady job, I cashed in all my bonds and

The letters come in most every mail delivery, every day, telling me how I can make more money by just investing a few dollars with them. Then of course there are the begging letters for most every disease I have heard of, and a lot that I never heard of, and of course there are letters from different churches inviting me to attend their church. I do not know how some of them found out that I am a diabetic and have arthritis and suffer from anginal attacks, but I receive offers to join their societies quite regular.

I like to have people write to me, and I enjoy answering their letters, but when they are always wanting money for giving nothing, or wanting me to invest in something, I do not care to have them filling up my mail box with their letters and junk mail.

Oh well, I guess it makes a little money for the post office and keeps some people employed, but it does get tiresome for my wife having to carry it down to the basement and burning it. Myself, I think it should all be recycled back into a new useful product.

I would like to know just how all these people get my name and address, people and companies I never heard of before.

On the subject of the benefits of breast feeding babies, I do not want to offend either you or your friend the Optometrist about my idea about breast feeding, but it seems to me how can he be so sure that there is no connection between poor eyesight and not being breastfed when he admits that he does not know of any tests being tried.

I am glad that you mentioned the two things that benefit the mother by breast feeding her baby, and of course it does benefit the baby very much also, which is only natural, so why are so many mothers so ill informed by their doctors, or are they just plain stupid or selfish?

I do not know myself what the answer is, but from families that I have known, I think that I could make a pretty good guess.

You ask about how I was getting on with the trouble in my legs. Well, I still cannot get around very much and I am still stuck with having to use my canes, despite all the exercises I do to strengthen them. My good friend, I do not know if you realize just how lucky you are to be healthy and able to move around from place to place without the aid of canes, or pains in your legs that sometimes make you want to scream, or be unable to bend from your hips. If you could see some of the things I have to do to get dressed in the morning and get undressed at night, I guess you might laugh as I sometimes do. And then there are all the bottles of pills I have to take all the time to stay alive, it is hard not to get discouraged sometimes.

You ask about my memory. Well, it is not as good as you think. For example, I do not seem to remember the names or the birthdays of our grandchildren or any of my great grandchildren. It puzzles me very much why I can not do so when I have no trouble at all in remembering names of people that I knew fifty or sixty years ago, and what different places looked like at that time.

I think the brain is a strange machine.

Now my wife can remember all their names and birthdays as soon as I ask her. She also can remember all about her early childhood, both in Switzerland and here in Canada when she was very young and can tell me some very interesting stories and experiences about those times, which I enjoy hearing. She did not have a very easy time when she came to this country, not being able to speak any English at all, in fact no one in the family could speak any English at all. When she first went to school here, she could not understand the teacher and the teacher could

not understand a word she said, so it must have been very hard for both of them. After we were married, I helped her a lot and when I bought a radio, that was when she came along real fast.

Of course a lot of people laughed at some of the mistakes she made, but she laughed right along with them, and this helped her to not make the same mistake twice.

Yesterday the mail was delivered along with a special Xmas present that I had sent to Cornwall for my wife. I had been a bit worried about not getting it before Xmas, as there is some talk of the posties going on another strike, so I ordered it very early to be sure I would get it in time. Now that I have her present two months before Xmas, I will have to try to hide it so my wife does not see what it is, but still, I feel quite content about having it in plenty of time.

I got my wife a nice big colorful hand crocheted robe for Xmas.

If she asks me how much I had paid for it, I will tell her that is my secret, for I know if I told her she would not enjoy it as much as she would if she did not know. It cost me \$45.74, and if she knew that I paid that much for it, she would say that she did not need a robe that cost that much, and would have said that I should have saved my money for my old age.

Heck, I may die tomorrow for all that I know about it, so what is the use of me saving a few dollars when I can buy something as beautiful as that robe for one whom I have loved all my life so far and still love her as much as ever. It will give me a great deal of pleasure to see her really enjoying the robe, so I really get a lot out of it too.

Well, I must close now and get this letter ready for tomorrow's mail.

Good by and good luck to you both and to your daughter.

Your friend,

Sam.

vistaVision Memories

The Pressure of his Meanness

When I went to work as a security guard at Great Lakes Paper in 1947, we were getting paid 75 cents per hour, but since I had been getting 85 cents per hour scraping rolls on the paper machine, I continued to get that after I went on guard duty. I told the other six men that were on Security at the mill about it, and they went after the same money and got it.

Our duties were to watch for men smoking in restricted areas, watch for heated motors, check for fires in the sulfur plant, and watch for fires all over the whole woodyard. We had twelve keys to punch at first, then as the plant expanded, we had thirty or more. We also had to check for loose or slipping belts, hot bearings, sleeping on the job, and for stealing from pop machines, lockers and the company. Also, in the summer, we had to watch for fellows stealing fruit or garden produce, as the company raised most of its vegetables for their bush camp.

On the first month on the job I caught and reported 52 men for smoking in restricted areas.

You can imagine how much I was liked by the fellows I used to work with.

Before I made my first trip as a security man, Bill Renton, who was the Chief of Security at that time, and who was a retired RCMP sergeant, told me never to warn a man about smoking in restricted areas, for they had all been told about it when they were hired, and the restricted areas were all posted with no smoking signs in big clear lettering. He said they had several breaks in the shift when they could go to the smoking room in the basement for a smoke. He said that I must ask them for their card number and their name, and leave a report of the time, name and card number in his office at the end of my shift. He told me that failure to do so could cause me to lose my job.

Even though I was not supposed to, I always gave a man a break the first time I caught him smoking or stealing the company's property by warning them what would happen if I caught them again. They usually told me it would not happen again. Some kept their word, but most of them did not. Some of the men were quite stupid about where they did their smoking too.

I remember one time when I located six of the yard crew working a day shift smoking right in the centre of six long piles of wood worth about \$200,000.00. When the centre piles had been piled, a space of about three feet had been left between two piles near where a fire tunnel had been left right through all of the piles. I came along there one day on my four o'clock round, and as I passed the end of this tunnel, I smelled tobacco smoke. I went in this tunnel and saw six of the yard crew and the foreman away down between the piles, and they were all smoking while they waited for it to be time for them to punch out their cards and go home.

They did not see me, so I went over to the scaler's office and phoned for the Security Chief to come up as fast as he could, which he did. We went in the tunnel and caught the whole seven men still smoking. The boss took their names and numbers, and that day they went out the gate for the last time, all seven being fired. We found that they had been smoking in there for a long time, according to the number of butts we collected.



The Gatehouse Where I Worked

There was no security patrol in the wood yard at that time from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon, but from that day on there was. The Fire Warden and his crew were suppose to keep their eyes open on that shift for smokers breaking the rules, but they never did.

Another time I caught three men sitting in the hay in the hay barn one rainy night smoking. I reported them and they were fired. They lied about it and the union backed them up until the Security Chief and the union president went up the next day and found several burnt matches amongst the hay where they had been sitting, then they were through for good.

When I reported someone I caught smoking in restricted areas, I also reported their excuses, which, while it did not help them at all, did save some of them from being laid off for a week or more. I even went and reported the manager of the whole mill for smoking in a restricted area. He was Chris Michaels. I thought at the time I might be fired if I did, but I was sure I would be fired if I did not report him.

He was waiting in the gatehouse the next day when I came into work.

I thought this is where I start looking for another job.

He called me over and told me I had a lot of guts to report him for smoking in a restricted area.

I said it was not a matter of guts at all, it was just my job. I said his cigarette could start a fire as quick as anyone else's, and I was hired and paid for reporting anyone who broke the rules about smoking.

He said I was the first one who had ever reported him for smoking around the wood yard. He said the others were afraid of him, that was why they never had reported him. He ask me if I was afraid of him.

I said I respected him for working his way up through the paper making business from bottom to the top where he now was, but I was not the least bit afraid of him, and if he had any intentions of firing me for the embarrassment that I had caused him, why to get on with it and have done with it.

He then said he had no intention to fire me, he just wanted to shake the hand of a man that had the courage of his convictions.

I will always remember Chris Michaels for saying that, it made the job seem more worthwhile to withstand the abuse I got from the union and some of the employees for reporting smokers in the wrong places.

I also caught the Fire Warden, George Watt, smoking in a very sensitive area among the dry wood piles in very hot weather one time. I told him I would have to put in a report about it.

He said if I did, he would have me fired. I put that threat in my report too, and he was called up on the carpet before the manager and given quite a lecture and suspended for two weeks.

As he was going to his office after the meeting, he had a heart attack right then and there and was off work in the hospital for over a month.

When he was back on the job for a few weeks, he came up one morning to get the night report and ordered me to take my car from behind the guardhouse and put it across the road in the parking lot.

I told him each of the watchmen, while on duty at the hill gate, had been told to keep their car back of the guardhouse where they could get it in a hurry in the event of an emergency. We had been given this order from the Security Chief. He had the electricians install a plug for us to use in the winter so that our car would always be ready to roll no matter how cold it was.

I told the Fire Warden all this, but he said he was the boss and if he was not obeyed, he would have me fired from the job.

He went away pretty mad, but I left my car where it was.

George was a very proud Englishman, right from the old country, the kind that looked down on Canadians as belonging to England body and soul, feeling that the English were very much superior, and that we should all be very thankful to have them come here to live.

A few minutes after he had gone, my oldest son, Lorne, came in and ask me if I thought he could get a job on the security staff. I told him I would phone down to the Personnel office and arrange a meeting for him with Personnel.

I did this and made an appointment for 12:50 that afternoon.

I did not know at the time that the Fire Warden was in there talking to the Personnel man. About 12:30, I saw the Fire Warden come running up the road from the mill without his hat on that real hot day and wondered what was his hurry. I soon found out when he got to the gatehouse and was able to talk so that I could understand what he was saying.

He said I had phoned the Personnel man to tell him about the argument we had in the morning and that I was trying to make trouble for him. He swore at me and called me a lot of dirty names and said he would go down to the Manager and have me fired right away.

I did not even answer him, and he finally run out of swear words and left. I then did phone the Manager and told him why I phoned the Personnel man about a job for my son. He wanted to know what the argument was about in the morning so I told him.

He said if the Security Chief wanted us to keep our cars close to the guard house for an emergency, we were to obey his orders.

I said I did not think I should have to take the abuse and cursing that had been given me by the Fire Warden, and I thought I had an apology coming to me. The Manager said I would get it. I then called the Security Chief and told him all about it, and he blew his stack and said he would take care of the matter.

He told me some days after that that he was called over to the Manager's office, along with the Fire Warden and the Personnel man. The Fire Warden accused me of complaining to the Personnel man about our argument to get him into trouble. The Personnel man told them what I had really called about, and the Fire Warden was in deep trouble.

The Security Chief said he never heard anything before like the way the Manager went after the Fire Warden, ending up with giving him another suspension for six months. He also told him that he could resign if he so wished.

The Fire Warden did not resign, but instead had another heart attack, right there in the Manager's office.

He spent most of his suspension time in the hospital.

One Xmas the company bought a boxcar load of turkeys and all of the employees of the company, including the bush workers, got a turkey for Xmas. My boss at that time, Bill Renton, had my turkey picked out for me and hid it over in his office at the gatehouse.

When I saw it, I could not believe my eyes it was so big. He said it was the biggest turkey in the boxcar and that it weighed 42 pounds. He told me he thought I should have it, as I had a big family living at home, and that I had done a good job for the company by putting a stop to the smoking around the wood piles and the stealing from the company had just about stopped too.

I think that he was giving me more than I deserved, but I did accept the big turkey. I had to buy an oversize roaster to cook it in, but we all enjoyed it very much, and I went to work on the night shift that Xmas night stuffed with turkey and all the good things that went with it.

I think that was about the best Xmas that we ever had, with all our children at home in our log house at Little Falls, and not owing anyone a cent. Our own cows and team of horses were warm in their barn with plenty of feed, and no one could ask for any more.

At ten o'clock that night, I had to warm up the old Ford and drive twelve miles to work, but it was a nice clear night with the moon very bright in the sky, and the night was very cold, about thirty below, and my old Ford had no heater, but I was dressed very warm and I enjoyed the hour's drive to work.

I was one lucky man. I had a good paying job that I could use to warm and feed my family, and they were all safe at home, so I was very happy.

One night in the spring when I was coming home from the four till twelve shift at the mill, I found that a small bridge had been washed out on the road that I usually used on my way home. I knew of another sideroad that I might use to get home without going five or six miles up the hwy and coming back down what was called the pole line road where my house was. I started up this sideroad that had not been used all winter. There was quite a bit of snow still on it, but my Model A went through it alright.

There was a steep hill leading up to the railway tracks which I would have to cross to get home. I got to the tracks where there was quite a pile of snow that had been shoveled off the crossing and my car stalled with the front wheels on the tracks.

Just then a freight train came around a bend in the track, about a quarter of a mile away, going very fast.

I did not want to lose my car so I managed to start to back off the tracks. When the engineer saw my car he slapped on the brakes and the sparks flew from the wheels of the freight train. The wheels of my car were spinning but the car was slowly still moving backward as I had no chains on the back wheels.

I just made it off the track as the engine went passed. It did catch my front bumper and threw my car away off the tracks out of danger.

After the train had gone by, I got the car into gear and went back out to the highway and up it about five miles then down the pole line road home. When I got home, I shut off the motor and just sat there and went all to pieces for a few minutes over my narrow escape. It had never bothered me at all till then.

I heard afterwards that the freight had never gotten stopped until it had crossed the highway, about a mile and a half from where it had hit my front bumper. Two of the crew had walked back up the track to see what had happened to me and my car, and when they saw where the car had went down the bank in the snow and had got back up onto the road and been driven away down the road, they thought I must be alright, so went back to their train.

That was a very dangerous crossing, and there was talk for a while of closing the road, but as usual nothing was ever done about it.

Mr. George Elchuck lived on the place just east of my land. He went in for growing potatoes and grain. He also had a flock of sheep in partnership with his father who lived across the road from me to the north. George had one son of about twelve and an adopted daughter of about eight or nine. His boy was going to school in Fort William at the time. Whenever I needed wood hauled from my bush after I sold my team, my son Tim used to get George's tractor and long wagon to haul it up to my house, but George would never take any pay for the use of his outfit.

Well one day in the fall, when he was digging his potatoes, and had a crew of about seven women picking potatoes, I had been into town to cash my cheque and get some groceries, and was coming home past where they were digging potatoes. I was on my holidays at that time and was working on my new frame house.

There was about seventy-five bags or more of potatoes sitting in the field, and I knew there was something wrong, so I stopped in to see if there was anything that I could do to help.

George had strained his back the night before when he was taking in the last load of potatoes and could not even get out of bed. His father was running the tractor and the potatoe digger but he was too old to lift the bags onto the wagon bed.

I told him to forget about the potatoes and just think about getting well, that I would look after getting the potatoes in the big root house.

After I went home and had my dinner, I brought my son Tim up to drive the tractor and I would build the load of sacks of potatoes on the wagon, and we got busy. I told George's father to go and take a rest while we took in the potatoes as there was no way for him to help and I said that he needed a rest after riding that tractor for so long.

Tim and I got busy, he drove the tractor and I built the load so none would fall off as I heaved the bags on to the wagon bed. We took about twenty-five bags or so in a load and it was not long before we had caught up to the pickers. We worked all that afternoon and two more days and part of a third day until we had all the potatoes in the root house.

When we were finished, George wanted to pay us but I said we were not taking any pay as we had used his tractor so much for hauling up wood that it was about time we had done something for him, and if he was satisfied, we were. Well we argued a lot about it but I am pretty stubborn and I told him that I was just as stubborn as him. He would never take pay for the use of his tractor or for the gas we used, so why should we take pay for a bit of work to help a neighbour out when he was in trouble. I told him he must have a pretty low opinion of me as a neighbour when he wanted to pay me for returning a favor he had done me when I needed help.

That fixed him from arguing any more as he had no more to say about paying us for what bit of work we had done.

He was a good neighbour to have and I liked him and his family very much.

When I built my new house near his place, he offered to come over in his spare time and help me with the heavy work, but I told him there really was no heavy work to do after I had the basement dug, not the way that I went about it. I told him that I had got different ideas about handling the jobs that usually took two men to do, just from having to figure things out for myself, and find easier ways to do them.

Him and his family, along with his mother and father, criticized the way I did things at first and could not understand just what I was trying to do, but as my house went up their criticizing stopped and they would look over what I had done so far and said it might work.

George built a house shortly after mine was finished and he said that he wished he had paid more attention to how I had done things and not so much to what his father and mother had told him about how to do it.

In the late 1940s we had a swing relief man named Howard Orr in Security at Great Lakes. I do not believe that I ever worked with a more bigger trouble maker or meaner man. He had been working in the grinder room, but he caused so much trouble there that he was disrupting the whole shift, so they gave him a job on the Security force, as he was a veteran of the second war.

He was an awful boozer and came on the job many a shift at night, drunk.

There were a few of the guards that would take a drink from him when he brought in a bottle, and would cover up for him. I never bothered with him until one night, he did not come in to relieve me when I was on the four to twelve shift. I phoned Bill Renton at twelve and ask him if I should work the full shift. He said he would be right down.

Before he arrived, Orr came in drunk as a loon, with a bottle of whiskey in his pocket. He asked me to have a drink, which I refused. I told him that I had to drive home twelve miles on the patrolled highway and could not take a chance of being stopped by the patrols on the highway.

He said I was just being yellow and had no guts.

Just then the Bill Renton came into our gatehouse. He told Orr that he was in no shape to carry the clock and to go on home. Orr put up quite an argument and said he could handle the job, but the Chief insisted he would drive him home as he did not think Orr should drive a car in the shape he was in.

The Chief took him home and I worked the shift until eight in the morning. I got paid overtime for the extra sixteen miles that I walked that night, as we were making one trip every hour in those days, and the trip was about two miles long. That was when Orr started to put the pressure of his meanness on me, and it lasted until he was finally fired about three years later.

Every Security Chief was a retired RCMP officer, except one, and they were all more or less afraid of Orr, as he was a big man and quite vicious when drunk. With me, he was more sneaky than vicious, always doing something dirty that would cause me trouble when I took over guard duties from him, or in some way causing damage to my property in the gatehouse.

Because I couldn't trust Orr to stay away from my things, I had made a good sized box to keep my wet weather things in, along with some books and writing materials. One night when he was on, Orr turned my box upside down and shook it good so that everything inside was all in a mess.

I complained to Bill Renton, and he ask me if I saw Orr do it, and of course, I did not see him do it as I was not on duty and Orr was and he had one of the three keys that would open the lock on our gatehouse door. Bill Renton had one key, the yard Superintendent had one, and one was riveted onto the clock.

The yard Super was never in the yard at night, so that left Bill Renton and Orr with the other two keys that would open the lock on the gatehouse door.

I ask Bill Renton if he had messed up my box.

He said of course not.

I said that left only Orr that could have done it.

Next shift, I got four long lag screws and fastened my box to the floor right down into the floor beams.

The next time Orr was relieving up there he got a bar from the section tool shed and pried my box loose from the floor and shook it up again. I knew there was no use of going to Bill Renton about it, so I locked up the gatehouse and hurried down to the main gatehouse. No one knew where Orr was, or they would not tell. I went over to the time clock and saw his time card had not been punched out yet. As I came away from the time clock, I noticed that the door to the rest room was closed.

I had never seen that door closed, so I went over and opened it, and there was Orr on the far side of a long table, laying on a long bench behind the table.

I would not have known he was there if he had not raised his head to look over the table.

Right then I knew he was a coward and that I could take him, big and all as he was.

I went in and shut the door and told him to come out from behind that table, and that I was going to beat the hell out of him.

He would not come out and I could not get at him. He could escape me if I ran around either end, and if I got on top of the table and tried to go across at him, he would lift the table and upset me and the table.

I had already seen his hands gripping the edge of the table and the hope in his eyes that I would try that way of getting at him.

I thought if I called him enough names and swore at him he might get mad enough to come out and fight like a man, but no such luck. I cussed him with every cuss word I knew, called him all sorts of a coward.

He said he never touched my box, then I called him all kinds of a liar, but still he just wedged himself tight in the corner and would not come out.

There was quite a crowd around the door listening to all that I was saying, and I think that a lot of them lost all fear of Orr from then on.

Finally it was time for me to officially take over the shift, so I would have to leave without getting my hands on Orr. I did tell him that if he interfered once more with me or any of my things, that I was going to come after him on the job or off it, and beat him up so badly that he would need hospital care, either with my hands or with a club, or whatever I could get a hold of. If I lost my job over doing so, well, it would be worth it.

That winter, a few weeks before Xmas, he stopped all his mean tricks towards me and started to get real friendly. I was very suspicious and watched for traps pretty closely when he was on the shift before me, but could find nothing that looked like his work.

Xmas eve I was on the twelve till eight in the morning. When I came in the main gate and went over to punch my time card, I met Orr over at the rest room. He was very drunk, and called me in. He offered me a bottle of beer, which I refused. He kept on pestering me and said he wanted to be friends with me and would I accept the bottle of beer as a show of his friendship over the holidays.

I said I would and took the bottle of beer and put it in my jacket pocket.

On the way up the hill in my car I threw the bottle of beer out the window into the ditch along the road. I had figured out Orr's little game, I was sure.

When I got back from my first round of the shift that night, the Fire Warden and Orr were in our gatehouse waiting for me. As soon as I stepped in the room and closed the door the Fire Warden, George Watt, who was friendly with Orr and who wanted to get even with me for years because I had caught him smoking in a no smoking area, ask me where the bottle of beer was that I brought to work.

I said he was mistaken, I had brought no bottle of beer to work with me.

He said that Orr had seen me with a bottle of beer in my coat pocket as I left for my first round, and had called him.

I ask him if he ask Orr where I had gotten the bottle.

He said he did not need to do that, it did not matter where I got it, just that I was taking it onto company property to consume while employed there.

I said if the bottle of beer had not been taken on company property, how would he feel about that.

He said he could only act if it had been taken on company property.

I said alright, I would show him where it was and had been ever since I received it.

I took our big electric lantern that we had in the gatehouse and went down to where I had thrown the beer in the ditch. We got the bottle of beer and went back to the gate house as it was a very cold night. When we got inside where it was warm the beer started to leak out of the bottle, so we set it in the wash basin.

I told the Fire Warden where and when I had received beer, and from whom. I told him that I had expected Orr to try something like this, but nothing quite so stupid as this had been. I had been away ahead of him all the time and I hoped that the Fire Warden had caught on to the frame up by now.

If he needed more convincing, I said, check this bottle with the empties in Orr's car, or ask Old Bert Wiltshire what brand of beer him and Orr had been drinking all night.

The Fire Warden told me he had checked and found what I said was true.

I wrote the whole thing up in my shift report and I heard later the next day, that Orr had been warned to stop trying to get me fired or he would be fired.

Orr came on so drunk one night a few weeks later on the midnight shift to relieve me that I would not let him take over as there were some pretty dangerous places to go around in the dark, and he could walk into one of the deep holes we had on company construction sites at the time and be hurt and no one would find him for some time as the construction crew did not work at night yet.

I called up to Bill Renton, and he came down and ask me if I could do a double shift. That would be 32 miles I would have to walk, but I thought I could make it alright, so I stayed.

The boss drove Orr home to his wife and kids, and I thought that would be the end of it.

Orr had punched his card in, so when I punched out in the morning I punched his card.

Not long after, when he was on the four to twelve and I was relieving him, I came around to where we had a little grating across a 6 or 7 ft. ditch so we could get on the other side to continue our rounds. Later on, this ditch would have a big drainage pipe in it and be covered over with soil. When I came to this grating, I put my light on it and saw that it had been moved a

bit. I turned it up on edge and it just about fell apart in my hands, The two pieces of 2 x 6 that the boards were nailed to were sawn very near through. If I had stepped on them, I would have went to the bottom of that ditch into three feet of water and mud.

I could not think of who would do such a dangerous and stupid thing, but I was not long in finding out.

Orr came in one night very drunk and proud of himself. He started bragging about how he got even with me for getting him into trouble with the boss by coming into work drunk. He ask me how I liked it down in the bottom of the wet ditch. He wanted to know how I got out, and how much it cost me to get my uniform cleaned and pressed.

I knew the boss was in down at the other gate, so when Orr took the clock and went on his first round, I phoned the boss and he came up, and we waited for Orr to complete his round.

When he was twenty minutes late I went looking for him and found him in this big ditch that he had tried to trap me into falling in. He was so drunk that he had somehow missed the new bridge that had been put across the ditch, and walked right into the ditch. He babbled all the way back to the guardhouse about him fixing the bridge to catch me, and that I must have fixed the bridge to catch him.

When we got to the guardhouse Bill Renton questioned him more about how he had laid a trap for me to tumble into the ditch, then the boss told him he better get on the next bus and go home and to not bother to come into work for a month without pay.

The boss put Orr on the next bus.

The boss then came in and ask me if I could work the extra shift, and I said I would, but this time I was going to have the time I put in on my timecard. He said did I not get paid for the

last time I worked two shifts and walked 32 miles? I said no, that I had put it on Orr's card, as he had small children and needed the money. He told me I was a damned fool for doing that as it only gave him more money for booze.

I felt sorry that Orr's wife and children had not benefitted from the money, but at least I had tried.

Bill Renton quit the job soon after that and we got a retired police inspector from Port Arthur police, Jack Brown, as our next Chief. Then my troubles really started with Orr.

Jack Brown, the new Chief, liked to be buttered up and Orr sure knew how to do a good job on him. Brown and Orr got along fine on the night shifts. Orr would go over to the company cafeteria and cook up a hot meal for them both and would keep the Chief supplied with cigarettes that he stole from the cafeteria.

I used to go down to the washroom in the basement under the machine room and have a shower before I went home. This was when I was building my first new frame house at Little Falls on Corbett Creek. I kept a change of clothes in my locker there and a towel and soap.

Orr found which was my locker and blew aniline dye in through the air vent system and ruined all my clothes.

I laid for him in the washroom one night and there was only one other man in there besides myself, the president of the paper maker's union.

When Orr came in he walked right past me and I thought I had him cornered, but he got behind one of the big wash bowls.

I hung the clock I carried on my rounds on one of the door handles of a locker and tried to climb over the big wash bowl to get at him, but he moved too fast for me to catch him and he got away out of the room.

There was no point in reporting what Orr had done to my property to the Chief as Jack Brown would always back Orr over me.

A few days after that incident the union made the company let Jack Brown go as he was over seventy years old and the union threatened to go on strike if he was not let go at once.

Then Larry Carswell, a retired RCMP officer was hired, and right away I liked him from the first day that he was on the job. He got us all new uniforms similar to those used by the Provincial police which were much more comfortable than the ones we had. Also they paid for the dry cleaning of our uniforms. We had arm patches on the arm of our coats and shirts, and a badge on our winter and summer hats.

Our first uniforms were a dark blue of rather poor material, but our second uniforms were of the very best material, but a lighter blue.

Our new Chief, Larry Carswell, would stand for no one coming in drunk or drinking on the job or any horseplay.

I had a flower garden around the gate house that I made myself and looked after and a small lawn which I kept mowed with a long handled pair of grass shears. It really looked lovely and quite a few people came in and ask for some of the numerous midget daisies I had growing there, even in the gravel that was banked around the bottom of the gate house. I had little paper sacks that I used to fill with this fine gravel which was full of daisy seeds and in about two years you could see them growing in most of the flower beds in Fort William.

I had some lovely tall flowers growing in front of the window facing south towards the mill that were just starting to bloom.

Suddenly one day the flowers started to die and droop over. They were healthy plants and I took real good care of them. We got our drinking water from across the road at a grain elevator and when I was over there one evening, I was telling the watchman about these flowers dying on me.

He said it is was no wonder they died with Orr urinating on them every time that he was up there.

I told Carswell, the new Chief, about it and he came up on a hot day and you sure could smell the stink.

He told me to keep a close watch and check everything the day before Orr came up there and the day after he had been up there and perhaps we could catch him up in something.

It was not long after that that Orr had his car parked inside the gate on the south side of the gatehouse where I had several rose bushes that were in bloom. When he went to back out of there he came ahead first and run over my rose bushes twice before he backed out and went off the job before I took over. He had new tires on one of the front wheels of his car and it left clear impressions in the soft flower bed.

I got a sheet of plywood from the mill and covered the tracks over and phoned Carswell at home and told him what Orr had done.

Carswell liked flowers very much and when he came in that evening before dark and saw what had been done to my rose bushes, he said, that finishes him for ever coming up on the hill again. When one of the hill guards was having his day off, the Chief would send the paper mill

guard on that shift up on the hill beat and make Orr take the mill shift, that way he never got up on the hill again to cause trouble.

One night, as I finished my first trip on the midnight shift, when I came to the gatehouse, a Provincial Police officer was waiting for me in a cruiser. He ask me what Orr was doing with a key and opening the middle gate and going in with his car. I told the officer that he was not supposed to have a key to that gate and was not supposed to be going in that gate at all without a permit.

The policeman then said lets get him when he comes out.

I said he went over in the parking lot behind the cars parked there with his lights out and his motor running, and if I went up inside the fence then we would have him.

When Orr had turned his car around and got out and went and got a box that he had hid beside the railway track and put it in his car, and started out, the police officer got a little bit in a hurry and came out of hiding too soon, and Orr saw him coming. He threw the box out into some bushes along the tracks and came out to where the police car was stopped across the highway.

Orr did not see me until I came out carrying the box that Orr had threw into the bushes.

He said that he did not throw it in there and that we were trying to frame him. There was a emery grinder in the box and quite a few tools taken from the new construction job.

Orr was a bit drunk and had not relieved the man on duty down in the mill when he should have, so he quit that night and avoided being fired the next day.

He never came back to the mill.

I heard he was given a job working for the city, going around and emptying the parking meters, but he did not last long on that job after the parking meters started showing losses after he had been on the job awhile.

I do not know what he did work at next, but one day a few weeks after he had lost his job with the city, I saw in the paper that he had been found dead in the park near McKellar hospital from exposure, having been under the influence of liquor.

It was too bad that a young man like him should die like that. He was only thirty-four years old. He was a veteran from the second world war, and somewhere along the line, he got off the track, and was never able to get on it again.

I was told that he had a very lovely wife and one son of around eighteen years old. I heard that he beat up his wife one night when he was drunk and when his son came home from a hockey game he beat up his father and took his mother away from that house for good.

November 5, 1977

Dear Friend:

I just got your welcome letter this morning and am eager to answer it as you ask some good questions.

First off, I am happy to tell you that there have been some changes in our family since I wrote last, and I might say they have been for the better. Pat is home from the hospital and she has brought her beautiful little daughter with her that was born on November 3, 1977. She is a beautiful baby and we all love her very much. Pat just cannot seem to take her eyes off her and is with her most all the time, even when she is in her little bed asleep. The phone is continuously ringing with well wishers on the other end of the line, and Pat is getting many cards and letters from her friends.

As for my wife, she is going around in a happy cloud, it seems to me.

I enjoy looking at her myself, even if I do not get many chances to see her.

This little girl is our twenty-second grandchild, so we are doing alright as a family. At least the little girl got here before I left on my Long Endless Trip, so I am very happy about that. I do not know just how long I have left, but I am going to make the most of the days I have left, now that she has arrived safely.

I am going to go up and see an eye specialist very soon now, as soon as I can get someone to take me to town. I want to get the best man in the business to check my eyes, and tell me the truth about what can be done about them, either with an operation or glasses. I have spent quite a

bit of money on glasses that was supposed to help, but did not. I think they were taking me for a ride, as they were only interested in gouging me for all they could get.

About Orr. Orr was always coming into work the worse of drink, and when he was in that condition he was very mean and bad tempered and always trying to pick a fight with someone. I do not know what he looks like now, as he has been dead for some time, but he was about six foot one or two, when he was standing up straight, about in his mid thirties when he died. He weighed, I would say about 170 more or less, yellow hair and blue eyes. He was a Vet from the second world war and believed that the world owed him a lot because of it.

Yes, you are right. My job as a Security Guard at Great Lakes Paper sure made me lose a lot of friends, but by doing my job as I was instructed, and according to the rules laid down by the company that was paying my wages, I also made quite a few friends that I did not know I had before I took this job.

It was mostly the ones that I caught stealing from the company that hated me, but I did not let that bother me as I knew how miserable they felt at being caught, as the other honest workers punished them severely by reminding them of it for quite along time that they were stupid for risking a well paid job for something the company would have most likely given to them if they had only come and ask for it.

Very few of them would ever admit that they had ever done anything wrong, and they would usually run to their union to get them out of the mess they were in. I got good backing from the company when the union got involved with all but two of the bosses I worked under. One of them was a Chief named Jack Brown, a retired Chief Inspector from the Port Arthur Police Department, and the other was George Watt, the Fire Warden at Great Lakes. But I had

the Insurance company back me, and I had the best record for spotting fires and fire hazards before they did any damage over all the other members of the security staff, at least that is what I was told in front of the whole staff when I was pensioned off in 1966 after nearly twenty years of service.

Did I ever fear for my life on the job in Security? Well yes. It got pretty dangerous for us guards sometimes. I made a lot of bad friends out of fellows that used to be friendly with me in the wood yard. They could not see that I was preserving their jobs for them by insisting that the no smoking rules be obeyed in fire hazard areas. They claimed I was just being a smart alec and trying to be a big man.

I caught one man smoking on the bridge by the woodyard one cold, windy night. I had caught him twice before and warned him the next time I would put him on report. Both times he said I would not do that because he was a friend of mine. This time I had to report him because the Superintendent of the wood yard saw him too and he was given a suspension from work for several weeks.

When that man came back to work he was given a job pulling wood on a conveyor and the first day he was back, when he saw me coming, he came running over with a picaroon in his hand and stopped in front of me and waved it in my face and told me what he was going to do to me some dark night. The Superintendent saw this and came out of his office, and although he had only one arm, he took the picaroon away from the man and told him to go home for another two weeks and cool off some more without any pay.

That winter, when they were taking wood off the big storage pile, they had an overhead conveyor over where I had to travel on my rounds. This same man was stationed on this conveyor right over where I had to pass under.

One night I saw him move direct to where I would have to pass under. I started under and as I was coming out the other side, a bit of snow fell off the walk overhead and I quickly drew back.

It was well I did so.

Five sections of a big link chain hit the peak of my cap and fell on the ground.

This fellow that I had reported for smoking and had lost nearly a month's wages over it jumped down off the overhead walk and ask me if I was hurt. I said no but I still was going to report his attempt to injure me. If that chain had hit me on the top of the head it might have seriously injured or killed me. Another fellow and I carried it into the wood room and weighed it, and it weighed a little over 72 pounds.

The union had him fired from the mill as being a dangerous man to employ.

There was another time too, when I reported another man for smoking on top of the woodpiles when they were piling wood. There was a key box about a foot away from the end of a pile they were working on. One night when I came to punch this key, I had just taken the key out of the box when something made me look up. The pile was about twenty feet high at this end and there was a big eight foot stick of wood coming right at me, big end first.

I jumped back, and the stick hit the key box and completely demolished it.

I run up along the pile in the dark and caught the fellow as he climbed down off the pile. I took his number and reported him.

The next morning the boss of the security staff wanted me to press charges against him, but I said if the company would just let him go I would forget about it.

As I told you back aways, I have been trying out exercises that I dreamed up myself that would strengthen my legs without bringing on an anginal attack. Well, both exercises that I thought up and have been using are starting to slowly pay off. The leg exercises are showing some signs of getting my legs to support me more without so much pain, and I have high hopes that if I can increase the number times per exercise that I can raise and lower my legs while laying on my side on the bed, that I may eventually walk again without the aid of cane.

Also, the swellings on each side of my neck have gone again, this time, I hope for good. They were real painful and came with each anginal attack. Because of those swellings my throat seemed to be closing and I had difficulty in getting my breath. Those things are all gone now when I suffer an attack, and I feel quite pleased with myself. The grinding noise in my neck has just about stopped now when I turn my head.

I am not building on it but I feel a ray of hope, if I can only get some strength back into my thighs and legs. The muscles in the lower part of my legs seem to be in good shape right now, and I do not seem to have any more swelling from water collecting in either leg since I started to exercising them. I feel a lot better now and have lost all that hopeless feeling that I have been fighting now for several years.

I hope I have answered your questions alright, and write back soon as I always enjoy answering your letters. Also, I am glad to hear that your wife and little Emily are doing well.

My eyes are getting rather dim now, so I had better close this letter while I can still see, so I will say good by for now wishing you and your family the best of good fortune and health.

Your friend,

Sam

Family Portrait: Pat

Our last child, a girl, Patricia Rose, was born here in McKellar hospital. Of course to us, she was the most beautiful baby born that year. She was born April 20, 1946. At that time, I was working for a construction company digging basement footings for a string of new houses that they were building in West Fort William, at \$55.00 per house.

Pat, as we called her right from the day she was born, grew like a weed. When she went to the school on Arthur street, now called Highway 17, she did real good in school and mixed well with the other children, except for the DeCort children. They were a real tough bunch and all the kids were scared of them.

Pat came home one day and said that the biggest DeCort boy had been knocking her around, and I ask her why she took that from him.

She said it was not nice to go and fight with boys, besides, he was a year or so older than her.

I told her the next time he bothered her to fight back and to give him a good beating and he would leave her alone. I told her she had lots of Irish blood in her, and the Irish always fought and usually won the fight, and I would be very proud of her if she gave that boy a good drilling.

Well, from what my two boys told me, she did give him a heck of a beating the next day, and when the teacher told her that girls did not fight like that, she told the teacher that Irish girls did.

Pat had no more trouble with that boy, and it gave the other girls courage to fight back at the DeCorts, and the teacher told me one time that the school was a better place for the rest of the kids from then on.

Pat graduated from that school and went to the Vocational School in Fort William as they had bus service by then. Her report cards were very good, and she wanted to take up business administration, but they told her that the classes were full and said there was only home economics left for her to study. We scraped up enough money to send her to a business college, where she graduated with good marks, but jobs were rather scarce at that time.

She took nurses aid at the McKellar hospital for a while, until she saw an opening at a trucking company that trucked new cars across Canada.

In the meantime, she had got married to George Wallace and went to BC to live. When her son Danny was born she came back to live with us in Fort William, as she could not live the life that her husband wanted to live, so they separated. Shortly after that, in 1967, I sold my home in Thunder Bay and moved back up to Rainy River to live out my last years there with my

wife, and Pat came up there to live with us. Her husband had come back east to live with his family for awhile, and then went north to the mining country and has been working in the mines ever since.

Pat would not accept any money from George for the keep of their son. She said it was her son and she would raise him by her own efforts.

In Rainy River, she got the kind of job that she had always wanted, with the town council as town clerk. In about two years she had worked up to secretary treasurer of the town council. About two years later, there was a job open at Red Rock, near MacKenzie Island, for a secretary treasure at a much larger salary, so she applied for that and got it.

Danny, her son, had already started to school over in Bergland, where our Sheila, the girl who later was drowned near our place in the Little Grasssy river, was going to school, when Pat was working in Rainy River. When Pat took the job at Red Rock, she took her son with her and he went to school there. She worked there for several years, then she moved down here and bought this house that we are now living in, for \$25,000.00 and took the job in Geralton, where she received \$2,000.00 dollars more a year than she had been getting at Red Rock.

When she went to Geralton to work, she rented a house there and took her son along with her, and he attended school there. She came home every weekend and found that vandals were doing damage to her property, so that was when she ask us to come down and look after her home and it would cost us nothing.

Of course I would not do that, as I knew that she could not afford to keep us, so I told her we would only sell our place and come down here if we could take over the upkeep of the house and all its expenses except the taxes.

The reason I did not want to pay the taxes was because if I paid the taxes for ten years without a break and then died, my heirs would own her home, and I would not take that chance, so she would have to pay the taxes every year, and I would pay for the upkeep of the house, fuel, power, phone and all expenses, which I have done.

It has come to about \$100.00 per month average, now this coming fall and winter it will be more as the price of fuel and repairs have gone up quite a bit, but I still am able to afford it from my two pensions and I can still buy the things I want.

Her son Dan, his father, and Pat are real good friends, and George comes down here every time they are home for the weekend and takes them out for supper and to shows. George's mother and father are both dead now, and as he is the kind of fellow that depends on someone to look after him and see that his meals and his clothes are taken care of, he would like to get back living with his wife again, but for some reason Pat says she will not live with him again. I do not know just what is wrong between them, but I have picked up bits and pieces from conversations between Pat and her mother, and I think I am getting an idea of what the trouble is all about.

I think George let her down someway when Pat was carrying the boy, but just what it was I do not know. It must have been pretty bad.

George is a good steady worker and he can get a job in a mine at any time when he wants a change. He makes real good money and is a big good looking fellow, although he is now letting himself go to fat. He is very agreeable to talk to, but Pat says that is only a front that he puts on before other people.

Well, she has shown that she does not need him to provide a home for her and her son, and that she can provide everything that they need with her own two hands, and that she is much better off without him living with them.

In a way it is rather pitiful to see the way he acts at any time he is over to see her. He is always very agreeable to anything that she suggests, and he often reminds me of a little dog wagging his tail trying to be friendly with someone.

Pat is a very kind hearted woman, very honest with people and with herself. She is very ambitious to get ahead and to provide for her son and for her future years.

In one way I think she is a bit too generous with her friends and she is very easily imposed upon. She never likes to say no to her friends when they used to want to come down with her from Geraldton when she came home for the weekend.

Since we have been living here, however, she has had no trouble in saying no when they ask to come down with her to stay over the weekend, she just tells them there is no room for them.

When she was younger, Pat used to always go with me when I went fishing if it was not a school day. She got to be just as good a fisherman as I was. Pat goes out every year in partridge season and gets her quota of them. She likes hunting or fishing but does not get too much of it now that she is working for a living and supporting her young son.

vistaVision Memories

Hits and Near Misses in Security

In the early 1950s, I was building my first new frame home on Corbett Creek in my spare time, and it was a slow, long job, and I got no help from anyone. Then we had my father-in-law living with us for some time, until he had a heart attack and we took him to the hospital, where he died after being in there two days.

After I had built my first frame house and tore down the log house I had built when we first came to Corbett Creek and was getting ready to put the siding on the new house, I decided that I would like a skirting of bricks around the bottom of the house. I figured out how many feet it was all around the house, and about three feet high, and went down to the brickyard to see how much the bricks would cost. The same man was still foreman there from when I was there before buying bricks for a chimney I wanted to build, and he worked out the number of bricks that I would need for my house, 586, so he said I had better take 600 to be sure I had enough.

I told him that I wanted rough tapestry bricks that had been fired until they were dark, and he said they had several thousands piled out in the yard and I could go out and pick out what I wanted.

By that time I had a Mercury half ton truck with good tires and overload springs so I thought I could take them all in one load.

I got them all loaded and went around to the office to pay him. I ask what the bricks were selling for per thousand, and he said sixty dollars. I started to figure out how much I owed him and he spoke up and said, "give me twenty-five dollars and we will call it square, that's all they are really worth."

I paid him and thanked him and hauled them home.

When I went to work that day on the afternoon shift, I ask Percy White who done odd jobs of brick laying in his off duty time as wood scaler, how much he would charge for laying these bricks for me. He ask me 55 cents a brick, I would supply everything, including mixing and carrying the mortar to him, also the bricks, and moving and putting up the scaffold and feeding him twice a day.

I told him he would get nothing like that out of me while I was alive. I said I would buy a four foot level and do it myself.

He said I would make a hell of a mess out of it, if I had never done it before.

Well I did buy a four foot level for \$19.95, and that was all the extra I had to spend, and I did the whole thing myself. Percy White saw the wall when he was out there, but could not believe that I had did it all alone.

When I had my first frame house finished, my wife suggest that we give it to Tim, as he was getting married and needed a home, and I could build another frame house on the other side of our land, and that we give Dan the piece inbetween to build a house on for him and his family.

Well I did that and I started in the next spring before the snow was all gone to clear a place for another new house, and by fall I had it all finished. I put all my spare time, and two weeks of holidays into that and we moved into it early in December.

My son Ben came up one evening when I was back filling around the basement wall and he helped me for about an hour and a half. Then when I was putting up my chimney from the basement and had it up through the roof, Tim came up and carried the chimney blocks and tile up onto the roof for me. That helped me a lot as it was getting dark and the blocks were concrete and very heavy.

I had a barrel in my workshop that I put the nails I recovered from any old wood I was re-using in after I had straightened them. The squirrels started to use this barrel for a toilet. I got a wooden box full of sand and set it near the barrel of nails and they used the box of sand and never used the barrel again. I think they are really smart, and if you give them a chance, they will cooperate.

When I carried peanuts in my deer jacket pocket, one of the oldest squirrels was watching where I got the peanut from, and shortly after he climbed up the back of the jacket and went directly to the pocket where the peanuts were and stayed in there very quiet until he had eaten all the peanuts, then he came out and down the back of my stool around and back up on to the work bench. He was smart enough to figure out that short cut all by himself, without the other four squirrels knowing a thing about it.

My son told me that after we had sold and left that place when I retired in 1966 to go back up to live in the Rainy River District for the second time, after the other family that bought it had moved into the house, that the squirrels and chickadees all came down to live at his place, and he fed them all that winter, and that they had made their home there ever since.

Since my son Tim has owned that place at Little Falls, things have changed quite a lot. His brother Dan has a lot on the other side of the falls that I gave him to build on. They got their heads together on how to improve the place below the Falls and have a swimming pool, but I do not think that they are as willing to work as hard as I did to make a success out of it. The last time I saw it was several months ago, and it was not very successful.

I guess when children see their father work hard for little things, they most likely do not want to do it that way.

Somehow I have got off the track again about working at Great Lakes Paper in Security, so I will get back on it.

I had been on the security staff for about five years when, one hot day in 1952, I was on the four till twelve shift and making my first round, and I was crossing over the top of the sulphur bins where they had unloaded a car of powdered sulphur. There was quite a lot of sulphur dust laying around on top of the bins and I had just punched the key and was inspecting the melting pots inside the doors for small fires. I had just closed the doors and turned away to go off the top of the bins, when a gust of wind came and whipped the sulphur dust up into my face and some got into my right eye.

It was real painful for awhile, but I gradually got it all out.

At least I thought I had.

After that, as long as I was outside in the fresh air my eye would run a constant stream of water. I had to carry soft tissues with me at all times to soak up the water out of my eye so that I could see. As long as I was inside where the air was dry my eye did not run water.

It got so bad that I went to see an eye doctor. He checked my eye and said the duct in the corner of my eye was stopped up with something.

I had told him about the sulphur dust, and he said whatever was causing the trouble, he would have to operate and remove it. He did so and cut a little piece of flesh from the corner of my eye with a very small piece of something sticking in it. He told me that was all he could do now, and if it started to run water again to come back anytime, I would not need an appointment.

I had to go back twice, each time he cut out a piece of flesh, the last time he took out a real big piece.

I never had any trouble since.

When the men are unloading sulphur, they were all equipped with masks and goggles to keep them from breathing in the dust, and to protect their eyes. Many times I ask the Fire Warden for goggles for us guards for that area, but he refused to get them for us, until one day when we were at a fire drill meeting in the Fire Warden's office, I again brought up the matter of safety goggles for each security guard while on the sulphur bins.

The Fire Marshal took me to another room where his office was and brought out a big pair of goggles such as the workmen used around dry sulphur and handed it to me. He said we could keep them in our guardhouse and every guard could wear it when he made his rounds.

Those goggles were so big that it would not go into the pocket of my parka, and those parkas the company supplied had big pockets.

I told the Fire Marshal as far as I was concerned he could keep it and I would buy a sensible pair of goggles and pay for them myself. I did this and got a good pair that I could carry in my pocket quite easy. I put in an application to the Safety Engineer for to have him get safety goggles for every man on the security force, but he wrote back and said it would cost to much money. When I made the application to him, I had all the security staff on the hill sign it and when I got his answer back I kept that answer in my book of records at home. In one way I was glad, due to something that happened a couple of years or so after I tried to put in the application.

One winter night in 1953 I was on the midnight shift and we had a blizzard that started in the late afternoon and was getting much stronger all the time. I left for work early that night at nine instead of ten, which was the usual time that I left for work on that shift. I had chains on the



hind wheels and I plowed right along until I got to the paved highway, some two miles away. I drove to work the other ten miles with my headlights turned off as the snow was coming down so thick that I could not see the road with them on.

It took me near two hours to bust my way through the drifts but I finally arrived at the mill.

When I got to the gate house on the hill my mate that was on duty was not there. I phoned down to the main gate and ask the gateman there to go over to the time clock to see if old Jimmy Price, the man that I was relieving, had punched his card out. When the answer came back that he had not punched out, I put on my parka, took my flashlight, and started out backwards over the route.

I found old Jimmie about half a mile or so from the gatehouse exhausted and stuck in a big snowdrift half asleep. I got him up and started him walking back to the gatehouse. I phoned the Provincial Police and ask them if they would come out and take care of him as he was about seventy years old and was in no shape to walk over a mile to get home.

They finally arrived and took him home.

I wonder if he would have been alive if I had left home at my regular time of ten o'clock. I would have arrived at the mill an hour later than I did and I have often wondered if Jimmy would have been alive then when I found him.

That incident went a long way for the company to have the pension law in the next contract with the union, for everyone to be pensioned off when they reached the age of sixty-five.

There were a lot of men and women pensioned off the next year when the contract was signed, some of them were over 65, and I was fifty-three that year.

About that time, during winter, I found that someone was trapping the beaver that were making a home on my place at Corbett Creek. I found and lifted all his traps, and there were quite a lot of them. I left a note at most of the places where the traps had been set, telling him what I had done and why, and if he wanted his traps back, he would have to come to see me about them.

I thought that I knew who it was that was doing the trapping, but I was not sure.

One evening he came to see me and get his traps back, and it was the man that I had thought it was. He talked for quite a while and I ask him if he had a license to trap beaver and if he had a permit to trap them on my property. He said no he did not have them, so I ask him why he was trapping them, for he knew it was against the law to trap them without these permits.

He gave me a great story about having a large family to support and no job to support them with.

I ask him if he ever ask for a job unloading wood at the Great Lakes paper mill.

He said he would not work there, as the work was too hard and dangerous, and that he could make enough to feed his family just trapping.

I told him that I could get him a year around job at the paper mill, and that if he stuck to it, that in a year or so he could apply for the first job in the mill or outside that came up on the board, and most likely he would get it if he could do the work.

He said he would never work in the paper mill.

I told him that I would put in a word for him the next day, and he had better show up in the afternoon and apply for a job and take it. If he did not, I would report him for trapping beaver on my property without a permit, and without a license, and he would most likely go to jail and get a heavy fine. The jail term would be not less than a year and the fine would be at least five hundred dollars. On the other hand, if he took the job offered him and stayed with it, I would give him back his traps and say nothing about him trapping beaver without the authority to do so and would not press charges of trespassing on my property.

Next day I went into work early and had a talk with the Personnel manager and told him the whole story, and he said he would hire the fellow if he applied for a job and put him to work in the wood yard.

I ask him to let me know if the man showed up and he said he would.

The man applied for a job about two in the afternoon and came to work the next day.

About a week later he came up to my place and told me to keep the traps, as he was through with trapping. He said he was very glad to have a steady job, and so was his wife and family. He thanked me for putting in a good word for him and said he would stay on the job as long as the company wanted him. That was in 1954, about twelve years before I was pensioned off, and he was still there when I left, and he had a good job with the company driving a half ton truck to and from the bush camps.

I smashed those traps so they could never be used again and sold them to the junk man.

There was a young fellow, Nash, that came to work as a relief security guard in 1954, when the holidays were on. He was up on the hill with me one night on the midnight shift. That was when they had two guards on duty while construction for mill expansion was going on. One guard would stay at the gate while the other made a trip around the route. When he got back to the gatehouse he would guard the gate while the other guard made a round.

This night when Nash made his first round, he did not get back on time. I waited twenty minutes but when he had not showed up, I phoned the wood room office and ask if he was there. The foreman said he had not seem him so far this shift. I told him that Nash was a spare man and was twenty minutes overdue, and as it was a rough windy night, perhaps he had an accident. I said they had unloaded a car of sulphur that day into the bins, and perhaps they had left a hole open and he had fell into it.

The foreman said he would go over and check it out right away and call me back.

They found Nash down in the sulphur bin with his eyes full of sulphur and his flashlight away down at the bottom of the sulphur pile. There was no way out except by the chain conveyor that took the sulphur out to the elevator that took it up to the melting pots, or out the manholes in the top where the sulphur came into the bins.

They had to get a rope and someone had to go down into the bin and tie it around Nash, then they pulled him up and took him to the hospital to have his eyes washed and cleaned of the sulphur.

I went to see Nash when he was in the hospital, and although he got only a few bruises from falling in, he got so much sulphur dust into his eye that I found out from the doctor who was looking after Nash in the hospital, that he was liable to be blind for the rest of his life.

That night I took in this paper I had when I had ask for small goggles for all the security people on the hill and the answer we had received from the Safety Engineer. I ask the other guards who was going to pay for what happened to Nash, for he was still a very young man with all his life before him, and to lose his eyesight and be blind for the rest of his life was terrible.

I was going to do all that I could to get him a good pension so they would pay him for his loss.

I talked it over with the boys on the hill and told them my plan and they were all for it and said they would back me up if there was any trouble about it.

I made an appointment to see Mr. Jeffery, who was Manager of the mill at that time, after I came on duty on the day shift. I went down to his office and showed him the papers. I could see his face getting redder all the time, and I thought I was in for a blast of his temper that I had heard so much about, but had never seen.

After he had read the papers, he said I should have brought them to him as soon as I had received them, and then this boy would not have been in danger of losing his eyesight.

I told him I realized that now, but at the time I had thought when the Safety Engineer had thought it over that he would change his mind and get the goggles for all the guards. I said that I

did not want to cause trouble for anyone, but now that a man's eyesight was endangered, I thought that something should be done to take care of the man for the rest of his life, such as a pension of some kind that would provide a means for him to survive.

The Workman's Compensation Board eventually gave him a pension of \$100.00 per month, and the Great Lakes Paper mill gave him double that amount, and that was a lot of money at that time.

He had lost the use of both eyes and I think it was the Kinsmen Club that gave him a seeing eye dog and had Nash go to the Institute for the Blind, to learn how to use the dog and how to live with his blindness.

The Safety Engineer lost his job and left the company without any recommendation. As far as I know, no one even said good-bye to him when he left.

Nash did not live very long after that, as he took sick in Toronto and died in a hospital there. He had a brother that worked at the same job as he did, and one summer and when he was through with the job, he went out east and got another job, and shortly after he took sick and died.

It seems to me those two boys were followed by very bad luck.

I think the job of security guard was the most frustrating and least appreciated job of protecting the company and employee's property that anyone could think of. If you did your job and reported all smokers in a no smoking zone, the employees and their unions were down on

you right away, saying they had not been smoking in that area, and that the one reporting them was a liar. If the company gave the other employees a raise in wages, the security staff did not get a raise at the same time because they did not belong to a union. In fact, any man that was in a union when he applied for a job on the security force had to resign from the union before he could accept a job.

When Bill Renton was Security Chief he would back up the security staff against the unions one hundred per cent. After he left the job and the Fire Warden took over temporary, he would not ever back us up in an argument with the unions. Then when the Inspector from the Port Arthur Police Department, Jack Brown, took over the job, he was worse than the Fire Warden ever was. Then we got Larry Carswell, a retired RCMP officer, for our Chief of Security. He had only been there a few days when he came up one noon hour to talk to me when I was on the day shift on the hill gatehouse.

He talked for some time, asking a lot of questions about different things, then he took a folder out of his pocket. He said it was a copy of my reports ever since I had been on the Security Force, and he said that it was away ahead of all the rest of the security guards put together for the number of times that I had spotted hot motors, fires that had started from one thing or another, for the number of employees that I had reported for smoking in restricted areas, for the number of thefts from the company reported and stopped, and best of all, I had reported the Manager of the mill and the Fire Warden for smoking in a restricted area.

He said that I did not get very much backing against the unions from my Chief at the time that I put in some of the reports. He then told me that as long as he was on the job as Chief, every guard would get a one hundred per cent backing from him and the company against the

unions and employees when a complaint was laid against them for breaking any rules of the company. He said all rules were to be strictly enforced from now on, and any guard that shirked his job would be let go. He said those were the orders he had received from the Manager of the mill, and he was responsible for seeing the guards carried them out. He said now that the new expansion program was getting under way and hundreds of new men would be on the job, we guards would have to enforce all rules right from the start and really be tough about it.

Well, that was in 1962 and the start of close to four years of very tough work for me in a way.

About the time mill expansion really got going, the gas station for all the construction equipment was just a few yards from our gatehouse and the guard on duty at the gate kept control of the keys for the gas pump, and whoever got the keys had to sign a book for them when he took them out and brought them back, also the number of gallons of gas he took out of the pump.

For awhile there was a lot of gas missing when the officials of the construction company would fill up their tanks before going home, without putting it in the book. They would send up a small tractor with a four wheel trailer with quite a few five gallon cans on it to take gas to stationary equipment. There would be several extra cans on the trailer and these would be filled up and taken and emptied into the official's cars, but would never be in the record book as going in their cars, but would be booked to some nonexistent piece of equipment.

This went on for years.

I saw this happen several times when I was on the four to twelve shift, and saw the gas being poured into these private cars.

I reported it to Carswell and he watched these cars himself and knew about how many gallons went in each car. At the end of a week he had the figures all down on paper and handed them in to the Manager of the company. It ended up that the officials of the construction Co. had to pay for the gas that had been missing each month from the tank since construction started. This sure added up to a lot of money for the construction company. And, of course, they were the ones that had been accusing the guards of taking the gas at night.

Only one guard had been filling his tank when he was on night shift, but Carswell caught him in the act and he was let go right there. Gas was cheap then, 35 cents per gallon, so he really had no need to steal it.

Some people will steal things, even if they never need them.

Part of my job was to look for fires and I used to discover a lot of small fires in the years I was on the staff as a security guard, but only one big one on a Sunday morning in the sulphur plant. There had been a fire in there the morning before I came on duty and Fred Robinson, who was on the midnight shift, had neglected to check the area on his last trip, so it had a pretty good start by the time I got there. I knew there was a fire when I was about a quarter of a mile away as I could smell the sulfur fumes, and there should have been no fumes as the plant closed down on Sunday mornings. I run as hard as I could go and checked everything I could see and found no

signs of fire. Part of the plant extended above the roof of another building beside it, so I thought I had better get up on the roof and check the top above the roof. There was a door in the wall where the motor was for hoisting the sulfur up the storage area. I opened that, and there was the fire.

There are no flames of any size from sulphur when it burns, just a blue glow, but is it ever hot. No smoke either, just a gas, and it is deadly, you can be sure of that.

I rushed over to the wood room and turned in the alarm.

The two electricians who were on duty at that time came up with two small Pyrene extinguishers and saw that they were of no use for a fire of that size, so I told them to come with me and we went over to the nearest hose house and started pulling out the big long standard fire hose for big fires. It was all coupled together with a nozzle on one end ready to go.

When we had enough hose over there to handle the fire, the Fire Warden and his assistant were on the job by then, along with several other men from the boiler house and mechanical and pipefitters that were in to take care of the Sunday work. They got the hose connected to the water supply and turned it on and a start was made to control and put out the fire.

They kept the water on the fire until the Fire Warden said to shut the water off as the fire was all out.

It turns out that this fire had been discovered and put out earlier in the night, but had somehow started up again.

I had been doing quite a bit of thinking about how that fire had got started again.

It was in the usual brick building, built of two courses of brick with a hollow centre.



Typical Sulphur Fire

Over the years, holes had been broken through the walls to put pipes through the walls to the wood room. I had an idea that the hollow walls were full of sulphur dust and that it was still burning inside the walls and would break out again.

Even though I knew what would

happen, or maybe because I knew what

would happen, I ask the Fire Warden to put his hand on the outside brick wall.

He did and had his hand severely burnt for his trouble, but he found out that the fire was still burning in the space between the walls.

They did not get that fire out for another two hours, and I got a cussing from the Fire Warden for telling him to put his hand on the wall. But we had no more fire in that area.

Sunday afternoon a crew of masons came in and sealed all the holes up airtight that were in those walls.

One night, when I was on my rounds, I came in where the melting pots for the sulfur was, and I smelled very strong sulfur fumes. I looked around real careful, but could find no fire. The pots were covered with asbestos about two inches thick, and one pot covering had a crack in it.

I got my nose near that crack and nearly passed out with the smell of burning sulfur. Sulfur dust had been going into that crack for a long time and had finally taken fire from the heat of the pot. I went down below and got the operator to phone for the night Superintendent.

He came up and I showed him where the fire was and ask him what we should do about it. If we took off the asbestos covering, the pot could not be used until it had been replaced, so I was of the opinion that it should be his decision.

He said for me to rip off the covering, but to first wet the floor down good. I did so and we found the whole area of the pot was covered with burning sulphur. The night Super put in his report naming me as the one who tore off the covering, making the pot useless from then on until it was recovered the next day.

I got a phone call the next day asking me to come into the Manager's office at three in the afternoon, even if I was on the midnight shift.

I went in and the Manager wanted to know who gave me authority to strip the covering off that pot and put it out of production for nearly ten hours.

I told him the night Superintendent did.

He showed me the man's report and it said that I had taken off most of the covering by the time he had arrived at the pot room.

I told him that was a lie and I could prove it by the operator on that shift because he was there when the Superintendent told me to take the covering off.

The Manager ask what the operator's name was and I told him.

He phoned the operator and the night Superintendent and told them both to come at once to his office. They did and the operator confirmed what I had said and the night Superintendent was fired on the spot, as the Manager told him he was going to stop this passing of the blame for things, even if he had to fire every man in the mill. He said that the one thing that he disliked above all else was a man who could not admit a mistake when he made one, but would lie and put the blame on an innocent man. He said as long as he was manager of the company, a man that would do this was not to be trusted and he did not want him on the job.

The Manager ask me if I was on the midnight shift and I said I was. He then told me and the operator that we would receive a full eight hours pay extra for coming in on our time off to straighten out this problem, which we did get the extra day's pay.

I always liked that Manager, Chris Michaels, and respected him as he always got to the bottom of things and tried to give everyone a fair deal. He would not stand for any foreman or boss abusing or treating an employee in a mean or unfair way, and if he found anyone doing that he was quick to take action and very hard on them, no matter who they were. I think everyone was very sorry to see him retire. I know I was.

One day when I came in on the four to twelve shift, the Security Chief, Larry Carswell, told me to keep a close eye on the pop dispenser in the wood room basement. He said a complaint had come to him that a lot of pop was being stole from the machine.

When I went into where the pop machine was located in the basement, it was empty of employees. I went up the stairs and punched the key in the lunch room, then walked out past the square hole in the floor where they brought up the sharpened saws for the washers and let the dull ones down. I could look right down at the pop machine from there, which was just about past the hole when I saw two young fellows come over to the pop machine. One had a short piece of heavy wire in his hand, with a hook bent on the end. I watched him put the wire up into the machine and move it around a bit, and then reach over and take two bottles of pop out of the racks in the machine.

I waited until they were gone with the pop, then I went down to the foreman's office and got the foreman and went down through the wood room and pointed out the two that had got the pop and ask the foreman for their names and numbers. He gave them to me, and I reported them on my work sheet.

The next day when I came to work, the Security Chief said that they had denied my report, and the union had backed them up, so the Chief had them and the union president taken into the Manager's office.

The Manager had first ask the union president if he had been there at the pop machine at the time that I said the two were taking the pop. The union man said he was not. Then the Manager told him to go on back to his job in the machine shop, as he had no business here in the Manager's office. He refused to go until the Manager told him to either go back to his job, or go home and look for another job.

The union man went back to his job in the machine shop.

The Manager questioned both the boys, finally the one that had accepted the bottle of pop admitted what I had reported was true. The boy that had stole the pop was fired, and the one that had accepted the bottle of pop had to go to the lunch room owner and pay for his bottle of pop, and go home for two weeks without pay.

Very expensive pop for both boys. But that put a stop to the pop stealing as far as I know.

I had several other experiences with catching thieves, some of them were even ready to fight, but when they found out I was quite willing, they got cooled off in a hurry. I never backed down from any of them, but one big Polish fellow I caught stealing scrap copper had me pretty scared when I caught him in the act with about 80 pounds of copper one night.

We of course never carried a gun. As he had just been hired a short time before, he did not know that. He threw that bag of copper at me, which missed me, then I ask him if he would like a bullet through his hip. He started to beg me not to shoot him and said he would go quietly. I told him to walk ahead of me up to the guardhouse and when we got there, I called the Provincial Police and the Security Chief. Both got there pretty fast and when they saw the bag of copper and I had told them about him throwing it at me, the Provincial Police put the handcuffs on him and took him away.

He got three months for his trouble.

He told the Provincial Police and the Security Chief, when we were in the guardhouse, that I threatened to shoot him.

The Provincial Police told him he was a lucky man that I did not shoot him, as that was what I was supposed to do when I was attacked by someone stealing from the company.

I told both the Provincial Police and the Chief, that I did not say I would shoot him, I just ask him how he would like a bullet in his hip. The Provincial Police and the Chief both knew that none of the staff carried guns, but they did not give me away in front of the Polish fellow.

When they checked the scrap dealers in the city they found that he had sold three other lots of scrap copper to them, a little over \$78.00 worth.

Another time, three men working on the electric crane that unloaded the cars of pulpwood stole some felts and took them out through the gate on the railway with the electric crane. They had a car there with a driver and loaded the felts into the car and the driver took off. I got the license number of the car and turned it in in my report in the morning, along with the names of the crane crew. The man with the car was given three months for possession of stolen property when the city police searched his place the next day and found the felts, and the crane crew lost their jobs.

Stealing in the wood yard stopped then for a long time.

I was asked by several people how I was able to catch so many thieves. I just told them I kept my eyes open like I had been told to do. It was not hard to do as the fellows that did the stealing were amateurs and they gave themselves away before they committed the theft. I knew where every man was supposed to be for the full eight hours and how he behaved when his mind was on his work, and when I saw him watching for the security guard to pass and then look at his watch, I made the next trip as soon as I got to the guardhouse instead of taking my usual forty minute rest. When I knew the man to watch, and he was not at his job, and as there was only one way out I would wait there, and sure enough he would soon come along with what he had wanted to get out.

Another night I followed a man up the tracks with four long new 2 x 4s over his shoulder. He put them over the fence and as he came onto the tracks to go back to the mill, I stepped out from behind a box car and shone my flashlight on him and got his name and number. He also lost his job.

Another night I caught a man in the garden taking onions. He was sent home for two weeks without pay.

In 1964, when construction of the new Kraft mill was going on, there was a lot of tools and equipment that was being stolen. We were at first not allowed to stop cars that were leaving the property, but the stealing got so bad that we were finally given orders to stop and search every car or truck before it left the property. After we caught the first few, the stealing sure slackened off a lot.

I saw one car that was coming out one day with its back end very close to the ground. It came quite fast over the railway tracks, then the rear end did go down close to the ground. I stopped it and told the driver to open the trunk of his car. He refused, so I went over and locked the gates, then phoned Carswell.

The Chief came flying up in his car and the man opened his car in a hurry.

He had ten bags of cement in the back of his car, two in front of the back seat covered with an old blanket and eight in the trunk of the car. He also had a broken spring on the back wheel. The chief made him unload the bags of cement, and put them in the gatehouse, took his name and number, then I unlocked the gates and he was free to go.

He never came back.

At one time the company had a garden crew that did no other work except raise vegetables and berries for their bush camps. There was a widow woman in charge of all the gardens, and she sure knew her business. When I first took the job of security guard, I saw this woman in there in the garden, and as no one had told me about her, I went over to ask her what she was doing in the company garden. She must have known what I was going to ask her, because before I got to where she was, she said she was not stealing from the garden, but instead was the head gardener. She spoke very poor English but I soon got so I could understand her.

Over the years she learned me a lot about gardening and the care of vegetables after you harvested them that I did not know before. We got to be very good friends, and when the tomatoes were ripe, she would often save one or two of the best for my lunch by wrapping them in a piece of newspaper and hiding them under the edge of the porch of the little house she had there. In the late fall she would give me a paper sack full of green tomatoes that were still on the bushes and tell me to take them home and leave them in the bag in a cool place and they would ripen in the bag, and every one did ripen. She always told me it was going to freeze the night when she gave me the green tomatoes and it always did. She was a very smart gardener.

That year too there were complaints that someone was stealing a lot of cabbage every night from the gardens, so I ask the Chief if it would be alright if I missed a trip one night because I had an idea who was stealing them, and they most likely would try for some more that night.

He said alright, give it a try.

After he had gone I phoned the Provincial Police and got the man I wanted to help me, and I set up a plan with him. He came down early in the evening, and parked away back in our parking lot across the road, inbetween two cars beside some trees. I went over and shut off the lights in the parking lot just before the yard engine was due to bring cars in.

When I saw the train coming from the Neebing yards, I went over and told the officer they were coming, and then went back to the watchman's house. When the train started through the gate, I went out, locking the gatehouse behind me, and started down the road like I was going on my rounds. When I got down to where the wood piles prevented the train crew from seeing me, I cut across through the wood piles and went to the edge of some bushes along the cabbage patch and waited.

Not long after I got there two men walked up the track and into the cabbage patch. Each

had a sack and started cutting off cabbage and putting them in their sacks. When they had them full, they tied a string around the top of the bag and put the bag on their shoulder and started for the gate. When they got to the gate the Provincial Police officer was there waiting for them, and I was right behind them.

I opened the guardhouse and we all went in, taking the cabbage along too.

I phoned my Chief to come down at once, as we had

the thieves, with evidence.



He said he would be right down. When he got there, he swore out a complaint against them and the officer handcuffed them together and got his car over and took them to the jail.

I ask the Chief what would happen to them, and he said that would be between the company and the CNR, whatever they agreed on.

I found out later that they got a suspension from their jobs for three months, and had to pay the company for all the cabbage that had been taken from the garden, whether they took them or not. One of the men had been working for the CNR for 19 years, and the arresting officer said he knew him for a long time and the putting of handcuffs on him had hurt him more than the suspension or paying for the cabbage.

I was not liked by the railroad crews after that for a long time after their suspension was over, until one night, on the midnight shift, when they stopped inside the gate, the whole crew came over into the gatehouse. There were five of them, including the engineer and fireman. I thought I was in for a real beating, but said nothing, just looked them over closely so that I would know them when I saw them again.

I got quite a pleasant surprise.

They had all come in to apologize for the way they had been blocking where I had to cross the tracks when I was on duty. They said it was a mean way to treat me for doing what I was paid to do, protecting the companies property. They said they were sorry they had treated me so mean and wanted to know if I would forget about it and be friends again.

I told them, that to be honest with them, I knew they were harassing me by blocking my way across the tracks, but I did not lay a complaint about it because it would only make more trouble for them and extend the harassment from which no one would gain anything, and

anyway, climbing up and over railway cars was a good way to get exercise and keep awake, so lets forget the whole thing and leave the cabbage patch alone.

Well they started laughing and shaking hands with me and telling me what a good sport I was to look at it that way, and they said we were all friends again. They proved it in many ways the rest of the time I was there.

I talked later with the one that had worked there for 19 years one time when their engine went off the track due to a broken rail just across the road from our gatehouse. They were waiting for the crane to come down and lift the engine back onto the tracks. He said they had been getting vegetables out of the company gardens for years. He said they could afford it, a big company like that. He said it had just got to be a habit, and that they never thought of it as stealing or of the humiliation of being caught and arrested. He said that now that it had happened, he and all the men at the yard knew how easy it was to get caught, they wanted no more of it.

I told him that was a good decision for both of us, as I had not wanted to catch them but was forced into it.

He then wanted to know how I found out that they were the ones that was taking the cabbage.

I told him it was just a matter of elimination. I eliminated everyone until I got to the switch crew. I said, "you have the opportunity, you had the easy means of getting the cabbage away, you had the right to be in around the yard or gardens most any time of night, you knew where the watchman was at all times and could see him at least fifteen or twenty minutes before he got back to the gate, and the engineer could give you a little toot on his whistle, which I heard

him do many times before I caught on to what was going on. I did not do anything about it until the pressure was put on me, then I had to make my decision."

November 20, 1977

Dear Friend:

I am a little late in starting to write to you, as Pat's new baby daughter has turned the house just about upsidedown with excitement and happiness. My wife is buzzing around on cloud nine most of the time, but things have sort of quieted down a bit now, so I thought I had better start your letter while I have a chance to write it uninterrupted. I do not know just how long it will be before I am interrupted, so I will try to make the most of this quiet time.

On November 15th I was watching a program on TV about Quebec and the language law that was passed in Bill 101. I have been waiting to see if someone would make public the law in

this bill, but so far in any program about this Bill no one has said much about it. Under this law, if carried out as the law now stands, every person in Quebec will only be allowed to speak in French, and English will not be taught in Quebec.

So how will the people in Quebec be able to conduct business with the rest of Canada? Will the premier of Quebec expect the rest of Canada to learn French too?

It amazes me that no one else has mentioned this that I have heard or saw in any of the papers. I think the premier of Quebec has made an error there, but no one seems to have noticed it. Oh, well some of the politicians will wake up some time and see it, no doubt, when their brains start to come out of their deep sleep.

I think it is a great crime to deny the children the right to an education that they will most likely have to use the rest of their lives, by forcing them to be educated in the language of just one province that is very seldom spoken in any other province in Canada. The English language is used in most of the world to conduct business deals between different countries, and when the children of Quebec grow up and go out into the rest of the world they are going to face the handicap of not being able to communicate with most of the world's people.

They will be especially handicapped in their own country, Canada, and in their neighboring country to the south where a good deal of our country's business is done.

And how about the tourists that come to visit Quebec? Are they going to have to learn to speak French, or are they going to stay away? Are investors and businessmen going to have to learn to speak French before they can do business in Quebec, or are they going to take their business to other parts of Canada or to other parts of the world?

It is going to be very interesting to watch how this problem is solved.

They say in Quebec that they have not had a fair deal from the Federal government, and because of that, they need to form their own society, if not their own country, but I remember quite a long time ago when the Federal government offered to finance all their colleges and universities, and the premier of Quebec turned down the offer flat, which would have cost the Federal government millions of dollars. They did not want the Federal government to have anything to do with education in their province at all.

What are you going to do with people who will not accept help when it is offered? They complain of not getting a fair deal from the Federal government but will not accept it when it is offered. This is only one example of how the Federal government has tried to help them, there have been many more, but I guess the politicians have forgotten all about them.

On another subject, yes, I enjoyed that book of modern poetry that you sent me, the little I have read of it. I got the surprise of my life when my wife asked me if she could look at it, and she has been reading it over and over again ever since, in her spare time. I have never seen her so interested in any book we have ever had. I have been thinking that perhaps she has what I lack, understanding of the poetry she found in that book and perhaps she likes it, she has never said. I am waiting until she gives the book back to me before I ask her for an opinion of what she thinks of it. I am very pleased to see her taking such an interest in it, but as she has never discussed a book that she has read with me. I wonder if she will like this one.

When I get the book back from her, I am going to read it again and again, to see if I can find the key to understanding it. The poetry I try to write, there is no mystery about it. I just try to put on paper in simple words, just what is in my mind, in such a way that anyone will know what I am writing about. I do not try to make a mystery about what I am thinking, I just try to

tell a story that anyone can understand and if I succeed in doing that, I am satisfied. When I write a poem, if you can call it that, that I am always trying to tell a story about something, someone, or something that I feel. I try to put into every day words what most anyone can read and understand what I am trying to say. I try to make my poems as simple and straight forward as possible. I may not always succeed, but I do try to make it so that it flows right along smooth and easy.

Some people are naturally good poets and some just think they are. Of course there are lots of others inbetween those two classes that we must not forget. They try hard and may someday be recognized as good poets, and others may never amount to a hill of beans. I think that I fall into this last class, which does not bother me the least bit, as I do not aspire to be a great poet. The satisfaction that I get from putting my thoughts down on paper and reading the results is good enough for me.

This little boy we have here and are looking after for the Children's Aid is getting to be quite a boy now. He is going on two years old and is a very active little fellow. He never very seldom walks where he wants to go, but always travels on a run. He has my wife chasing him all over the house when she wants to feed him or when it is time for him to go to bed. She usually catches up to him in my room, as he seems to think that I will protect him from whatever it is my wife wants to do with him. He is a very great tease with her, but never with me, for when he is getting into my records or books, he will look at me and when I shake my head, he stops at once and goes and starts on something else.

I have as yet not had to tell him to stop anything he was doing, just shake my head and he would stop.

He learns very fast as there has been very few times that I have had to shake my head a second time at him for something he was doing that was wrong. I started off this way with him right from the start, and it is working out quite well. When I am sitting in my rocking chair listening to some music and he is tired from running around, he will come over and have me lift him up on my knee, and when he gets his head up on my shoulder and I start to rock him, he relaxes and I have to watch that he does not go to sleep, or that will get a very bad habit started of him always wanting to be rocked to sleep.

I made the mistake with one of my children, and she was a very big girl before she got out of the habit.

Our little boy here may be adopted most any day now, and if he gets the habit of being rocked to sleep while he is here, it may cause him trouble in his new home. If we were both younger, we would adopted him ourselves as he is very easy to get along with and is a very loyal little fellow.

We are both going to miss him very much when he does go, and like all the other Aid children we have had, we are going to wonder if they are getting the proper care and the love that they deserve.

Your wife is right about the reason my legs fill up with liquid, due to poor circulation. I know I do not get enough exercise by walking and I sit a lot. I used to have an exercising bike, before I had these anginal attacks, but I soon had to give that up. Every time I got on the bike, I would have an attack after I had been on it a few minutes, so I was cut off from that as these attacks are very painful while they last. I was always worried about getting The Big One that would finish me off when I was on that bike. These days, I tell my wife that I guess I am just

getting old, but she scolds me and says that I will never get old, as long as my mind stays the way it is.

It is a good thing that she does not know some of my thoughts when I have these anginal attacks.

Yes, we are still trying to find a place of our own but so far have not come across just what we want and what we can afford to buy.

My wife would like to have a little place near a village that she could walk to, where she could go to do her shopping, but the prices of land are much higher there, and all the timber is cut off them. I want a place with lots of trees that I can use for firewood, as the price of oil is getting out of sight. I would like to have electric heat, but the Hydro will not allow that any more, so I am told. There is only going back to burning wood for us, which I like very much.

We used to burn wood on the last place we had after



I had my legs crippled, up in Rainy River, and I used to cut it up into stove lengths, then split it and pile it to dry, and I used to enjoy the work very much. Now that I have no work like that to keep me busy, the days are long and very dull. There is nothing like good hard work to drive away the blues. When you have been able to accomplish a good day's work, it gives you a good feeling and you can be forgiven if

you stick out your chest a bit and strut about. I like work and feel the happiest when I am working hard.

Well, I had better get to your questions now or this letter is going to be rather bulky, so here goes.

Where did the mill use the sulphur? Sulphur is used in the paper making business to make sulphuric acid which in turn is used to make bleached sulphide pulp. The wood is chipped instead of being ground and only spruce is used. The chips are then elevated and put into big high pressure tank cookers, along with so much water and so much sulphuric acid. Steam at high pressure is then let into the cooker and after so long in the cooking process the liquor, as it is called, is drained off and the pulp is washed and recovered and pressed into sheets about two to three in. thick in slabs of about twenty-three feet in size. Sometimes they roll it out like a sheet of paper, only much thicker and cut it in sheets of about the same size as the slabs.

About sulphur fires. A sulfur fire can be put out with a shovel or stick of wood or even with your shoe, depending of course on where it is located. At Great Lakes, they used to have a big pile of sulphur just across the road from our watchman's house at the mill railway entrance. When the yard engine was shoving in a long string of loaded pulpwood cars, it would quite often shoot sparks out of its smokestack and these would fall on this sulphur pile. They would ignite the sulfur and you could not see that it was burning until a rather large patch had been burnt on the pile. The patch would have a blue looking color, and when we would see that, we would take a shovel that we kept at the gatehouse for that purpose and go over and shovel sulphur on the fire and so smother it out.

We had a key over on some big woodpiles that were on that side of the road, and when I have been over punching that key when the freight was pushing in cars, I always walked around the pile looking for fires caused by sparks from the engine, and lots of times I would find small

fires just starting. I would scrape sulphur over them with my shoe and that would be the end of them.

Which is the happiest of my married children?

Well I would say that I think Tim is. He is a welder too, but does not specialize, just does all kinds of welding, but will not take a job that takes him away from his family over night.

He has a son and daughter, the boy is about 12 and the girl will soon be eleven. His wife works at the Sanatorium as a nurse. Tim bought the first frame house I built at Little Falls on Corbett Creek. I sold him the house and about twenty-five acres of land, for \$10,000.00 but after he paid me about \$7,000.00, he was out of work for quite a while so I gave him a deed and clear title to the land and house, for what he had paid on it.

I later sold him the back 50 acres for \$1,500.00 and a day or two after he was offered \$70,000.00 for the whole thing. He would not sell, instead he spent quite a bit of money on putting some additions on the house and building a big garage and workshop out of steel beams and corrugated sheet steel.

When I need something done like wiring, pipe fitting or something goes wrong with the furnace, he comes over and fixes things up as good as new.

Yes, I think he is the happiest and most satisfied.

His ambitions are very mild and he worries very little.

The rest of my children always seem to be reaching for something that is just out of their reach, so I think they worry a lot more than Tim does.

Well, I must close now, wishing you and your family the best of health.

Your friend,

Sam.

vistaVision Memories

Watt's Last Shot

One spring, a year or so before I was pensioned off, when the snow was melting, I came around the north end of the big conveyor where the pulp trucks were unloaded and smelled smoke. I went over to investigate and found the big motor that operates the conveyor had been taken out the day before, which was a Sunday, for repairs, and the wires leading to the motor were left hanging down from a timber above. The melting snow was running down these wires and when the wind blew these wires so that the bare ends of the wires came together and touched a pile of oily rags on the base of where the motor had sat, they caused a spark which had set the rags on fire.

The electricians had neglected to pull the fuses or the switch when they had taken the motor out of service on Sunday when the power was off. Anyone trying to shut off that switch now while standing on those wet boards on the floor, would be killed at once.

I pulled the fire alarm and stood there to prevent anyone going near that switch.

The foreman of the shift came rushing up and was going into pull the switch when I stopped him. He put up a bit of a fight until two more men showed up to help me keep him away from that switch. Finally an electrician showed up, and he got a long dry stick, put on a pair of rubber gloves and tripped the switch, and took out the three fuses.

The foreman had relaxed by then, so I asked the electrician what would have happened if someone had tried to pull that switch. He said if they had taken hold of that wet switch, they would have not been able to let go until the power was shut off, and they would have been pretty well cooked, depending on how long it took to shut the power off. Anyone that touched him would have also been cooked if the power was still on.

The foreman's face got very gray looking when he heard that, and he came over to me and said thanks and walked back down to the wood room.

The electrician ask me who removed the motor on Sunday, but I told him I did not know. He said he would find out and told me to be sure and put in a full report on the whole thing, which I did. When I came in the next day the Chief of Security told me the two electricians who took out the motor had been fired from their jobs.

Great Lakes is very proud of it's safety record, and that incident could have given them a black eye, as it was rank carelessness on the part of those two men that knew better.

I was on day duty when the new Security Chief took over in 1965. His name was Frank Smith, he also was a retired RCMP officer, and he was the last Security Chief I had before I was pensioned off.

The first day he was on the job he came up to the gate, and he was a very big man about six foot six inches tall, quite heavily built. He was going to walk right through to the construction sight until I went out and told him he could not go in there unless he had a pass. I did not know at that time that he was the new Security Chief.

He said he did not have a pass and he said he was going into where construction was going on, and what was I going to do about it.

I said if he went past the guardhouse, I would phone the Provincial Police and he would be charged with trespassing on private property.

He started to laugh and went into the guardhouse and sat down.

He then told me he was the new Security Chief, and he said he had just been testing me to see if I knew my job. We got along fine while he was on the job until I was pensioned off. He showed me how to tell a bad piece of paper money quickly from a good bill, and he also told me a lot about drug traffic work by the police, of which he had been a part for over fifteen years. I learned a lot from the many talks we had when I was on the day shift.

He said that I would have made a good police drug snooper as I learned pretty fast.

He also said it was too bad that I was so old and short, but I think he was just kidding me.

There were several bad accidents on the construction site while that new Kraft mill was being built. The worst one was on the building of the great high chimney, in the fall of 1965.

The nights were starting to get cold when it was up over 100 feet. They usually poured the concrete on each section before they went home in the evening so that it would be set by the next morning and they could go ahead with the next section. In the morning they would take the form off the section that had set over night, raise it up another section in height, fasten it together, then raise the timbers and put them across the form and fasten the hoist to the timbers. These timbers went about a foot over the outside wall of the chimney and the hoist was used to bring up the concrete.

On this particular day everything was all ready for to start hoisting up the concrete. When the first load got near the top of the stack the whole system collapsed and went down through the stack to the bottom.

There were eight men up there, four got killed outright, one died after he arrived at the hospital and the other three were still in the hospital when I was pensioned off the next spring.

What happened was that the concrete that had been poured the evening before, instead of setting as usual, it had frozen, and when the sun shone on it the next morning it thawed out, and when the weight of the first load of concrete they tried to bring up pressed on this concrete, it all collapsed.

There was another accident on this construction site on the midnight shift when I was on duty. A high wind had started to blow and several fifty foot pipes that were hanging from a girder in the plant started to sway back and forth. They were hanging there as that was the way they would hang when this filtration plant they were putting together at that point would be like when completed. They had to put the pipes in position first as they were so long, and then build the rest of the plant around it.

I phoned the Manager of Construction and told him some of the pipes had broken loose from their rope lashings and were swinging wildly about, being held only at one end by the chain that held them to the overhead girder.

He said he would be right down with a crew to take care of it.

They came and there were four men and the Manager. They got a lot of rope and started to try and tie these pipes so they could not swing about. One man got down on the bottom girder where the plant would sit when completed and tried to get a rope on a pipe that was swinging wildly about. He grabbed at it and missed, and the pipe hit him in the face and knocked him off the girder.

He fell 68 feet down to the cement floor.

He hit the floor about 6 feet away from where I was standing and something that was wet splashed on my clothes and face.

That is the first time I ever saw anything like that and I hope it is the last.

The Manager wanted some of the men to move the body, but I told him the body should not be moved until the police had seen it. I went and called the police and an ambulance and notified my boss.

That was the last accident where a death was involved while I was there.

There were lots of accidents, some serious and some not so serious, but I have never forgotten that wetness on my face when that poor fellow hit that cement floor.

One time, not long before I was pensioned off, George Watt, the Fire Marshal, had his last try to get me fired from my job.

He came up to the gate when I was on duty, and ask me if I could use a small Pyrene fire extinguisher for my home.

I said perhaps I could as I did not have one in my new frame house on the Corbett Creek property that I had built not too long before. This was the last frame house I built there before moving back up to the Rainy River District to build my dream house for my wife and I to retire in and see out our last days.

He said the company was giving away or destroying all of the old extinguishers in the mill and woodyard and replacing them with more modern new ones. He said there was a small hand extinguisher down in a sawmill where they cut lumber for boxes, and if I wanted it I could go down there on my rounds sometime and get it before someone else got it.

I said alright, but I had no intention of getting it as I thought it was a trap that he was setting for me.

It would be about a quarter of a mile out of my usual way around to go there and get it, and the same to get back on my route, and it would all show up on the disc in the clock, and of course I would have to explain why I was off my patrol round the next day.

About two days after the Fire Warden had been up to see me, the Security Chief came up when I was on the four to twelve shift and told me to keep my eyes open for a small Pyrene fire extinguisher that had been stolen from this sawmill building.

I had a good sized box I had made myself and kept in the guardhouse to keep my raincoat, hat and boots in, also some books and tools for repairing things around the guardhouse and some garden tools for my flower garden around the guard house. I had built this box years earlier, when Howard Orr was putting the pressure of his meanness on me. I kept this box locked at all times when I was not in the guardhouse.

When I was next on the day shift, the Fire Warden and his assistant came up to the guardhouse and the Fire Warden asked me to open my box.

I ask him why I should do that.

He said that a small fire extinguisher had been stolen and they were looking for it.

I told him that there was only things in that box that belonged to me, and I would not open it for him as it had nothing to do with security. If he wanted it opened he would have to get the Security Chief up here and I would open it for him, but for no one else.

He said he would get the mill Manager up and have me fired on the spot.

I told him to do so, if he would not take my word for what was in the box.

The assistant Fire Warden said he believed me, and as far as he was concerned that was it. But the Fire Warden phoned down to the Manager who came up in a few minutes and ask me if I would mind opening my box.

I said I did not mind at all, but I said the Fire Warden had told me some time ago that the company was giving away or destroying the fire extinguishers and replacing them with new ones and that if I would like to have one for my new house I could go down to the sawmill and take the small Pyrene extinguisher that was there before someone else got it. I said I suspected a trap to get me fired, like he said he would do when I reported him for smoking in the woodyard, years earlier, so I did not bite. Now since the extinguisher is reported missing, he is sure it is in my box or in my house.

I opened the box and the Fire Warden went through it all, then said it will be in his house most likely.

The Manager ask me if I was willing to have my house searched and I said yes and my workshop too, and that if they wanted to go out right then, I would phone my wife and tell her they were coming, nothing else.

The Manager ask the Fire Warden if that was alright with him, and he said it was, and that he was sure they would find the extinguisher there. The Manager said that if you do not find it there, you will not need to come back to the mill because you will not have any job to come back to. He said, "I believe Sam did not take the extinguisher or does not know who did, and you have called him a thief and you will have to prove it or give up your position with the company. Now you can either apologize here and now to Sam, or go out and search his house and workshop, which will it be."

The Fire Warden did not hesitate, and he really did a good job of making an apology and got out of there fast.

About three weeks later the assistant Fire Warden came up with a bright new five gallon extinguisher with a note from the Manager saying I was to accept this for what harm had been done to my character by the Fire Warden, and that the price of the extinguisher had been deducted from his pay with his consent.

I knew right then that I would have to be on my toes more than ever as George Watt would really be after my hide now.

One time, my son and I went fishing when I had bought a new Ford truck and camper a year or so before I was pensioned off. We went up to Lac La Mac, about 70 miles up Highway 17. The pickerel were running but the lake was still frozen over.

Everyone was fishing at the Sawanee river that emptied into the lake. There must have been about 50 or more people already fishing there and I thought we were real early, as it was only around five-thirty in the morning. Every place between the highway and the railway bridge was taken up except one which had a big rock about half way across the river in front of it.

I ask one of the fellows sitting next to this place if he had reserved it for me.

He said no, that everyone took one look at that big rock and then looked for another place.

I said I guessed as it was the only place left between the highway and the bridge and that no one would mind if I took the place.

He said, "go ahead but you will never catch a pickerel there."



Fishing With Dan and his Friend

letting them wash over the rock. Some times I would get one about two pounds which I would let go. I was after the bigger ones as the limit at that time were eight. When I had my limit I changed to fish worms as bait and started to pull in nice three and four pound white fish on which there was no limit.

The men on both sides of me were not catching a thing and finally got up in discust and left.

I said I was not fussy about catching fish just so long as I could sit down and rest and wet a line. I sat down and put a nice fat minnow on my hook and cast out about two feet directly above this rock which had two or three inches of water running over it. I had hardly got set when my line started to go out. I gave a jerk on my rod and started to reel in.

I landed a nice four pound pickerel.

The fellow I had talked to asked me if I had a horseshoe in my pocket.

I kept on casting minnows in the same spot and

My son had brought along a friend of his, Bill Frost, so I gave my string of fish to my son and ask him for his stringer. Him and Bill sat down on each side of me and I changed back to live minnows.

The first time I cast out I got a strike right away and got a nice big pickerel, and so it went until I had filled my son's stringer with eight pickerel and several white fish and Bill's too. They did not catch a fish so we decided to go home.

My place was taken up quickly by another man and we stood there for quite awhile watching to see how he would make out but he always cast to the far side of this big eddy behind the rock and by the time he got his bait to where it should have been in the eddy, it was down in the rocks below the eddy where there were no fish.

On the way home I told both my son and his friend how I was able to catch fish there and the other fellow could not. I said he did not understand that the fish had come up the river to spawn and that the river was open but the lake was not. While the spawning season was over by then, the fish could get a lot more oxygen in the open river and especially behind that rock, than they could in the lake, so they flocked in to that spot, and as they were very hungry they went after my minnows and worms. The water going over that rock had a lot more oxygen than any

Cornmeal-Crusted Pickerel

Ingredients:

1/2 cup (125 mL) all-purpose flour	1/4 cup (50 mL) milk
2 eggs	1 cup (250 mL) cornmeal
2 tsp (10 mL) dried dillweed	1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/4 tsp (1 mL) pepper	1-1/2 lb (750 g) pickerel fillets, skinned
1 tbsp (15 mL) butter	1 tbsp (15 mL) vegetable oil
Lemon wedges	

Method:

Place flour in shallow bowl. In separate shallow bowl, whisk milk with eggs. In third bowl, combine cornmeal, dillweed, salt and pepper. Dip fillets, one at a time into flour, shaking off excess; dip into egg mixture, then cornmeal, patting to coat both sides evenly. In a skillet, heat butter and oil over medium-high heat; cook fillets, turning once, until fish is opaque and flakes easily when tested, about 8 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges to squeeze over top. Great with green peas and roasted potato wedges.

other place in the river as the river came from a small lake on the other side of the bridge and it too was all still frozen over solid.

Fishing is not just throwing a hook into the water with bait on it. You might catch a fish that way, but if you understand all aspects of fishing and the surroundings and conditions, you will have a much better chance of getting your limit of fish. Bait and weather have a lot to do with it too.

When they were building the new Kraft mill in 1965 and installing the machines in it, they had a lot of crates and boxes that the machines came in. Some of the boxes were thirty feet long with pipe in them. Lots of the boxes were very big and made of pressed No.1 spruce. I ask the Manager in charge of the construction what they were going to do with them.

He said, "when we are finished here we will take them across the road to that field and burn them."

I ask him if I could have some for to build a garage. I said I could take them to pieces after my shift was over each day and haul them home in my half ton truck which I drove to work in.

He said that would be too slow and as he had two platform trucks and three dump trucks that were not doing anything, he would load them up with a hoist and they could haul them all out in a day, if I had room for them.

I said I had lots of room, about twelve acres.

Next day they got busy in the afternoon and loaded all the trucks, and when I was off shift they followed me home with full loads. Next day they hauled the rest home, and every time there was enough for a load they took that out too.

When I was at home, I was busy all the time pulling them apart, taking all the nails out and piling the lumber in different piles. I was kept real busy for about two months, and when all was finished I had about five barrels of different sizes of nails, about 5,000 ft. of three quarter in. lumber of all lengths and widths, about 2,000 ft. of 4 x 4 in. lumber 14 ft. long and a big pile of 4 x 4 1/2 to 16 ft. long. And another big pile of 2 x 4s of all lengths.

I think I had close to 10,000 feet all told, that cost me nothing but my work.

About six months before I was to be pensioned off, the Fire Warden, George Watt, made out the work schedule for all the watchmen, with me going down in the mill for two months. In over 19 years I had never made a round in the mill. It would have taken about a month for me to become familiar with all the fire hazards and keys on that patrol.

About a week before he made out this schedule he told me, in the presence of the assistant Fire Warden and another man, that as I was soon to be pensioned off, I would not have to go down in the mill on patrol.

After he had made out the schedule sending me down to the mill patrol he went on his three months paid holidays and the assistant Fire Warden was in charge. He told me to stay up on the hill and come in on my regular shift, but in order so that the George Watt could not say when he came back that I had not obeyed his orders, I should see the Manager about staying up on the hill until I was pensioned off.

I did that and he said if it was alright with the assistant Fire Warden, it would be alright with him, and to be sure and stay there until I was pensioned off.

George Watt had made his last try to have me fired as he had promised when I reported him for smoking in a restricted no smoking area, many years before. And like all the other times he tried, it did not work.

December 20, 1977

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter yesterday and was quite happy to receive it. I know just how you feel about Xmas, as I myself went through all of those experiences when our first child was born. It is a very wonderful thing what a baby that looks so helpless can do to a man who considers himself to be so strong and independent. They can make you cry, and they can make you laugh and just wind you around one little pink finger, and you are helpless. I have had it done to me with my own children, and with other people's children too.

Most people think I am a hard, unfeeling man, but really that is just a bit of a mask that I have put on as I grew older to keep from getting hurt. If most people really knew me, they would have a ball taking advantage of my feelings about children and people that are in trouble or having hard times to survive.

I have been taken for a loss so many times that I was beginning to feel that all people were like that, and then I would meet someone who was just like myself, with the same feelings and ambitions to lend a helping hand to someone who was down on their luck, someone who felt the same way about it as I did. I then began to see that there were more good people in the world than I had thought there was, and I felt a lot better.

I know that you and Mrs. Filter are getting a lot of pleasure out of little Emily, your daughter, but you have experienced nothing yet to what you will in the years to come. I have

experienced it seven times and it gets more wonderful as the years go by. I wish you all the happiness that you have coming to you both, and as the days go by you will realize what I mean.

Well, my old typewriter broke down again and would not operate all of last week. I ask my daughter to get me a new typewriter, but another brand from the one she got before, when she comes home on Saturday, but she could not get me one as the agency for the kind that I wanted was closed on Saturdays. So I got busy and took my typewriter to pieces again and found the trouble and fixed it up, gave it a good cleaning, oiled everything I could with three in one oil, put it back together and here we are, in business again.

It works like a charm now, but I am still going to buy a new one. I have had this one since 1960 and I got it used then, so I do not know how many years it had been used before that. And I am not sure I can keep fixing it every time it breaks down as my eyes are pretty much useless for that sort of thing now.

My daughter Pat will be taking over her new position up in Red Lake after the first of the new year. My wife will be looking after her new little daughter and her son, Danny, until the summer holidays, then Pat is going to sell this place and take her son and her daughter to wherever her job is. And she wants us to go along and live with her.

I guess she just wants a babysitter to look after her two children while she is at work, but I have other ideas.

I just paid the power bill here yesterday for the third month. They do not read the meter every month, but instead, send me a bill each month for the first two months at \$40.00 per month. Then they read the meter and send me the bill for the remaining month. The bill for the third month was \$77.35, or a total of \$157.25 for three months.

We have two TVs going, one from when Danny comes home from school until sometime early in the morning, and my TV which I turn on at six and shut off at night when the late news is over at eleven. Most all the lights are on in the house until near midnight when Pat is at home on weekends. There is a big 100 watt bulb in the kitchen and two of them outside that are on all the time at night. I have to pay the power bill so three days or so ago, when I got my bill for the third month and saw that \$77.25, a jump of over \$20.00 in three months, I laid the law down about the light business while I had to pay for the power.

I do not have my TV on now except for half an hour to get the evening news. I have given up watching TV altogether. My TV is a black and white and the one in the front room is colour. I tried watching the coloured TV but the strain on my eyes is too much, so I had been using my own. Now I do not use the TV because I cannot afford the power for two TVs. I sit in my rocking chair and read by a forty watt light I have, and I have to get up most every time anyone comes out into the kitchen and turns on the light and then goes into the front room and leaves it on.

I used to read in bed late at night, but no more now. I do not mind not reading in bed or not watching TV but I would like some cooperation on the part of others that are living here. I did get some cooperation for about two days, then it was right back to their old habits of leaving every light burning that they turned on no matter how many times that I had to get up out of my chair and go and shut them off. My leg muscles are very sore all the time now and it is very painful for me to get around and shut off lights that have been left on. The worst of it is that this is not my own home and I cannot say too much about turning lights off. I can only ask for everyone to please cooperate in helping me to save on the hydro bill.

If we go up to Red Lake with Pat, I am going to try and rent a house of our own so that we can do as we please and be the boss in our own home about the way it is to be run.

I do not think that Pat is out anything with having us live here at her house, as we always had a warm house and plenty of food for her and her son to come home to when she came home on weekends from Geralton. So as she will be getting around double the salary now that she did in her last job, I think it is time that we go someplace and live the rest of our life alone, someplace far enough away so that we can have a home of our own again and do the things we want to do. We do not have very much time left, at least I do not have, as I will be 77 in February.

Pat has been very good to us while we have been here and has made us very comfortable, but it is getting to be too much work for my wife to take care of this big house, along with three Aid children, and now she will also have to look after our two grandchildren for several months.

I am going to write to several large towns in the east to their Chambers of Commerce and get the addresses of Real Estate Agencies and see what they have to offer in the line of new homes for sale. Of course I will keep you informed of what I find out and where we go. One thing I am sure of is that we are going to get far enough away from here so that my wife will not be a housekeeper and babysitter for any more children, Aid children, or grand or great grandchildren. She has earned a rest, and she is going to be able to take life a bit easier.

I ask my daughter if she was ever going to sell this place or at least sell some of the land for building lots when we first came here to live. She said no, she would never sell a bit of the land, that this was finally going to be her home for life, and that we could stay here for the rest of our lives. That was in the winter of 1976-77. Now here in the winter of 1977-78 she plans to sell

the whole thing about June or July sometime. She wants us to go with her to Kenora or Red Lake, whichever place she goes to work at for the goverment, but I am going to try and rent an apartment someplace further east, where my wife and I can in time have a home of our own once again, and no one will ever pry me loose from it again.

Anyway, Xmas is just around the corner and I will stop complaining and try to get in the spirit of it and not worry too much, at least for now and until after Xmas, about where we will find a place of our own. And I am looking forward very much to seeing the look on my wife's face when she unwraps the nice big colorful hand crocheted robe I got her for Xmas this year.

Wishing you and Mrs. Filter and Emily the best of Xmas and New Years wishes,

I remain, your friend,

Sam.

Final Movement

The Harmony of Dying Flowers

vistaVision Memories

Rainy River Again. At Last.

Spring 1966 - Spring 1968

I was pensioned off in the spring of 1966, and I was then free to finish painting my house up at Corbett Creek with two coats of paint, and get ready to sell it and move back up to the Rainy River District for the second time, the place where I wanted to see my years out. When they gave me a reception when I was pensioned off, the Fire Warden came up to shake hands with me, but I could not do that. I reached past him and shook hands with the next man in line. I was sorry afterwards, and felt badly about not being able to forgive him for the many ways he tried to take my job away from me and my family, but I was very bitter that he, of all men, could not see that when I reported him for smoking, I was just doing the job I was paid for, the job that he had been always impressing on us all that we were hired to do.

Just before I left Great Lakes Paper, when I used to go up to Rainy River District looking for a piece of land that I could buy on which to build my future dream home, I always camped at

Minihica Beach at night, on Lake of The Woods, in my Ford camper. To me it was a very beautiful place, and not many people used it as they preferred the new park, which was much closer to the highway and had longer beaches.

I liked Minihica Beach mostly because it was more private and the water was only about three feet deep out to about a hundred or so yards from the shore. I could go there in the evening, have a cool bath without bothering with a bathing suit, and come out and listen to my radio while I was cooking and eating my supper without having a lot of people hanging around.

It was so peaceful and quiet, with just the sound of the little waves lapping on the shore and sometimes the lonely call of a loon out on the water. I felt so happy and relaxed there and at peace with the world.

It was a good place to go and forget all your cares and troubles.

When I arrived there this one evening when I was up looking for a place to buy to retire to, there was a trailer parked on the other side of the clearing from where I usually parked for the night. As it was still quite light, I started getting ready for a dip in the lake.

I had just got in the water and was swimming around when I heard a motor start up. I stood up and looked around and saw a small boat, a twelve footer, come dashing out from the shore dock where this other camper trailer was parked.

The wind had started to blow quite strongly from the northwest by then, and the water was getting quite rough.

I got out of the water and dried myself off while watching this boat speed back and forth in front of the beach. It was going so fast that it looked like it was standing very near straight up on the end where the motor was. It did not slow down one bit when it was making a turn and

quite often, I thought it would capsize. The wind was blowing much harder and the waves were getting much higher by then, and I wondered why the operator did not come in as he could see the danger signs as well as I could.

I started my Coleman stove and put on water to heat for coffee, and got ready to cook my supper when I happened to look out where this boat was still going all out, back and forth. It had gotten darker and he had come in closer to shore, only about fifty feet or so from the shore. The waves were real high as the water was very shallow where the boat was.

As I watched him making a turn with most all the boat out of the water, it suddenly seemed to fly into the air throwing the man out of the boat, and the boat landed upside down on the water.

I kicked off my boots and pants and I was glad that I had no shirt on, and made for the water. I swam out there where I had seen the man land in the water and found him just coming to the surface and standing on his feet in about three feet of water. I then found out it was only a young girl, of about fourteen or fifteen.

You can imagine how I felt standing there naked in front of that young girl, although I was covered with water up near my armpits. I ask her if she was hurt and she said no, but she said she would be when her father came back and found out what had happened. He had forbid her to take the boat out while he was away, and she said he was sure to punish her when he got back.

I said if she would go ashore and look after my coffee, I would tow the boat to shore and get the water out. I also told her that I had no clothes on and ask her not to come near me until I got the boat safely out of water and got some clothes on.

I got the boat up on the shore far enough to be able to turn it up on its side and get most of the water out, then I went up along the edge of the water to where I had dropped my pants and told the girl to turn her back until I got dressed.

She did and I got my pants and boots on and then went over and got my shirt off a bush and put it on too.

I ask her if she was hungry and she said she was starving, so I got busy and cooked bacon and eggs. I had a jar of blueberry jelly that I had brought from home, and lots of bread and butter, so we did a pretty good meal. I had plenty of canned milk for our coffee, but no sugar, as I had just found out I was a Diabetic.

The girl had changed her clothes while I had been taking care of the boat, but she was still shivering from the cool wind, so I went to my camper and got her a heavy wool sweater that I had there.

She put it on and then ask me why I had not ask her what her name was. I told her that her name was her own business and if she thought I should know it, why she could tell me.

She laughed and said I sure was an odd person and then told me what her name was and her father's name. She said her name was Elisabeth Marsden, but everyone called her Bessie, and her father's name was James Marsden, and his friends all called him Jim. He was in the real estate business in Akron, Ohio, and was doing pretty good at it. Her mother had died when she was about three years old, and from then on her father and the neighbour raised her. She said her father did not let her have many friends, and was very strict about her going to parties. He would not let her go at all.



My Truck and Camper I Stayed in at the Beach

She told me that she had thought about running away from home several times, but did not want to hurt her father. She said that he treated her like a baby and did not seem to think that she was able to think for herself. He gave her most everything she ask for, except the right to have her own friends, and this she resented very much.

The evening wind had died down completely by then, and we had built a fire of driftwood down on the beach to take the chill off the air and we were quite comfortable. I had brought a couple of boxes out of my camper and we sat on them and talked, or rather Bessie talked and I listened.

At close to ten her father came in and drove right past where we were sitting, down to his camper. He came back up pretty quickly to where we were.

Bessie had asked me not to mention her accident to her father, and then as soon as he was there and saw that she was alright, she started in and told him the whole thing.

I had gave my box to her father to sit on and he sat there and they talked for quite a while. I went and gathered up some more wood for the fire along the beach while they were talking, and when I came back her father told Bessie that she had better go to bed and they would talk some more about it in the morning.

I put some wood on the fire and sat down on the box that Bessie had been using.

Her father started right in saying he did not know what he was going to do with his daughter as she would not obey him anymore and was giving him a lot of trouble.

If that boat accident was what he was referring to, it got my temper boiling right away. What he needed, I thought, was someone to tell him a few truths, and I was just the one who could do it.

I told him the girl was not to blame for the accident, he was. He had put an 80 HP engine in a twelve foot boat, which was against the law, and he could get a pretty stiff fine for doing so. All he was allowed in that size of a boat was 20 HP motor. Another thing, he was not allowing his daughter to think and make decisions for herself. That was a very bad mistake, for someday soon she would take off and go on her own, unprepared to go out in the world on her own.

I told him he should be preparing her for that day instead holding her back. I told him that my wife and I had raised seven children and they were all married now without any forced marriages or blemishes on their lives so far. They had families and homes of their own and were doing quite well. I said he should be encouraging his daughter to go out and mix with the right kind of young folk that she liked, not what her father liked.

If he explained the facts of life to his daughter and told her the truth, I thought she had enough good sense to steer clear of the wrong people. "Be open minded with her and answer all her questions truthfully," I told him, "no matter how painful they are, and you will be on the road to understanding your daughter and that will make all your fears for her vanish. She is a good girl now and will remain that way," I said, "only if you be honest and fair with her and consider her as an equal."

Well he sat there and let me talk, not one interruption did he make.

When I stopped talking, he rose and shook my hand and said, "thank you Sam, someone should have talked to me years ago like you just did."

Next morning as I was getting breakfast ready, Bessie came over to bring my sweater back. Her face was just glowing with happiness. She gave a little kiss on my cheek and said thanks a million.

I had given her my address and about four years or so later, just before I had to go to the hospital for my hip replacement, I received a box with a letter from her and one from her father and a big piece of wedding cake.

She is married now and has a small family of her own, and from what she tells me, she is very happy. Oh, the names of the girl and her father are fictitious.



My Last House on my Corbett Creek Property After I had Painted it

In 1966, after I had finished with the painting of the house on Corbett Creek I wanted to sell so that I could move back up to the Rainy River District, I started hauling my lumber up to Rainy River, to 80 acres I had bought in Spohn township over at Harris Hills. This place was located about a quarter of a mile from the shore of Lake of the Woods. I still had several big piles of boxes to pull to pieces from what I had salvaged from the construction crew at Great

Lakes Paper before I was pensioned off, and I still had to take the nails out of all the lumber and pile it in separate piles. Then I had boxes to build to take all of my tools in up to Rainy River, where I was going to build a new house for my wife and I.

I also had to haul about 5,000 feet of lumber up there in a half ton truck. That was over a 600 mile round trip in a day, as well as unloading the truck.

I took most all of the lumber and nails I had salvaged up there in my new half ton Ford truck. I got caught by the weigh scales man once with 2,965 pounds, but just got a warning instead of a fine. I never got caught again, as the weigh scales man never got on the job until 8 a.m., and I was always past there by 6 in the morning when I had a big load.

I would leave about half past four or five in the morning, and I would get back about ten-thirty at night.

This place at Harris Hills I hauled my lumber to was not my first choice, but I bought it because the man that owned the place that I really wanted was asking too much for it.

There was an old shack of a house on the property I bought, and an old small barn, also a large new garage that had been built the year before. It had a good well, and lots of clothes lines, and two small gardens. It was on a main Hwy to Rainy River town, about twenty miles south at the border.

After I had bought it and had hauled most of my lumber and tools to this place at Harris Hills, the man that owned the place I had really wanted to buy decided to sell it to me for the cash offer I had made him, so I bought his 26 acres with an old house and a chicken house on it, and then started to haul my lumber over there.

I then had three places that I had bought while up there. Forty acres in Tovell Twsp., 26 acres in McCrosson Twsp. right along Lovell Twsp, and 80 acres in Spohn Twsp., right next to McCrosson Twsp. I paid \$200.00 for the 40 acres and sold it for \$250.00, and \$2,500.00 for the 80 acres and sold it for \$5,500.00.

To the ordinary buyer, the land I very much wanted and finally bought did not look like much, but to me it was perfect, not the way it was, but what I could make out of it. The old buildings were filled with junk of all kinds scattered all over the place, and weeds were growing everywhere, some over ten foot tall, but that did not take anything away from what I saw there. I only regret that I did not take some pictures the day I bought it.

It had a small, deep river, the Little Grassy river, running along one side of it about twenty-five or thirty feet from the old house that was there. When the gates were in on the end of Lake of the Woods where the water ran out of the lake, there was a good sized marsh of wild rice just north of the house about ten feet. There was a lovely grove of spruce and balsam on the long tip of land where the house stood, and an Indian graveyard on the tip of land. The land where the house sat was about fifteen or twenty feet above the high water mark on the bank of the river. There was twenty-six and a half acres, and where the weeds grew the tallest in their garden, was very rich soil.

It would take an enormous amount of work to get it cleaned up, but that was what I liked. There was always a cool breeze to keep the bugs away, along with hundreds of swallows. There were very few birds around the place when I bought it due to the twelve year old son of the former owners who shot every living thing he could get a bead on with his twenty-two rifle.

I knew when I took over that I would change all that, which I did right away. That fall I started feeding the birds instead of killing them, and it was not long until we had lots of company all the year around.

The wife of the man that owned this place before I bought it did not like Indians, and when they started to pick the wild rice in the marsh, she ordered them away and phoned the game warden to come over and make them leave.

He came over and ask me first if I wanted them sent away.

I explained that I had agreed to buy the place and the other people agreed to sell it to me at a certain price, but were having some trouble getting a clear title to transfer to me.

The game warden told the lady that her husband and her no longer owned the property as they had signed an agreement to sell it to me as soon as they had a clear title, and as they did not have a clear title, they did not own it, so could not have the Indians ejected from the marsh.

She was pretty mad about it but agreed to let the Indians pick the rice, but said she would not tell them she did not own the land anymore.

I said I would go down and tell them, which I did.

After I had explained it all to them and I knew they understood, I told them I was buying the place and after I owned it they could come and pick the rice every year. They said they would always pick it, and they always did when there was any to pick.

People told me that those Indians would steal anything that was not nailed down, but I never had anything stolen from my place the years that I was there. I found that the Indians minded their own business, and of course I never did interfere with them in any way. We knew a little about how the Indians lived because my wife took care of several Indian children from the Aid, and we even had one for close to sixteen years, our Sheila, until she was drowned in the Little Grassy River shortly after we moved up there.

When I first went up there, in the summer of 1966, I started building as soon as an agreement of sale was signed. I paid the owner \$100.00 down and the rest was left with my lawyer to be paid when the present owner delivered a clear deed.

The owner's father was a joint owner of the property and had died several years before. The present owner, his son, could not get a clear deed for it because his father was not legally dead. He would have to prove that his father was dead.

In the meantime, time was running out for me to get a house built before winter.

Their kids interfered a lot with my building work. Every time I wanted to use a tool I had to unlock my tool box, then lock it again. If I did not do this, in about one day or less, I would have no tools left.

The owner had spent the \$100.00 I had given him for a down payment, and said he needed \$500.00 more.

I said I would give it to him on condition that him and his wife would sign a new agreement which I would write out. They agreed, so I wrote out a new agreement, stating that I had a right to take to pieces any building that I had built on the property and remove them and any building material, tools or equipment that I had brought onto the property, and would get a refund of any money I had paid them, in the event of the deal not going to its agreed conclusion and agreed price.

They did not want to sign it for awhile, but I told them that I would have to start building at once if I was going to have a house to move into before winter. If they did not agree to sign, there would be no more money given out.

They finally signed and I started to build near the end of August of 1966.



Old House on Rainy River Property

I had the walls of my house up in late 1966 and had started to put the roof rafters on before they got the deed transferred to me. They stayed there until about the first of October, when I already had the roof on my house.

When they left, I saw that I would not have my house finished so that it would be warm enough to live in that winter, so I started cleaning out and repairing the old house they had been

living in. It had an old homemade furnace in the basement, so I moved that out of the way and bought a new oil burning furnace and fuel tank. It cost me \$612.00 installed. There were seventeen panes of window glass broken, so I had to replace those.

That summer and fall the squirrels and birds got used to seeing me around there. I always had a pocket with some shelled peanuts in it every time that I went up there to work on my house, and the squirrels and birds used to watch me put them out on a board away from where I was working. It was not very long before they would be waiting for me and the birds would fly down and get a half of a peanut while I was putting them on the board, and then fly up into the tree to eat it. Soon they would see me coming in the road and fly out to greet me and perch on my cap or on my shoulder until I gave them a piece of peanut. Then they would fly into a tree and eat it and come back for more.

Then there was a young dog I had been given when I bought the place. The people that owned it were going to Winnipeg to live and could not take the dog up there. They ask me to take it, so I did. We just let it run loose and he stayed around home until he was near full grown and was good friendly dog.

One morning I got up much earlier than usual as I was going to Fort Frances that day, about seventy miles away, and wanted to get an early start. The neighbour across the river from us had a flock of sheep pasturing in the field just across the river from our house, and I saw our dog with two more chasing and worrying the sheep and young lambs. I whistled to him and he came home around by the road, and his nose and head were covered with blood.

Right then I knew I would have to destroy him at once, for once a dog gets the taste of sheep blood, he will always go after them and kill them if he can.

I got my .410 shotgun, the only gun I owned at that time, and took the dog out along a bank near the marsh. I shot him once through the chest where his heart was, but he leaped at me and broke all of the rope except a few strands of it.

My gun was just a single shot shotgun, and the shells were for partridge, which I had received with the gun when I got it. I managed to get in another cartridge, then I walked over to the dog who was frothing at the mouth and pressed the gun right against his side and pulled the trigger.

He dropped dead right there, and that was where he is buried today.

That was a case where there was no other decision for me but to kill him, as he was a danger to man and beast from the time that he had his first taste of warm sheep blood. I did not want to kill him, but I had no other choice, he had stepped over the line and had to be destroyed.

Then we had a tom cat that went after birds and not only killed them for food, but when I saw him playing with birds that he had killed, for fun, I knew I had to kill him. I knew he was a favorite of the children that we were taking care of for the Children's Aid at that time. They, of course, did not see the killing or the burying of the cat, but they thought the cat had got run over by a car out on the highway and spent a lot of time looking for it out there, but of course never finding it.

There was a lot of smelly junk in the basement of that old house we had to live in until our own house was finished which I had to clean up and throw out the window. All the walls

were covered with wallboard and had been painted white. They had never been cleaned for years by the look of them, so I had to clean and disinfect walls, ceilings, and floors. It was a big job, and I worked at it from about five in the morning until midnight each night, and sometimes later.

There was only one small bedroom on the main floor, so I had to make another bedroom beside it in a hallway going to the bathroom for our girl Sheila, who we were fostering. The hot and cold water pipes were rusted and leaking, and the bathtub had no hot water line. I had to replace all the water pipes with hard black plastic piping as we would not be in our new house until the spring. After I had everything as clean as possible, I got paint for the floors, walls and ceiling, and by the time my wife and Sheila got up there in November, the house was warm and clean.

They got there a day ahead of the truck with all our household goods, and we had quite a time to fix up places to sleep. I had a camp bed over in the new house I was building with three blankets and a pillow, and in my camper I had two quilts that truckers pack around furniture, and one blanket and a pillow. We fixed up one bed for my wife, then I went out and got an old single camp bed that had been discarded by the previous family and wired the springs in it together with some wire and rope and made a bed for Sheila that looked quite comfortable. I then went out and got two saw horses and some pieces of planks, and that was my bed for that night, no blankets or mattress for me.

I was pretty stiff and sore next morning, but after doing some work around the place, I soon got loosened up and was as good as new.

About ten that night, the truck pulled in with our furniture and we helped unload it, and I paid the driver and let him go. We worked until after midnight getting things more or less into shape, and I know I was quite tired when we finally called it a day.

Next morning, I mixed up some sand and cement and went around the basement walls and cemented up all the holes and cracks in the concrete walls. It certainly made the house quite a bit warmer.

The first fall I was up at our new place in Rainy River building my house, three young fellows came up the river in a motor boat. As they came around the bend in the river, the ducks rose out of my marsh and these boys started shooting with shotguns. Some of the shot went into the side of the old house on my property. I went down to the point of land on my place where one of them had landed to look for a duck they had hit. I ask him if he knew it was against the law to carry a loaded gun in a boat, also against the law to discharge a gun from a boat.

He said sure he knew that the same as everyone knew it, but no one paid any attention to those silly laws.

I told him the game warden was over at the store and that I was going up to the house and phone him to come over and explain to these boys that these laws were not silly and were very important for the protection of the lives of other people. I made this boy go up with me to the house, and I showed him where the shot had went into the wall of the old house. I stood by the

wall where the holes were and showed him that if I had been walking by there when that shot was fired, I would have received most of it in the side of my face.

His face got rather white, and he said he had never thought of that.

I told him he had better think of those things or he might be on trial for his life for murder, or at the very least, manslaughter. I said I was going in and calling the game warden over and for him to go down to the boat and tell the other two how near they had come to going to jail for life.

He was really scared and they did exactly as I had expected, they took off down river as fast as their boat would go. I never did see them up in my part of the river again.

Up hwy 17, a short way past Shabandowan Lake, is a small lake in the shape of a pair of water wings. It is on the left side of the hwy, going west. There is a copper mine on one side of it next to the hwy and it is about a mile in from the hwy on a fairly good road, at least that was the way it was when I was last up there when I had been pensioned off in 1966. There were other mines some distance from there to the southwest a few miles away. This copper mine at Burchell Lake was completely enclosed in a chain link fence and was guarded day and night.

When I was pensioned off, I was offered a position there as a guard at \$90.00 per month with my bed and meals free. I went up to look the place over as at that time the mine was closed down, but was pumping the water seepage out and getting ready to go into production again.

Just after I had been pensioned off, I found out that I was a diabetic. I went to see the manager of the mine and tried to make a deal with him where he would pay me a larger salary and I would provide my own diabetic meals and sleep in my camper. The best he would offer me was a straight \$100.00 per month and no more, so I told him I did not think that was enough, so I could not take the job. I had excellent recommendations from the Great Lakes as a non drinker or smoker which was very important for this kind of a job but he still said that he could not offer any more

I found out a few weeks after that he had hired a man two years younger than me for \$200.00 per month with free meals and bed in the bunk house. A week or so after that, the employment office sent me a letter saying that the company had ask him to get in touch with me and tell me they wanted me to come up again to talk about me taking the job. I went up to see the manager, not with any intention of taking the job, but just to see what he had to offer.

He came right out the first thing he said and offered me \$200.00 a month and he would supply me with what food that I wanted and I could cook it myself in my camper.

I told him that I had made other plans and had bought property in the Rainy River District and was building a house there and would be moving up there in a few weeks, so I could not take him up on his offer. Then he told me that he had had two men at different times on that job at the price he was offering me and they both had been found drunk and asleep on the job several times and he had to let them go.

I told him in the twenty years that I had worked at the Great Lakes paper mill I had never been drunk or slept on the job. The clock that I carried always showed that I made my inspection trips on time when they were supposed to be made and I never missed a key except in the winter

when the snowstorms came and the snow got too deep to make the complete round trip. We had always been warned in the winter that if we thought that we might get bogged down in the snow, to just make the trip to the wood room and back until the road was opened for us.

There was a well just outside the old house we were staying in until I had my new place finished. It had been drilled by an eight inch auger down about ten feet into the cold soil. There had been no well cribbing or pipe put in to hold the soil back and it only had a wooden box over the top. The cold would get into the well and freeze the moisture in the air onto the soil on the sides of the well walls. When the ice got heavy it would fall down into the well taking pieces of frozen clay with it. There was no screen on the well end of the pipe that drew the water up out of the well, so that when the pump drew the water up, it brought up pieces of clay, which lodged in the trap valve that kept the water in the pump from draining back to the well when the tank was full and the pump stopped pumping. When there were pieces of clay in the trap or check valve, it could not close when the pump would stop, so the water would run back to the well. When the pump started up again it would not pump any water as there was no water in the pump to prime it, and the motor would run until someone heard it and shut it off, or it got heated and caught fire.

We had two motors burn up like that, both of them started to burn after we were asleep.

I was so worried about fire in that old building that the least smell of something hot would wake me at once. I woke up both times when the motors caught fire and was able to shut them off before the fire had reached the floor overhead.

I had tried to uncouple the pipe going to the well so that I could put a filter on the end in the well and so stop the clay from coming up and blocking the check valve, but the pipes were so rusty and thin that to put a pipe wrench on them and try to turn them would only crush the pipe and do no good whatever. I intended to have a new well drilled over by our new house, so I did not want to spend too much time or money on this old place.

I worked on the inside of my new house through most of the fall of 1966 and winter of 1967. I soon had windows and doors in our new house, then started on the electric wiring and plumbing. I had the well driller come up and drill me a well down to bedrock, 51 feet deep, 18 inches in diameter. When he pulled the drill out for the last time there was already 26 feet of water in the well and by the time they had the metal casing in, the water had came up another foot. I had my pump already installed in the basement under the kitchen with heavy plastic pipe ready to connect to the well. I got them all connected and then run an electric line to the pump for power and started the pump going.

I had it pumping for two hours to clean the water in the well which was a bit muddy from the drill. I let this water run down into the pond by the house. When I shut the pump off, the water was clear, but had not lowered one inch in the well, so I knew I would never run out of water in that well.

I had a lot of snow removal to do that winter as we had rather a heavy snowfall and high winds. I kept my little 7 hp. tractor and snow blower in the new house where I had a wood burning stove. I had a fire on in the stove whenever I was working over there and when the tractor was well warmed up I would take my snow blower out and open my road which was about a 1/4 of a mile long out to the highway.

Of course I would have quite a bit of snow to move away from around both houses after the wind died down. What with working on my new house and removing snow, I was kept quite busy all winter.

Later in the spring, when the weather warmed up a little more, my wife and I would go over to Harris Hill where we owned 80 acres with another shack of a house and a new garage on it, and we started pulling the house to pieces and hauling it home to build a workshop with some of the lumber. We had the house all pulled down and hauled home before the snow went and I had started to build my workshop.

I finished the workshop in less than a week, and then started to build a thirty by fifteen foot kitchen on the back of my new house. I had the posts in to support the kitchen and two of the stringers built and installed, when I first felt the Osteoarthritis that was going to be the cause of me being crippled for life.

It was not very bad at first, but as I kept working on the kitchen, it kept getting more painful. When I was putting the shingles on the roof and I was on my knees a lot, my wife had to make me a pair of pads of sponge rubber for my knees, because I could hardly stand the pain any longer. The pads helped a lot, and I was able to finish the roof before the fall rains came, which were rather heavy that year.

My son that made his home in Oregon came home for a visit in the spring of 1968, and he was just in time to help complete some of the trim around the doors and windows of the kitchen I

had built on the back of my new house. I sure would have liked to have had his help when I was putting shingles on the roof and the tiles on the kitchen floor the previous fall. At the time, I finished laying tile on the kitchen floor by laying on my stomach and sliding around that way from place to place, as my knees gave me so much agony, I could not put any weight at all on them.

At night, when I went to bed, I had to stuff a handkerchief in my mouth to stop the scream of pain when I moved in bed.

I did my best to keep my wife from knowing too much about the trouble I was in, at least until I had the kitchen livable. I knew if I stopped work on the kitchen now, I would never be able to finish it, so I just pushed on with it until it was all done.

January 8, 1978

Dear Friend:

Your very welcome letter came with this morning's mail, and first off, I want to say that I hope you had a very happy Xmas with your new daughter and that you are all well. We had a

good Xmas here with most all of my children and grandchildren visiting over the holidays to wish my wife and me well.

Now a lot of our grandchildren are raising families of their own, which brings me to our youngest granddaughter, Pat's little girl. I am sorry to say I have forgotten her name and cannot think what it is right now. I have seen very little of her since she was born, except when Pat, her mother, is at home on weekends or over the holidays. The little girl sleeps upstairs in her bed, and when her mother is away, my wife has her changed, bathed and fed before I get up around eight in the morning. When the baby is in the downstairs, she is mostly kept in the front room with her grandmother holding and rocking her while her and Danny watch colored TV.

I can't watch colored TV as the colors hurt my eyes too much.

She is a very quiet baby though, cries very little, and sleeps a lot and is growing like a weed.

It is a bit troubling that I cannot seem to keep track of her name.

Why can I remember things that happened fifty or sixty years ago so clearly, as if they had happened yesterday and yet I cannot remember my little granddaughter's name?

It has been many years since some of the unpleasant things happened, still I cannot forget them, and they hurt just as much now as when they happened. Perhaps it is because I have never told anyone about them before until now that I am bending your ear. I have always kept them bottled up inside me, where, if I had talked them over with someone, perhaps they would have died a natural death and I would be free of them. I think that I have talked less in my life than anyone except perhaps a dumb person.

Well, my wife and I have decided to go up with Pat next June or July to her new place up in Red Lake if nothing happens to prevent us from going. I do not care very much about going but I thought it might be a worthwhile experience for me to go along for a while at least. My wife has her heart set on going up there where she can take care of Pat's baby while she is covering her territory, and I don't think I have the right to deprive my wife of that pleasure, seeing as how she wants it so much.

Now I think I will tell you what I have been putting my time in at.

First as you may have guessed by now, I did not buy a new typewriter and instead I have had my old typewriter overhauled by an expert and a decent ribbon put in it. It cost me \$38.12 but I think it was well worth the price to not have to fight cheap ribbons and sticky type. I just got it back yesterday and I have quite a backlog of typing to do.

Of course the expert could not do nothing about the mistakes that I make in my typing, that is entirely up to me, so my friend, you will have to make what you can of the mistakes that I make. My eyesight is about gone, I am sorry to say, and if you can read these letters and make sense out of them, I on my part, will continue to write to you as long as I can see. I have to type much slower now and look for each letter, but so far I seem to be getting along fairly good.

I was up to the city last Wednesday to see a good eye specialist, and he said I had a cataract in my right eye, and would have to have it removed as soon as possible as it was putting quite a strain on my left eye. He recommended three eyes surgeons who could do the operation, so I will have to make a choice soon. He cannot give me a prescription for close up vision glasses until it is removed. He did, however, give me a prescription for long vision glasses and I will have them in a few days.

Since it looks like we are going to be moving up to Red Lake in a few months, I have been quite busy down in the basement sorting out what tools that I want to take with me. I was going to sell them all, but my daughter Pat said to take them up there with her load of furniture and it would not cost me anything. Well I had pretty well all sorted out what I thought I would perhaps need for repairs around the Pat's new home, or if I get a place of my own, when I found out that I would have to pay for the taking the tools along.

You learn something new each day it seems. So now I will have to cut back on what I will take up to Red Lake with me when we move up there.

I am not going to take all the boxes of nails, both new and old, that I have. My boys can use them around their houses. I have hundreds of pounds of them and it is cheaper to take only what I might need than to take all that load up there.

Then I had a lot of duplicate wrenches that I accumulated over the years, so I am just taking one of each and giving the rest to my sons. I have two fishing rods that I want to take with me as my daughter says there is plenty of good fishing in the lakes and the streams around Red Lake, and I enjoy fishing very much and I also enjoy eating fresh caught fish, especially pickerel. There is also lots of game close by, but I am not much interested in game anymore because you have to be very active and able to get around good to go out hunting for game animals. Of course I am planning on getting back the use of my legs again and I have been exercising them every night before I go to bed, but I do not think that my legs are up to hunting.

I came across an item in a paper that my daughter sent me from Red Lake that told how a French Doctor in Paris treated patients suffering from anginal attacks. He had them drink a small glass of wine just once a day with a meal and in time they would be free from cholesterol that

was blocking off the circulation of blood in the arteries of the body and causing these attacks. I started to drink a small glass of wine about a week ago and while I really have not been drinking it long enough to have seen sure benefits from it, it does seem that the attacks are not so numerous as they used to be, or perhaps that is only my mind's wishful thinking. Anyway I feel very much encouraged that I will be rid of them for good in a year or so, and I am not one to give up easily.

Still, I know I have to be careful with this drinking. I know the danger of drinking too big a drink of wine, for I had it demonstrated to me two Xmases ago when my daughter gave me a bottle of beer to drink. I just sipped at it until it was all gone. I did not think much about it at the time, but it must have started my heart pumping a lot faster, for all of a sudden I thought I was going to die right there and then. I know that if I had moved out of my rocking chair that I would have had a heart attack and died as there was too much strain on my heart trying to push that blood faster through my arteries. I think the strain would have been more than my heart could stand and it would have stopped beating.

I think that is why the doctor said a small glass must be used for only one drink a day.

My son Dan tells me there are several books on the market now about this cure for the hardening of the arteries and he said that he would buy one for me the next time he was in town if he did not forget about it. I hope that he gets it as I am quite interested in reading all about it as soon as possible while I have the time to still perhaps get the benefit of it.

I have been filling all the blank tapes that I could afford to buy with music from all the records I have before we move away from here, so that when I go fishing alone, as I most always do, I can enjoy my music and my fishing at the same time. I suppose I will have to stock up on

repellents for the insect hordes that will be up around those waters up there if they are anything like some other places that I have been. I know that where there is a lot of thick bush along lakes or rivers that protect the waters from the strong winds, that is where you find the most insects that bite.

I feel quite proud of our little granddaughter. She is a real beauty and will probably cause a lot of heartaches among the boys as she grows up. I think they should take a good look at her red hair before they make any passes at her. They might regret it if they don't. She is very even tempered right now but I think she is going to be a real spitfire when anyone gets too fresh with her. I know that her great grandmother, who had lovely red hair when she was young, was like that and when anyone abused any of us kids or said anything wrong about our family, she was out on the warpath right away looking for someone to clobber.

This little girl of ours looks very much like my mother and I only wish I could be around to see how she handles herself as a young woman. However I think that is not too likely, given the condition I am in.

I think I am living on borrowed time, and that is a troubling feeling to have.

Her mother was not home over last weekend as she is very busy in her spare time getting her new house up in Red Lake in shape to live in when we move up there. The family that is living in the house at present are living in the top floor and a half, so that leaves the bottom floor for Pat to live in until these other people move out sometime in July, most likely, when my wife and I will move into the floor and a half part of the house. Pat says the one floor is enough for her and her son to live in as her little girl will be living with us as Pat's new job keeps her away from home a lot as she has a very large territory to cover.

I think that is why she wanted us to go up there to live with her and her family, so that my wife and I could look after her house and family when she is away on business, which is most of the time.

I do not blame her for that as she knows how my wife cannot resist a small baby. But I think we should be able to live a life of our own, and my wife should be able to have a rest from looking after other peoples babies. She has been looking after more than a hundred of other people's babies after raising seven of her own. She has been doing this for close on to twenty years now, and they are a lot of work, besides she has never had a full night's sleep in all that time.

I have tried every argument that I could think of to have her say no when they ask her to take on a new born baby, but without any success so far.

According to what Pat tells me, Red Lake is not such a bad place to live. The people are kind and very friendly and make newcomers feel at home right away. They have good TV from Winnipeg and there is a small hospital there with several doctors and nurses, also three banks and some chain stores as well as most services that you can get here in Thunder Bay.

Costs are a little higher and the weather is about the same, so I guess I will give it a try.

I have about two hundred pocket books left and around one hundred hard cover books which I think I will take with me as the people up there might like some new reading material. I have a big box full of jigsaw puzzles, all are around the 1000 piece kind and take a lot of patience and time to put together. I have spent many relaxing days working on them. I think I should take them along too. I have a box full of toys that I have gathered over the years such as a book which, when opened, a hotdog pops out. By the way the title of the book is How To Raise a Dog,

and there is a little man that smokes cigarettes, and a little boy, that when you pull his trousers down, sends a stream of water at you. I also have a glass giraffe that will continue to drink water for hours, although I have to say that the drinking giraffe gets a little tiresome after about five minutes of watching.

Maybe I will leave the giraffe behind.

Well I will have to close now, and I hope that you do not fall asleep reading all this chatter. Best wishes to you and your lovely family.

Your friend,

Sam.

ps

Pat's little girl's name is Joanne. I just remembered.

vistaVision Memories

I Would Never Have Went Near the Place

Spring 1968 - Spring 1970

There was a widow that lived just across the river from us at our new place where we retired to in Rainy River, and she always ask my wife to go in shopping with her when she went to town in her car to do her shopping. Sometimes, when my wife could not go, she would tell this lady what she would like to have her bring out for her, and she always brought just what my wife wanted. When my wife went to town with her, she always paid for the gas and thought it was only right that she should. When there were times when this lady would be going to Fort Frances, that was about seventy miles or so from our place, she would insist that my wife go along just for the ride. If my wife was taking care of a baby for the Children's Aid, she would take it along with her, and they would not get home until quite late.

I did not mind being alone those times, as I had our little dog, Bambi, for company. In the summer time, she would go out to the garden with me and while I worked in the garden, she would prowl around and explore the bush. When she got tired of that, she would lay in the shade of the berry bushes and sleep until I was ready to go back to the house. When she would catch a

mouse in the long grass, she would always bring it to where I was working, and lay it down at my feet and look at me as much as to say, what do you think of that.

I talked to her a lot when we were alone, and I would not want this to get around to my children, but I think that she understood me. I have not told anyone that I thought that Bambi understood me when I talked to her, not even my wife, because I am sure they would think that I was starting to lose my marbles. I have enough troubles with them thinking that as it is without adding to it by telling them that I talked to my dog.

We brought Bambi with us when we came down here to our daughter's place to look after things for her, and it was quite a shock to me when she got killed by a car the very first day that she was down here. I had lost a good and true friend when that happened.

We had a rather bad experience the first year we were up in our last home in Rainy River district. We had neighbors in picking berries out of our garden for their own use. This was in 1968. The neighbor children seemed to think they could pick raspberries and everything else in the garden. They would go after the strawberries, peas, carrots, or anything else they took a fancy to, and destroy most of the plants by just pulling off the tops. They walked all over the strawberry plants and ruined most of them, also they picked the flowers my wife had planted along the edge of the garden. I had two rows of sunflowers the full length of the garden and the first year their parents brought their children with them, the children broke off most of the plants, and the birds got very little seed that winter, especially the Grosbeaks which were a very

beautiful bird. They always fed at our place, both in the spring when they were going to Quebec, and in the fall when they were on there way back to British Columbia.

Usually when the sunflower seeds were just about ripe, the blackbirds from the marshes would come up and start eating them. I had a lot of small plastic garbage bags that I had cut ventilating holes in. I would take these out and put them over the seed heads of the sunflowers and tie a cord around the neck of the bag and the sunflower stalk. The birds could not get at the



The New House and Workshop in Rainy River, 1968

seeds because of the bags, but I had left quite a lot of seed heads uncovered so they could have enough to get fat on before going south for the winter and still leave me plenty to feed the winter birds.

I planted quite a lot of sweet corn each year because the squirrels use to come out of the bush when it was ripe and shell it off the cobbs and pack it away to the bush for the winter. They also got pretty fat and sleek from what they ate while getting ready for the long winter.

Some of the squirrels used the old house on our property to store corn on the upstairs floor. I was up there one winter and found maybe a gallon or more in one corner covered over with some wood shavings that was up there. I remember we had more turnips than we had room for in our cellar that year, so we piled them on the grass by the garden and covered them over

with the tops. Of course that winter they were frozen, but in the spring the deer found them and ate them, tops and all.



My Garden in our Place in Rainy River

There was two half ton truck loads in that pile, but those five deer got rid of them all in about three days.

One thing that I do not understand is why the deer never ate anything in the garden from spring until fall. We always grew lots of nice green vegetables of most every type, and they have waltzed through the garden many times, but I could never find a place where they had even nipped the tops off anything.

I found out the first year we had a garden that they liked spinach. When we took up our garden that fall we left two rows of spinach that had been frozen. The next morning I saw two deer in the garden eating this spinach and by the next day it was all gone right down close to the ground. Next year, I planted two rows of spinach the full length of the garden. The deer never touched it all summer, but as soon as we had taken our garden out, they were in there eating in the next morning and had brought three of their friends along.

I know it may sound foolish, but I had begun to think that the reason the deer did not damage our garden during the summer was because we protected them from hunters all year around and provided them with a few goodies in early winter, and fresh green grass early in the spring, by keeping the snow off our roads so that it did not form ice.

The grass along the roads is green and juicy long before the snow goes off the fields, and the deer come out along the roads to eat in the spring. I do not think the deer had any fear of us, because they use to be around the buildings and on the gardens at night feeding. They would come out in the open quite often and feed where we could watch them. A gun was never fired on my property, and I would not allow anyone to hunt on it, or to cross my property to hunt on someone else's property.

There were several deer that bedded down on the vacant property on the north of me. It was a long narrow strip of land formed by a change of course in the river. It had an old log cabin on it that had no one living in it, and the cleared land had mostly gone back to brush. The only way to reach it was by boat or across my land. I, of course, would let no one cross my land for the purpose of hunting. As the marsh was surveyed as being within the limits of my land, I stopped all trapping or shooting in my marsh. You would be surprised how soon the ducks got to know that they could come up the river to my marsh and be safe there from hunters. The muskrats and mink seemed to get more numerous after I put a stop to hunting and trapping in my marsh, or perhaps I only imagined it.

Just after Xmas of 1969, in the winter of 1970, one of my sons and his wife drove up from Thunder Bay and said they had made all the needed arrangements for me to be admitted to St. Joseph's hospital in Port Arthur on January 29th to have my hips operated on for Osteoarthritis. If I had known then what I know now, I would never have went near the place,

nor would I have consented to the operation, but I guess some things you find out when it is too late to do anything about them.

In January of 1970, I was admitted to the emergency room of St. Joseph's hospital in Port Arthur, about eight in the evening. They did not have a room to put me in, so they had me take off all my clothes and put on a gown that was open down the back, then they put a folded blanket on a hard top trolley affair with a small pillow at the top, and told me that was my bed for the night. They shoved the trolley wagon, with me on it, down into a storeroom for empty boxes and other junk, with one little light bulb in the ceiling where it would be shining in my eyes at all times. I could not lay on my back or on either of my sides because of the pain in my hip bones, and in my knees, so I sat up on the side of the trolley all night. Two nurses came in, each one on a different shift, and tried to make me lay down.

I told them that I could not lay down because the hard top of the trolley hurt my bones, and I could not stand the pain. I said I did not mind sitting up until they had a room for me.

The one nurse said she would have me belted down to the top of the trolley if I did not lay down.

She came back in a few minutes with a male attendant, and they put me into a sort of a jacket and tied me down to the trolley. As soon as they were out the door, I started working the knots, which they had tied under the trolley where I could not reach them, around to where I could work them loose. It took me a long time to get them where I could work on them, but I did

get them within my reach, and soon I was free of that jacket. They had covered me over with a blanket, and when I heard the nurse coming, I again laid down, and after pulling the blanket over me, I closed my eyes. She just looked at me and went back out the door, then I sat back up on the edge of the trolley until the day shift came on at 8 in the morning.



Me, Just Before Entering the Hospital

They had a room for me about nine, at which time I got my breakfast and went to sleep before I had finished. When the nurse came in to get my dishes she woke me up and ask me why I did not eat my breakfast, so I told her what had happened down in emergency, and about the doctor sending my son nearly 500 miles to bring me down to the hospital and saying there was a room waiting for me when there was not. The nurse went out of the room and came back with the head nurse who was in charge of that floor, and I had to tell everything all over again.

That afternoon a Nun came up and ask me all about it and wanted me to sign a complaint, but I said I would not do that as I did not think it was the fault of the staff, but instead was some mixup from higher up in the management. I said it had been an uncomfortable and painful night, but it was over now, and punishing the staff for obeying the orders they had been given was going to do no good to anyone, and perhaps a lot of harm to a few. I said I thought the staff were only guilty of obeying orders they had been given by someone higher up the ladder, and it would please me very much if they would just forget it.

The Nun thanked me and said as long as I would not lay a complaint, there was nothing she could do about it.

Two days after that, I was taken down to the operating room for the operation on my right hip. I knew the time I went down there and the time when I came back to my own room from the recovery room, and it was exactly 54 minutes by my watch. I could hardly believe it, so that night I ask the night nurse in charge of my floor how long the operation took.

She said she would lookup the time in the book and let me know.

She was in again later on, before lights out, and told me the operation had taken exactly 22 minutes.

They had me all rigged out with pulleys and weights when I first opened my eyes in my room after the operation. There was a long bar from the head of the bed to the foot, supported at each end by an upright metal post attached to the bed. On this long bar was a short bar about a foot long with a chain on each end attached to a device on the bar that could be locked by a ratchet in different positions. This is a hand bar for the patient to raise himself when he wanted to move around in his bed.

Then there was a 1/4 inch cable attached by a sling arrangement to the large part of my right thigh going up to the long bar and down back of the head of the bed on pulleys, with a weight of 10 pounds on the end. A hole, 1/4 in. dia., had been drilled through the bone below my knee cap and a bolt put through with an eye on each end to fasten another 1/4 in. cable which went along the overhead bar and down the foot of the bed on pulleys with another ten pound weight on the end of the cable. This contraption was left on until my hip healed.

A husky German employee was in charge of this, and he would come in every morning to check the weights, and when he would look at the one at the foot of the bed he would raise it up a little and let it drop. The first time he did that I passed out from the pain.

When I came to the hospital, I had a big homemade cane with a perfect crook in one end. You can see this cane in the picture I sent you of me before I went in to the hospital. I had found it in the bush several years before when I was clearing land. It was hard and dry and quite heavy. It was hanging on the head of my hospital bed.

When that fellow came around the next day, I had ahold of it by the small end, just under the edge of the top cover on my bed. He was right close where I could reach him quite easily. When he lifted that weight up off the foot of the bed, I told him to hold it and I brought the cane out and showed it to him. I told him if he dropped that weight I would hit him on his bald head as hard as I could with my cane.

He let that weight down very, very gently.

After my leg had healed and the stitches had been taken out, they took the weights and gear away and put up new tackle so that I could exercise my leg. There was a new man in charge of this part of the business. He came from the island of Ceylon. I never did know what his name was. I would start to exercise my leg with those ropes and pulleys first thing when I woke up, for I was very anxious to get back into shape so that I could leave for home as soon as possible.

After I had a wash and shave and had my breakfast, I would start in and exercise my leg until it would start to ache, then I would rest for a few minutes and go back at it again.

When the nurses came in to change the beds, I would stop exercising until they had changed my bed. Then I was at it again until my arms got tired pulling on those ropes. I would lay there and rest a bit, and it always was about this time that this man would come in to inspect the exercising contraption. He would come over and start giving me a very sarcastic lecture about not exercising.

It did no good to tell him that I had been exercising for about three and a half hours before he came in. He was real dirty in the way he talked to me in front of the other patients and nurses too.

I finally figured out that he was putting on an act for the benefit of those young nurses, and when I got around to where I was allowed to go to the gym to exercise, I found out that he was always showing off for the girls.

I guess he was not making much headway with the nurses as he was not a very pleasant or good looking fellow.

Finally one day when he came into my room and was especially nasty, an old man who was a patient in another bed in that ward, said to me, "when are you going to take care of the s.o.b." If I did not do something soon, he said he would get up and beat the living daylights out of him himself.

I said, "there is not much I can do when I am tied up in this bunch of ropes." But I told him to hold off for a week or two and I would be going down to the gym where I would have no ropes to stop me from having a good work out with the colored boy. But he said he would not be

able to hear or see what went on as both his legs had been mangled under the dual wheels of a twelve ton loaded gravel truck.

I told him I would send a man up with a wheelchair to bring him down when I thought the time had come to jump him.

After about two weeks stuck in bed after my operation in that contraption in the hospital, I was finally freed of it and I was sent down to the gym in a wheelchair to work on the parallel bars to limber up my legs. Right away this coon came over and started making fun of the way I walked. There were quite a lot of female patients in there at the time, and he was really letting himself go. I never answered him, just let him go on. When the man who was taking me back up had me back in my room, I ask him if, after he had taken me down the next time, could he please come up and take the old man down in a wheelchair, as he wanted the gym.

He said he would, so I went over and told the old fellow to be ready the next morning to go down to the gym after I had gone down.

The next day the old man was brought down just as the fellow was giving me a hard time in front of a young woman who was waiting to use the bars. He was standing right close to the bars, so I got hold of two handfuls of his long hair and pulled his head over the top bar and pressed down on it with one hand so that his throat was pressing hard on the bar. I held him there with my left hand while I gave him several good hard slaps on each side of his face with my right

hand. I then let his head up, but held onto his hair with my left hand while I told him how he would behave towards me in the future.

I think there must have been fifty or more patients and nurses gathered around watching me slap his face. When I let him go, I told him when I got back the use of my legs, I would come down and really work him over if he did not behave himself.

What really surprised me was to see the Manager of the gym standing away over in the door of his office, watching the whole thing.

After everything was back to normal and I was walking back and forth in the bars, I looked up and there was the Manager standing there watching me in my walking. When he saw that I had seen him, he said he had been wondering how long I was going to take the kind of talk that fellow was giving me. He said the proper way to take care of it was to lay a complaint to him. However, he said I had a very effective way of taking care of it, and he did not think I had to worry about having any more trouble with that fellow.

When the old man was brought back up to our room, I gave the attendant a dollar for making the two extra trips. He did not want to take it, as he said that he enjoyed seeing that fellow get what was coming to him, but I insisted so he accepted the dollar.

The fellow I slapped a bit never came near me again, except when my other leg was operated on, and then when he spoke to me he was very polite and did not have very much to say.

When I went down to the water pool after my operation, a young girl of about twenty was in charge. They used to bring a metal chair up to my room and a pair of swimming trunks. I would put on the trunks and they would put the chair in my wheelchair and cover it with a large blanket, then I would sit on the blanket and they would wrap the rest of the blanket around me as the halls were drafty and cool where we had to pass through on our way to the pool.

When we got there, they would hook a big hook into a ring on the back of my chair and hoist me and the chair up with an electric winch, then run me out over the pool where the parallel bars were and let me down inside the bars, then take the chair back out.

I would have to walk back and forth in there for about half an hour.

I would be walking in water up to my chin all the time, and none of my weight was on my feet or legs. I would have to walk frontwards, backwards and sideways, then stand on one foot and swing my leg back and forwards in the water as high as I could.

When it was time for me to come out, they would let the chair down again and lift me out, then put the blanket back in, wrap me up good so that I did not get a chill and I would go back up to my room.

A few days after I had started to go down to the pool, the attendant forgot to put the metal chair in the wheelchair but did put in the blanket.

When we got down to the pool, the girl that had brought me down said she would have to go back and get the chair.

I said if she would wheel me around to where the steps went down into the pool, I thought that I could walk down into the pool and over to where the bars were.

She ask me how I was going to climb up four feet to get over into the bars. I told her that I had thought of a way to do that too.

She took me over to the steps and I ask her to lock the brakes on the wheelchair. She did that, and I reached over and got ahold of the railings on both sides of the steps and pulled myself to my feet so that I was standing at the bottom step going up over the wall of the pool.

At the time, I had only one operation on one leg, the other, the left leg, had not been operated on yet and was about the same as when I had first came into the hospital.

I used my left leg to go up the four steps, one at a time, and I was able to pull my right leg up each time after I had my left foot on the higher step.

When I started down into the pool on the other side, I put my full weight on my arms and hands holding onto the railing and I let both feet down to the lower step at the same time and so reached the bottom of the pool without any trouble.

The water was only about a foot deep where I entered the pool but kept getting deeper as I moved towards the bars.

Along the top of the pool was a trough about four inches deep to run off any overflow of the pool. It was easy to hold onto as I worked my way to the bars. I put my weight on my hands, moved my left foot along the wall of the pool, then still keeping the weight on my hands, moved my right foot along beside my left foot. In this way it was rather easy to reach the bars.

I told the girl in the pool that I would need her help to get in and out of the bars for the first time or two. I said that I would raise myself up level with the top bar and all she would have to do was keep my legs from rubbing one bar as they crossed over. I got hold of the bar farthest

away with my right hand, and ahold of the one next to my body with my left hand, and lifted my whole body up and over the bar.

My feet cleared the bar quite easy without any help from the girl.

When it was time for me to come out of the bars, I just put a hand on each bar and pressed down and I floated right up and over the bar with no trouble at all.

Everything had worked just like I thought it would.

I had remembered when I was walking between the bars, how little of my weight was on my sore hip, so I thought I could apply that idea to getting in and out of the bar pen. It worked very good and I had no more trouble about getting in and out by myself.

Soon after they started sending me to the pool in the morning, they began sending me to the gym in the afternoon for a half hour of workouts there. I would work out on the bike for about twenty minutes or so, then in the bars for the rest of the half hour. After a few days on that schedule, they changed it so that I spent about twenty minutes on the bike and the rest of the time I would walk around the full size of the gym floor with my new canes.

I was continually telling the doctor that I was unable to bend at my hips, but he kept telling me that it would be alright in a week or two.

It is now going on seven years, and not once in all that time have I been able to bend at my hips. I have worked hard, both in the hospital and at home to get my hips in shape to bend, but so far have had no success, and I do not think I ever will.

I weighed 172 pounds when I went in there in January of 1970, and in exactly one month they had me down to 140 pounds.

One time, as I was going from my room to the gym to exercise my legs and hips, I noticed an old Indian woman sitting off by herself in a wheelchair in a corner. She was just staring at the walls and she looked like she was praying to herself. She was rocking back and forth and I think she was speaking in French and it sounded as though she was very sad and saying good-bye to this world, like she had given up on life.

One of the nurses ask me if she could give this old woman one of the puzzles I had brought to the hospital to work on as she had nothing to occupy her time with and was sinking fast into depression.

I ask the nurse what was wrong with the old woman, and the nurse told me that the old woman was quite sick and was trying to die.

Well that was hard for me to understand at first, but when I saw how sad and lonely that old woman looked as she was sitting there staring at the walls and mumbling to herself, I more than anything else felt sorry for her that she had sunk so low in her life.

I did give the nurse one of my puzzles for to take to the old woman.

After I got my second operation on my other hip, I used to walk up and down the hallways everyday with a walker, and one night the doctor brought up a eight foot long set of parallel bars for me to use out in the hallway.

After I was taken out of the rope exercisers on my bed and given the use of a walker and a wheelchair, my schedule was a very busy one. When I was given a walker, which is a four legged affair made from very light weight metal, with rubber pads on each leg so it does not slip on the smooth floors, I was using it every day to try to limber up my legs and hips. You stand still and lift or shove the walker ahead as far as you can reach, then, putting your hands on the railing along each side, you let your weight rest on your hands as you move your feet to the front railing along the bottom, then continue to repeat these movements as you progress.

I used to get up an hour early in the morning, put on my robe, and take my walker. I would go down to the far end of the hall, get clean pajamas and go into the shower room where there was a nice big hot shower.

I was not supposed to do this unless I had a male attendant along with me.

One morning one of the young night nurses saw me going past and followed me down to where I got my clean set of pajamas. She ask me where I was going, and I said to have my morning shower. She then ask me where was the attendant I was supposed to have, and I told her that he was busy but would be down later. She said he was supposed to be with me all the time, but I then told her we had been working it this way for quite a long time, and that everything was fine. I told her that I really did not need the walker, but took it along to be on the safe side.

She then gave me quite a surprise. She said that she was coming along with me and would stay with me until the day attendant showed up.

I was really caught then but I never let on, I just said sure, come along and away we went.

The shower is divided into two compartments by a plastic curtain. One part is for undressing and dressing, the other is where the shower is. I put my clean clothes on a chair on

one side of the plastic curtain and took off my soiled clothes after I was behind the curtain where the shower was, and hung them over the rod that supported the curtain. When I was through with my shower, I reached through the curtain and got my towel off the back of the chair. When I was dry I reached out and got my clean pajamas off the chair, put them on, and stepped out where the nurse was waiting for me.

She looked at me and said that she thought there was no male attendant coming.

I said no there was not and that I had been coming down there every morning about this time so that I could enjoy a good hot shower, as it helped my leg a good deal to regain its use.

She said that she would not report me and to be very careful and not fall and get hurt.

I told her I could not afford to get hurt as I had a wonderful wife at home counting the days when I would be coming home, and I was not going to let her down by getting careless.

She then told me that she thought I could take care of myself and went away.

I met her several times after that, but she never went to the showers with me again.

After I had the second operation on my other hip I bought two canes and was able to get around much easier.

I did have one spill that could have been very serious. I was walking down the hall to where we had our dinner each day, and had just turned the corner to go through the alleyway to my table, when my right cane slipped on the floor. I had all my weight on that cane as I was stepping down, so I dropped both canes and grabbed the safety railing along the wall.

My body did not hit the floor, but I got quite a bump when I swung against the wall, but was not hurt very much.

Two nurses that were passing came over and helped me to my feet and got my canes for me, and then started to look for what had made me fall. They found a little wet spot about the size of a saucer on the floor where someone had spilt a little water, and as the floors were always waxed, it made my cane not take a hold with the suction cup on the end of the cane.

That was the only time that I ever came close to having a fall while I was in the hospital.

After I had my operation on my other leg, I had a elderly man in the bed right next to me. He was in there to have operations on his hands for arthritis. He had one operation on the first joints in his left hand just before they brought him into our ward. Sometime before, he had trouble with his back, and he was supposed to wear a sort of a corset affair to support his back. He would not wear it though, and when the nurse would put it on him in the morning and then left the room, he would take it off, saying they were not going to make a woman out of him. He said none of the doctors in this hospital knew what they were doing most of the time, and he would not let them work on him anymore.

One morning, four young girls beginning to learn nursing came in and were each appointed to a patient to look after for that morning. I got along fine with the little Japanese girl that was to take care of me, but the old man in the next bed started in to harass the young girl that

was looking after him. She could not do anything to please him, so he started calling her names until he had her crying.

She came over to where my girl and I were playing cards and ask what she should do.

I told her to go and report him to the head nurse.

She said she could not do that, so I pushed the button calling a nurse to my bed, and when she came I ask her to have the nurse in charge to come down, as I had a complaint. When the head nurse ask what was wrong, I told her that the old man in the next bed had been abusing the young girl and had called her an untidy, sloppy slut, and I was laying a complaint to her about him.

She ask the girl if that was so and she said it was.

My girl spoke up and said she had heard it too and thought the old man was being very nasty and mean to this young girl.

The nurse told the old man that if there was just one more complaint about him, that he would be discharged from the hospital at once.

The old man just sat there in his bed and cried, but the nurse told him that she meant every word of what she had said.

About a week or so after the trouble with the old man, I had sores starting to grow on my back from having to lay on it too much. The nurses decided to put a water mattress under me with a small electric pump between the bed of the old man and my bed. The pump worked automatically to keep a certain pressure in the bed at all times.

I woke up the first night, after having been asleep about an hour and a half, and my water bed was completely flat.

I rang for the nurse and she found that my pump had been shut off. She asked the old man if he had shut it off and he said he had not shut it off. The nurse then had the electrician come up and check the motor to see if it could have stuck when it shut off automatically when the pressure was at the right level. The electrician found that the switch that shut off the motor manually, had been shut off by someone. He started it going again and filled the mattress with water and went away, but I stayed awake and watched the old man in the other bed.

I was still awake and watching about an hour later, when I saw the old man lean out of his bed and shut off the motor on the pump.

I buzzed the night nurse and when she came in, I showed her my pump had stopped, and I told her that I saw the old man stop it. She then had the electrician come up and put the pump on the other side of my bed where the old man could not reach it, and I had no more trouble.

The next night, just after the midnight shift came on duty, a nurse came in with a paper for the old man to sign, for to permit another operation on his hand on the next set of joints for arthritis the next morning.

He would not sign it, saying that the surgeon was just a butcher and did not know what he was doing. The nurse went away and soon after, the surgeon, Dr. John Remus, the one that operated on my hips, came in. He explained to the old man that if he did not sign the permit to operate, he could not do so, and if it was not signed by eight in the morning, the old man would have to pay all hospital expenses out of his own pocket, or leave the hospital.

Next morning, he packed up and left the hospital to go to another hospital in Toronto, thinking he would do better there. I do not think he would, as that hospital was sending cases to St. Joseph's Hospital in Port Arthur, that they could do nothing for in Toronto.

I used to have quite a bit of trouble with the nutritionist at the hospital about my meals. I could not eat dill pickles, radishes, hard boiled eggs, fried eggs, consume or any kind of soup, cucumbers, raw onions, any highly spiced foods, or drink the tea or coffee they sent up. When she came up to ask me why I sent so much back at meal time and why I did not drink the tea or coffee, I told her I did not drink coffee, and that when they put the tea bag in the hot water in the tea pot before it left the kitchen, it was like lye when I received it.

I told her if they put the tea bag on the saucer, I would put it in the hot water when it got here and could brew a cup of tea that was fit to drink.

She said she would have them do that, which they did for two days and then went back to putting the teabag in the hot water before my tray left the kitchen.

I then sent it back to the kitchen and drank water from the tap.

The lady ask me why I could not eat boiled eggs and I told her about an experience I had on a threshing crew in the west when we had boiled eggs for breakfast one morning and I cracked mine open and it was rotten. I said I had never eaten a boiled egg since. I said fried eggs gave me indigestion all day when eaten in the morning. I liked scrambled or poached eggs fine.

She came up one day while I was having my dinner in bed and talked me into trying a few spoonfuls of hot consamme.

In about ten minutes they had to pump out my stomach.

I think that convinced the lady from the kitchen that I could not eat that sort of food.

Outside of these few things, I think I was treated real fine while I was there and if I ever have to go to a hospital again, I would prefer one like that.

February 21, 1978

Dear Friend:

I received your nice long letter today and I am quite touched over your concern for my health. Do not worry about me, my friend, as I will live as long as I was meant to and no longer. And except for trying to keep yourself in fairly good shape, there is little anyone can do about it. I know that I will be taking The Long Trip some day, but as far as I can tell, it will not be any time soon.

The boy we were looking after who was going on two years old was adopted yesterday by a young couple. I think he will have a good home with them. My wife feels pretty bad about losing him and so do I. He got into a lot of mischief but you could not help loving him, which we both did and I guess we will miss him for quite a while. We just have the one baby now from

the Children's Aid, another little Indian boy baby who has a problem. His mother is an alcoholic and the effects show on the boy. My wife is trying to keep him alive with the help of the doctors. I think it would be more humane to save the little fellow a lot of agony if they had let him die at birth, but that would be against the man made laws.

About the people I had met in the hospital. They were not all mean, like that old man with arthritis. I had a boy for a neighbor in the bed next to me who had been in a car accident and was paralyzed from the neck down, and would be like this as long as he lived. He was a high school student, and a teacher used to bring in work for him to do so that he could keep up with his class. When exam time came around, I loaned him my typewriter and he used to lay on his stomach with some pillows under his chest and type out his exams very slowly, with one finger the way I am typing this, but not full of mistakes, the way mine is.

Of course his eyes were good, they had not been hurt in the accident, but both his hands had received some damage so that his fingers did not move very freely.

He left our room a few weeks later and I never saw him again until a short time before I was to leave to go home.

I met him in the hall one day in a wheelchair. He said he was in another building where he was getting a special treatment in the hope that he might have some use of his legs, but he said it was not showing very good results. He said he thought he would be tied to his wheelchair for the rest of his life, and the way he said it made me realize just how fortunate I was to be able to hobble around with my canes by myself.

I never saw him again, but I do hope that he was and still is getting some pleasure out of life.

Who was the old lady I saw in the hospital that would not speak to anyone? I never knew her name. All I knew was that she was very old and that she was an Indian by birth, and could not speak any English. A French nurse that looked after her told me that this old lady spoke very good French, and that she came from a tribe just south of Hudson's Bay. I have no way of knowing if the lady wanted to die or not. I think I can truthfully say that I do not think she wanted to be there in the hospital. I make this observation from the way she was not interested in anyone else as far as I could see. She was always alone either in a corner of the room or out in the hallway talking to herself. She may have been praying, I had no way of knowing, but I was told by an Indian in another room that when people in his tribe got too old, they would get in a corner by themselves and pray to their Gods and tell the Gods they would soon be coming, then they would sit there and will themselves to death.

Perhaps the reason she wanted to die was that there was no more hope in her heart or mind, and she had come to a blank wall. That does happen, you know. Just look at the numbers of people, some of them very young, who cannot go on, who take the quick answer to their problems, suicide. They can see no other answer. To them all hope seems to be gone. They think they have only one way to go, and they take it.

It is all too sad to think about.

Well, I went down to the basement a few days ago to finish sorting out the tools that I was going to take with me when we would have to move out to Red Lake. I have never seen such a mess on the floor since I have been here. Danny had been down there for several weeks trying to make an amplifier for a guitar he has. So far he has not had very much success. All I could see was that I would have to clean the place up before I could do any of the work that I had planned.

I was down there for about three or four hours before I had it all cleaned up, so I went upstairs to have my dinner. By the time I had eaten my dinner, my legs were so sore and stiff that I decided not to go down there for the rest of the day. I planned to go down the next day, but when I tried to get out of bed in the morning, I could hardly move. After I had managed to get up and dress, and wash, shave and eat my breakfast, my legs were much sorer than they had been when I went to bed. I walked around my room quite a bit to see if a bit of exercise would take some of the soreness out of them so that I could stand on them again, but it did not help at all.

Well, this is the price of getting old I guess, and like the doctors have told me, I will just have to live with it.

After I had the basement all cleaned up and started to really look around, I found that both 100 watt lights over my workbench were gone and 25 watt light bulbs had been put in the light sockets, also that one of the chains for turning the lights on and off had been completely pulled out of the socket so that the light could not be switched on. Also that the nice smooth top of the workbench had been drilled through with a bunch of holes.

I felt very disgusted about these things and wondered what was the use of trying to learn any of them to be tidy and careful to protect what they would want to use many times. I had spent quite a bit of money and work on getting things so they would be handy and make it more of a pleasure for everyone who had something they wanted to work on where it was both comfortable and handy.

It seemed like no one cared a damn about having things that way and there was not much I could do about it, as I did not own the place.

My daughter Pat was home over the weekend and she said that she came across a house up in Red Lake that was for sale for \$8,000.00. She said it was located on a small hill on a large lot, but needed some repairs. She said that as I wanted my own home that she thought that I might be interested in buying it, but as she had not looked it over, she could tell me very little about it. She did say that she could get pictures and a description of the place from the real estate agent who was selling the place.

I gave her five dollars for to get the copies of the pictures from the real estate agent, and ask her to go and give the place a good inspection, and told her just what to look for.

I guess it will not be much of a house for that price, but as long as it has a good foundation and a solid frame, I think that I can make a good warm comfortable home out of it.

My wife says that I am too crippled to do any work on the house, but she does not know how much I want a home of my own again and does not seem to realize what I can do when I really want something bad enough. I will find the strength and energy somehow to make a nice warm little home of it, and this time I will stay there no matter what happens. I lost my dream home by giving in to pressure to what other people wanted, but never again.

No one could have treated us any better than Pat has, but still it was not my own home and that irked me all the time I have been here, although I have tried very hard not to show it in any way.

Well I must close now my friend, wishing you and your family the best of everything.
Write again soon when you get time. So long for now.

Best wishes,

vistaVision Memories

Leaving My Dream Home

1971 - 1974

When I arrived back home from the hospital late in 1970, I sent at once to Eaton's in



After the Hospital

Winnipeg for an exercising bike. It cost me a little over \$60.00. I exercised on it every day in the winter, as well as sawing, splitting and piling about four cords of stove wood. I shoveled paths through the snow that first winter I was home from the hospital and did whatever work I could outside, and went around 15 miles each day on my bike.

Still I was unable to bend at my hips.

That next spring, in 1971, when the ground dried up, I got out my RotoTiller, attached it to my little 7 h.p. garden tractor and rototilled the whole garden

twice, and I always had a big garden of over an acre. I then, with the help of my wife, put in the seeds, but first I would rake and smooth the whole garden level with a garden rake. I would make the holes and the drill rows for the seeds with a hoe, and my wife would put in the seeds, and I would go along and cover them with the garden rake. This took an awful lot of walking and I know if my hips were ever going to bend they should have been starting to loosen up by the time the garden was all in, but they never did, not one little bit.

I was in the hospital again later in 1971 to finally have an old hernia sewed up that I got when I was on the broke beaters at Great Lakes Paper back in the 1940s.

My old partner in security at Great Lakes, Fred Robinson, was over in St. Joseph's at the same time that I was in there having that hernia sewed up. He was having quite a time breathing as he had put on so much weight. He said he weighed two hundred and fifteen ponds when he came into the hospital and was still gaining weight.

I told him the best thing he could do to get rid of some of it was to cut down on the meals that he was eating and stop all the liquor at once that he drank every day. I said I did not drink or eat heavy meals. I only eat what I thought I needed to carry me through the day and I did not drink at all. Then I said he should buy a twelve foot boat and go up to Oliver Lake, which was a quiet lake close to town, and get in the boat and row around the lake and fish for several hours a day. I said he might not catch many fish but a good spell of rowing each day would soon get rid of a lot of fat and he would feel much better each day as he kept at it. It would become much easier after he got used to it by starting off and rowing for a few minutes at a time and gradually increasing his time at the oars as he progressed.

I looked Fred up the next time I was in town a year or so later and he was fatter than ever. I ask what happened to the boat, and he said that he sold it as it was not producing results very fast. I told him that he did not get in that condition fast so how could he expect to get out of it fast. I said it would take time and a lot of hard work on his part to get back to where he was when he was in good shape. I said the first year would be the toughest, but after that it would be smooth sailing for him and that he would enjoy himself as long as he kept himself in shape.

He said, "oh hell, it's not worth the effort, it's too hard."

I said, "it is your body to do what you wish with it, and you are the only doctor that can get rid of all that fat and give your body a chance to show what it can do." I told him that doctors could do nothing about it if he did not cooperate with them. He said he knew all about that, the doctors he had seen had all told him the same thing.

I think if I had been able to be with him every day, that I could have got him going again and kept him going until that would have been all he thought about, but I had my life to live and I was badly crippled too.

Every spring, after I got out of the hospital, I had a garden and I used my little 7 horsepower tractor to do much of the heavy work of turning the soil, and then I would spend the rest of the summer working the land by hand as best as I could with the increasing pain I was getting in my legs and hips from trying to make them bend properly.

By 1974, things had gotten so bad that I could not bend down anymore to get weeds out without near passing out from the pain. I realized that if I did not do something about this I would have to give up gardening altogether as I could not ask my wife to do the weeding as well as keeping the house nice and clean for us, and doing all the preserving and cooking. She was getting on to 65 and she had her hands full.

So one time after I had a pretty bad day trying to pull up weeds, I went into my work shed and watched the birds for awhile and began to think through that problem of me doing the weeding without passing out from the pain. Right then I decided that I could beat this one like I had beaten most of the other tough problems I have had to face. I decided that I could come up with a way to let a person in my condition still get rid of the weeds in his garden.

Weeding is not just pulling up anything that is not a vegetable. Weeding means pulling unwanted plants out by the root, and that means that weeding also has to loosen up the soil to free the roots so that they can be pulled out completely, without leaving any part of them behind or they will just grow back. Loosening up the soil is good for another reason because it lets air get down into the soil around your plants, which lets water get in better, and which encourages the growth of worms. Worms fertilize the soil and feed your plants. So weeding is really a complicated and important affair.

Now, I tried different types of hoes over the years and I noticed that the ones with blades just chopped things up. This was not much good because it left the roots in the ground and in a few days they all come back. If you try to use a blade hoe to plough up the ground, you run the risk of accidentally chopping into the vegetable plant root, and this will kill it. What is needed is

a tool which breaks up the soil and pulls out unwanted plants without affecting the vegetables.

And because I could not bend down very good anymore, this tool has be used while standing up.



I got busy in my workshop on this problem, and I think I came up with a good answer.

Garden Claw

I took one of my blade hoes apart for to get the handle and the end fitting without the blade. Then I got three four inch spikes and bent them each a little left. Then I got an old horse shoe I still had from when I had a team, years before. I got my little electric welder and I welded the bent nails to the horse shoe so that they stuck out down, like long thorns with a kind of twist to them, and then I welded this horse shoe affair to the metal fitting for the hoe. I re-fastened this to the hoe handle.

I tried this out and it did a pretty good job of loosening the soil without bothering the vegetables when I pushed it down into the ground and twisted it. But it was still too hard to twist because I could not get a good grip on the hoe handle. So I took this tool back into the work shed, and about four feet up from the claw I had made at the bottom, I attached a handle bar from an old bicycle the previous owner of our place had left behind with some hose clamps and wood screws. I even put handlebar grips on this so that my hands could get a good grip.

It was a strange looking hoe, but when I got it outside and tried it, I was amazed at how handy this thing was at penetrating and loosening the soil around my plants, and ripping out weeds without disturbing my vegetables. All I had to do was lift this thing a little by the handlebar and drive it down so that the bent nails went into the ground about two inches and then twist the hoe by the handlebars so that the nails loosened the soil and pushed themselves back up

out of it, then repeat the process again. All the weeds were tore out by the roots and just left laying on the top to dry out. I did not even have to bend down to pick them up.

I was telling a neighbour about this handy tool one day, and he seemed quite interested, so I showed him how it worked.

Boy I wish I had never done that.

This was the fourth time in my life when I lost out on a fortune.

This neighbour had a son who worked in the garden tool manufacturing business, and about a year after I showed my garden tool to the neighbour, I saw on the TV a garden tool which looked an awful lot like the one I had made, and they were selling it for \$19.99 a copy.

I should have been the one getting \$19.99 a copy, not this company.

I wrote to the son who ran this company and told him that he was making a lot of money off someone else's hard work, and that since I had invented this tool, he should be giving me a portion of that money.

A few months later I got a letter from the lawyer of that company telling me I was not entitled to anything because I did not own the rights to this tool, and that as I had never even met the son, there was no link between me and him which would justify my claim.

There was a link. It was the father of the son.

Maybe someday I will learn to keep my mouth shut when I have a good idea.

Anyway, getting back to my gardening after I was out of the hospital, I would start raking and leveling at one side of the garden and work to the other side, and when I was through all the garden, I would go back and do the same thing all over again to kill any weeds that had grown up, and to keep the soil loosened up so things could really grow. That is why, when people saw

my garden, they would say it was the best they had ever seen. I learned this way of doing a garden when I was a boy and worked in market gardens.



Me and My 7 hp Tractor with Mower Attached in Happier Times

My wife mowed all the ground that was kept mowed using a power mower, and we had a lot of grass to cut as it grew real good on that land and had to be cut often. I tried to use the power mower at times but had to give it up as I could not keep up to it. When I used my little 7 hp. tractor with the mower attached to it, I could put it in low gear and that was just the right speed for me to be able to keep up to it.

If I slowed the grass mower speed down to where I could keep up to it, it would stop when it got into a thick bit of grass, then I would have to start it again, which was agony for me to try and bend over enough to work the starter.

Altogether there must have been about four or five acres of grass to be kept mown, and my wife had to do it all, and it was really too much for her to do. I always had two mowers ready to go, with blades sharp and tanks full of gas and the oil tank full too. I always cleaned them up

good after each time that she used them and checked them for loose nuts or bolts. Sometimes an old piece of scrap iron would work its way up through the ground, when that happened it meant a lot of filing to get the blade sharp again.

We lived there, at our place in Rainy River, until my daughter Pat came up for a visit one time in 1974 and was telling us about what the vandals were doing to her house while she was away at work, up in Geralton at the time.

That started the ball rolling for us leaving the house we loved so much.

She wanted us to sell our place, and come down and live in her home free of rent, just to let people know there was someone living there all the time. I thought it would be a good thing for my wife, then she would not have to mow all that grass in the summer, or work so hard getting in coal and wood in the winter, besides walking out a quarter of a mile to the mail box in the winter. I would be closer to a doctor and to a hospital if I should need one.

But it was an awful feeling to leave that place which I had grown to love more than any place I had ever owned.

I thought it over for a very long time before I agreed to sell our home and move down here, but my wife had rights as well as me, and they had to be considered. She was getting old too, and she had a very hard life and deserved a rest in her declining years, and I thought this was a good chance for her to have it.

Apparently I still had something to learn about my wife.

That last place we had in Rainy River was a very beautiful place, the type of a place we had always wanted in our old age. There was lots of wild life and the insects were no problem there, except the ticks you would get in the long grass. There were not so many ticks after the new community hall was built and the municipality started to burn the grass off every year on my land south of our home, to protect the community hall from fire.

When the river started to open in the spring we would often see otters come out onto the edge of the ice and eat a fish they had caught. Sometimes two of them would come out at once and start to scuffle and play in and out of the water. In the summer evenings when the moon was bright, we would see mink and muskrats swimming around in the marsh, and in the day time we could look out over the marsh and see dozens of turtles sunning themselves on logs.

It was such a beautiful place.

We always had a breeze blowing around our house, and along with that and the swarm of swallows that were always flying around feeding, the mosquitoes did not have much chance to bother us. If a person had a boat and went down the river about three miles, you would be in Lake of The Woods, and also in the new Provincial Park with its nice beaches. There was real good pickerel fishing at the mouth of the Little Grassy River where it enters the lake, when they are running in the spring. There was so much peace and quiet there, just what I had been looking for all my life.

It was a very tough decision for me to make to go away and leave everything and perhaps never see it again, and perhaps never own my own home again. If I am ever left alone, I will go back up there and try to buy back that home, no matter what the price is.

April 3, 1978

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter yesterday and it has taken me quite awhile to read it. I also received a letter from a friend in Milton, Ontario, telling me that my brother Joe had been quite sick in a hospital in Milton, and that he was so sick that they moved him to a hospital in Burlington. I had, of course, to write her a letter of thanks for letting me know right away about my brother's condition and that took up all the time I had last evening.

I read your letter over again this morning to be sure that I had not missed anything, and so have plenty of time now to answer your letter the best I can.

To begin with, I would rather you did not waste paper by writing on every other line. It does not help me any to read your letters, as my eyesight is failing quite fast. I use a big magnifying glass to read any written word with pen or pencil now. It is much slower with the big glass but I think I get all the meaning out of your letters just the same. When I can no longer read with my magnifying glass, I guess I will be completely blind.

I have most of my tools packed and books that I am taking up there, but I still have quite a bit to do. Of course I still have better than two months to do it in, but time seems to really fly here now. The last time I had movers bring my things down to Pat's place, some of them went missing. This time, I have made a complete list of everything I have packed and I also have a complete list of all my records, large and small, of their serial number, also my tapes for my cassette recorder and equipment for recording tapes. I am going to show this list to the movers when they come to pack these things up to let them know that I have a record of everything, perhaps that will make them think twice about taking some of my things for themselves.

When I was in to see the doctor the other day, I got him to write out copies of the prescriptions of all the drugs that I take for different things that I am afflicted with. I tried to get him to increase two of the drugs that I take to hold off these anginal attacks, as I am having them much more often now than I did when I first started taking them. Before I went up to see him, I had been out of those particular drugs for five whole days. I had been taking massive doses of Aspirin tablets, with ice cold water to hold these attacks off. The Aspirins blunted the pains but did not stop them.

It was a very dangerous thing to do, and I knew it.

I told him what I had been doing to hold off the attacks, and he just said that I was taking a big chance of dying.

I told him that would be a big relief for me if I could do that instead of having to fight every doctor that I had to get enough pills each month to keep the terrible pains away. I said as far as I knew, there was no cure for these attacks, so why go on fighting them off.

He just said that he could not prescribe more pills than I was now getting each month. He said to try and get more exercise and that might help hold the pains off.

Then I told him that was what brought the pains on real fast and I told him that I did not think that he was a very good doctor and it would be a relief to get up to Red Lake where I had been told that there was a very good doctor that had quite a few cases like mine and his patients were getting along fine and were out walking most every day when the weather was good.

He then said that was where I should go for treatment then, and perhaps I would benefit from having him.

I will have to say that this last doctor that I have had here and the one I had before him, never checked me over at all to really see if there was anything that they could do to make things a bit easier for me. They did not seem the least bit interested in me at all. I had a good doctor when I was over in Port Arthur, and every time I went there he gave me a good going over, and when I ask for stronger pills for these attacks, I got them and that kept the attacks off much longer. But he went over to the States where he could do better and I had to do the best I could with what was available.

Since I have lost the use of my legs and cannot do the work that I used to do, I am paying a very high price with my body, which is giving me terrific pain at times and is slowly deteriorating from lack of use.

I went down to the garage the other day to get a long handled pair of grass shears that I had. I had taken them all apart when I packed them in my tool box, and when I got the various parts out and laid them on a table that was in the garage I noticed that there were parts missing.

The handles of the grass shears had plastic handles like a bike has on the end of the handle bars.

When I came to get them to put them on, they were gone.

There were several boys in the garage, including Pat's son Danny.

I ask the boys if they knew what happened to them but no one seemed to know.

Well the boys all went away, except Danny, and he said one of the boys must have taken them to put on his bike's handle bars.

I told Danny that he knew the boys that were there and to keep his eyes open and if he saw them to tell the boy if they were not brought back within a week I was going to call the police and have them look for them. I said if they were returned in good condition, I would say no more about them and there would be no more trouble.

I just wanted those handles back for my grass shears.

Well yesterday morning when I opened the drawer in my desk to put in the case that I had for my glasses, there was the two handles for my grass shears. I have not mentioned it to anyone or ask Danny any questions, but I believe that he told the one who had taken them what I said if they were not returned in about a week, and the boy thought it over and gave Danny the handles to return to me.

I do not want to know who took them as it would not benefit me in any way, but I think that whoever took them has learned a lesson that he will remember, that there is ways of finding who the thief is, and it could cost them more than what they stole is worth. Once they realize this, I do not believe they will ever do it again.

There is a lot of this going on all over the world and it is a bad thing and I think a lot of this is the fault of the parents not paying enough attention to the training of their children in the

early years of their life. Most parents that I know are too busy with their own affairs to take time to listen to what their children are talking about, or how they spend their time when they are away from home. I think most children at a very early age know more about what is going on than their parents did when they got married. There is not enough discipline in most homes and certainly not near enough love and respect.

Also, when I see the way some people waste things, I think back to the days when we did not have very much and think that perhaps if people today were to experience those times they would make better use of what they are wasting and be much better off. When people are up against hard times and have just barely enough to survive, that is when they realize just what they can do to survive, and it is a good education that everyone should experience.

About the place my daughter found for me to buy around Red lake. I get more information about it whenever my daughter Pat has a few minutes to talk to me. There is so many people calling her that know just when she is available and that have something they want to talk to her about, that my wife or I get very little time to really get to have a complete conversation with her. However I did manage to get talking to her for a few minutes last night before she went to bed and what she told me voided all my plans for the present of again owning our own home.

Here is what she told me.

The nearest village to the place we were to buy is Madsen, about eight or nine hundred yards from the place. I had been given to understand that it was quite a large village, with a population of several hundreds. I found out that was years ago when it was a mining town. Now

most of the houses are empty or have been moved. Now there is just a post office and a very small store and a few scattered houses.

This is not good for my wife to do any shopping. Also, there is no hospital nearby, which is not good for me. I found that Red Lake was about seven miles by road from Madsen, much too far for my wife to walk when she wants to go shopping, so I am not going to buy it at any price.

Pat says that there are plenty of places for sale up around Red Lake, but she has only had time to investigate a very few of them. She says there is a very nice log cabin on a lake close to town that she says is for sale, very reasonable priced, that would be a good buy for me when I wanted to go fishing, or to spend a summer on the shore of this lake. She says that it has no modern conveniences like bath and electric lights, but then a person can always have a bath in a cool lake and go to bed when it gets dark which is about eleven pm in the summer and you can get up about four am, that is about the time it gets light in the spring.

I will look into that place when we get up there.

We have seen an awful lot of prospective buyers coming out to Pat's place without letting us know before hand that they were coming. Sometimes the mother and father bring the whole family and they tramp through the house just like they own it already, talking and laughing real loud and waking up the two babies, and it takes my wife quite awhile after the people are gone to get the babies settled down again.

I told her to phone the agent and tell him that he must notify my wife at least an hour before they were to arrive from now on and they would have to be quiet while they are in the

house. If he did not notify her before they came out, she would not let them in to look the house over.

I told her if they tried to force their way in to just give me a call. I would see that they did not get in. If they are too noisy they will be told to leave at once, after all, they do not own the place yet.

My wife has been about worked to a frazzle trying to keep the house clean and in perfect shape for these visitors, besides looking after the babies from the Children's Aid, and Pat's baby girl whose name I cannot remember just now, and thirteen year old Danny.

Well I had better close now as my wife says that supper is on the table. So I will say good by for now and hope to hear from you again soon.

Your friend,

Sam

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If I end up being a little slower answering your letters in the next couple of months it is because I have an awful lot of things I have to do before we move up to Red Lake. There are a lot of letters I have to write to people and businesses telling them of my change of address for example, and because it takes me so much time to write even one letter these days, there are never enough hours in a day. Once we are settled up there, things should get back to normal.

vistaVision Memories

Moving to Thunder Bay

1975 - 1976

In the early spring of 1975, we did at last make up our minds to come down here to live at our daughter's place. We sold our home to a young couple with two children, and had everything packed ready for the truck when it came to load up. We got the truck loaded and on its way to Fort Frances, and the young man and his wife who were the new owners drove us down to the railway station at Rainy River.

The train that we traveled on to Thunder Bay was a diesel two car train, which gave us a mighty rough ride. It rained most all the way down and was raining when we arrived. We took a taxi from the station out to our daughter's place, where we now live, and we have been here ever since. We had a bit of supper when we first got here, and then got our beds ready and turned in for the night.



My Daughter Pat's House

except one, would all have to be pulled down and rebuilt. Brush and weeds had grown up most everywhere and would have to be cleared away.

I decided I would have to get a piece of land worked up for a garden and for fruit trees and berry bushes before my plants and seeds got here. The ground was still too wet to plow and I did not think the frost was out of the ground yet where I wanted to have the garden.

I decided to clear out some of the useless things the former owner had left in the basement and put them in one of the old, better preserved buildings outside.

As the walls of the basement had never been painted and it was very dark there, even with the lights on, I decided to get some white paint and give it a good covering of white paint. I would have all the next winter to do the painting and any fixing to be done in the basement, so I thought I should leave most of the basement work until then and instead do what I could to get a

The next morning, our first full day at our daughter's place, I helped get our bags packed away in our rooms, and then went out to give the place a good looking over to see what had to be done about cleaning up and repairing things. Outside, I found that my daughter and her brother Dan had done a pretty good job of getting rid of most of the scrap iron that had been on the place for about 35 years. The side buildings,

place ready for the garden in the spring. I had my seeds ordered, due to an early order bonus on them, also some berry bushes and strawberry plants that were to be shipped at planting time. So I got a good sharp hoe, a rake, and a grub hoe, and started to work to prepare a garden around back of the old blacksmith shop on my daughter's property.

I cut off weeds and small brush with my hoe, and used the grub hoe on larger trees and roots. Every tree that could be used for firewood, I trimmed up with an axe that I had got real sharp. I piled them to one side to cut up later on for firewood for the cookstove we were going to set up in the basement.

I would clear a small patch at a time of weeds and brush, which I would then rake into a pile on the road. Then I would use the rake and the hoe to dig and pull all sizes and shapes of pieces of scrap iron out of the ground until I had it clean of the smallest piece of iron, glass, wire, wood or rubbish of any kind. I kept at this until I was very near the far end of the building. After taking out such a large amount of scrap iron and all sorts of other rubbish from along this building, it left a low place where the water might lay for a long time. I decided to fill it in with soil from a nearby ridge that was quite a bit higher.

I chopped this ridge up with the grub hoe and raked the grass and roots out of the loose soil and then raked the soil into the hollow and leveled it off with the other land the best I could. I kept this up for days until I had everything looking fairly good. I think I could have made a better job of it if I had the full use of my legs, but hobbling around with my canes and being unable to bend at my hips handicapped me quite a bit. However I did get it done and it looked much better.

That first spring after we got here to my daughter's place, the spring of 1976, I had dug up about three or four hundred pounds of mixed scrap iron, as well as a lot of several other kinds of rubbish which my daughter hauled away in a half ton truck when she was home over the weekend. The scrap iron was put in a nice tidy pile by itself, out of the way, and I went to work on a large pile of old lumber of all kinds that had been just left there to rot. I sorted it out, and what could be used for firewood, I cut into stove lengths with my swede saw. Any that was still sound enough to be used for building, I piled to one side for future use.

The man who owned the house before my daughter bought it was a timber contractor for a good many years. He was also a blacksmith and did all his own repair work. It sure was a mess around the buildings of scrap iron, old lumber, logs, glass, and old wire.

After I had cleared that eyesore up, I left all the wood I had sawn out on the road in the sun to dry out good before putting it away for the winter. I got my rake and started raking up all the leaves where this old lumber had been piled. I found a lot more scrap iron amongst the leaves and a lot of broken glass. There were some broken benches and other shop materials, such as shelves and different wooden forms that had to be pulled apart, and the nails and bolts taken out and put in a pile of old junk of all kinds. I got this all cleaned up and cut what wood I could into firewood for the cook stove.

My son Ben brought up a load of ends of 2 x 4s in his 1/2 yd gravel box on his big gravel truck. With that, and with what I had gathered up and cut, we would have enough wood to keep our cook stove going for a year or more. There were several dead dry trees to be cut down for firewood but I could not cut them down as I could not bend over far enough to cut them off at the bottom.

I finally got one of my sons to come over and cut them off for me.

When my daughter came home on a long weekend, she hauled all the rubbish away to the garbage dump in her half ton truck. The whole place was a lot tidier and better looking when we were all through with the moving of this rubbish. By this time it had been raining off and on for several days, so I could do no more in the garden, so I decided to start painting the cellar walls.

Whoever had built those concrete walls, had done a very poor job. They were full of holes where the concrete had not been properly worked inside the forms, so had left spaces between the too coarse gravel that had been used. It looked to me like whoever had mixed the concrete did not know very much about what he was trying to do.

I mixed up some base sand and some cement and tried to patch up these holes, but they were dry and full of dust and I was not able to do as good a job of it as I would have wished.

It did look better after I was done however, and I had to be satisfied with that.

On the west side of the basement there was one place, when it rained, where the water would squirt out of the wall onto the floor. There was a ditch about four inches wide and three inches deep all around the basement floor to drain away the overflow from a spring well in the south end of the cellar. When there was a rainy spell, which there was a lot of when I came down there to live in 1975, that ditch had to be kept clear of all obstructions or the water would flow out onto the floor. Anything that got into that ditch, however small, would cause it to overflow.

I made a suggestion that I get some four inch pipe and deepen the ditch to have it below floor level, but was voted down by my daughter's husband, who said it would not work. So we were stuck with always checking that ditch to keep it clear.

I had said I would pay for the pipe and install it, but nothing doing said the husband.

I guess he thought I was interfering in their home too much, so I said no more about it and got busy with the painting of the walls.

I started out painting the walls with an electric paint sprayer that I had bought. It did not use air at all. It did not do as good a job as I would have liked it to do, so I bought a four inch brush and painted the whole thing by hand with that, twice. The cellar was about 40 feet long and 32 feet wide and about 7 feet high. It took me the most of the first fall and winter here to paint it as the paint did not dry very fast due to the air being a bit damp from the spring. While waiting for the walls to really dry good before I started to put on the second coat, I built another work bench, a cabinet to hold my clothes in my room, and I put up some wiring to bring lights over to my work area and I made myself a workbench out of scrap lumber I found around the old buildings, and bought some hardboard to put a nice smooth top on it, and I thought that would be all I would need for what little work I would have to do before I die.

When the walls were dry, I got busy and went over them again, and when finished they improved the basement a good deal, making it more brighter and cleaner looking. I thought it would stay like that for years as I had bought the best paint possible. The six gallons I had put on those walls, had cost me well over \$60.00.

One thing that I had not taken into consideration was the damp air in the summer when the furness was shut off. The next winter, the winter of 1976, when the furness on again and the air and walls dried out, the paint started to come off like powder and kept on coming off. And there was nothing I could do to stop it.

July 16, 1978

Dear Friend:

Well here I am up at Red Lake. I must apologize for the long time that has past since I wrote you, but as we got closer to moving day, things to do just piled up and completely took over. Now that we are all up here, I can take a day off from unpacking to at last write to you and let you know that I am still alive and kicking, although I think it was touch and go a couple of times on the way up here.

I have to tell you that I felt very discouraged this morning when I got up and I have been sitting here wondering if the struggle to stay alive is worth the effort. I had a very bad night last night. At ten past ten pm, I had three severe anginal attacks in less than half an hour. Each attack lasted about five minutes. I have never had three attacks so close together before, so I thought my time had come to go. However I survived them all, and when I went to bed at eleven, after doing my usual exercises, I tested my pulse for it's reactions.

Well I could feel my heart and it was not performing as it usually did when I checked it every night before going to sleep. It would beat twelve times real regular then took off and beat so fast and so very weak that I thought any minute it was going to stop. It was quite interesting

to lay there very quietly and feel the way it was behaving. And I was quite scared. But after what seemed a long time to me it got back in to its steady rhythm that it always had and I finally managed to get to sleep.

I woke up this morning still feeling a little weak and knowing that I really am living on borrowed time. To top it all off, the weather has put in it's two cents worth as it has been raining for several days now.

All of this has got me quite down.

Then there is this. Some time ago, I got my daughter in Winnipeg to get me some typewriter ribbons so that I could stock up on them for when I got up here. I told her to get me ribbons that were black on both sides. I had to put in a new ribbon this morning to write this letter, and when I got the ribbon out of the box, I found that one side was red. I checked the others and all of them had one side red. Well, I paid \$2.79 for each ribbon thinking that they were all black ribbons, now I find that I am only going to get half of what I paid for. I guess that helped to give me a bad morning too.

Years ago, something like getting a wrong coloured typewriter ribbon would not have bothered me all that much. I would just have gone back to the store with it and exchanged it for the right one. Today, I cannot just go back to the store, and something like this turns me sour on the whole day. It goes to show you how my world has shrunk, and that too has got me wondering if the struggle is worth it.

Well, enough of my troubles, I should get on to telling you about this new place here.

Red Lake is about 500 miles northwest of Thunder Bay, on a paved highway all the way. It is a beautiful country in it's wilderness most all of the way. With it's many lakes and small

rivers and the tremendous growth of forest, it is quite breathtaking and wonderful to look at on the way up here. There are some scars from forest fires, but they are rapidly disappearing under the new growth of trees. Most of the lakes and rivers are as yet unpolluted and look clean and fresh and make one feel just like taking off their clothes and enjoying a good cool swim, at least that was how I felt when I first saw them.

After we got past Dryden, the air was fresh and clean the rest of the way and it was a pleasure to breath it. I just did not seem to be able to get enough of it after we passed that awful smell from the Dryden paper mill. The waters around Dryden are very badly polluted from this mill and although they have been warned many times to clean up the pollution and stop dumping their waste into the river that goes past their mill, so far they have done very little about the problem and continue to dump their waste into the river.

From Dryden up to Red Lake it is a very clean and unpolluted land and I hope that it stays that way.

Red Lake is a very busy little town with several other small towns around it where there have been mines that are now closed and other new mines that have been opened up lately. What I saw made me like the country and the people more than ever.

People that I have met and talked to are very friendly and pleasant to talk to and some have a wit that is quite refreshing. They all seem to be happy to be living in such a pleasant place and the children all seem to be carefree and happy too. The ones that I talked with never complained about anything while I was talking to them, and the storekeepers were especially cooperative in trying to supply what you wanted to buy.

Most all the roads around here are paved and they say they are kept open in the winter and in good shape the year around. There is good water supply, along with Hydro and garbage pick up service, but no mail delivery so far. The telephone service is good, also TV, although we do not have our antenna up yet as the man we tried to get to put it up is swamped with work.

My son and I and my daughter arrived here a couple of days ago in the late afternoon about six-thirty. My wife and Pat and her two children, stayed down at the other place in Thunder Bay over the weekend to see that everything was loaded on the truck and then they all came up on Monday. The truck got here Monday evening and just unloaded the beds so that everyone would have a place to sleep. Tim went home on Sunday night in order to get to work on the Monday at the college in Port Arthur where he is an instructor in the welding department. My daughter, Mary, stayed here until the others came up as she wanted to look after me and keep me company until the others arrived and took over.

It is about three hundred miles up here from Thunder Bay and in my opinion it is very beautiful country, although my daughter Pat says that I have seen nothing yet.

This house that Pat bought is sure a lovely home. It looks inside like it had just been built. There are three bedrooms on the main floor, a large kitchen, also a very large bathroom with tub and shower. I never seen so many big closets for to store things in before. My room is just across the hall from the bathroom and it is a lovely room with a thick rug covering all the floor. Next to it is a spare bedroom and then next to the big kitchen is my wife's room. At the end of the hall by the kitchen you go down about three steps and can go outside, or turn left and go down some more steps into Pat's apartment in the basement. You can also walk right into her apartment from the level ground outside.

The house is built into the side of a hill and there is a stairway at the front and one at the north side of the house which we usually use so that we do not have to walk over the front room carpet to track in the soil from outside as just part of the yard has been sodded so far. The paved highway going to town is just about fifty feet or so in front of the house. There are houses across the road on a flat place that at one time used to be a lake but has now all been filled in with rock and soil, so I have been told. They have trouble with dampness and there is one lovely big house straight across the highway that they are going to tear down next year and rebuild on a solid concrete foundation.

The lady of the house was over to visit my daughter and I on the first day we were all here and brought over a nice dish full of wild strawberries.

I went up to the bank this morning when they first opened up to have my account transferred up here, but so far I have heard no word from the bank that it has been done. When we went to the bank we took a taxi and I was told it would only cost me two dollars to go to town. But the one Mary and I hired had a meter on it and when I paid him off it cost me two dollars and thirty-six cents, so I did not tip him anything. I found out later that he took us in a roundabout way and if he had taken us straight to town it would have showed less than a dollar on his meter.

Well I guess you have to find out for yourself just who is the crooked ones in every place you live, and I guess this place has a few of them like any other place. I suppose he thought we were tourists, which some people consider fair game up here.

It is raining right now, with a wind that blows right in the big open door of the garage. There are no windows or electricity in the garage yet, and Pat plans on having some windows

and the electric power installed, but to get someone to do it is another matter altogether. I told her some time ago that I could put in both those things for her, but she said she did not have me come up here to work myself into an early grave. She said the building business was sure to slacken off here soon and there would be plenty of help available before too long.

Well if she does not wish me to do it, I am not going to push my way into the job, but I have always done my own building and wiring of the houses I have built, and if I do say so myself, they have always passed inspection by the official inspectors. I like doing that kind of work, and I like to be busy, yet, my children all seem to think that I am too old and crippled to do these things any longer.

If I can get enough money together to build another home for my wife and myself I will surprise the lot of them with what I can still do, I am sure of that.

When I was packing my tools and things to come up here, for example, my two youngest sons kept coming over wanting to help me pack. I thanked them for their offer and told them if I needed help I would let them know, but I never called on them for I was busy enjoying myself for I had something to do after sitting around the house for months with nothing to do. I packed heavy boxes and while I had quite a time lifting some of them, I thought of different ways to do it to get around me being crippled and I managed alright and felt very good while doing it.

It might surprise a person what one can do by trying out different ways of doing it. It formulates one's mind too, so that when you have other problems, you can come to grips with them and solve them much more quickly than usual. I have found it this way and have solved many things when I thought there was no solution for them. It seems to me that there is an answer to every problem if a person will only concentrate on it and take his time and think things

out very calmly. There is no use trying to rush things when you have a serious problem on your hands.

I guess I had better close now. We are still quite busy getting unpacked and settling in, but it should not be too long before everything is back to normal. Bye for now and write when you get time, as I will be looking forward to hearing from you.

Give my best wishes to your family, and I wish the best for you too.

Your friend,

Sam

vistaVision Memories

The Garden

1975 - 1976

The first year we moved to my daughter Pat's place just outside Thunder Bay, my daughter and I had been planning on a garden with a lot of raspberry and strawberry plants, also some fruit

trees and flowering trees along the highway fence. Where we were planning on having the garden was all sod with twitch grass about two feet tall. It was going to take a lot of hard work to get a garden spot cleared of that twitch grass sod.

I thought and expected my daughter and her husband to put in a few hours work helping me with the hardest part of the work when they were home weekends. My daughter is young and strong, and her husband is about the same age, about 6 ft. 2 and about 180 or 190. He is all muscle as he works at a mine at Red Lake, Ont.

My daughter got a farmer to come and plow up the piece of land we wanted done, and he made a very poor job of it. I refused to pay him the high price he wanted unless he went over it and plowed the long pieces he had missed by going to fast with his tractor. I had made a much better job with my little 7 h.p. tractor at our last place in Rainy River, plowing a piece of about one or two acres of the same kind of sod for a garden. I never missed one piece of sod as I had the tractor going as slow as it would go in order that I could keep up with it with my crippled legs. We argued for quite a while, he wanted twenty dollars and I said I would give him ten, take it or leave it. He did take it and said he would never do no more plowing for me.

I told him he could bet on that for sure.

I went over that garden with my big RotoTiller when the sods had dried a bit and chewed them up and shook some of the soil out of them. I then raked them up into piles.

I had 45 piles the first time I went over it.

My wife wanted to haul them off in the wheel barrow, but I told her to leave them there until my daughter's husband came home on the weekend with his half ton truck, and he could haul them off with a lot less work.

When he did come home on Friday night early, he sat around talking to his wife while I was out working in the garden. Then on Saturday morning he took his son and wife to a motorcycle race track where they were having races all that day, so they never did move the piles of sod.

I got my special three cornered hoe that I had made for my own use and started at one side of the garden and went across to the other side cutting into every inch of that garden about four inches deep and getting every bit of twitch grass out of the ground and loosening up every bit of soil. When I raked that up, I had another 37 piles of grass and sods. My wife had been hauling a lot of the other piles off to fill in big holes around the house and other places and she had the first lot about all gone. She then took away all the piles on one side of the garden so that we could plant our seeds as it was getting late for planting.

We had just had a very good rain the night before, and the soil had dried up enough so that we could start planting our seeds and berry bushes that day.

Both my wife and I worked hard that day and got everything planted and covered before night. I made all the rows and covered some of them, my wife put the seeds in, as I cannot bend at the hips, and she covered the rest of the rows of seeds. I made the holes for the berry bushes and the strawberry plants, and she put them in the ground and covered in the soil around them.

The next day I went back to cleaning the rest of the garden.

When I got finished chopping at the other side of the garden, I let it dry for half a day then started raking the sods into more piles. I had it all finished by the next Friday night when my daughter, her son Danny and her husband came home again.

That Saturday they went to another motorcycle meet for the day and did not help with getting rid of those sod piles.

My son Tim came over with his half ton truck, and when he saw his mother using a wheel barrow to take the sod off the garden, Tim and his son Steve got a couple of forks and started to load their truck. They worked most of the day until they had every pile off the garden.

When I offered to pay them, they got quite upset about it. I told them if they liked working for nothing, they could come over the next Saturday, and I would have some more piles for them to take off as I would be finished with the sod by then.

When I was finished with the sod, I got my tiller out and went over it several times, and then raked it again with the garden rake and got a few more sods. When I was finish I had a nice soft clean piece of land with just 14 piles of sod to move. By this time the grass and weeds were starting to show up good in the garden we had planted, and the onions, carrots, peas, parsnips and beans were ready for thinning.

It kept me pretty busy, that first year at Pat's place, getting things in shape and loosening up the soil around the roots so the plants could put out more feeder roots and so grow faster. My son Tim and grandson came over on Saturday and cleaned all the sod out of the rest of the garden. Now I only had to keep the weeds down and the soil loosened up with my hoe and rotoTiller.

We had a fairly good crop of vegetables that first year, although the bees did not get out to fertilize my sunflowers very well. We had to buy sunflower seeds to feed the Grosbeaks when they stopped here on there way back to B.C. All that summer my wife mowed the lawns, except some that my grandson, Danny, did in his summer holidays.

The winter of the second year we were at Pat's place, my daughter planned how nice she was going to have the garden and a lot of flower beds around the house. I had sent away for all the plants and seeds for the garden the first year, and my wife had worked herself to a frazzle trying to help me make a garden and keep the lawns mowed, also to fill in holes around the place and clean up rubbish. That winter when the seed catalogues started coming in and my daughter was planning on a lot of big projects for the following spring, I told her I would not be able to do much work outside in the spring or summer, as my legs would not support me anymore.

That was true as far as it went, but that was not the whole story.

I did not give it up because it was too much for me, in fact my muscles in my thighs were improving a lot. I gave it up because I did not want my wife to be working like a horse pushing those heavy wheelbarrow loads of sods over that soft ground while Pat's husband sat in the cool shade of the trees taking life easy.

I did not want a garden that bad that I would take the chance of my wife hurting herself for that lazy bum.

I was seething mad at the time when I saw him sitting there like that and watching my wife struggling with those heavy loads, and if it had been my place I would have told him to grab ahold of the wheelbarrow or get off the property.

I quit all work around the place after that, and things sure got looking much more shabby.

I could have made a beautiful place for Pat in time out of that place, but no one outside of my wife and I seemed interested in it at all. Pat wanted to have a nice place to live in but she just could not seem to get her husband interested enough in it to help out.

Pat is a pretty good worker herself, but not her husband. His family's place shows why he is so easy going and never did any repair work around the place unless they actually had to. I feel very sorry for that kind of people that take no joy in hard work and get no pleasure from accomplishing a job that is done well. I like work of all kinds, and I especially like hard work, and I get a lot of satisfaction when I know that I have did a good clean job.

My mother used to say that I would be working at something when I died, and come to think about it, that might be a good way to go.

September 5, 1978

Dear Reinhard:

It is a damp muggy morning up here in Red Lake, with a fairly thick fog hanging over the countryside. It is rather chilly and a little heat is needed in the house to take the bite out of the

air. My daughter Pat and her son had been down to Ear Falls, to some sort of an affair that the goverment was putting on. Pat had to be there all day as official representative of the goverment for this neck of the woods, and did not get home until late in the evening. I do not know yet what it was all about, but I think it had something to do with a new TV outlet that I read about in the paper few days ago. If so we may not just have the one station at Winnipeg putting on programs that we saw a long time ago in Thunder Bay.

We have had a lot of rain since I have been up here in Red Lake, but we are not the only ones that are getting too much rain. I see by what I read in the paper from Thunder Bay that they are getting too much there too. The farmers cannot get their hay in for the winter as it is all rotting in the fields, so they will be very hard pressed to get feed for their dairy herds.

I was to go see a doctor when I first came up here about getting my regular supply of drugs each month. I received quite a surprise from the way I was treated, much different than the doctors in Thunder Bay ever treated me when I went to see them. This doctor here, Dr. Duggan,



was really interested in me and my ailments, and although there was quite a long line of people in the waiting room, he took the time to find out everything there was to know about me that was wrong or had been wrong with my body over the years, and the names and addresses of all the doctors I had been to see.

He has sent for my medical history to all these doctors and I am to go back to see him in about two weeks or so and get a thorough physical examination.

No wonder that I have hopes of this young doctor. I have a feeling that I may be able to walk again without the canes with some help and advice from this young fellow. That is the brightest thing that has happened to me since I have been up here and I feel pretty good about it.

There has been a leak in the bank in Red Lake where I have some of my savings. Word has got around that I am quite wealthy, which is not so. I have been getting quite a lot of proposals to invest money in about every kind of an investment venture that you can think of. These people that have been bothering me through the mails and by personal visits are apparently strangers to the town and have come in by plane.

If it was not such a bother, it would be very funny and I would enjoy stringing them along, but it is rather getting out of hand. I believe the bank is trying to find out who started the rumour and if they find out, someone's head will roll. I do not go to town now very often since this started as I do not like being stopped on the street to listen to a lot of talk about how wealthy I can be if I invest in their stocks or buy shares in their mining claims.

For several weeks now we have been trying to find a piece of land that we could afford to buy and build on, but they are priced like the rental places, right out of our reach. We have the money to buy a piece of land and to build a small home, which is all we will need as there are just the two of us, but the land that is offered at a price that we can afford is either high rocky land, swampy land, or ten to thirty miles from hydro, telephone or a small store. As for a doctor or hospital being near, we would be about forty or fifty miles away from either. That would mean buying a small car at around four or five thousand dollars, and what good would that be to me, as I would not be able to see to drive.

I have been thinking about putting in a garden here at my daughter's place, come next spring, but my wife and daughter do not want me to have a garden again. They say that it is too much work for me at my age, but they do not understand that I love working in a garden and it gives me something to put the time in. It is very painful for me not to have something to keep me busy.

Most all of my life I have raised most of the food that my family has eaten and they have thrived on it, and I do not want to stop growing it now. The exercise keeps me fit and along with the good fresh vegetables, I perhaps have a chance of reaching an age of one hundred years that my wife predicted that I would. My weight is staying around one hundred and fifty-nine to sixty, which it is where it is supposed to be, so I do not have to worry about getting overweight, but I would like to get more time and opportunity to exercise by having a garden and going on long walks on the paved road out in front of our house.

Oh well this wet weather we are having right now cannot last forever and one of these days I will be able to go out and stretch my legs.

I have not as yet been able to take any pictures since I have been up here, as the weather has been very much contrary for getting clear pictures. My wife has taken some but it has just been a waste of money having them developed and printed as they were not too clear. I have a very good camera and it takes pretty good pictures but only when the weather is clear and the sun is shining.

I suppose one of these days the sun will shine again and I will be able to get some good snaps as there lots of new things around here that I think you would like to know about by

looking at rather than have me try to tell you about them as I am not very good at describing the way things look.

Well I bought a new pick in the hardware store in Red Lake when I was in town to do a little work in Pat's garage as the floor is not concrete yet but soil and gravel. It was very strange in a way that I had to have a new pick. When I was up in Rainy River just before I had sold my last home, I had five pick heads that I had taken down to the blacksmith shop and had them all sharpened. When one of my sons was up for a visit with his half ton truck, he said that he would take a load of my heavy tools and implements down in his truck and that would save me quite a bit of the cost of moving down here. He said he would take them over to my daughter's place when she came home on the weekend and lock them up in her garage.

He took the picks along as part of his load.

I have never seen them since.

He took everything to his place and unloaded it, and by the time that I came down to my daughter Pat's place in Thunder Bay with my furniture most of everything was gone from his place, given away to his friends. He did not know who had got the picks, so now I had to go and buy a new one.

Oh well, I guess these things happen, but they seem to happen a lot when it comes to my son.

My wife is babysitting for my daughter and feeding and looking after the baby and Pat's son free of charge. Babysitters up here are getting ten dollars for just four hours of their time at babysitting and they do not have to cook or look after more than one child at a time.

When my wife and I came up here we agreed that she would be taking things easy and not looking after any more children for anyone. We have been here over two months now and she is looking after Pat's baby and her big son, and now, this morning, an Aid lady came in with an eight month old Indian baby and ask my wife if she would take care of it, and of course my wife took one look at the little rascal and she was lost, and said she would be glad to look after him.

So much for her taking it easy.

Well I guess she feels the same way about little helpless babies as I do about gardens, you just can't resist them.

The baby is about eight months old and has a problem with his rectum always coming out. He has been in several foster homes to try and get some meat on his little body so that he will be strong enough for the doctors to operate on him and correct his trouble, but so far he has not gained any weight at those other places. He has only been with us a bit over two weeks, and he has already stopped his continual crying and seems to be much more interested in things around him.

My wife holds him a lot in the daytime and I have never heard him cry yet while she held him. He is looking much better now and I am expecting to see him smile most any time now. I stop at his room whenever he is awake and talk to him so that he will get used to my voice, and he raises his head and looks at me when he hears me speaking.

I like the little fellow, as I think he has a great deal of pain, as I do at times, and I think that he is taking it better than I take mine.

I know that my wife will bring him around so that the doctors can fix him up so that he will perhaps grow up into a healthy man, but like most of the Indians, he will only grow up to be

abused and looked down on by the white people as just another lazy Indian which I have seen so much of in my life as I have traveled around this country of ours.

My wife just called me for supper, so I will have to end this letter now, wishing you, your wife, and of course little Emily the best of health.

Write soon.

Your friend,

Sam

vistaVision Memories

An Embarrassing Moment

1976

In the second year here at my daughter's house in Thunder Bay, my daughter and my wife put in a small piece of ground, and grew some small potatoes and things like lettuce, onions and

radishes. We had no corn, cabbage, pumpkins, turnips, carrots, peas, beets, tomatoes, green beans, or anything else that we had the year before.

I sure missed having them.

That year, 1976, when we wanted some of those things we had to buy them and pay a big price for them, and they were not as fresh as we had been used to getting from our own garden. Most of all, I missed having fresh berries every day, like we had at our own place up in Rainy River. Back there, my wife could go out and pick enough berries in half an hour to give us berries for two days or more. My wife made a lot of them into jams, jellies and canned some and froze some. We had as many as we could eat all summer, with a lot put away for the winter.

We had lots of vegetable for the whole winter up in Rainy River too, and every time one of the children came up for a visit, we usually gave them a lot of canned fruit and a lot of vegetables to take back with them. I always planted a lot more than we could use when we were on our own land, as our children could always use them, or if they did not want them, the deer always enjoyed what we had left over in the spring.

I had a very embarrassing experience one Saturday night about ten in the evening in the fall of 1976. I take a hot shower every morning with a cold shower to wash all the soap off, but on one Saturday evening when young Danny and his mother were uptown, I decided to take a hot bath in the tub and give my body a good soaking and scrubbing with a long handled brush that I made.

There was just my wife and myself and the two little babies in the house at the time, an Aid baby and our granddaughter.

There came a rap at the back door and the Children's Aid woman walked in bringing some cases of baby milk for the Aid baby my wife was looking after. She ask my wife if she could use the bathroom just as one of the babies started to scream.

My wife was distracted by the baby's screaming and she must have forgot that I was in the bathroom having a bath, so she told the woman yes she could use the bathroom and then she rushed into the front room to see what was wrong with the baby.

I never lock the door of the bathroom, because one time in 1965 when I was in the bathroom of the last house that I built down on Corbett Creek, I passed out and fell and knocked myself out on the toilet seat, by hitting it with my head. It was lucky for me that I had put locks on the bathroom doors that could be opened with a long nail. My wife heard me fall and she got the nail that we had hanging by the door and opened the door. She phoned for the ambulance and somehow got a robe on me. I did not come around again until I was in the hospital.

I had been in a diabetic coma, and that was when I first found out I was a diabetic. To get back to the lady coming into the bathroom while I was having a bath, she sure must have been in a hurry, for she made right for the toilet without even seeing me.

I had the curtain of the shower drawn about half way along the side of the tub but when she was through with what she had been doing she came over to the tub and pulled the curtain to one side. I had only about three or four inches of water in the tub, as I wanted to give my legs a good scrubbing.

She looked at me with her mouth open, just like she was going to scream.

I did not know what to say, so I just told her to hop in, that there was room for two in the tub.

I guess it was the right thing to say, for she started in to giggle, and said she would take a rain check on the invitation.

Thinking back to when I was working at Great Lakes Paper and how it is today, I think that the unions have too much power today. I think it is mostly because of some of the leaders that manage the union's business. The average union man is not hard to get along with, but some of the leaders are very greedy and very selfish and they have brought wages to such high levels that our money has almost lost it's value completely because prices end up going up about as fast as wages.

It's just a vicious circle going around and around, with no end in sight. I think that one of these days there is going to be an awful crash like there was in the Hungry Thirties, and I do not want to be around to go through that again, as once was enough for me. If it should happen again, and I think it will, a lot of people are going to suffer and really know what hunger is all about.

People today are greedy, and give little or no thought to the other man, only to their own selfish interests. People seem to have lost respect for one another too and many lack any kind feelings or thoughts for the man that is not so fortunate as they are. An honest and kind person

seems to have no place in the scheme of things anymore, and a person's word does not seem to be of any value or pride to them anymore.

It used to be that a person's word was as good as gold and could be trusted, but not anymore. What has happened to this generation?

I have thought a lot about this question but do not as yet have the answer.

Most children today do not show any respect for their parents or their grandparents. I really think a lot of parents are responsible for this for I believe that the children, when they see their parents doing the things that their parents had told them not to do, lost a lot of their respect and love for their parents. The parents hold these drinking parties, yet tell their children that they must never drink or smoke, that it is bad for their health, which is quite true. The children see their parents drinking and smoking and think they should do it in order to be grown up. That is another vicious circle that I have been trying to find the answer to for a long time.

Parents should realize that the children look to them to set an example for them, and the parents do not always do the best at that. If parents would only set the example for their children of what not to do, I think there would be a lot less heartaches and sorrow in the world and it would be a much more pleasant place to live.

October 28, 1978

Dear Friend:

I was in to Red Lake the other day see the doctor again to talk over my medical history with him and to get a complete check up, and he told me that as far as he could make out, that I was in good health, outside of the crippled legs, my diabetes, my deafness, my increasing blindness and my anginal attacks. He said that my diabetic trouble was being controlled and that my blindness and deafness was just the price of old age. He said an operation on my eye to remove the cataract would not make me see very much better, so it would be up to me if I wanted it removed. There was nothing to be done about my deafness except to get a hearing aid, which I have had for years.

This Dr. Duggan is a very good doctor, I do believe, as he answered all my questions that no other doctor ever had and took a great load off my mind that I had been worrying about for years. I feel much better mentally than I did before, now that I know a few truths that I did not know before.

Well it looks like winter will be with us soon again. They had three inches of snow last night up in northern Manitoba. It has been quite cold and raining off and on most of a month.

The leaves on the trees are all different colours around here and some of the trees are shedding their leaves very fast. Some people here say they have never experienced weather like this so early before. Perhaps my coming up here changed the weather pattern. Anyway it has been cold and wet for so long that I have not even got started on my job in organizing Pat's garage to make more room for storage.

If those men that are supposed to put in the concrete floors in the garage do not get a move on they will not be able to do it this year, as the concrete will not set in cold weather and will just freeze. In the spring it would all have to be taken out and the job done over again in warm weather.

When a man does his own work, he usually gets it done when he wants it done, and at a much lower cost. I tried to tell my daughter that about putting in the concrete floors and offered to do it for her, but she said that I might not get it done before cold weather, that was why she was having a contractor do it.

Cold weather is here now at nights and there is not much chance of that concrete getting set before it freezes, even if it was put in today. I guess people will have to find out for themselves the truth of things when they will not take someone's word for what might happen.

Yesterday I went to get all I could tidied up in the garage before cold weather really set in. I put in a bit over four hours the first day moving things to the other side of the garage so that I would have the south side in which to build a workshop. Now, I cannot move fast like I could before my legs were crippled, and I have to have a least one cane in my hand when I move around at all times. This has slowed me down in doing any work, so that I do not get as much

done in the same time as usual. I however, have made some changes in how I do things, and that helps a bit.

There are several room sized carpets in there that had to be moved. Before my legs were crippled, I would have taken them in my arms and carried them to where I wanted them to be. They are good carpets, that have very little wear, but when we moved here they have just been taken in the garage and dropped on the gravel floor. I had to sweep them off the best I could and get them to the other side of the garage and to the back away from the front doors.

I tied a long rope to one end of the carpet and threw the other end over a rafter at the back of the garage and dragged the balled up carpet to where I had laid a platform of lumber on the floor, and piled the carpets on the lumber. I had to work pretty hard in doing this, and when I had most of them piled there I sat down on my tool box to take a breather when I suddenly remembered that I had not one anginal attack in the whole time that I had been working hard enough that I was sweating.

These anginal attacks had been a common occurrence when I had been sitting for an hour or more typing or reading, and then got up from my chair to go to the bathroom. I would have a very severe anginal attack at times like that, so I have come to think that I need more work instead of taking so many pills.

*** An hour later ***

Sorry for the break but my typewriter went on the blink again and I had to put in a new ribbon. While I was at it I cleaned and repaired the carriage again, but my eyes are so bad now

that I cannot see, but have to feel to find out what is not working right. That carriage seems to be catching on something every little while. Perhaps, like me, it is getting wore out. I sure have done a lot of typing on that typewriter since I have had it.

When I think back to when I was living in our last home in the Rainy River District, after I came out of the hospital, and how hard I worked putting in a big garden and looking after it, and the cords of firewood that I handled, sawed and split, wheeled in a wheelbarrow and piled outside to dry, I realized now it is exercise that I need more than pills to stop these attacks, so I am going to try to get it if possible.

Pat, my daughter, has finished her painting and has had the carpenters out to install storm windows on all the windows in her basement apartment where she lives with her family when she is at home. My wife looks after her little girl when Pat is away at work and she will soon be a year old. She crawls all over the upper floor where we live and comes in my room to see me whenever she can find that the little gate across the hallway has not been put in place to keep her in the front room and kitchen. She stands up when she has something to hang onto and has taken a step or two on her own, before she drops to the floor.

We are letting her pick her own time to start walking, as she will be doing very soon. To push them to learn to walk before their little legs will support their body can make them have bow legs for the rest of their lives, which I am sure no one likes very much. They will walk in their own good time when they are ready to walk, so we have never hurried any of our children and they all have had nice straight legs.

I have a pair of high topped gum rubber boots that I can wear in the snow that I think I can put on and take off myself, so I think I will be able to manage alright this winter. I have

learned to study ways and means of dressing and undressing myself without any help. At one time I thought I would never be able to do it, but I continued to try different ways of doing things until I finally succeeded in putting together a way of doing things that I never had before.

It has made me quite independent of having someone to help me.

I read in the papers here that we have just had a young man of twenty-five charged with the murder of his forty-five year old brother, which happen at a drinking party a few nights ago. The date of his trial has not as yet been set. I believe, from what I have read, that both of them were Indians.

That is the sad thing about the Indian population around here, they seem to have lost all hope of ever being able to get themselves out of the poverty in which they have been living all their lives. When they do get a little money, most of it is spent for cheap drinking parties, which usually ends up in someone getting badly hurt. Of course they are all not like this, some of them are real sober hard working people, when they can get some paying work to do. But the majority of them around Kenora, and some of them around here, are all on Welfare and cannot get work of any kind.

Those that do try to earn their own living for themselves and their families by cutting pulpwood, trapping, guiding and fishing for what little money they do get, try and get along on their own efforts. They are good people and deserve a lot of credit for their efforts to make their own way. From what I have heard they are not liked by the other Indians very much for not accepting Welfare aid from the goverment.

I must say that the white race has nothing to be proud of in their treatment of the Indians. They came to this country and took away their means of living and debauched them, took their

land that they had lived on for generations, and forced them to live on the poorest land in the country, where there was no chance to survive. They raped their women, and killed their women and children whenever they got the chance, and did their best to exterminate all the Indians from the land that was theirs for thousands of years.

The Indian extended the hand of friendship when white people first came to this country and we returned their friendship by cutting off the welcoming hand.

I think all the white people of Canada should try and make amends for their forefather's greed and cruelty to these people as soon as they can, and let them share in this country's bounty on an equal basis.

It is no wonder that Indians are committing suicide on an ever increasing number, for they cannot see any hope for getting a fair chance to make a living for their family, or any future for their children, if they do survive to become men and women.

I think the white race should stop thinking so much about themselves and their family in foreign countries, and give more thought on how to repair the damage their forefathers have done. The pot has been boiling for many years and I think it is just about ready to boil over. If it does, it may be too late for to do anything to prevent a lot of trouble. I think that some of the goverment men are beginning to understand what the danger is, as they are beginning to listen to what some of the Indians have to say. But they are very slow in making any changes, and that is causing the Indians to get very restless, especially the younger generation, that have had a better education than their forefathers.

I most likely will not be around to see how the Indians make out in their bid for equality and for the goverment to recognized their just claims, but I sure wish them luck in their efforts to

right a great wrong. They have it coming to them and deserve to be treated as equals in this country.

Well, I had better close off this letter now as my typewriter is acting up again. I think I will take it apart again to see if I can fix the trouble, if, that is, I can get a really bright light to work under so that I can see enough to do the job.

Best wishes to your and your family.

Your friend,

Sam

ps

I know you are busy getting ready for Xmas with your lovely family at this time of year, so if I do not get a chance to before Xmas, I want to wish you, Mrs. Filter, and little Emily the best Xmas wishes and to have a happy and healthy new year.

vistaVision Memories

Red Lake

1978

When Pat took me out for a drive a few days ago, we went around her whole district that she represents and looked at several mines that were closed. There were rows of empty houses near some of the mines that were just standing there empty and rotting away, with no one living in them. Pat showed me a beautiful big house that one mine manager had lived in. It had been a lovely big home, but was starting to go to pieces now. It had a lovely view and a tennis court and the large grounds had at one time been well taken care of but were gradually getting over grown with weeds and young trees.

It seemed a shame that such nice homes were allowed to fall into ruins like that.

Then there were rows of nice houses where the men that worked the mines and their families lived. They also were being allowed to go to ruins.

There are some very good views of lakes here, but so far I have not had much of a chance to get taking any pictures as the weather has been pretty dull with not many clear days. I think when the moon changes again, so will the weather. I hope so anyway.

We still have not had our TV antenna put up.

If I could get around better, I would put our TV antenna up myself. I have a mast about twenty feet or more tall that one of my sons welded together for me and brought up here sometime before I came up here as a surprise for me. As we are near the top of a hill behind the

house, when it is up, I will be able to tune in on some stations from the States when I get fed up with the Winnipeg station.

I have been tidying up the garage in Pat's new house but it is a very long continuous job. I get it all organized and tidy, then after a few days I go in and find it just about as bad as it ever was, and I have to start all over again.

I have ask my daughter several times to bring me home about ten or twelve lbs. of four inch spikes so that I can hang a lot of tools and things on the walls, such as ladders and garden tools, but she is kept so busy on her new job here in Red Lake that she forgets about them.

I guess I will have to hire a taxi and get them myself.

I am suppose to have the back end of one of the stalls in the garage in which to build a workshop. I cannot unpack my tool boxes until I get someplace to put my tools and it makes things very difficult for me to do any of the jobs that I see around here that I could do.

Everything that is not needed in the house is taken out and dumped anywhere in the garage. Pat's son Danny usually takes things out there when his mother wants more room in the house to paint walls or clean up, and he just piles it on top of anything that is handy or just drops it on the floor when he can find a spot there for it.

I have my boxes of tools pretty close together in a bunch and most every time I go out there, they are all covered up with some other things that have been brought out and I have to find a place for to put them so they will be out of the way. Twice I have went into the garage and packed things at the back of the garage, neat and out of the way, leaving about half or more of the garage with nothing laying on the floor. I would go out a day or so later for something and the floor would again be covered right up to the front doors.

I have given up trying to keep the place neat and tidy, as it is a hopeless job.

Now if Pat had consented to an idea that I had some time ago, I could have had all that floor pretty well clear of everything and there would have been only my tool boxes and the lawn mower and Danny's bike and a few tools that we would be using quite often along the garage walls.

I wanted to make an opening up into the big attic of the garage and have a ladder or a stairs to get up there and put all these boxes, a lot of carpets and furniture up there out of the way. The storm windows and all the other things that was laying around on the garage floor could be put up there out of the way and a person would have lots of room then to do any kind of a job.

I do not know just why Pat does not want me to do things like organizing things in the garage for her. I think it would be much better if everything had a place and was kept there when not in use, and as handy as possible. I think it would be much better than having everything in a heap and have to go through the whole pile when you wanted something in particular. I am not asking her to spend any extra money. I will pay for any materials that I need. I have the money and I can't take it with me when I die.

Of course it is her place and I know that when I was building my house, I never wanted to have anyone around telling me what I should do or just how to do it.

Perhaps she takes after her pappy, who knows.

I know that she is a pretty independent person and has proved many times to me at least that she can get things done when she starts them. She can take very good care of herself as getting this job that she has now with the goverment shows. Last year she said that she wanted it and that she was going to get it. She enrolled at the college in Port Arthur and really studied.

When it came time for the examinations she was quite confident that she would win and she did, and the people she works for like her work and she sure does a lot of good up here with the respect of the people here.

She is easy to get along with and the people really like her and they get along very well together from what I have heard some of them say that I have talked to. She has her faults I suppose, but who has no faults. You cannot please everyone and do a good job as you are supposed to do, so you just do the very best that you can, and that is just what she is doing, and it is working pretty good.

That is what I tried to show all my children by example, to put the best they had into what they were doing and they would come out alright in the end, and that is the way they have tried to be. They all have good jobs and trades, the girls having been just as successful as the boys in slightly different occupations. They have raised their families and have held jobs after their families were pretty well on their own.

I am sorry about this wandering habit of mine, my friend, but when I get started typing I just put things down as they come into my head, and it must read like an awful mess.

My mind is going steady from the time I awaken in the morning until my last conscious thought at night. Some nights I get on a certain train of thought about something and I lay in bed for many hours until I have solved the problem, then my mind just seems to drain out and I feel so relaxed and comfortable I turn over on my side and the next thing I know it is morning. Then the same problem pops into my head and it flows through my head as smooth as silk, right up to the correct answer that took me so long to find the night before.

I often wonder about a person's brain, how it works and where it stores all the years of what you hear, see, and do down through the years. It is all there and you can recall everything eventually if you work at it long and faithfully enough. The surprising thing about it to me is that the memory that comes back to me comes back as clear and sharp as if it had just happened a day or so ago and in my mind I can see and experience it all over again.

January 17, 1979

Dear Friend:

I received your welcome letter and have now read it over several times to make sure I got everything in it. I hope that you and your family had a nice Xmas and a happy New Year's holiday. We had two of our sons with their wives up from Thunder Bay over the Xmas holidays, but otherwise we had a very quiet Xmas. I received many gifts from my sons and daughters as well as from my grandchildren, and my wife also was quite snowed under with gifts. We just sent out cards to them all as we have twenty-six grandchildren now and very near the same number of great-grand-children, and we really could not afford to send them all gifts at the

present high prices on our fixed incomes. However most all of them told us they would feel rather bad if we did buy them gifts, as they all knew our income.

We received a nice Xmas supper from the town of Red Lake. My wife and I could not attend the supper on account of the two little children we have living here with us, so the town council delivered the supper to all that could not attend. There was a lot of the food that I could not eat as I am a diabetic, but they all meant well by sending it and we both thanked them for it.

We have had quite a lot of snow up here since I wrote to you last, but for the last week or so we have had clear skies and low temperatures, down around the thirties below zero usually at night, and around about twelve to fourteen below in the daylight hours. It is a dry cold so you do not feel so cold if you keep moving. It is not like the cold in Thunder Bay before the great lakes freeze over. At ten below zero there when the wind is blowing off the lake, it feels like it is about forty-five or fifty below. That is why I like being up here in the winter as the lakes here freeze over very quickly and we do not get that wet cold that you do in Thunder Bay.

There are good chances up here for a good electrical repair man to make a fortune and always be busy if he can repair all kinds of electrical equipment and do it quickly, such as TV, radio, household appliances and electrical installations. Carpenters also are in short demand. Pay is good and usually for cash as soon as the job is completed. I only wish that I had known about this place before my legs were crippled, I could have made a pile of money to retire on up here. But I guess a person can't be everywhere at the same time.

This place is going to boom this spring with the building of two new supermarts and the rebuilding of the highway that goes past where I am living now. Some of the old mines are going to open in the spring, so I have heard, and that will help to give things a boost.

Pat is now being put on TV once or twice a day at the Ear Falls TV station by the goverment. She gives short talks about what the goverment is doing for the district and what facilities are available to the public.

It has been quite a surprise to me the things that the goverment has a finger in up here in this district.

Pat is overworked and although she has an office secretary who does all the paper work, she is still on the go all the time covering her district which is quite large. She has several mining communities to look after, and she has to make the rounds of them all quite frequently in order to keep things running smooth. When Income Tax time comes around, she has to work overtime, as there are a lot of people, old timers mostly, who do not know how to fill out an income tax report, so she has to fill it out for them. Some of these people live in places that are rather hard to reach, and she sometimes has to leave her car and walk into where they live and fix their papers up for them.

This all takes time and quite often she has a long walk through deep snow to get there and back to her car. She says that she likes that part of her job the most, as most of these old timers have some very interesting stories to tell about their early days in the mining industry. Then of course there are a lot of trappers to dig out of the bush and get their papers filled out correctly, and also a fair amount of elderly pensioners that she has to look in on to see that they are alright. Her job is mostly concerned with contact between the goverment and the people, and from what I have heard from some people, especially the elderly people, she is a good contact and is very well liked by them all.

When it gets a little warmer in the spring, I will build a workbench with at least two deep drawers in it, and one or two cabinets on the wall to hold my smaller tools where I can get at them when I need them. I will have to keep them locked all the time when I am not there, if I expect to have any tools left to use when I need them.

When Danny uses a tool, mine or his own, he leaves them right where he has been working, and by doing that, I have lost a lot of my tools down where we lived in Thunder Bay.

My own boys were like that, until I laid the law down to them and trained them to put every tool back where they had got it when they were finished using it. I cannot do that with Danny, as I do not seem to be able to get through to him about this. I cannot get tough with him like I did with my boys, as his mother would get very upset if I did, and besides, I do not feel that I have any right to order him around. He always does what I tell him at the time, but it never sticks. In some ways, he reminds me of one of my sons.

I received a letter from my sister-in-law a few days ago, and she told me that my second oldest sister, Annie, had died in Vancouver two days before. I have not seen or heard from Annie in close to fifty years. I did hear, about a year ago, that she was living in Vancouver, but I did not hear what her address was. I wrote to her daughter, who lives over in the States, and ask her for her mother's address, but she wrote and told me that Annie did not want the Allen family, or anyone connected to it, to write to her.

Well I could not understand why she felt that way towards me, as we had always been very good friends when I was at home and I had always taken her part when she was in any trouble with the family. Many times I had covered up for her and helped her out of difficult

situations. I had always considered us very good friends, up until the time that she disappeared, now near fifty years ago.

No one knew what had happened to her.

She was married at the time and had just had one child, a daughter. She left the husband and the two year old daughter behind and went to a picture show in town one night and that was the last anyone heard or seen of her.

Now she is dead, that is two of my oldest sisters dead and just one left, my sister Maude.

Maude has not answered any of the letters that I have wrote to her over the years and I cannot get it through my head why my brothers and sisters do not answer my letters.

My one brother that lives in Milton, Ontario, and a sister-in-law, who lives in Georgetown are the only two who ever have answered any of my letters. Now my brother has not written to me for months, in spite of the fact that I have sent him several letters during that time.

If they do not write soon they may be too late as I am getting old and am living on borrowed time.

These days, I do a lot of my remembering after I go to bed and turn out the light at the head of my bed. When I am warm and settled and relaxed that is when my mind starts me off into a trip into my past life, and a stream of experiences start coming into my mind, and I actually experience them all over again. This goes on sometimes for several hours, and in the morning they are still fresh in my mind as if they just happened.

What worries me about all this is that I am right there in that picture of what I had experienced at that particular time and place, and I feel everything that I felt at that time, even to the blows and pain that I received when I was in a fight with someone. I can at that time

remember what I said and the words the other fellow said. I am right there again experiencing just the same things that I did when it happened, and that is what worries me the most.

I have always kept this to myself, I did not want people to think that I was going nutty, which is what they would have said if I had mentioned it years ago. Now, of course, it does not make any difference as my time is just about to run out, and what people say or think about me is of no importance anymore.

I really enjoy them nightly sessions with my memories, even if I do worry about them a bit. It is good to be able to see your past life and see where you made mistakes and where you made the right decision, or where you helped someone out of trouble, or gave a helping hand to someone in need.

I never know ahead of time what will be coming up each night and that is what makes me look forward to each night's show of my mind's remembrance.

On another subject, and one that is not so good, I had an experience just before I had my supper last night that made me wonder if I was going to make through the winter.

I had been playing some eight track tapes on my tape machine and was sitting in my rocking chair quite comfortable, facing the machine and my record cabinet. All of a sudden the record cabinet and the machine started to whiz past me in front of my eyes very fast and I felt very dizzy and I seemed to shrink all over. I kept looking at the cabinet as it went past and it seemed endless. This lasted only a few seconds, although it seemed like a long time, and when the cabinet had come to a stop, I felt like I had been running fast for a long time. I was very weak and sweat was running down my body and my underclothing was very wet.

I had never had anything like this ever happen to me before.

I thought for sure that this was the end of the road for me.

I pressed my hand over my heart and there was a very faint slow beat, quite difficult to feel, but it was still making an effort to keep going. While I had my hand there, the beating of my heart picked up strength and finally got back its steady banging away as usual. By that time my record cabinet had come to a dead stop and the tape that I had in the tape player was still playing right along, like nothing had happened.

For a few seconds, I did not know whether to be happy about my heart picking up its strong beat again or disappointed that it had. I have suffered a lot of pain these last months from these anginal attacks which are coming more and more often now, and I felt like I had had enough. But I did want to see what spring up here in Red Lake was like, so I decided that my heart did too, so I am going to try to give it all the help that I can.

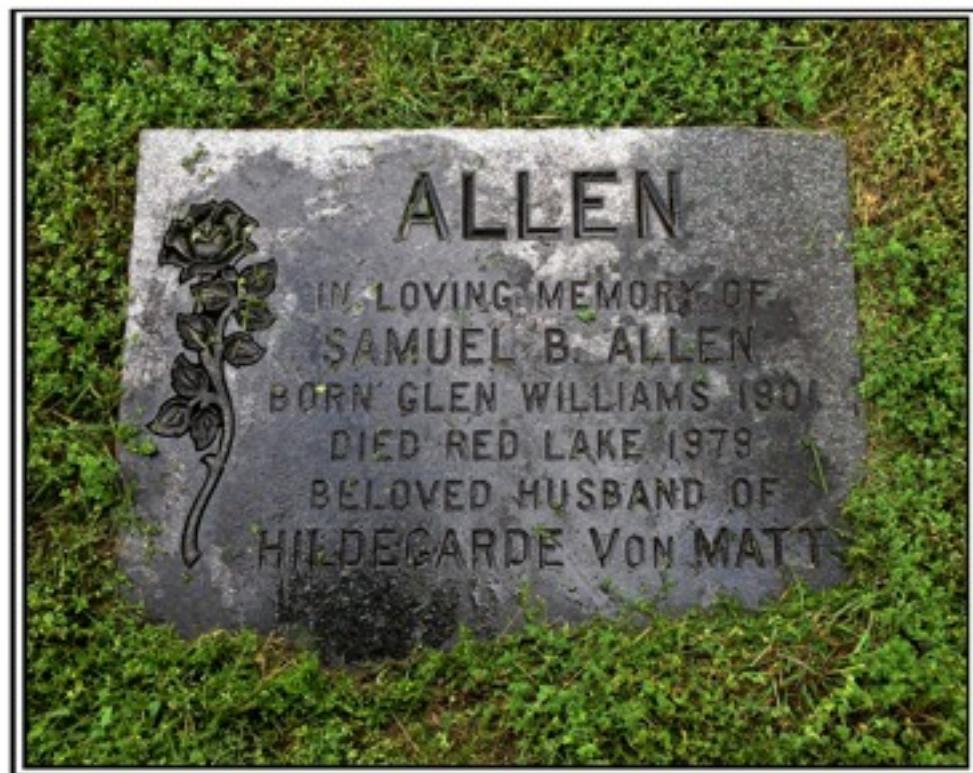
Still, it was a scary couple of minutes for me as I sat there and thought about what was happening to me.

Well I had intended to perhaps write a vistaVision memory or two for this letter, but I forgot one thing while I was planning this, that in a few more days I will be seventy-eight, and it will be our fifty-second wedding anniversary.

The cards and letters have started to come already in from all our relatives and friends, and I am looking at quite a pile right now that should have been answered before I started to write this letter. I thought I could dash off a letter to you at one short sitting in the morning of yesterday, but found that I cannot type as quickly as I used to because of my poor vision. However, once I get started on the replies to my many well wishers, it will not take too long to

get through them all, then I can catch up on my writing to you. I hope that you and Mrs. Filter and little Emily are warm and comfortable this winter and are enjoying good health.

Good-bye for now and best of good luck to you all,
from your friend,
Sam.



Samuel B. Allen, 1901 - 1979



Barber Bros. Paper Mill Pond Tree

Recessional

I was thinking about the way prices keep going up, also wages, and I can't for the life of me see what anyone stands to really gain. I believe that this race for more money by everyone is what is causing all the unemployment and hardship for the majority of the people of the world, not to mention the pollution of our environment, and the using up of all our resources. The way

people are living today, and what most spend their whole life reaching for, higher wages, more money for less work, and always bigger and better things is all wrong.

I think the Indians had the right way of living. The land provided everything they needed, and they did not ask for more and more. The Indians were satisfied with their way of living and raising their families, but not the white man. When the white man with his greed came along he spoiled it all, first for the Indians, and eventually for himself too.

When the white man wants a home he has try to get the biggest home he can get and then he buys it from someone else and ends up working most all of his life to pay for it. He has to have every work saving device in it that has ever been invented because he wants to do the least work he can get away with. But because of that attitude he is tied down to work all his life for someone else, so they can make a profit from his labor. And it is a ride he cannot get off of.

The whole of the country's population has gone mad as far as prices and wages are concerned because of this attitude. Wages of \$10.00 not for a day's work but just for an hour's work are quite common now and that just can not go on. All because people want more and more of everything, and everything has to be bigger than it was before.

If people are finding they need that kind of wages to survive, there is something very wrong with the whole economy, and it is not going to be solved by more high wages or more high prices. The goverment is going to have to get enough backbone to put a stop to all this and bring people back down to earth again, out of their dream world that they have been living in for the last fifty or more years. If they want to survive, people are going to have to come down to the realities of what life is all about, and live life as it used to be lived, when people had, and made do with, much less of everything.

I remember those times and I can tell you that people were happier.

Our oil and gas are just about gone, so we are going to have to slow down our speed of living. The railways are going to have to return to steam. No more planes guzzling millions of gallons of gas in one day. No more cars or diesel trucks doing the same. No more gas stoves and no more power from gas for industries to use for power to drive their factories.

Our minerals will also soon be gone so we will have to go back to wood again, if there is any wood left by then. Our big grain farms and other big farms that are now operated like big factories with very few men working in them will have to be cut up into small farms and farmed like they were several generations ago. More people will have to farm, and some great reforestation plan should be started at once to provide wood for construction and fuel, without delay, before it is too late.

We will have to learn to import less from other countries and to make do with what we can produce ourselves, right here at home. We will have to become more dependent on ourselves for the things we need, instead of some country halfway around the world.

We should start all this winding down at once, while there still may be time to get every acre not growing food planted to all kinds of trees. We are going to need them in the coming generation.

I will not be around to see if my prophesy comes true, but I am sure it will from the way things look today. Just think about how far we have come in 100 years or less.

I saw the country when there were very few good gravel roads. I saw the country when cars first appeared on the roads. I saw steam engines pulling a full load of thirty-five boxcars, and at the time I thought that was a lot. Now I have seen two diesels pulling a mile or more of

loaded grain cars. I saw one of the first planes that seemed barely able to keep in the air carrying just the pilot. Now there are planes that carry 350 passengers or more and all their luggage. And those planes are burning fuel like there is no tomorrow.

All this happened in less than 70 years. What will happen in the next century if this kind of growth keeps on going? This growth where everything gets bigger, more expensive, and uses enormous amounts of our resources but employs less and less people to earn the money to pay for it all.

We can develop energy from the sun, but what good will that do if we have no mineral wealth left, or if we can't give people jobs, or there is no space to build a home? In less than one hundred years we may have no land on which to grow our food at the rate our farm lands are being covered with highways and buildings while the rocky useless land is lying idle and is of no use for growing food. We should be using that land for building on, not our farmland which cannot be replaced.

With the pollution of our rivers and lakes where are we going to get water to keep us alive? With the way our air is being polluted what are we going to breath? Take a look up around the city of Sudbury to see what pollution of the air has done there from the mine and refinery. When the ore gives out there and the company moves away, which I am sure will happen sooner rather than later, the environment may never recover, and this was all done just so some greedy group of people can make some extra profits. Where does that leave the people who live around there after the mining company moves away?

The same goes for The Dryden paper mill. It has polluted the Wabigoon river with mercury that will take years to clear out and let the river come back to being safe to eat the fish

on which the Indians depended for their lively hood. The Great Lakes paper mill here at Thunder Bay are still dumping pollutants into the Kam river, killing off a lot of the fish that were going up the river to spawn. Fish that would have been food for some people and that would have helped to keep the whole environment healthy.

The same could be said for our deep sea fishing business as well. We do not have men supporting their families by fishing like we used to. Now there are huge trawlers that are really just factories processing fish. They scoop up hundreds of tons of fish at a time. How long will it be before we have used up all the fish we depend on for food?

Things like these have got to stop and stop soon.

From what I can see, the goverment will not make the changes which have to be made, because the goverment is only interested in getting re-elected and will not tell the people hard truths or take hard actions. It is the people who will have to find a new way of living with what we have.

We have wasted and squandered our birthright and the birthrights of future generations, now we must start with the cleaning up of the mess we have made by doing away with all pollution of air, water and land, no matter what the cost today. We can start by cutting down on the terrible waste that is now going on by making much better use of the resources we still have.

It does no good to ignore these things and tell ourselves that they will go away. The truth is that the harm we have done and are still doing will increase until in the very near future people will lack the very essentials that we now take for granted and waste so freely. It has happened before that we have had plagues and death by starvation and all kinds of diseases, but on a much

smaller scale than will happen this time if we do nothing. When it happens this time, living will be so hard that many will die and those that do not die will wish they were dead too.

I will not be around to see it happen, and for that I am thankful. There is only so much reserves the earth has to support life, and when they are gone, so are all of us. It can be delayed and perhaps prevented, but it will take a big change in our way of thinking and our style of living. And we had better start right now.

Samuel B. Allen

Spring, 1979

Appendix A

Building a Log House

The Log House

You ask about building a log cabin or log house, so I will write up a little piece about how to do it. This piece about how to build a log cabin is all about how I built one. There are as many different ways to build one as there are leaves on a tree. I did not know that when I built my first one, so I just used my own judgement. What I wrote down for you, in case you ever decide to build a log house, has all my experience from other log buildings I have built over the years and none of the mistakes I made as I learned how to do it. It also has some of the improvements and changes that I made over the years.

Today there are more modern tools you can use to help with building a log cabin than I had at the time I built mine, such as the chain saw which had not been invented at the time I built my last log cabin. New tools like the chain saw and others will make the job a lot easier for you than it was for me back in the 1930s and 40s.

You ask about living in a log house. I know that I prefer a log house to any other kind of a home to live in, but for the life of me I do not think I could explain why so that you could understand. A log house just seems to me to be the most homey, comfortable kind of a home to live in. You just feel good all over to be living there. It seems to me to welcome you with a friendly warm feeling, and you feel at home right away, the minute you pass through the door.

At least that is the way my log houses have felt, although I have been in some that discusted me very much.

How to build a Log House

by Sam

First you must decide on how wide and how long you want your house, then cut your logs about two or three feet longer than the length or width of the cabin you want to build. Then pick out the location where you want to build.

The first consideration is easy access to the cabin from a traveled road. Next comes the access to a good supply of drinkable water and to a good supply of firewood. Do not clear a place to build amongst tall trees, as they may blow down in high winds on your house. Pick a spot that has real good drainage as this is very important now as in most places in the province you will have to put in a septic tank and sewage field.

Now about your logs, spruce is best as they grow more straight and uniform. As I said before, cut them about three feet longer than the length or width of the building you plan to erect. If possible cut them when the temperature is well below zero and when the sky is cloudy, this will prevent sap from being in the tree and coming out when warm weather comes and makes big cracks in the logs. If you are going to partition your cabin into rooms with logs be sure you cut enough logs in the winter when it is real cold.

Next step is to get them to where you are going to build.

If not too far away from your building site, you can skid them there with a single horse or to be more modern, perhaps with a strong Skidoo. Put them up off the ground on logs or skids as



*Piled Logs for Building a House
(They are up off the ground)*

they are called but not on the ones you are going to use for building.

The next step is to peel them as soon as possible. For this you will need a spud, which is a chisel shaped piece of iron flattened at one end into a blade like a wood chisel about four inches wide. It is overall about six or seven inches long.

On the other end is a socket like a wood

chisel that you fit in a wooden handle about four or five feet long. When using it you keep the beveled side to the log's surface always, and it must be very sharp to make the work much easier.

When the logs have all been peeled the peelings should be burned as soon as possible and when the weather gets warmer the logs should be turned about half a turn at least twice a week. It would be much better if they could be left in a shady place while they are drying out, as they would not dry so quickly and so would not crack so much.

Now that's done I will tell you what tools I had and how I used them on the building part.

First I had a new axe which I ground the cutting edge of the blade into a half moon shape. I then sharpened it to a thin sharp edge. Next I had about 100 feet of 3/4 inch rope and a wooden

pulley block with a place to tie the end of the rope. Next I had a hammer and a four foot level, also a round mouth shovel, a 12 pound sledge hammer and a five foot bar to pry with.

Now that you have picked your location for building you need at least six or more flat stones about ten to twelve inches in thickness and about a foot and half in diameter, more if possible. Now you are ready to start building. Now get two of the straightest logs for the long part of the house.

Now here is where you must start right or you can run into a pile of trouble. Each of these logs are to be put up on these rocks, one at each corner, right where the logs will cross each other, and one under each log in the middle. Get each log as level and as solid as possible, seeing that the log is resting firmly on each rock. It is a good idea to remove all top soil from where rock will seat on the ground so that there will not be an uneven settling as the weight increases.

Now before we go any further I will tell you how these logs must be started out in order to come out about right when you are finished.

Let us say the log on the west side has the big end of the log at the north, that would mean that the big end of the log on the east side would have to be at the south. Now the next thing to do is to get two more straight logs, the shorter ones for the ends of the cabin, now these will have to be placed as follows. The big end of the log at the south will have to lay on the top of the small end of the log on the west side and the log at the north end will have to have the big end lay on the small end of the log on the east side of the house.

Now these four logs must be spaced so that they project out over each other about two feet. You can square your cabin up until it is very close to square by driving a stake into the



Setting up the Logs

ground at the four corners, then measuring with a tape measure or a piece of long rope. When you get the corners measured diagonally across from the corners and have them as square as you

can get them, line the end logs up with about two or three feet of overhang and then take your axe and mark each end of the log on top in the exact centre of where it crosses the long logs on the side, with a notch with your axe.



Log House Corner

Before you move each log after you have notched it, take a carpenter's pencil and draw a line outlining the outsides of the bottom log on the top log. If you do not have a carpenter's pencil a good soft lead pencil will do. You must have a short pencil that makes a good dark mark on the log.

While putting up your logs, as I will explain later, you can nick the outline of the bottom log with a small notch of your axe. Start from the centre notch to cut out your notch to fit over your bottom log, working towards your outline mark of the bottom log. You will notice that the centre of your cut is deeper than the outside after you think you have cut deep enough on both ends for the top log to fit over the bottom one. This is for a purpose.

Now turn your top log over and let it down so the notches fit over the bottom log when it is where it should be on both bottom logs. This is where the pencil is needed again. Mark all high places in your notch where the log is resting on them on both ends then turn it over so the notch is up again and nibble away with your axe until you think it will fit on both ends and try it again. You may have to do this several times before it fits fairly tight.

When you are satisfied that you have fitted it as tight as possible, take two strips of oakum as long as from one edge of your notch to the other down into the bottom of the notch and up the other side and lay them on the bottom log and turn the top log over with the notch on the bottom and lay the big end on the oakum first, then go down and lay the small end on the oakum, then line them up where you want them.

To give you a better idea of where to line them up, when you have squared the four logs up and are satisfied that is the best you can do, if you make a small notch on your bottom log at each end looking down the outside of the top log, before you start to notch the top log, it will be much easier to line up your first log, which is very important to the appearance of your cabin when it is finished.

Now is the time to decide where your door is going to be or if you are going to have two doors.

We will say that you have your first round of logs in place and that you are putting up your second round. Always put the big end of the log right over where the small end is on the log below it. Now look over your building logs. Do you have one that is a bit crooked about where your door or a window is going to be? If so, now is the time to use the one with the crook

where the door will be, because when you cut the doorway in the wall you will cut the crook out and when the casing is put in you will have a straight wall. The same holds true for the windows.



House Walls as High as You Want

Now that I have taken care of that, there is the problem of the floor.

There are two kinds and ways of putting down a floor.

One way is to put in three long logs lengthways of the long part of the house, and level them up on flat rocks then lay smaller logs cross ways on these three logs, leveling them up, when they are place about two feet apart. The other way is much quicker, gives

a more solid level floor but it costs more. That is to level off three logs length ways of the house, then get 2 x 8 planks and place them 18 inches apart and you have a perfectly level floor and you put it in in half the time. You can use three quarter inch shiplap for the floor, and when the roof is on and the doors and windows are in, you can lay 1/8 plywood on top of it and then put on floor tile. I would recommend floor tile as they are much easier to clean with soap and water, and a mop.

Now you have your cabin logs up as high as where the top of your windows and doors will be going on the top log, allowing about two inches extra in the height of your hole for the doors and windows for leveling them, and about five inches in width, for a 2 x 6 on each side of each opening for to allow for plumbing the doors and window frames. Now put on the rest of your house logs as high as you want your house at the eaves.

Now if you have lots of straight long slender trees that you can use for rafters about four inches in diameter at the small end and logs of about 6 inches in diameter at the big end when peeled you can go ahead and frame your ceiling and roof.

First, you use the larger logs for the ceiling, having them overhang the wall of the cabin about fifteen inches on either side. If you cut them about thirty inches longer than the outside width of your house wall they will come out just about right. When you have them all in place, flatten the top of each end of each log so that your rafters will sit as tight as possible. Now take your axe and cut a bevel on the ends of each log, which will match the slope of the roof rafter.

Your roof rafters comes next. Your roof should have a rather steep pitch in a district where the snow fall is heavy, as it will then shed most of the snow.

The first thing to do before trying to put up your rafters, is to install a ridge board. This is an idea that I thought up myself before I ever built a log house.

I looked at a lot of houses when we first went to the homestead and I wondered why they were all with a swayback roof, low in the middle and high on each end. I got permission to go up in there attic, then I saw the reason and later on I thought up a cure or rather a preventive plan for a roof. There was nothing to hold the roof from settling down and spreading out at the same time, so I thought up the ridge board and braces right up tight under the bottom edge of a six in. by 3/4 inch board.

I also put in another safety feature that I invented to keep the walls from spreading.

Usually the bottom ends of the rafters were just nailed to the top of each wall, and the ceiling rafters were set on top of the wall and they too were nailed to the wall. Most of the roofs on houses I had seen had a very low pitch on them. When they got heavy snows, the snow all

stayed on the roof and most of it turned to ice from the heat on the underside of the roof. This



Roof Under Construction

put a heavy weight and strain on the nails holding the rafters to the wall and over the years they started to pull out of the logs they were nailed to, letting the roof sag in the middle. That is why you can see many cabins in the Rainy

River District with the roofs fallen in.

I put a ridge board with braces under it and set the bottom ends of the rafters outside the walls of the house about a foot or more so that the weight of the roof was pushing straight down instead of out sideways.

I saw the first house that I built out of logs after near thirty years later when I was up there looking for land, and while the man that had bought it let it go to ruin the log ridge was as straight as the day I put it up.

Now with the ceiling logs out over the outside of the wall with the bottom end of the rafter fastened into it there is no chance of the roof ever collapsing. Another thing is that with a ridge board you can put up a pair of rafters by yourself quite easily. You put the small end up on the ridge board and the large end down on the end of the flattened ceiling log then you climb up on the box or platform and bring the small end of the rafter up flush and tight to the ridge board and nail it tight through the board and into the rafter end. Then you go down and line up the

bottom end and nail it with a five inch spike in the middle of the rafter and a three inch nail on either side.

By the way I forgot to tell you that before you start to put your rafters up, you should space your ceiling logs about two feet apart and nail them down to the house walls with five and four inch spikes.

Your rafters should be marked on your ridge board two feet apart and then you will have to centre them the best you can by your eye. The way I did it was to adjust the small end of the rafter so that it was flush with the sideboard then drove in a three in nail far enough to hold it in place, then I went down and got the big end of the rafter lined up with the ceiling log, nailed it down, then I went back up to the small end of the rafter, pulled out the nail and moved it into line with the ceiling log.

In no way can you be exactly accurate when building with logs, as logs are not accurate.



Attic Window

You just have to use your eye to measure and adjust things. Try it and you will be surprised how accurate you can be on most things. You only need line up the rafters on one side of the roof as the other side pretty much lines up itself.

When you get the rafters all up, next cut braces out of short pieces of boards for braces to hold the top end of each set of rafters together. There should be two braces to a set of rafters, one on each side. Now a couple of short pieces of 2 x 4 should be cut in length and angle to be nailed to both sides of where the rafter and ceiling log passes over the wall. These pieces of 2 x 4

should be installed directly over the top wall log and nailed to both the rafter and the ceiling log and each of these spaces be closed up tight to the roof and filled with insulation; fibreglass, preferable.

The ends of the roof studding can now be put in.

A fair sized window should be put in each end of the attic so that they can be open in hot weather to cool off the rooms below. The windows should all have tight screens on that can be taken off when storm windows must be put on. If the roof is not going to be insulated for winter and summer and you have to use the attic for a bedroom for children, you must have direct ventilation right straight through the attic in the summer as it is hot as an oven.

Without it, no one can sleep there.

Now when you have the ends of the attic boarded up tight, and do this before you put the lumber on your roof as it will save you an immense amount of work, then put the lumber on your roof and have enough overhang so that when you cut the ends off the roof boards you can have an overhang of two feet. Put facer boards along all the edges of your roof made from 6 inch dressed lumber. A good way to get the ends of your roof cut off straight is to get a straight board and tack it onto the roof at the top, two feet out from the wall at the end of the attic, then go down to the eaves and use a steel square to square up the board with the facer board at the eaves.

Take your pencil and mark along the outside of the board. Take the board off and put it on the opposite side of the roof, being sure to get the edge of the board at the top right in line with the line that you put on the other side of the roof. Go down to the bottom by the eaves and square the board the same as you did for the first side of the roof. Do the other end the same way, then put on your facer boards on each end and sides.

These facer boards are important for two things. They make your cabin look more finished and they protect the walls a good deal from rain.

Now as to roofing. We could not get asphalt shingles when I put the roofing on my first or second log cabin, so I used 210 pound to a square of rolled roofing. It was the best to be had at that time. But it swelled in the heat and shrunk in the cold, and in time developed cracks in the wrinkles which leaked. Now you can get asphalt shingles that will seal themselves tight and will not shrink or wrinkle and crack, and the wind can not blow them off or loosen them. They cost a bit more and are much easier to put on and look very much better and are well worth the extra cost as they are good for thirty or forty years,

First you put on an 18 inch strip on the bottom, which you can buy in that length. You let it out over the edge of the facer board about a half an inch or three quarters. Next you start at one side and take half of a single shingle sheet and lay it with the half shingle side to the outside of the wall edge of the roof, with the bottom edge flush with the bottom edge of the starting strip. You go right across the whole roof like this until you come to the other side. Then you cut another three shingle sheet in such a way as to match up with the last shingle you laid and the edge of the strip on the bottom of the roof.

Now you are really ready to go, but first I want to tell you of a little tool that I made out of a little piece of wood that allowed me to lay shingles much faster. I got a piece of wood about nine inches long and about an inch square. I cut it down the centre, the same distance that was the part of the shingle that was to be exposed to the weather, then cut half off the split end off. I then had only to nail the one end of the three shingle strip next to the last shingle I had put on the roof, go to the other end of the strip, put this handy tool to the bottom edge of the strip and shove

it up until it was in line with the last one and nail it all on. When I was all finish it looked real fine.

When you get to the peak of the roof on one side, trim the shingles off close to the edge of the peak and then start and do the other side the same way. Now I very near forgot to tell you about the scaffolding.



Scaffolding

You build a scaffold so that when you're standing on it, it will be about two feet below the edge of the roof. Arrange it so that you will have two uprights one at each end and two about in the middle each at about the height of the other. Now nail a 2 x 4 or more along these uprights, so that it rest on the 2 x 4s.

Be sure to nail the 2 x 4s to the side of the upright next to the wall of the house.

Now get two 2 x 4s that when put end to end will be about the same length as the roof. Nail two 1 inch by 6 inch boards long enough to reach from the 2 x 4s on the uprights to within four feet of the peak of the roof. When you have put on shingles as far up the roof as you can

reach, take one of these two by fours, with the board nailed with four inch nails not all the way through the two by four, and put it on the shingles about about a foot or so below the last shingles. Do the same with the other and when each is in place nail them to the two by fours on the uprights with two three inch nails in each with the heads of the nails out about a quarter of an inch. When you get to the top and have trimmed off the shingle on one side and have completed the other side in a like manner it will be time to finish off the roof ridge.

Before we go any further we better do something about a chimney. Now if you are going to just have a pipe going up and out of a little contraption on the top of the house, it would not be no problem to install that kind of a chimney. I strongly disapprove of this kind of a chimney, for safety reasons. I installed one on my first log house that I built and was very near burnt out on several occasions, and once when I was a long way from home in the winter working on the highway.

There is a certain amount of moisture in all wood and when the smoke and steam go out into the cold part of a metal chimney they condense into creosote and stick to the chimney and if it is a very cold night and it condenses in your pipes down in the house when all are asleep and someone gets up and stirs up the fire and puts some more wood on to warm the house a bit, you can have a big fire in your pipes that you can not get at to put out, until they melt and fall down on the floor or as it sometimes happens, on a bed full of small children.

No, I do not like them even if they are much cheaper. When I got money enough I got bricks and tile lining for a chimney and built a chimney by myself, and I slept a lot better at night.

The chimney can be built from a sort of stand made from two inch planks and works very good. The chimney would have to be built before the shingling could be ended as the flashings for to make it waterproof have to be built right into the sides of the chimney. The way I finish off the peak of the roof is another idea of my own.

I start at one end of the peak and I take a sheet of three shingles and cut it into three separate shingles. I then nail these to each side of the peak by nailing one side first then bending the shingle lengthways and nailing it down on the other side. I just have the part of the shingle exposed to the weather that is supposed to be exposed. It has worked fine on the last two houses that I have built.

Before you are done, you will have to fill the spaces between the logs. To do this, you cut short pieces of small logs, about three or four times larger than the space between the logs. You take your axe with the half moon shaped cutting edge and hew the log on both sides so that the centre is hollowed out lower than the edges. Have the edge that will go inside the wall small enough so that you can insert it an inch or two between the logs. Have the edge that is going to be outside much thicker so that when you force it in it will fit snugly between the two logs, but not big enough to raise the logs.

I would suggest that you start in the centre and work both ways, getting each piece of log up tight to the one next to it. You will need a twelve pound sledge to drive them into place. If there are any spaces on the top side between the small piece of log and the wall log, pack some oakum in these to make them fit tight.

Oakum is shredded jute soaked in some kind of water repellent, and mostly used on boats for forcing into cracks or crevices or around doors and seams in boats to make them waterproof.

It is a good thing for putting between the logs of a cabin or in the notches of the corners as it keeps out the moisture and insects. Insects will avoid it.

Next you mix up some sand and lime or cement, which even is cheaper, and starting at the top plaster up all the cracks between the logs, particularly where the logs cross each other. After that has dried for about two weeks, go over it again and fill the space full of mortar giving it a good smooth finish, then go in again and do the same process on the inside of the space between the logs.

I have been trying to think if there was anything that I have forgotten then I remembered I did not tell you how to get the logs up on the walls when they got too high to lift up. Well this is how I did it with some rope and one wooden two sheave block.

I rolled my log over to the wall, in fact I put up two at a time while I had the rigging ready. On the opposite wall, outside the wall, I had a good strong pole tied to the logs that I already had put up. On the top end of this pole a little higher than my house walls would be when finished, I had a two sheave block tied to the pole. I had about a hundred and fifty feet of one inch rope tied to the eye on the bottom of the block and out over the opposite wall, then around the log I was going to put up, then back across the house and through one sheave of the block and back through a window opening. The logs roll up the skids rather easily. When they come up against the ends of the two previous logs I had put up, I went over to the corner of the house and tied the rope to the end of one of the house logs. I then got up on the ends of the logs already in the wall and lifted the heavy big end of the log up onto the one I had put on the wall last. I then got down off that end and went to the other end of the log and lifted the small end up. That is the way I got all the logs up to build my log houses and barns.

About the advantages of a log house. One of the biggest advantages of a log cabin is that the logs hold the heat for a long time in the winter, and are much easier to heat if they have been carefully built and the walls well sealed. Another thing, if you give them a good coat or two of varnish they will only need a damp rag to give them a good cleaning so that they will always look clean and fresh. There is no papering or painting to do every year or so, and the outside can be made to look very beautiful with one or two coats of a waterproof paint. The window and door trim is about the only part of the whole building that will need painting. I do not know of any disadvantages to any log house that I ever built.



Corbett Creek Log House

Appendix B

Selected Poems of Samuel B. Allen

June, 1939

Springtime on the Homestead

When it's springtime on the Homestead,
The flies and mosquitoes are here,
Everything is wet and dreary,
And the days hold little cheer.

The bulldogs bite the horses,
The black flies eat the cows,
Mosquitoes chew the baby,
And ants eat away at the sows.

Plant beans, corn, and cabbage,
Potatoes by the pound.
When you get up some mornings,
They are frozen to the ground.

The cut worms get your cabbage,
Army worms eat your hay,
You fight potatoe bugs always,
From morning till end of day.

You buy a team of horses,
Cut pulpwood for them to pay,
At forty-five below zero,
Working sixteen hours a day.

But it's time to leave the Homestead,
And travel far, far away,
And I will not forget my Homestead,
To the end of my dying day.

Good-bye to the flies and mosquitoes,
Good-bye to the wet work and cold.
I am going back to the city,
To be warm and dry when I'm old.

May, 1946

The Flower

In the old family Bible
The purple violet lay,
Pressed between the pages
That thumbs have worn away.

Dustbrown stains upon the leaves
Betray that life had gone,
But something of it's fragrance
Continues to linger on.

I wonder who had placed it there,
What hand had held that flower,
Making sweet remembrances
Of some much cherished hour.

Or was it plucked in sorrow?
In what woodland did it grow?
The reason it was cherished,
Only my mother can know.

October, 1956

Autumn

Let me tell you a little secret,
I love the Autumn days,
The tang in the morning air,
The hills blue with haze.

Stay longer with us, Autumn,
Don't yield to winter's cold.
I love the mellow sunshine,
The leaves all brown and gold.

Stay longer with us, Autumn,
I love each passing day.
The world in vivid colours
Begs Autumn to please stay.

April, 1963

A Choice

A little acorn has no choice
Except an oak to be,
But things are very different
When it comes to you and me.

We may become like sturdy oaks
On which folks will rely,
Or just remain small saplings
Who would not even try.

July, 1963

Geraniums

They sing about the lovely roses,
And paint the daffodil,
But geraniums look mighty nice
Upon the window sill.

They seem to bid you welcome,
In a homey sort of way,
Their blooms will add a cheery note
To brighten up each day.

July, 1965

Will You Love Me When I'm Old

I would ask of you my darling,
A question soft and low,
That gives me many heartaches
As moments come and go.

Your love I know is truthful,
But the truest love grows cold.

It is this that I must ask you,
Will you love me when I'm old.

Down the stream of life
We are sailing side by side,
Hoping someday to anchor,
Safe beyond the tide.

Today our sky is cloudless,
But at night clouds may unfold,
And storms may gather around us,
So will you love me when I'm old.

My hair will be a snowdrift,
My eyes shall dimmer grow,
I would lean upon some loved one,
Through the valley as I go.

I would claim of you a promise,
Worth more to me than gold,
It is only this my darling,
That you will love me when I'm old.

June, 1970

My First Love

I was just a kid of seventeen,
When I saw her for the first time.

I knew I never could be happy
Until the day that she was mine.

She had a smooth and graceful body.
It was warm to my first touch.

As she stood there clean and slim,
I loved her very much.

She was a beautiful, lovely thing
In her coat of brilliant red.

If I could not have her for my own
I felt I'd rather be dead.

After months of work and denial
It was plain for all to see.

She would not be with another,
She would serve only me.

Each day I would stroke her body,
With gentle, tender hands,
To get her in the proper shape,
To obey my desires and demands.

I would move in upon her,
And try to make her move.
Then soon I would enjoy the feel
Of her movements strong and smooth.

We have grown old together.
We've reached the end of the line.
But nothing would get me to part with
That wonderful Tin Lizzie of mine.



Ford Model T "Tin Lizzy"

June, 1972

The bedpan

When I had both my operations,

I think I had a lot of guts.

I could take it, smile, and like it,

But the bedpan drove me nuts.

When nature called, I'd call the nurse,

And when I called, she ran,

And soon I'd have my carcass parked

On that darned old bedpan.

I'd slide back on my shoulders,

But the leverage was not there.

And instead of something doing,

I'd shoot a lot of air.

When I would finally get results,

I would feel around my seat,

To see if I had missed the pan,
Or soiled it on the seat.

With sweat upon my forehead,
I would feel with cautious care,
And with sighs of satisfaction,
I'd find nothing there.

But now a new contortion
Would leave me weak and pale.
I'd have to work, and twist and squirm,
To wipe my poor sore tail.

When I would ring, the nurse came in
To carry off that pan.
I'd wonder why, on such a job,
They did not send a man.

Then finally, I'd settle down,
That movement was a treat.
But, wait a minute! What's so warm,
So wet upon the sheet?

With a gasp of apprehension,
I would slowly raise my gown.

And there beneath my sitter,
Would be a blotch of brown.

And so as operations go,
I am a big he man.

But gosh! It burns me up,
When I missed that darned bedpan.

January, 1973

Bambi

Bambi is our happy mutt,
Who lives with us in her little hut.

Made of lumber with roofing and cement,
She is in and out and quite content.

What a nice little dog, so smooth and brown,
Who sometimes acts just like a clown,
She will lay on her back doing a trick,
Or jump in the air when chasing a stick.

Every night we keep her indoors,
She does not howl or scratch the floors.
When she hears a noise in the dark,
Then Bambi lets out a single bark.

Each time that we sit down to eat,
In her basket she waits for a treat.
I try to always give her a taste,
Certain none of it will go to waste.

There are some who would fuss and fret,
That an old man like me has such a pet.
But it gives me peace to have this friend,
And I hope that I have her to my very end.



(Bambi was run over and killed on the first day we came to our daughter's place to live.)

May, 1977

The Old Man

He hobbled along with his canes,

A tired and lonely old man.

He is buffeted by people in a hurry,

While making his way as well as he can.

His life was not always lived in this way,

There are memories of happier days,

Of a home of his own, with a family to love,

But his children have gone their own ways.

They have forgotten he helped them all out
When they needed advice and a bit of a hand,
When he gave them shelter, and there families too,
When all he had was theirs to command.

As he walks the sidewalk to his empty room,
He thinks of these things with an aching heart.
What he did wrong, or what did he not do,
To make his children from him draw apart.

He worked at jobs, no matter how menial,
The pay was poor, but at some it was good,
To keep the family fed and sheltered,
And he always did the best that he could.

He worked ten hours for fifty cents,
Not often did he receive much more.
Small pay for a hard day's work,
But it bought them all food at the grocery store.

The old man thought of those days as he walked,

And it did not seem so long ago.

If any man knew what the depression was like,

He was one who should surely know.

Now he is passed by and ignored

By them that had depended on him to live.

He had worked hard for them all when they were quite small,

But now he's forgotten, when there's no more to give.

Appendix C

List of Figures

List of Illustrations

In the following list of illustrations, most of the pictures come from the photographs Samuel B. Allen sent me along with his letters and memories. Of those that did not come directly from Sam, most of them can be found in the public domain, often in Wikipedia. Those illustrations for which permission was required to allow their use in this work have been attributed to the copyright holders, as listed below.

Title	Location	Source
1. Cover shot - Canadian Gothic	Cover	Samuel B. Allen
2. Dad (behind Drum), circa 1910	p 9	Esquesing Historical Society
3. Jack-In-The-Pulpit	p 16	Public Domain
4. Turkey and Cradle	p 18	Carolyn Filter
5. The Gold Cure for Drunkenness	p 19	Public Domain
6. Riding the Rail	p 23	Carolyn Filter
7. Spring Flood, 1911 at the Barber Bros. Paper Mill	p 53	Samuel B. Allen
8. The Credit River Behind Paper Mill Row	p 63	Carolyn Filter
9. Fishing on the Credit	p 64	Carolyn Filter
10. Crinkleroot	p 65	Public Domain
11. Holding Pond for Barber Bros.	p 65	Carolyn Filter

Paper Mill (2013)

12. The Old Iron Bridge Over the Credit	p 76	Esquesing Historical Society
13. Old Style Lunch Pail	p 77	Not copyright protected
14. Spencerian Script Example	p 82	Not copyright protected
15. My Older Brother, Tom	p 84	Samuel B. Allen
16. Barber Bros Mill, circa 1910	p 113	“The Barber Dynamo,” Revised Edition, R. Filter
17. The Double House my Mother Bought on Paper Mill Row	p 114	Samuel B. Allen
18. Joseph Flavelle	p 120	Public Domain
19. Patriotic Fund	p 121	Public Domain
20. Blue Ointment Tin, circa 1918	p 127	Not copyright protected
21. Me at 17 and Just Arrived in Trenton	p 128	Samuel B. Allen
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25. On Hastings Street, circa 1925	p 161	Public domain
26. Train on the Kettle Valley Railway Crossing Sirnach Creek, circa 1920	p 166	Public Domain
27. Suitcases	p 167	Carolyn Filter
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Cleveland Farm, 1921

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About the Recipes....

None of the recipes in these memoirs were provided by Samuel B. Allen; however, I noticed that he would describe some of the meals he'd prepared as a child, or eaten as an adult, in surprisingly sumptuous terms. I thought it might be interesting to search out traditional recipes for the meals he was describing and include them in these memoirs. My sources included the internet and various cookbooks in my own library. I made every effort to keep the recipes authentic to his times, and as simple as possible. And to my surprise, many of them seemed quite delicious and I would encourage the reader to try them out to get a flavour of what Sam was talking about when he was describing his food. I know I will.....except maybe the turtle soup.....