

# Reminiscences

by

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Lloyd Thorsley  
at  
Vintage Green

## Precis

These Reminiscences are, as the title suggests, from my memory only. I had no diaries or journals for reference. There are therefore many things that are not recorded because they did not leave a lasting impression and there are other things that I felt did not contribute to the record that I was creating.

I trust that I can be excused for not including experiences that were too personal to discuss and would only make the story unpalatable to me and , I would expect, to most readers but, in order to be honest, I admit that there were such experiences.

This story is not about any one but myself. References to other people are included because my relationships with them affected me. Some of them would have justified a story of their own but that was not my purpose.

Finally this is not intended to be a heroic romance. It is simply a record of things that I remember and if my memory is faulty I have no excuse. I do however feel that my life has been eventful enough to justify this record and I hope that it may be interesting and possibly helpful to others.

My thanks to my daughter Penny for reading the text and saying, "good".

LLT  
February, 2002

## I Childhood

As I watch my great grandchildren using all their senses to explore their environment, sometimes causing concern for parents and grandparents, I sometimes think back to when their parents and grandparents went through the same stage. They won't remember those early years but the amount of information they accumulate is enormous. I must have gone through the same process myself but I have no memory of it. All I know is that my mother reminded me later of how concerned she had been that I might get kicked by a horse or chop my feet up with the axe at the woodpile. She also told of the washday when I managed to wiggle the drain plug out of the hand operated washing machine and so let the wash water run out on the kitchen floor. I don't remember but I can well imagine what consternation that must have caused at the time. But those experiences and the milieu in which they took place probably had a major effect on who I finally became.

That was only the beginning. Once I had learned to walk and talk and go to school the learning curve was still steep. Much of what I learned was from relatives, playmates and teachers. But the basic character is formed at home and a child's parents are the source. All of the fundamental attitudes, values and prejudices formed in the first six or seven years of life are the result of the attitudes of the parents and the home environment. The learning is largely non-explicit and much of it is subconscious but I have had to live with what I learned throughout my life. Looking back I have to think that it was not all bad.

I was born on July 12, 1916 on my father's homestead in North Central Alberta, the eldest of the two surviving sons of Alfred Julius Thorsley and Mabel Elizabeth Lister. My mother was a school teacher from England and since I was born in the middle of World War 1 and David Lloyd George was Prime Minister of England I was blessed with his middle name. Mother was an Anglican and a proud adherent of the British Empire and had a portrait of Lloyd George hanging in our living room. She often referred to him as "The Welsh Wizard" and may have felt a connection to him because her mother's maiden name had been Elizabeth George. Lloyd George's later reputation portrays him as more of a conniving philanderer than as a wizard and I am rather pleased to be blessed with his name rather than his reputation.

Mother's religious and political convictions no doubt had an

influence on me and my brother Jim. But she was a farmer's wife and that meant baking bread, preparing meals and doing laundry and I don't suppose that her early years prepared her for that. She did it and found time and energy to get involved in teaching and various organizations connected to the United Church and Co-operative Commonwealth Federation as well as acting as secretary of the local School Board. She liked to travel and visit and we made a number of visits to Edmonton to visit her brothers and their families. In 1924 she took Jim and me to England to visit her parents and see some of the sights of her homeland. I think we were both too young to fully appreciate it but it no doubt influenced our attitudes. The sense of antiquity may have remained since her parents home had reportedly been built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The impression I had of her father may have had a lasting effect. As the eldest male grandchild present he had me sit at his right hand at dinner and ordered a small cup for me into which he poured a little of the quart of ale he drank with his dinner. My mother didn't approve but made no protest. Her father was king in his own castle. I didn't care for the ale but I drank it because, even then, I realized that I was being recognized.

Mother thought of herself as a writer and produced a number of essays and poems that I didn't see until long after her death. They show some skill but I think the main importance of them is the fact that she had the ambition to keep trying and they reveal in specific terms her feelings and beliefs. I don't believe she was happy with her lot in life. She had the ambition and courage to leave the stability of England to make her fortune and become famous in a new land and ended up respected and liked but still only a farmer's wife. She didn't have the sense of humor to see the joke and that might have been the biggest error in her personality.

In contrast, Father was able to accept the many disappointments in his life and just prepare for next year in the hope that it would be better. He was not a big man but he had many of the skills that are required for the life he chose to live and a dogged determination to meet the needs of the moment. He was a gentle man and his greatest fault was a lack of aggressiveness but he had the high moral standards of his mother and he could be very stubborn and that stubbornness, I think, contributed to the misunderstandings with my mother. He took his family responsibilities seriously and, while he had a family of his own, he was still the head of the Thorsley family.

His patience was often unbelievable but he was an excellent teamster and I was amazed at how well trained his horses were. When I began to drive them I often found that they knew more about what they were doing than I did. Operating a farm alone made him find

ways of doing things himself that in most cases would require two or more men.

Father probably had a minimum of schooling, possibly as little as four years and had the ability to read and write simple language and the fundamentals of simple arithmetic. I expect he was expected to help with the farm in Iowa, where he was born, as soon as he was able and schooling was not the most urgent need. So his background was that of a subsistence farmer without the talents or ambition to make him an entrepreneur. He was aware of his shortcomings and saw marrying a teacher as a way of ensuring that his children would not be faced with that limitation.

Father was a quiet man and taught more by example than with words but I learned many skills from him. He was not an adherent to any organized church and, I think found churches and ministers somewhat boring. But he was honest and dedicated to what he thought was right and I believe that the values I hold today derive much more from him than from my mother. When I heard of his passing in 1959 I had had little contact with him for some years but I felt devastated. I can still remember saying, "Part of me died with him but as long as I live he' Il never die".

How our parents got together can be the subject of some speculation. For Father it is pretty clear. His father had not been very successful in Iowa. He didn't own the farm they lived on and had to work in construction, usually away from home to supplement the family income. The prospect of 'Free Land in Canada' for him and his two sons was too much for him to resist. What Mother's objectives were is not so clear but I suspect that one of them was that she was growing older and was unmarried and without prospects. Another may have been that she was a British citizen with a profession as a teacher and would be a respected community leader in the  $\Phi$  'colonies'. She may have been disappointed in her reception but clung to hopes that things would improve. She wanted to marry and when the time came Father was the best choice but it doesn't appear to have been a romantic affair. In her diary she refers to her wedding with one word, 'Marriage'.

As time went on she became very bitter against Father and I can recall her giving Jim and I vicious lectures about him when we were only 8 or 9, though I never heard him use a harsh word to her. I suspect one cause was a \$1000 debt that his father had left when he died and our father was stuck with it. The effect was that of a black cloud over the family finances and she resented that more severely than it deserved. But she was always supportive of her two sons and I

think that both our parents saw their mission in us and though they were pleased that we both had successful lives Mother carried her bitterness to the grave.

Our farm was in the Alberta Parkland, about 60 miles east of Edmonton and 6 miles from the small village of Ryley. Parkland is distinguished from the prairie by consisting of a mixture of grassland and woods, slightly rolling, with small streams that carried water usually only in the spring and occasional depressions, that we called sloughs, that were water filled whenever the rainfall was sufficient but often dried out completely in summer. The grass was short and tough but was excellent grazing and provided high quality hay for winter feeding. Around the sloughs there was a much longer grass that was less nutritious but much less work to harvest. The woods were mainly aspen poplar with willow predominating around the sloughs where the moisture was more abundant. The woods supported a variety of birds and rabbits and partridges and the grassland supported millions of gophers that were the bane of field crops.

Whenever I mention that I was born in Alberta I seem to get the reaction that it must be awfully cold out there. It is true that the temperature can fall to 30 or 40 below zero and stay that way for weeks at a time in the winter months. Some say that it is tolerable because it is a "dry" - cold but 30 below is 30 below wet or dry. One learns to live with it and on a farm there is work to do and errands to run regardless of the weather. The summers, by contrast, were often very hot and that was sometimes more difficult to deal with than the cold. The spring and fall seasons were quite delightful.

I often heard the description, "Sunny Alberta", not because there was more sunshine but because the sunshine was so bright. I think that was because the air was clear and one of my recollections is of seeing the sky on a clear night when the Milky Way was so bright and close that I felt that with just a little longer arm I would - be able to reach up and get a cupful of it. And on a clear, cold winter night the sky would be alive with the Northern Lights and, if you listened carefully, you could hear the rustle of the changing colors. I have never seen either of those displays with so much clarity since. I think I got my first inklings of how insignificant we humans really are and what a tiny speck of dust this thing is that we Call the planet Earth.

We had a small one and a half story cottage that my father had built and the usual complement of farm buildings, a barn and granaries and a chicken coop and, of course, a well and windmill and the inevitable woodpile. It was just the basic necessities but was much like those of our neighbors. Our toilet was the standard . back house

at the bottom of the yard. It seems crude but the differences are largely a matter of convenience. If we needed water we had to go to the well and get it; if we wanted fuel for the big, cast iron kitchen range we had to bring it in from the woodpile; and the back house was supplied with paper, usually an obsolete copy of Eaton's catalogue. In the back house the slick pages of featured products were not appreciated. And in the winter time — keeping a clear path from the back door to the back house was the major priority.

Our livestock consisted of eight or ten horses, twenty or so cattle, maybe thirty pigs and about the same number of laying hens and a rooster. Three or four of the cattle were milk cows and we separated the milk to sell the cream but we also had cream in our coffee and on our breakfast porridge. The hens supplied us with eggs and, on occasion, a chicken dinner. We butchered our own pork and one of my thrills was the spare ribs, a whole side of spare ribs baked in one piece with only a little salt and pepper for seasoning. The liver was another matter. Since it wasn't easy to preserve we had to eat it. I didn't care much for liver but it seemed that Mother served it every day until it was used up, the rest of the pig was cut up and frozen or salted so that there was a winter's supply of pork. Since we had our own potato patch and vegetable garden we ate well and had no thought of any sort of contamination.

One of my earliest recollections is the sensation of mud squeezing up between the toes of my bare feet. I suppose a lot of children have had the same experience but on a dry-land farm it meant that there had been a summer rain and the success of our crops depended on it so that it had the effect of raising everyone's spirits. And the dirt road in front of our house provided lots of opportunity to indulge in the sensation. But there were lots of other opportunities to indulge new sensations. There was a small patch of woods near the house that was just big enough to hide in and find interesting things to investigate. Just beyond the woods was a branch line railway with trains almost every day and if Jim and I went out on the road and waved to the engineer he would always wave back.

As I got older I found wider fields to explore and in time I think I covered every comer of our 320 acre farm. I found new plants or trees and wild strawberries in the grass lands that, while they were very small they were tastier than any of the large cultivated ones. And occasionally I would flush out a rabbit or partridge or find a magpie's nest, an enormous construction of twigs, almost large enough for a tree house for me. I was fascinated with the growth of wheat and oats and of the potatoes and vegetables. It seemed like a miracle to me that those seeds could transform into something so much more. And,

of course, I learned how baby colts and calves and piglets and chicks were produced.

At times I would try to imagine what I would do with a certain location that seemed to invite more than nature provided; fantastic castles or underground caves where I would make my home and invent a new way of life. None of my dreams were feasible but they gave my imagination some exercise and that might have been useful.

There were more practical things to do to keep the farm operating. As soon as I was able I had to help with the chores, bringing wood in to the wood box in the kitchen or bringing water in from the well or emptying the slop pail under the sink. And there were barns to clean and animals to feed and those chores just became part of living on a farm. Chores were a part of every day's activities all year round but in the springtime the summer's work began. There were fields to plow and seeds to plant and after that bringing in the hay for winter feed. A typical day began with my father firing up the kitchen stove and making coffee. As soon as I was old enough I would go down and join him and help where I could with the morning chores. He seemed to appreciate any help he could get and before long I was driving a team of horses and learning how the farm machinery worked. By the time I was eleven he felt that I could drive a team of four horses and operate the grain binder. I was far too small and weak to handle everything well but I managed to cut the whole crop and I think Father was rather pleased with me.

Along with all this I had to go to school. It was a one room, country school with about thirty pupils in all the grades from one to eight. It was about a mile from our home, located on a large lot that had been donated by a local farmer and was given his name, Solberg School. I was often teased by other pupils because I had only one mile to walk to school. The schoolroom itself had large windows in the north wall to give diffused light and blackboards on the east and south walls. Above the east blackboard, behind the teacher's desk was a number of maps that could be pulled down for study. Someone thought that geography was important. Beside the school there was a small one room shack that was supposed to be the teacher's residence but many of the teachers found a place to board instead. Our home was one of them.

I don't remember my early years in that school with any pleasure. It seemed that I was not as aggressive as many of the other kids and even the school classes were set up to be competitive. I recall one regular session in Arithmetic that was called Rapid Calculation. The teacher would set up a group of quite simple problems and the class

was to see who could complete them the fastest. While other pupils seemed to relish it I just froze. At one time I was so unhappy that I just left and went home. When my parents caught me I was hustled back to school but that didn't make me any happier. But I'm still surprised at how much — must have learned in those lower grades. I can still remember my times tables; I can manipulate simple numerical problems in my head; and I can recognize grammatical errors that many others miss. I guess the early school experience was worth while. I learned some things and found that I preferred to do things for the satisfaction of doing them rather than just beating someone else.

It wasn't until grades nine and ten were added to the classes that I began to enjoy it. Algebra and Geometry and Ancient History and Shakespeare and the French Language were much more interesting and I didn't have to compete with anyone. I give credit to the teacher who taught those two grades, a Mr. John Daniel McDonald (J. D.) who taught in Solberg School for those two years and then became principal of Ryley High School. It was he who aroused my interest and acknowledged my abilities and may have had a major influence in my choice of a career. I recall his comment that I seemed to have a mathematical intuition. On the other hand, when he asked for my favorite quotation from the Merchant of Venice I passed up, "The quality of mercy", and chose, "How soft the moonlight sleeps upon this bank. Here will we sit and let the sound of music creep in our ears". J.D. felt that marked me as an incurable romantic.

But not all education occurs in school. The formal part does but it goes on outside the classroom and, in childhood, largely at home. I recall Dr. J. L. McPherson, in an address to a graduating class in Ryley using the theme, "Education is Learning to Live" and it goes on throughout life and in all kinds of places.

One thing that distinguished our home from those of our neighbors was the number of books that my mother had brought with her; complete sets of Dickens and Stevenson and a complete set of the eleventh edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. We got the Edmonton Journal, delivered with the mail three times a week and there was a variety of magazines and pamphlets on a wide range of subjects. Mother contributed to local newspapers and she did get an occasional piece published in the Edmonton Journal. Some of her interest might have rubbed off on me although I do not remember ever being involved with her work.

Otherwise our home was like many others and the one piece of electrical technology we had was a telephone. It was a rather nice

piece of cabinet work that hung on the kitchen wall but its inside workings were pretty crude. We were on a party line with several others but we could call another line by going through the central office in Ryley and we could make long distance calls through the same office. The telephone was an important communication link for a rural community where one's nearest neighbor was at least a mile away.

In time we got a radio, battery powered because we had no electrical power. It was to be succeeded by a series of improved models but always with enormous batteries. The radio added a new dimension to our lives. We could now hear from far away places and listen to news and entertainment not available otherwise. Favorite stations were CJCA in Edmonton, KOA in Denver and KSL in Salt Lake City. It was on the radio that I first heard cowboy singers like Wilf Carter and I memorized some of the songs and used to sing and yodel, all by myself, just for the sheer joy of it. There was one station that caught my attention. It seems that a certain doctor in Oklahoma City had a patent medicine to sell and wanted to build a big station to promote it. He wasn't allowed either a license or a frequency in the States so he built a 100,000 watt station in Mexico. I believe the programming was largely promotion of his product but I still remember the call letters XER. pronounced in Spanish as ekes e eros a Via Acunya, Mehico.

In the meantime I seem to have been developing a personality of my own. In one of my mother's essays which I didn't see until many years after her death she describes a family that seems very much like ours; a farmer, his wife and two sons. The older son is described as moody and aloof while the younger is always pleasant and cheerful. That may have been her judgement of me as the older son and brother Jim as the younger. I can recall her referring to him as Sunny Jim. She was probably justified in her view of me. At quite an early age I began to wonder at the reason for my own existence. I didn't know about the selfish gene and that I was just nature's way of ensuring the survival of Homo Sapiens. There had to be a reason and I couldn't justify being here just for my own benefit. So I was here to make this world a better place for someone else or there was no point to it. I don't think Jim was ever infected with that kind of thinking and I didn't discuss those thoughts with him. We were playmates as children and went to school together and never had any conflict or jealousy between us. Jim participated in the farm life but I don't recall that he ever operated the binder or drove six horses as a team or worked on a threshing crew. We each did our own thing and I think took each other for granted. He was always a nice guy and I'm not sure that the same could be said about me.

My mother as an indoctrinated Anglican and an adherent to the Christian Bible taught me the Ten Commandments before I could read or understand what they meant. She seemed to think I had a tendency toward transgression because she constantly reminded me that God was watching. When I protested that He couldn't possibly see me all the time she finally said that God was everywhere and I couldn't possibly escape his surveillance. That thought percolated in my head for some time and I finally realized that, if it was true, then God was in the trees and the grass and the flowers and even in me. Whatever this thing called God was I was part of it; a very tiny part but still an essential part..

Also, among the various books and pamphlets I found in our bookcase were some ideas that caught my fancy. One was a small pamphlet entitled "Absolute Justice". The message summed up for me was that you are responsible for everything that happens to you and you cannot blame others for any misfortunes. Another philosophical work seemed to convey the message that nothing can happen to you except in your own mind. With ideas like that circling about in my young mind it is no wonder that my mother looked on me as moody. Looking back over the decades it seems to have left me with a kind of intellectual integrity that I can still respect. If something bothers you it is because you let it. If things are not to your liking it is up to you to do something to bring them closer to your views.

In contrast to my mother's doctrinal view of things Father was quite specific in his discipline. If he told Jim and me not to do something and we did we could expect a few whacks with a willow switch across the backs of our bare legs. The command was specific and so was the punishment. And I well remember the stern warning I got about not wandering into a grown wheat field. I was still too small to see over the tops of the grain and if I got into it — might well have not been able to find my way out. But when I fell off the roof of the back house onto a board that had been carelessly left there with a nail in it and got the nail in my heel it was Father who came to my rescue and poured kerosene into the wound to sterilize it. A few days later I drove my mother to a meeting some three miles away with a horse and buggy. I was not very impressed by being told what a good boy I was to drive my mother to the meeting. I was only doing it because I couldn't walk very well and couldn't do much else.

Our lives were really not isolated. We had frequent visitors and from time to time Mother's brothers and their families would come from Edmonton and Father's sisters and their families from Ryley were often there or we would be visiting them. I recall one occasion when a

cousin was spending an afternoon at our place and we spent our time killing snakes and practically destroyed a fairly healthy colony near the house. I got no plaudits from Father who pointed out that snakes have a place in controlling other pests and should be left alone unless they become a problem. You shouldn't kill things just because you don't like them.

Mother took Jim and me to Edmonton on occasion to visit there and we had the opportunity to see life in the city. I don't recall much of those visits except having my first taste of Coca-Cola and not liking it at all and since then have had no use for it except when it is accompanied by a good measure of rum.

Christmas was always the big holiday time of the year. We always had a tree, a real evergreen tree with candles. The candles were held in little metal holders that clamped onto the branches. Since these were wax candles I expect that more than one house was burned down by a little carelessness. Our house was decorated with streamers and there were visits on Christmas Eve and always a big turkey dinner with family and friends on Christmas Day. It was the feast of the year and everyone ate too much and sometimes someone would fall asleep in the big chair in the living room.

It wasn't always that way. I have a dim recollection of one Christmas when we were blocked in by a blizzard and couldn't even get out to get a tree. So Father ventured out to the woods near the house and brought in a bare little poplar sapling. We set it up and decorated it and put the candles on. There was no big dinner that year but not even the blizzard could prevent us from doing what we could to celebrate Christmas.

There were gifts and I got my share. One of them was an Erector Set that I could assemble into complicated structures and machines. Another was a tiny steam engine with a real boiler that was heated by a methyl alcohol burner and an engine that ran on the steam produced, just like the big one that drove the threshing machine. Maybe those toys led me into building other things like the wagon that I had our dog at the time pull to bring in wood. An old horse halter was easily converted into a harness for the dog and the dog seemed to enjoy the game.

Most of my childhood experience was subconscious or long forgotten but it surely guided the rest of my life. The satisfaction of doing things and the thrill of encountering a new idea are still with me. I'm very suspicious of people who pretend to know all the answers and think that their way is the only way. Also, I find that I am not

stimulated by idle chit-chat and have no urge to find a warm beach to lie down on. But if some one needs help, either physically or emotionally, I find it easy to give without losing my own balance.

I find myself now living with many technological conveniences that either didn't exist or were not available to my family when I was a child. The time between then and now has been long and, while there were many interesting experiences, conditions were not often easy or comfortable. But my attitudes toward the basic fundamentals still seem to reflect my early years. Plus ca change, plus c'est la même chose.

## II Growing Up

As I entered my teenage years the Great Depression hit the world's economy. There were daily stories in the newspaper of financiers committing suicide by jumping out of their office windows. One local merchant who had been successful enough to invest in the stock market had his life shattered. Many businesses closed and many thousands of people were without work. And it all seemed to have happened in a single day.

On the farm we carried on and, since we were largely self-sufficient, we managed to get by but only just. Money was still required for taxes, and every home needs coffee and sugar and some spices and the yeast to make bread. The prices of all our products fell to a small fraction of their former values. I recall loading 100 bushels of oats in a wagon box and delivering it to the elevator and receiving a cheque for \$7.46. That financed a day at the Ryley Sports Day for the family and because I had done the work of loading the oats I got the last dollar for a ride in a barn-storming airplane. That was almost extreme extravagance at the time. Only someone like the manager of the bank could afford that and, if memory serves, he was indeed the other passenger beside me on the 15 minute flight.

The depression spawned the cult of the "hobo", lonely men wandering aimlessly along the railway lines in hope (without hope) of finding some gainful employment. Since we lived right on a railroad we got visitors from time to time hoping to make a dollar or two doing some odd job. We didn't have money to pay for such things but our visitors always got something to eat before they went on their way. It was a reminder that while we had our tough times there were many who were a lot worse off than we were.

I had the same urge to find some way to earn money and one day applied for a casual job ditch digging for the Gas Company, Northwestern Utilities Ltd at the time, in Ryley. I got the job and stayed with my grandmother for the three weeks or so that it lasted. It was a pick and shovel job for nine hours a day and six days a week at 32 cents an hour. I was just sixteen at the time and I found it really tough but I persisted and I think my determination attracted the attention of the foreman because I was later able to get work for the same company and he became quite a good friend

Later the same year I took a job on a threshing crew bringing

bundles to the threshing machine. It was my first experience at that job and while it looked easy I found that there was a lot more to building a load that would stay in place than I had expected. As a result I did an awful lot of extra work and sometimes was late with my load which didn't make the boss very happy. But again I stuck with it and survived and learned how to do the job properly. I got less than \$1.50 per day but I got my meals too and at the time had a tremendous appetite. I wasn't very big and quite slim but I gained weight just through the development of muscle bulk. I lived at home and soon began to take my father's place on the threshing crew. I was surprised at how much his horses knew about the job. I had to do less driving than other bundle pitchers because the horses knew when to move and when to stand still without any directions from me.

My ability as a teamster got me another job with a neighbor to break in a team for him by driving them on the threshing crew. They were smaller and more high spirited than the other teams and had never been driven together as a team though they were both quite used to being in harness. I knew that the first day would be critical and that there would be delays while everything got adjusted to get the machine operating properly so I got my load on early and drove my team up to where they could see the whole outfit. Then I stayed with them and talked to them and fed them handfuls of straw and then moved them a little closer and repeated the talking and feeding a couple more times. When it came time for me to take my load right up beside that awful whirring, clanking machine I could tell by the way they looked at it and moved their ears that they were kind of doubtful but they walked right up into place and didn't move until I had finished unloading. I was a bundle of nerves because, if they had got frightened and begun to run, I would have had an awful job to get them to go back there again. But by the time the season was over I had the best team on the crew.

At home we liked our animals but they were not pets. The horses were the motive power of our farm equipment; the cattle were there for the milk or for their market value; the pigs for pork or for sale. Horses were most important and were well trained for their job. But we had one big, black mare that hadn't quite got the message. She worked well when she was hitched up but she was a problem in the barn. She constantly resisted everything we did by crowding us against the side of the stall or shaking her head and clenching her teeth when we wanted to put her bridle on. It always took much longer to harness her than any of the others, and only because she was trying to see how much she could dominate. One evening when I was feeding the horses she made her mistake. She kicked at me as I was leaving the stall. If she had hit me she could have broken my leg but

she only knocked the can out of my hand.

My reaction was immediate. I grabbed a heavy leather strap with a large ring in the end, we called it a martingale, from the harness rack behind her and hit her across the rump as hard as I could. I hit her again and again until I couldn't do it any more. I guess the blows were pretty severe because they ripped the stitching in the strap and the ring in the end was gone. I did it out of anger rather than cool consideration but the effect was the same. That mare was noticeably easier to deal with afterward.

We always had a dog and three or four cats. The dog's job was to help with herding cattle and to be a bit of a watch dog. He never was allowed inside the house and in winter months the last chore was to let the dog into the barn where it was reasonably warm. Cats were for controlling the mouse population and that was all.

I had one rather unpleasant job regarding the dog we had at the time. It was a fall evening and we were at our evening meal. One of my mother's brothers and a friend were on a duck hunting expedition and were with us at dinner when a neighbor who had been walking by came in to tell us that our dog was out on the road with a broken back, apparently having been run over by a car and was in considerable pain. I left the table, took one of the hunter's guns, went out to the road, shot the dog and dragged his body into some bushes. Then I went back to the house, washed my hands and finished my meal. The story may sound callous in the telling but I know I could not have continued eating as long as I knew the dog was suffering on the road.

I continued to live at home and helped with the farm work but I also took advantage of my contact with the Gas Company to get seasonal work in the summer time, mostly just labor digging ditches but as I grew stronger that became easier. I have often thought since that the easiest job I ever had was digging ditches. It requires nothing but physical effort and the ability grows just from doing it. I had a much different opportunity at the Drug Store. It was owned by Dr. J. L. McPherson who had married my father's sister Clara. Their establishment included not only the Drug store but the Doctor's Office and the local telephone exchange. I began there just as a clerk in the Drug Store but soon learned how to operate the telephone switchboard and found it quite easy to do. It was a 24 hour service and I spent quite a few nights sleeping on a cot beside the board to handle any calls that the alarm woke me up for.

I had a long standing dream of getting a University education and,

while I had passed Grade 10, I still needed Grades 11 and 12 to get University entrance. Grade 11 was available at Ryley High School and partly by driving in with a horse and buggy and partly by staying with either my grandmother or Aunt Clara I managed to complete that year. Finally I had accumulated some money and with a bit of help from my parents spent a year in Edmonton and completed Grade 12, My mother had arranged for me to stay with the widow of a United Church minister and her daughter and sister. It was not a very exciting place to stay but it was close to Strathcona High School and I had a place to eat and a place to sleep. Mother also got me introduced to G. Fred McNally, at that time Superintendent of Schools for Alberta, whom she had known when he was a school inspector. I was expected to attend his Baptist Church and sing in the choir. Mother seemed determined that I would get my religion one way or another. Singing in the choir was enjoyable. I often sang all by myself on the farm just for the joy of singing and, while the choir was different, at least I had a chance to sing and no one tried to get me active in the work of the church. It is notable that Mother knew Fred McNally as well as she did. She used to say that she could have married him. I don't know if that was true or not but it was one way of expressing her disappointment. He was a short, not very handsome man, but quite cheerful and friendly to me. I suppose I should be happy that she didn't marry him. If she had I wouldn't have been here at all.

Boarding with the widow was costing money so I took it upon myself to get a job at a boarding house run by a Norwegian family on the other side of town. I had to switch schools but that seemed to present no problems. My key duty was to help get an old lady into bed at night. She had been a concert pianist but at the time was so crippled with arthritis that she could hardly move. The master of the house was in reality her son who was then approaching middle age and was not married. There were obvious attempts to find a mate for him and since he had a good job there were available candidates. I think I was the only one who recognized that he was homosexual and was not likely to nibble at any of the bait. There were a couple of other boarders that made life a lot more interesting for me and my other duties were mainly on weekends and not very demanding.

I also found time to spend with a friend who was a member of a militia unit and we would do some practice sparring at the local armory and then have a beer. I recall the quartermaster asking how old I was and I answered 17. But he brought me the beer anyway and then asked me again. This time I said 21. "That's what I thought you said", was his reply. I joined the unit and spent a week or so at Sarcee Camp in Calgary with them. It was a Cavalry Regiment, the 19"

Alberta Dragoons and we rode horses and did field exercises with blank ammunition. It was pretty casual compared with what I was to experience later in the real army.

Because I had some experience in the Drug Store I felt that Pharmacy might be my future so I registered in a Latin class. I had started late because the farm work took priority but at Christmas I had the top mark in Latin. I remember my Latin teacher raving about my ability to absorb languages and then forecasting that I would probably go into something like engineering. I think he sensed that one of my objectives was to find a way to make a good living and Languages certainly was not going to promise that but at the time I didn't know that I would eventually train as an Electrical Engineer. I had little trouble with the grade 12 courses even with the change in schools and passed with quite good marks.

I had achieved University Entrance but was in no position to pay the tuition fees and board so I continued work for the Gas Company and the Drug Store and at home on the farm as priorities arose. I took other work, sometimes in construction. Father was a builder and I had learned a lot from him. I also had one stint of work on a line construction crew for the telephone company. It started out digging holes with a spoon and bar, something I had never seen before, and it soon became apparent that I was not going to be good at that so I got switched to assisting the line crew who installed the insulators and wires. It was while I was on that job that I bought my first car. It was a 1924 Model T ford coupe and I paid \$30 for it. It would go but not very fast and I seemed to have little trouble going where I wanted with it. Gas was cheap and there were no other costs except a car license to keep it going. My future father-in-law, was intrigued with my car and promptly nick-named it 'Luxy', short for "Luxurious Transportation".

Every person is influenced by the people they meet and work with. This probably continues throughout life but is most effective in early years. There were several who I believe helped make me who I was to become later on. First and foremost were my parents and I think I have dealt with them elsewhere. I must tell about my grandmother, my father's mother, who was part of my life for some 20 years. She had been born in Norway and immigrated to the U.S.A. in 1867 at the age of 8. She was married at 16 and bore 9 children. While her native language was Norwegian she spoke English with little, if any, detectable accent. I learned little Norwegian from her but I remember discussing the two Norwegian languages, Riksmal and Landsmal, one of them influenced by the administration of the Danes for some 300 years and the other the language of the common rural folk. That

helped me when I later tried to learn Norwegian and found that there are still two languages but now they are Bokmal and Nynorsk.

Grandma was a little sedate and old fashioned and had no sympathy for cosmetics and nail polish and such stuff. However she enjoyed a good laugh and had a puckish sense of humor. She was neat and tidy in her home and in herself but she didn't need the modern frills. I remember her back house having a small stack of carefully torn squares of newspaper on a nail on the wall rather than an old catalogue. Toilet paper in rolls was available but she had no use for that.

She always presented a problem at Christmas. No matter what you gave her she just tucked it away in a drawer and never used it. She was a good cook and made Christmas goodies, including a Christmas Bread with candied peel and cherries and cardamom. I didn't see it again until I made it myself. One year her big effort was wool toques and scarves and mittens. She had purchased a whole fleece from a local sheep farmer, an oily, dirty bagful with burrs all through it. But she washed it and carded it and spun it into yarn and then knitted it. I thought that was typical of my grandmother and those were the warmest mitts I ever had.

Grandma died at the age of 83. She had gone to her daughter and son-in-law, Dr. McPherson's place for Christmas and, because the weather was very cold had stayed till New Years. On New Year's day she had felt unwell and went to bed early but when the doctor came home from curling she had called to find out if he had won or lost. About 4 hours later she quietly passed away. She had lived a full life and had left her influence on many people besides her own family.

Her son-in-law Dr. McPherson was born in Teeswater, Ontario and graduated in Medicine from The University of Toronto about 1908. He then moved west to the emerging community of Ryley, Alberta to set up a medical practice. He was a man of considerable ability and not only established a medical practice but opened the village Drug Store. His medical practice covered a wide range of diagnostics and treatment. He had an X-Ray machine and a fluoroscope so that he could view internal conditions and, since there was no dentist he had the forceps to do tooth extractions. He also had a set of lenses and from time to time could prescribe glasses.

It was the days when doctors made house calls, so much of the time he was not in his office and some of the house calls were rather long, for example, a difficult birth or serious injury. His most trying time was during the influenza epidemic of 1918. There were so many calls

that he had a relay of horses and drivers to take him from place to place and he slept in the sleigh between calls. So he worked day and night for weeks and returned to his office only to replenish his black bag or get a change of clothes. The strain inevitably had an effect on his later health but I expect many people survived because of his ministrations.

I don't remember that time but from my earliest memories I visited his home and he was often at ours, especially for Christmas dinner. I became familiar with the Drug Store and as time went on found myself involved in its operation. It was Dr. McPherson who showed me how to check an invoice and price the products and made me familiar with the drugs in the dispensary and the references I might need. In time it was he who showed the confidence to leave me in charge when he was away.

There were two occasions when I didn't accept his help and advice. One was when Dot became pregnant. His immediate reaction was to arrange an abortion but we rejected that, not for any moral reason but with concern for Dot's health and the youthful, stubborn confidence that, somehow we would survive. The other occasion was when I got the call to join the armed forces. Dr. McPherson was prepared to go to any lengths, using his influence and persuasion to keep me home. Again, we rejected his help but both those offers made a lasting impression on me.

Dr. McPherson's wife, Clara Thorsley, my father's sister, always referred to as Clara Mac, was a remarkable woman in her own right and before her marriage had operated a millinery shop. She did the book-keeping for the doctor's medical practice and the Drug Store but she found time to get involved in all kinds of community projects. She had a flair for dramatics and regularly cast and directed dramatic performances with local talent and had quite a lot of success. In her middle years she took time to take a course in elocution in Edmonton and I recall attending her final recital. She used to coach young people in the proper use and emphasis in dramatic performances and readings and sometimes the results were astounding. She also had a gymnasium where she taught tumbling and other gymnastic activities.

Doctor and Clara Mac never had children of their own but their home was a refuge for nieces and nephews who would otherwise have had a difficult time. My brother Jim and I may have been subject to the same attitude but we were always as employees not as live-in wards. All of the children that they helped in early years turned out to live very successful lives.

During the Big Depression there was much political unrest and that offered an opportunity for a Calgary evangelist, a William Aberhart and his Prairie Bible Institute to gather a lot of attention. Every Sunday evening he would broadcast at length . Aberhart's assistant was Ernest Manning, who would dutifully read the lesson as called on. But the Prairie Bible Institute came under the influence of a British monetary theorist and resulted in the formation of The Social Credit Party. Doctor and Clara Mac both became taken in and in the ensuing election Doctor McPherson ran for Social Credit, with his wife as his manager and got elected and for some years Social Credit formed the Government of Alberta.

I had always avoided getting involved with political parties. To me they were principally about power rather than policies and I voted for the person that was least removed from what I considered good policy. But my Aunt Clara felt that I should join the local Social Credit Group and finally when I protested that I wasn't interested in politics she said that it wasn't politics, It was a study group. My answer was that Social Credit formed the Government of Alberta and, as such, its first responsibility was to stay in power and that made it a political party, like it or not. I got no more invitations after that. But Doctor and Clara Mac had an unquestioned influence on what I became afterward.

Another influence, somewhat vicariously, was that of my father's brother Jack. Jack was one of those people who can do almost anything but never finds a permanent place. He could play almost any musical instrument without having any knowledge of music. He could walk a tight rope at village fairs and he was a competent airplane pilot. He left Ryley while I was quite young and billed himself as The Flying Shingler, in Portland, Oregon, specializing in the shingling of church steeples. He had been married briefly and had one son, Vernon, who went to the Far East and died in Manila. Jack himself died tragically in a fire. Although I hardly knew him he has provided a kind of romantic facet to my life.

One person who, in retrospect, was a larger influence than I realized at the time was my future father-in-law, Sylvester (Vete) Tredway. Vete was a big man, well over six feet tall and weighed some 240 pounds. He had a jovial disposition and I recall his listening to the radio broadcasts of William Aberhart and Ernest Manning in their Prairie Bible Institute on Sunday afternoons. Vete seemed to enjoy talking back to the radio when something came up that he considered nonsense. He always tuned in and always talked back. Then there was a family joke that persisted for years about the time he was writing a letter and looked up to ask, " How many r's in "barstard". One

personal experience had to do with a bit of vanity he had about his appearance. He had begun to develop a paunch and had just purchased a girdle to control it. He was wearing it for the first time and was bragging to me about how good it felt and how well it controlled the bulge. So he stood up to demonstrate and his pants fell down. Even though we were alone at the time he found it rather embarrassing. But he couldn't have had a better demonstration of the effectiveness of that girdle.

Vete often used salty language and drew protests from his wife Alice. The language he used at home was mild compared to our private conversations. I thought I knew enough profanity from the school yard and the gas line crews but he used expressions that I haven't found use for in any company I've been in since.

There are, in addition to the individuals who you remember, groups of people that you work or play with that leave an impression. For me the first after my family would have been my schoolmates at Solberg School. My first uneasy time may have been caused by my own feeling of not belonging probably because of my wonder about who I was and why I was here. As time went on I learned to keep that to myself and found that I could participate and enjoy myself. I couldn't discuss my thoughts with anyone. There was just no common ground and I have never done so since. That hasn't prevented my having lots of friends but it seems that those friendships are a bit less warm and committed as they might have been.

There were other groups. The threshing crews when the long, hard days of work and the heavy meals were a common experience that drew the guys together. The Gas Line crews who lived in a camp and slept on cots in tents and ate their meals in a mobile cookhouse brought a somewhat different experience. Most of them were just common laborers. Their language was crude and they had little to offer me but the fact that so much of humanity consists of such individuals was a revelation that I'm sure has been useful. A contrary experience was in the Drug Store where I dealt with people who had problems and concerns and I was expected to deal with them in a sympathetic way. Being exposed to such a variety of personalities must have had an influence and I think has helped me where unexpected situations have developed. I survived and went on to use these experiences in far different places and times.

### III Marriage

During my teenage years I enjoyed a fairly normal, if somewhat subdued, social life. There were parties and dances and occasionally a date but nothing very serious. I think I might have been a bit more timid than some of my friends; a little afraid of getting involved in something that I couldn't handle.

I think my first contact with the Tredway family was with their son Carman, a little older than I was, but a rather laid back personality and an interest in the military and things mechanical. We had some common interests and I found his company rather relaxing. He didn't seem to have much to do but found interest in the enormous machine that his father operated at the open pit coal mine of the Tredway Coal Company. Vete operated the mine with his brother Ward beginning in the early 1930's. They were sons of a General Contractor in Edmonton but Vete had spent most of his working life doing contract jobs for other people. That meant that the family had lived in a number of places from Vancouver to a construction camp in Saskatchewan. Their daughter Doris Catherine herself had been born in the small town of Alix in Alberta.

Their home was at the mine near the tiny community of Dodds, about three miles from our home and I found out that he had a sister who was a little younger than I was, either at a house party or at their home. Dot (Doris Catherine) had a more vivacious personality than her brother and we seemed to enjoy each other's company.

Dot had a delightful sense of humor and an artistic talent that I think she inherited from her father. And she responded intuitively rather than analytically as was my tendency which seems, in retrospect, rather strange but we seemed to get along together and somehow I wasn't afraid of her or any consequences of our association. But there was no enchanted evening or brilliant flash of ecstasy. We just felt comfortable together and wanted it to stay that way.

Dot and I were together regularly, at dances or picture shows or house parties or just visiting at each other's homes. Father would generally let me have his 1927 Chevrolet, provided that I paid for the gas, which wasn't much, and we could have a pretty full evening, including a lunch, for about \$2.00. To take her to dances I had to learn to dance but I found that with her it wasn't too much of a problem and we began to take in every one available. After I had

acquired my Model T coupe we no longer needed father's car and that gave us a feeling of freedom and I began to do things that were new to both of us. I recall one dance at a small village of Round Hill a few miles from home when I had bought a small bottle of home brewed liquor, moonshine, that was a common product, strictly illegal, but flourished because legal stuff was not easy to get and quite expensive. I had sampled the liquor and I had a good time at that dance but when I went outside the place was alive with police. There was no doubt that they were looking for moonshine and I was glad that I had taken the precaution to hide it under a bush rather than leave it in my car. That bottle may still be under that bush because I sure was not going to go near it again that evening.

As the years went by my relationship with Dot became more comfortable, closer and more serious to the degree that we began to plan our lives together, just assuming that is what would happen. Part of our plan was that I would get a University education and in 1938 I had accumulated enough money to pay tuition for one year and a little extra to support myself in Edmonton. We were about to begin our quest for a better life together than we could have hoped for otherwise.

Then Dot got pregnant. We had an opportunity for an abortion but I rejected that as too much of a risk to her and she agreed. Somehow we would make a go of things in spite of everything. The unquenchable optimism of youth. The reactions of our parents was quite varied. I think my father was hurt because he felt that he had failed to communicate his standards to me. I don't remember any reaction from my mother but I suspect she just felt sorry for Dot. Alice Tredway was very concerned about how I would be able to support a family. Vete just took it as a fact of life and proceeded to arrange a marriage.

On July 2, 1938 we were married and spent a few days in Edmonton as a Honeymoon and then I had to go back to work. The dream of an education seemed to be put in the deep freeze for who knew how long. My recollection is dim but I think Vete Tredway respected the fact that I had qualified for a higher education and arrangements were made for Dot to stay at home while I went to Edmonton for the one year term.

That was a trying time for both of us. She was at home just waiting and I was facing the adjustment to academic life and the loneliness of being without her. I found a place to stay with a cousin, Gladys Finnegan, who was a cheerful personality and made life endurable. The biggest problem was that she lived on the north side of the river

and I had to walk at least two miles across the High Level Bridge to classes. In Edmonton there were some bitterly cold mornings and I would arrive at drafting class with my India Ink frozen in the bottle in my pocket.

I carried on and at Christmas had a chance to see my wife and my parents. That may have been the only time until I got word that I was the father of a baby boy, born in a Tofield Nursing Home. Our son Alfred was born on January 31, 1939 and I was to see him there for the first time a few days later. It was just a short visit and I had to go back to school.

Dot and Alfred lived with her parents while I finished my year. I think her parents were as pleased as we were with their first grandchild. They seemed to get great joy out of looking after the new baby. Vete complained loudly, "Alice, he pissed on me" but every time I hear someone singing, "Happy Birthday" I want to add, "Little Alfie" and that can only have come from Vete Tredway on Alfred's first birthday, his first grandchild and the only one he would ever see.

That first year was hard and the only pleasant memories other than the cheerful atmosphere at Gladys's were Dr. Sheldon's dramatic search for infinity and a pleasant relationship with one Ron Phillips who was my laboratory partner in Physics. I didn't do as well as I had hoped and when the results of the final examinations were published in The Edmonton Journal and I found that I had received a passing grade in all my courses I was quite relieved. I now had a standing in the University.

Dot and I could be together again but I had to find work so we rented one room in a small house in Ryley and I found my summer job with the Gas Company. We lived in that rented room for one year and then another big change came about. The Tredway brothers had only a small financial interest in the mine and in 1940 the mine was closed. Vete was an American citizen and their plan was to move to California where he had an opportunity to work.

That meant that their house was available. It had no commercial value where it was and it was ours for the taking. It was of no value to us either in the place where it was. We needed a house in Ryley where we had friends and relatives and the contacts I needed to find work. The problem was how to get the house from where it was to somewhere in or near the village. So I purchased a couple of lots at the north end of the village for \$5.00 each. Vete had a problem with the farmer who owned the land the house was on but since it had no

foundation it was considered to be his property and he was allowed to remove it.

I still think of it as a miracle. I don't know how it happened but one day I was at my new property in Ryley and I saw a house coming up a side street toward me. My father and a couple of neighbors had mounted it on two farm wagons and with 8 horses pulling it had moved our house almost 10 miles. All I had to do was tell them where I wanted it. I don't even remember the unloading but there it was on the ground and the movers took their horses and wagons and went home.

The house was not quite square with the lot and it wasn't level and it wasn't straight. Not only that but it had never been intended as a permanent residence. It was drafty and unfinished in a number of ways but it came with a wood burning kitchen range and a circulating heater and some essential furniture. So when I got it leveled and straight we could begin to live in it.

There was still plenty of work to do. We had no services, such as water and sewer and the street was no more than a trail. The first requirement was a back house at the bottom of the lot. We were able to get water from neighbors but that was tedious and with my being away much of the time a serious impediment for Dot. So I dug a well by hand using a shovel and a crowbar and at 22 feet deep I found an adequate supply of good water. Then father came into the picture again. Somewhere he had acquired a used pump and when I arrived home one weekend we no longer had to draw our water with a pail and the windlass I had used to remove the dirt when I dug the well.

One result of the well was that it removed the need for an alarm clock. Every morning a neighbor woman, Mrs. Kirklund, came with two buckets to pump water from our well. She seemed to have an obsession with water and saved it in every container she could find. She was quite harmless and her husband operated the Red & White grocery store where our credit was good. But we started our days with a chuckle about Mrs. Kirklund and her water

We had a lot of work to do but in time we had a stone foundation, a cellar with our heater set up down there as a furnace and we had eave troughs and a cistern that supplied lot of soft rain water, an important convenience when there are small children. We used well water for drinking and cooking. The kitchen got remodeled and both the inside and outside got finished. I found a planing mill about a half mile away where there were lots of shavings just for the taking and they provided a measure of insulation for our little home.

We had a fence with gates and a little lawn and a big vegetable garden that gave us some food as well as the satisfaction of doing it ourselves. We experimented with hydroponics without success but had a real interesting try at bee keeping. I was fascinated by the way the bees ran the hive and learned a lot about their techniques of survival and how to deal with them. In August one does not take chances. The bees are busy preparing for winter and will attack anything that comes near to the hive. But there was one incident in April that I still remember well. We had just received a new hive with a queen and a few hundred workers and since the evening was quite warm I decided to open it up. The bees were very active and as I removed the screen to let them out they swarmed all over me. Dot and our children and some neighbors had been standing behind me and I turned my head to make a comment and there was no one there. I had no protection but the bees didn't bother me except for one that found a cozy spot in the crease behind my ear and I had to wait for her to go away. The next day at noon I noticed that the kids had picked a bunch of dandelions and put them on top of the hive and the bees were having a ball. There was lots to do and we worked hard at it. We had a small but cozy home but we were always short of money. The dream of a University education seemed to be fading fast. In spite of all that I think that those were the happiest days of our lives. We had each other and the confidence that somehow everything was going to be all right.

Our family kept growing. In April, 1940 our second son Blaine was born and in November, 1941 our daughter Penny came along. So we had a nice, tidy, normal family until in December, 1942 Dot was delivered of twins, Trudy and Danny, and overnight we had grown to a rather large family. There were lots of comments like, 'Don't you know what causes it', but we did know and the only explanation I can give even today is that we were young and healthy and happy with each other. Children were the natural result.

Dot and I had a sort of compact or understanding. It was her responsibility to maintain a happy home. My responsibility was to make sure there was a home and food on the table and adequate clothes. Dot did not like the drudgery of housekeeping and, in fact, didn't have time for it. But she became a good cook and was very devoted to her children. I don't think she ever earned a dollar in her life and even when she had art work that could have sold she gave it away and was kind of insulted if someone offered to pay her.

I had to work at any kind of job that would pay money. There were construction jobs that involved everything from wheeling cement to

shingling but they were always temporary. There was the Gas Company where the pay was better but that was seasonal and always in a camp that kept me away from home except on weekends. There was the Drug Store that I could be useful in but wages were not that great. It was more of a steady job and I found that I spent more time at that as the years went by. One duty I seemed to have was back on the farm at threshing time. And I enjoyed that as much as anything except it didn't help much in paying the bills and more than once I had to ask for credit at the grocery store.

Working on the threshing crew was closest to my roots on the farm and I felt comfortable doing it. There was a great camaraderie among the crew and since it was almost always at the time of the World Series there was a pool based on the score of the day's game. I usually was given the job of making up the tickets and holding the money and the kitchen staff were expected to keep the game on the radio and report to the field the score after every inning. At the end someone would win a dollar or so; tickets were 10 cents each. But the big thing was the long hard days of work and the copious quantities of food. I recall one first day when I had been working in the Drug Store and drove my team from our farm to a neighbor's for breakfast. I had been in the habit of having a couple of slices of toast and a coffee for breakfast and when I sat down to a thresher's breakfast and saw a big bowl of stewed prunes and oatmeal porridge and big, fat sausages and fried eggs my stomach revolted. I think I managed a small bowl of prunes and a slice of bread and then went out and pitched on my first load. By that time I was so weak I could hardly lift my arms but the kitchen crew appeared with mid-morning lunch, sandwiches and cake and cookies and more coffee and I was saved. Believe me, the next morning I did justice to my breakfast.

Working for the Gas Company I did a variety of jobs but two things come readily to mind. One of them was the unloading of 40 tons or more of 12 inch steel pipe, essentially alone. It was on a flat car and was supported by 5 fir posts on each side, wired together through the load. I first removed all but the centre post on the side where the skidway had been prepared to receive the pipes. I then chopped the middle post partly off at the bottom and looked for my helper so that he could observe what happened next but I couldn't find him. Chopping that post had looked a little too dangerous for him so he went and hid someplace. I really didn't need him so I went around to the other side of the car and proceeded to cut the wires on the middle post. I had to climb up the post to reach the top wire with the axe and when I cut it the whole load disappeared before me and then I could see a sort of demonic dance of tons and tons of steel pipe bouncing their way down the skidway. It was kind of awesome. I had

to find my helper to get the last pipes off the car and to hold the tape while I measured them. The Gas Company wanted to know whether they had received the amount of pipe that they were paying for.

The other experience had to do with cathodic protection of the original pipe line that had been in the ground for some 20 years. It involved installing zinc rods in holes drilled along the line and connecting them electrically to the pipe. It was a rather tedious job but the results were good. After a few months one could dig out a section of pipe and find that all the rust and scale fell away with the dirt leaving the bright, clean steel exposed. It was rough and pitted but the corrosion had been stopped. At the time that old line was being paralleled by a larger line that was protected by a bituminous enamel and supposedly was protected. It was soon found that if there was a break in the enamel coating the corrosive effect of the soil seemed to concentrate at the break and in a few months would perforate the pipe at that point. That was a piece of knowledge that I found very useful many years later.

My presence at the Drug store seemed to become more and more important as time went by. My brother Jim had been there before he enlisted and his absence was part of the reason that I could be useful. I had registered as a Pharmacy Apprentice some years before and I soon knew all the medications in the Dispensary as well as the stock in the store and I checked all the invoices and priced the products. My most important place was in the Dispensary. Dr. McPherson had been elected as a Social Credit member of the Alberta Legislative Assembly and when the House was in session I was the only one there. So I was what a cousin laughingly referred to as The Village Apothecary. Pharmacy was different than it is now. A prescription usually consisted of what I called a "buckshot mixture", of several ingredients. It was my job to know all about the various ingredients; whether they were compatible with each other and what their medicinal effect would be. Sometimes the biggest problem was reading the doctor's writing. I recall one incident while filling a prescription for a very prim young lady where I had to enlist Dr. McPherson's help to read one ingredient. The prescription had been written by another doctor and he had included one ingredient that we finally interpreted as, 'carbo ligni', or activated charcoal, indicated in cases of severe flatulence. Our prim, young lady was being embarrassed by too much farting.

For a while Dr. McPherson was replaced by a young lady, Dr. Ebba Sorenson. She was a nice person, well liked and very good at such things as minor surgery; tonsillectomies and removal of small growths. It was her first experience as a country doctor and often she and I were the only ones there. I think she was lonely and when she had

doubts there was no one to consult with but me. So, from time to time she would leave her patient in her office and go out the back door, through the warehouse and into the dispensary to talk. I couldn't give her a medical opinion but sometimes I could give her some background on her patient who I usually knew and I could tell her what medications I had available in case she needed them. Mainly she needed someone to talk to and she knew I understood the importance of confidentiality. She could also be helpful to me and I was sorry to hear that she had contracted tuberculosis and died just a few years later.

My biggest success as a pharmacist was making an ointment for the treatment of burns and scalds. I had known for some time that one of the big problems of a country doctor was the healing of burns or scalds. Once the protective layer of skin is broken the flesh becomes infected and as long as the infection is there the area won't heal. Trying to cure the infection without doing more harm than good was a real challenge. But it was about that time that the Sulfa drugs became available; the fore runners of penicillin and the plethora of anti-biotics that exist today. The idea came to me that if one of these drugs, such as sulfadiazine could be applied to such an injury the healing process could be much easier and quicker. We had the drug in powder form but applying it with a salt shaker didn't seem proper and probably wouldn't be effective. What I needed was an ointment. I found that I could dissolve the drug in triethanolamine and I felt that lanolin would make an ideal vehicle except the it is liquid at body temperature and would run off. I think I made a mess of my Aunt Clara's double boiler combining lanolin and bee's wax to get the right consistency. In the end I had a small jar of ointment that I labeled, 'Burn Ointment'.

That jar sat on the shelf for a while but one morning Dr. McPherson asked me for it. He didn't tell me why and I didn't ask. That was the understanding. If he had wanted me to know he would have told me. But the next morning he called and said, " Come here. I want you to see this". He had a male patient whose whole upper back had been scalded or burned from shoulder to shoulder and from his neck almost to his waist. The whole damaged area had already been covered with a thin layer of new skin and there was no sign of infection. He had apparently just cleaned up the dead skin, applied my ointment, covered it with a dressing and told the man to come back the next day. For the first time the old doctor had seen a burn injury begin to heal in one day. Within a few months there were similar ointments available commercially but Dr. McPherson always insisted that mine worked better than any of them.

It was Dr. McPherson who got me involved in the Oddfellows Lodge. I wouldn't have thought that I had an inclination toward that kind of secret organization but I found that I took quite quickly to the ritual and procedures and gained a lot from my experiences there. I found out how to conduct a meeting to a strict Order of Business and gained a lot of confidence in my ability to speak in public. I learned the Ritual for every position I was asked to take and Dot had a good laugh about my rehearsing to young Alfred in his high chair while she was away. He hadn't learned to talk and didn't understand a word but he liked the attention he was getting. The Lodge members enjoyed their meetings and always made them interesting and I looked forward to them and became quite active.

There was a war on that began in 1939. Many of my friends had enlisted early including my brother Jim. I was loath to leave my little family and I objected to the government's conscription policies. I couldn't understand why you get involved in a war if you couldn't make up your mind how you were going to fight it. I have never had much interest in politics.

Dr. McPherson and Aunt Clara both agreed on my not enlisting but Dot and I had discussed it and decided that I wouldn't volunteer but that, if I were called I would enlist for active service. So when the call came in January, 1944 I prepared to go. The doctor offered to use his influence to get me an exemption and I was offered a substantial increase in pay to stay home but I was stubborn, the decision had been made, my wife supported me, so when the time came to go I went.

I guess I can understand why family and friends might have felt that I was foolish to leave a wife who was pregnant and already with a sizable family to go on an adventure from which I might never return. In the end it was one of the most critical decisions of our lives though we didn't know it at the time. I think stubbornness was a factor but Dot's support through the most trying circumstances throughout was what made any success we had possible. There are no words to express how important her part in the success of our whole family has been. In retrospect I wonder why she put up with it but there were a number of considerations that may help explain. While we had problems she could see that there were others that were even worse off, living on welfare and in homes that were not as good as ours. And I came home when expected, not every husband did. She had the moral support of family and friends and a sense of humor that not everyone has. She had fun at times. I recall coming home one evening and finding that Dot and two or three friends had baked and decorated a cake for a shower. As I came through the door one of the women was holding the

cake up with one hand and teetering rather unsteadily. They had not only made a cake but had consumed quite a bit of wine at the same time. I took the cake on pretense of admiring it and put it on the table. I'm afraid that if I hadn't arrived when I did that cake would have ended up on the floor.

To find out about my army career you will have to read the next chapter.

## IV Army Service

In January, 1944 I proceeded to the Army Recruitment Office in Calgary to enlist for Active Service. I was given a medical examination and other than having a low color perception was classed as A1 across the board in the PULHEMS rating system. In that system P stands for general physical condition, U stands for upper body, L stands for lower body and legs, H stands for hearing, E for eyesight, M for mentality and S for sensitivity. If you are a nervous type you get down rated under S. I was rather pleased to find that I could be top rated in every category.

I was assigned to the Medical Corps because of my experience in the Drug Store and issued the basic clothing and equipment for army life. I was sent to the Basic training camp at Peterborough, Ontario. Getting there had it's moment when our train ran into another one in Northern Ontario. We smashed up a couple of passenger cars and I had a stiff neck for a week or so but that was all. Nobody got killed or seriously hurt that I ever heard of but it added one more experience.

Peterborough in January was cold. I couldn't remember when I had been so cold as my first days there. Maybe it was just that this was Basic Training and standing at attention for more than a few seconds was a new experience for all of us. We were all new recruits with no experience of army life and the object of the training was to instil the discipline and practices of the Army into us. That function seemed to fall primarily on our Corporal. He had a name but I don't remember it. It seems that he came from Arnprior and that's how we knew him and to me he is still Corporal Arnprior.

Arnprior was big and loud and domineering and he made sure that we knew the rules and lived by them. We learned how to form up in lines and how to respond to drill commands and he made it clear that we either learned or else. He made a strong pitch that the clothing and equipment that we had been issued was the property of the Crown and that we must keep it in good condition and properly stored and he did a regular inspection to be sure we took it seriously. And if we lost anything that had been issued to us we would be court-martialed and shot at sunrise.

That last point seemed quite emphatic to me and it happened that one morning as I was at the ablution tables in the adjoining building I turned away for a moment and when I looked back my wash basin

had disappeared. I didn't relish the thought of Corporal Amprior finding out that I had lost it and there was another basin a few feet down the table that seemed to be unattended so I just grabbed it and hustled back to my bunk. My basin had been clean but the one I ended up with was in filthy condition, dirty and coated with soap scum so my first job was to apply the Brasso and a cloth to make it look like mine. I was making good progress when there was a loud bellow from the end of the hut, "Who stole my wash basin". It was Arnprior and I had a pretty good idea that I had his basin. I was also pretty sure that he would never recognize it as the one I had absconded with. He inspected every basin in the hut, including mine, and never did find his own. I still can't imagine why any one would take my basin but it became apparent that his rules for keeping your kit in good condition applied to us but not necessarily to him.

We all lived by the same rules and the parade square drills were an important part of our training. It was a process of homogenizing but somewhat later I recognized it for the value of bringing men of various religions, races and backgrounds together and teaching them to do things in harmony as a team. They learned to respect each other, whatever their differences, because they had to live and work to common rules. I certainly don't believe that everyone should live by common rules but the development of mutual respect is one practice that should be more common than it is. That was just the introduction and after my two months I was loaded on a train again and transferred to the Advanced Training Camp in Camp Borden near Barrie.

My brother Jim had enlisted quite early and was a Staff Sergeant at Borden when I arrived. Of course, everyone knew in advance that I was coming and I got attention that the others in the group didn't get. I don't think that I got any favors. I had to go through the same training as everyone else but my performance got noticed and I don't think that did me any harm. Jim didn't live on the base. He and his wife Myrtle had a small house in Angus, a small village a few miles outside.

We still had regular foot drills but we also got lectures on medical subjects like First Aid. I can still recall how often the words, "Stop the Bleeding; Prevent Shock", were repeated. And there was training on how to deal with bone fractures and splinting. The camp was equipped with facilities for a complete field hospital and we had to learn how to use it even to having to make beds with injured patients in them. It was pretty thorough training.

We also had to learn how to read maps and some techniques for

judging distance and there was one long route march. It so happened that one evening some of the guys and girls set up a party in a green field beside a river and Jim and Myrtle were going to it and I was invited to come along. There was plenty of beer and I guess I'd had a couple when one of the guys, who I didn't know, offered me what I thought was a bottle of beer, I took a good swig of it and it turned out to be something else. I think it was gin but at any rate it got me pretty drunk. I don't think my sister-in-law entirely approved of my conduct that evening and I don't think I could have got back to my bunk without Jim's help.

The next morning I had a terrible hangover and we were scheduled to go on our route march. I couldn't face breakfast and it was going to take all my effort to get ready for the march. I did have the presence of mind to send my mess tins with one of the guys to get the meal we would cook in the field. It turned out to be a pork chop, a potato, an onion and a tea bag. When we were ready to move off I was prepared except that I still had that awful hangover. I can prescribe a sure cure for a hangover; about four miles with full pack on a warm day. I was completely sober and my mind was clear but I have never been so hungry as I was when we finally stopped to eat. I dug a little narrow trench with my shovel, found some dry sticks to build a fire and set my mess tins across the trench to cook my meal. My little camp site was not very tidy and my pork chop and potato got seasoned with a certain amount of dust and wood ashes as well as the salt and pepper. I have eaten in some pretty fancy restaurants in my time but I don't think I have ever had any thing as good as that pork chop was. Ten miles with full pack and no breakfast is not only a sure cure for a hangover it also develops a powerful appetite.

I think we marched 18 miles that day and when we got back to camp brother Jim told me that he had orders to go overseas. I spent the evening with him and Myrtle trying to help them over the shock of having to give up their home in Angus and Myrtle having to go back to Ryley. It was a tough time for both of them but orders are orders in the army and there was no alternative.

I completed my training soon after and was given a course on instruction. I still remember seeing my rating on that course for the first time and not knowing what it meant. It was a "D" and I thought I had done better than that. Then a sergeant explained that people will kill for that; it stands for Distinguished. So they put a stripe on my sleeve and made me an instructor. For the next few months I was effectively in charge of the training of a succession of platoons and I seemed to do quite well. I enjoyed the parade square drills. The usual method was for the drill master to march beside his squad and give

the commands from there. I varied that by marching beside them until we got to the paved parade square. Then I stopped and gave the commands from the edge of the square and paraded them all over the square from one spot. Every 15 minutes or so I would march them back to me and I would let them stand easy and we would have a short chat. The guys loved it, especially when they saw another squad responding to my commands. And when they came back to the hut after an hour's drill and no one had made a mistake they knew they were the best platoon in the Company and they told me so.

It wasn't all happiness. One of the cliches was that every soldier has the right to bitch and there were plenty of things to bitch about. They were paraded to meats; to lectures, to the stores for equipment or for inoculations, It was always hurry up to get in place for the parade and then wait for an hour till someone served you. Hurry up SO you can wait. And there was always some NCO criticizing the way you wore your cap or something else. Bitching never had any effect but I think every soldier did it from time to time. Our Orderly Room clerk had an answer after D-Day to any complaints, "You don't like it here? There's lots of boats going to Cherbourg".

One lesson I remember was a map reading class. I gave them a set of map co-ordinates and asked them to calculate the distance from the first to the last through the other co-ordinates. It was the route we had taken on a march through deep snow. The class didn't recognize it and when I told them they found it hard to believe. We had marched all day and at the end everyone was tired out but we had covered only about 5 miles. Another lesson was on distance judgement. One technique is to have each member of a group judge the distance independently and then take the average. So I set up a simple demonstration by putting two stakes in the ground just 100 yards apart. Then I asked the group of about thirty to not discuss it among themselves but to come to me individually and tell me how far they thought it was between the stakes. I got guesses as low as 30 yards and as high as 300. When I averaged them I got a distance of 103. Was it an argument for the validity of Democracy? Does the combination of widely variant opinions result in an answer that is very close to the right one?

I had one personal experience that gave me some satisfaction. By some happenstance I got entered in a three mile race. I had no idea how to run that far except that I couldn't run full out for that distance. My only real interest was whether I could run three miles. So I decided that I would run at an easy trot and see how far I could go. There were more than 100 entries and to begin with I was well at the back of the pack. My strategy soon began to pay off. In the first mile I

must have passed 40 or 50 who had already run out of gas. In the next two - miles I kept catching more and more and at the end I still had enough to fight off a challenge. I was met at the finish line by one of our officers who showed great delight because I had apparently finished in twelfth place. He took me by the arm and led me around a roped off circle a few times until my legs could stop running and get down to a walking pace. Another young officer who had finished a few places behind me got all excited about our going into training and entering further competition. He seemed quite disappointed that I didn't have either the time or the inclination to commit myself to a training program. I had just wanted to complete the race and that was all.

One thing I found out was that after the race my legs felt as if they were made of wood and even walking seemed awkward for me. But there was a masseur in our First Aid room who offered to give my legs a massage. I was amazed at how he was able to soften my wooder legs up and finally to take each muscle separately and stroke it till it relaxed. It was quite an exhilarating experience. Afterward I felt almost normal and by next morning all the stress was gone.

Although there were pretty strict rules and controls there was quite a bit of opportunity for recreation. Within the camp there was the Canteen and the Salvation Army ( the Sally Ann) and a movie theatre that was used to show training films but in the evening there were sometimes good movies. I remember seeing The Picture of Dorian Gray there. Every week end there was a bus to Barrie and a train to Toronto. There wasn't much that one could do on a soldier's pay but walk the streets or visit a park or museum or go to a dance that was put on just for the soldier's entertainment. And there were girls that got the attention of some of the guys. That was a concern and we got lots of advice on how to avoid venereal disease. My closest touch came when a young man asked to talk to me after lights out one night. He raised his arm and with my flashlight I could see his armpit literally crawling with crab lice. I was a bit concerned too because he was sitting on he edge of my bed. All I could do was tell him to go on sick parade in the morning and get some treatment.

I had some interesting weekends visiting Dot's aunts in Brantford and Montreal. Dot's Aunt Helen in Brantford and her husband Gordon Howell were good to me and their cottage down near Lake Erie was a pleasant spot to relax. Her Aunt Mona in Montreal was younger and was married to Jack Gerrie, an eminent plastic surgeon. They had five children under the age of 12 and a chalet at St. Sauveur in the Laurentians. We spent a weekend there. Jack had just got new skis so I was able to use his old — ones and we lived on skis

all the time we were there. We all went across country to the ski hill where Jack spent most of the day flying down and then going up for another run. I dredged up enough courage to buy a ticket and used the rope tow line to go up. When I looked down I almost chickened out. The people at the bottom looked like small insects and the ski run seemed to continue right up the main street of the town. But I was at the top of the hill and I had no choice but to go down. I found the solution by zig-zaging across the hard packed snow and found that I could make the turns quite competently and that kept my speed down to where I could handle it. I didn't try again. I guess once was thrilling enough..

I got home more often than many of the others. I was granted furlough in September of 1944 and was able to be with Dot for the birth of our daughter Kathy. At Christmas that year I had a fun time with our Orderly Room clerk working out a sequence of passes that would permit me to take a three day train ride each way and spend a couple of days at home and have a pass that looked valid for all that time. I think I had 6 of them but the only ones I had to use were the ones that let me leave camp and get in again when I got back. I got embarkation leave in February, 1945 and was listed to go overseas to Europe.

When I got back to camp after my leave I was no longer on the list and had been transferred to the Infantry Corps. I didn't lose my rank so I got the Infantry training as an NCO. I also did some teaching, especially on the drill square, but I got exposed to all the weapons with live ammunition and including grenades and mines and various types of explosives. I guess I did pretty well because I was invited to compete with a Bren machine gun in a competition. I think somebody goofed because I had no time to prepare and was eliminated in the first round. But at least I was there. The training involved a lot of military tactics but I was there mainly because I could teach and that occupied much of my time.

I remember the key words in weapons training. "The object of all weapons training is to teach you how to use your weapons in order to kill the enemy". When we began to study field tactics I began to realize that our weapons would be used as much for intimidation as for killing. The vast majority of ammunition ends up in trees or buildings or open fields rather than in human bodies. Better to take a dozen willing prisoners than human lives. One telling lecture by a Captain Auld pointed out that one should not take field training too literally. In action take lots of time and care considering the consequences. After all it is your future you are dealing with. He had been in action and had a severe limp as the result of a wound. I think

every soldier was aware that he could be sent overseas at any time and I myself sent quite a few of my pupils and had the warning of an overseas draft twice. We all knew that there was a hazard of not coming back but we had confidence in our training that we could protect our selves and if someone died it would be someone else, not me.

Then the war ended in Europe and the emphasis shifted from field tactics to jungle warfare. Two incidents impressed me. One was an assault on a ridge through heavy underbrush. It was heavy going and when I suddenly found that I was in a clear spot the tendency was to take the easy way. Then I looked up the hill and it was clear all the way to the top and there was a machine gun aimed at me at the top. I had discovered a fire lane. The other incident was when I was leading a squad through the bush on a reconnaissance. There were 10 of us and we were to be watching for any evidence of enemy presence. We saw nothing but as we entered a clearing we saw one of our own squad tied to a tree and gagged. He had been at the end of the line and someone had nabbed him without any of the rest of us knowing. I was shocked but it was a lesson on how careful we had to be.

Finally my tour of duty as an instructor ended and I was granted another embarkation leave before going to the Japanese war. While I was at home someone dropped a bomb on Hiroshima and before I left to go back the war was over with Japan too. There was a celebration in Ryley with a parade and some entertainment in the Community Hall. A few servicemen were home on leave and we decided to put on a skit as part of the celebration. It was to be the trial of a soldier charged with being drunk and disorderly and the usual procedure was followed but the plan was that it would deteriorate into a sing song and the presiding officer had a guitar stowed under his desk for that purpose. We had failed to specify which songs would be sung and I got scared when someone broke into, "The North Atlantic Squadron". That would not have been suitable in my mind for the audience so I let discretion be the better part of valor and pulled the curtain.

When I got back to Borden the place was just getting set to demobilize. There wasn't much to do so most of us were just killing time. There was one incident that got me involved in a way that I hadn't expected but I think it was good in more ways than one. There had been a group of recruits that, for one reason or another, had been considered not fit for active service so they had been assigned to light duties such as hut orderlies or kitchen helpers and had spent their army years having a pretty soft time with none of the discipline or hard training that the rest of us had to go through. When it came time for discharge it was found that they could not be discharged

unless they had received basic training. So a group of about 25 of them were in one of our huts to be trained as a group. Nobody was likely to take their training very seriously but they had to have enough so that some officer could conscientiously sign their documents as having received at least that much training.

There must have been a couple of trouble makers in the group who were determined to express their objections to having to finally find out what army life was like and they expressed their objections by wrecking the hut every night after the lights were out. The young corporal in charge was obviously frightened. He couldn't lay charges because he could never see who was doing the damage. So he asked me to stay with him and I agreed. I proceeded to take charge and at 10:00 o'clock I called out, "Lights out, settle down and go to sleep" and I flipped the switch. There was a bit of shuffling about and some rather loud voices so I warned them again but it didn't stop so finally I took my flashlight and walked down into the middle of them and gave them a real good tongue lashing and dared the first man to move because he would spend the night in the guard hose. "And furthermore for the trouble you've already caused you will all be out on the parade square at 6:00 A.M. for an hours pack drill before breakfast". I stayed there until I was sure my message was understood and then went to bed myself. That was the last I had to do with them. I guess the other corporal had gone to the Orderly Room and reported and the Duty Officer saw to the arrangements for the pack drill. The group was up early and out without me. Nobody had any trouble with them afterwards.

In the meantime I had been researching my eligibility for discharge and my choices thereafter. I found that I could take discharge benefits in education so I fired off a letter to the registrar of the University of Alberta asking to be admitted to second year engineering in the coming term. I had received his affirmative reply when I was called in for an interview and promised a commission to volunteer for the Occupation Forces in Germany. I was rather pleasantly surprised because, although I had only one stripe on my sleeve, I was considered to have considerable ability. But my mind had been made up so the interview was rather short.

Shortly after I was transferred back to Calgary for final discharge. That didn't happen nght away. Maybe the staff there was over worked but the excuse was that they couldn't find my files. I spent some time in the Wet Canteen and got a compliment from and old corporal who congratulated me as the only one who could come in there and drink as much as I wanted and leave. He seemed genuinely

impressed.

So I finally got the fancy linen document and proceeded to Edmonton to register. I was late for the start of classes and had to make time to get home and see my family and change into civilian clothes but my army service was over and I was about to embark on a new phase of my life.

The Army was a useful experience. I learned a lot, not the least of which was the essential of command. It is not how many stripes you have on your sleeve or how many pips on your shoulder that matters. It is making sure you know what you are doing and being able to display that assurance to others. In later years there were a number of occasions where I didn't have the formal authority to give orders but they got obeyed none the less.

## V University Years

In retrospect I'm almost amazed that I attended university at all and more so that I ultimately received a degree and had a career as a Professional Engineer. I think it began while I was in my early teens and the President of The University of Alberta, Dr. Henry Marshall Tory, was visiting our little town of Ryley to present a lecture. He was being entertained by the local doctor and his wife, my aunt and uncle, and the question was raised about my entering University at a rather early age and I seem to remember his expressing the opinion that it would be too early in my life for me to attempt it. I must have shown some promise or such a subject would never have been raised.

While attending school in Edmonton I impressed my Latin teacher with my ability to learn the language but he expressed the opinion that, in spite of that, I would probably become an Electrical Engineer. Possibly the most telling influence in my choice of careers was the advice of J.D. McDonald who felt that mathematics was my strongest aptitude.

My entering University at an early age was somebody's pipe dream; it certainly wasn't mine. After all I had to spend a year in Edmonton to achieve entrance qualifications with the attendant time and expense and the cost of tuition, books and lodging at university would be much higher. In the end it was the generosity of my wife's parents that made it possible but I think Vete Tredway enjoyed calling me 'Joe College' and hoped that my education would promise a better life for his daughter.

That first year, 1938-39 was personally pretty difficult for me. The courses were pretty basic mathematics, physics, drafting and a short course in surveying with actual field practice. I found the drafting the most frustrating but having had to make drawings I never forgot how to read them and that helped me a lot in future years. One course was on engineering materials and was taught by an older professor named Ibrahim Follansbee Morrison. He was commonly referred to as Ikey, not in disparagement but just to simplify his name. His only academic achievement was a B.Sc. From M.I.T. but he was an enthusiastic and competent teacher and his students loved him. His course covered such things as concrete, steel and wood with some reference to such things as rubber and plastics. It was in his class that I learned about stress and strain and tensile and compressive strengths. I still recall that the decay of wood requires warmth, air

and moisture and that wood will respond to changes in temperature and humidity. Professor Morrison kept a log of the diameter of his dining room table and shared the information with his classes to show that in mid-winter the table was smaller than in the summer. I still find myself thinking about the principles of materials often in company that would not understand them. I made few friends because I was lodged away from campus but did develop a relationship with my lab partner in Physics, Ron Phillips, that I was able to renew over 50 years later.

After that first year it seemed that the chances of continuing my education would never come to fruition but the dream remained and with the opportunity to take army discharge benefits in education there was no doubt about what action I would take. If it had not been that I had first year standing it might not have been so easy but the six years that I missed could have been my most productive and by returning to studies at the age of 30 meant that my chances of winning scholarships were limited. However the prospect of a professional career more than made it a good bet and there was no hesitation in taking advantage of it.

Attending university after being away from it for six years was something of a shock. I had the advantage of a room in Athabaska Hall, one of the residences, and got all my meals in the Dining Room there. That was part of the discharge benefit which also included support for my family. Being installed in the residence was due to my uncle, Reg Lister, my mother's brother, who was Superintendent of Residences at the time. It certainly was an improvement over my situation in my first year and allowed more involvement in the life of the university.

However, the six year hiatus meant that I had to adjust to a different way of life and try to remember some of the things that I had learned before. There were some daunting times; like when I found that I had to struggle with logarithms, a basic skill; and when I took my first test in Physics. I had started late and our Physics instructor had not been able to give me any clues. His first test involved four long questions with answers to be chosen at the end. I didn't understand the questions and had to guess at the answers. I guessed wrong four times. So my first test produced a zero. Not a very encouraging beginning.

I didn't find that instructor very helpful and was a little encouraged to find that other members of the class felt the same way. At Christmas there was another test and I had no reason to think that it was going to be any easier. So I went into the examination room with

the intention of spending the required half hour and then leaving regardless of how I found the test. I was quite relaxed and that may have helped. I read the first question and didn't like it so I went to the second and found that it had to do with Theory of Errors and I knew that so that question was quickly disposed of. The third question was a trick circuit diagram and I saw the trick instantly so that didn't take any time. The fourth involved a little integration but otherwise was no problem so I did it and then for the first time read the note at the top of the page, 'Do any three questions'. I had completed the examination and I had been in the room just over five minutes. I knew my answers were correctly done and felt a quite an exhilaration. I might better have spent a couple of minutes checking my arithmetic on the last question. I had misplaced the decimal point in the final answer and lost four marks. But a 96 is a pretty good recovery from that initial zero.

From that time on I made it a practice to not try to guess what would be on an exam. On the day before all my notes and texts were put away and any studying I did was on the courses that would come two or more days later. No cramming the night before let me relax in the exam room and I think that helped me.

I gradually got back into the academic routine which is so different from real life as I knew it and at the end of the year was able to read in the Edmonton Journal that I had passed all my courses.

It would take me two more years to earn my degree so I had to immerse myself and found that there was plenty to arouse my interest. I well remember my philosophical concern about the nature of Time. Of the three basic quantities used mathematically in the study of the physical world, mass, length and time, mass and length can be directly experienced and measured. Time, on the other hand, is experienced only in the instant that one is living at the time and can be measured only indirectly and by analogy, the swing of a pendulum or the phases of the moon. In later years I realized that one can conceive time in several different ways; the psychological way that lets us remember the past but not the future, the thermodynamic way by the continuous increase of entropy or the cosmological way by the expansion of the universe. None of these helped me a whole lot but that early concern has given me a grasp on the concept that there are some things we will never be completely satisfied about even in the physical world.

Another concept that intrigued me was the fact that the electrical permittivity and the magnetic permeability of space have a direct mathematical relationship to the velocity of light. Quite natural, I

suppose, but at the time it impressed me, maybe because of its simplicity. There were, of course, many intellectual challenges that got more interesting and more difficult as time went by but I still remember the essentials of much of it and use the concepts in the way I think about things. I was surprised to find, in later years, many of the engineers who had taken the same courses that I had were unable to deal with even simple differentiation so maybe I had an innate interest that not everyone has.

After so many years my memory is hazy on details and without a group picture I would not know who my classmates were and when I meet them now I don't recognize them. But I can recall being exposed to such concepts as hyperbolic functions, complex numbers and their application in a complex field. One of the most interesting concepts was Fourier Analysis and the idea that any relationship can be expressed as the sum of a series of waves. Do we live in a universe that can be expressed as nothing more than a complex field of electromagnetic waves? I can remember the evening that Len Greenberg, an Honors Physics friend, came into my room and announced that he had just proven that an electron was just an interference of electromagnetic waves. He had his first brush with Quantum Physics.

Len was a regular at the bull sessions over coffee and cookies that occurred in my room at 10 o'clock most evenings. I had the hot plate and the coffee pot and the necessary ingredients got supplied by somebody. The group basically consisted of Len and Sev Heiberg, both Honors Physics, Dave Cherry and Ashton Patterson, both Engineering Physics, and Doug Hall, an Electrical Engineer like myself. They were a bright and enthusiastic group and seemed to feel at home in my room. On occasion I would find things left for me on my desk or a note that someone had helped themselves to a book or some paper. I can still visualize Sev Heiberg sitting on my bed when I came in from classes. I had just solved what I considered a pretty tricky problem with pencil and paper and a slide rule and I thought Sev would be interested. So I read it to him. He put his hand to his forehead, leaned back for an instant, sat up and gave me the answer. I was impressed.

Associating with that type of friends undoubtedly had an influence on me but there were other activities within the Engineering group. There was an Engineering Students Society that I belonged to that held an Engineers Ball each year. Dot was able to come to Edmonton for at least one of those. There was a student branch of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (now a part of IEEE, of which I am now a Life Member). I had the  $\Phi$  pleasure of being Chairman of that organization in my final year.

It should be remembered that this all happened a long time ago and conditions then were not what they would be today. There were no such things as computers or even pocket calculators. All our calculations had to be made with the aid of slide rules or logarithms. All our notes and reports had to be written by hand and I was pleased to finally get a ball point pen that was reliable enough to use. As I write this using a word processor I wonder what a difference these electronic machines would have made.

I had my summer months at home and spent part of my time at casual jobs that helped to defray expenses and did some maintenance and improvements around the house. I hope it was a relief to Dot and I think it was when our little daughter Kathy fell and cut her scalp. The cut got infected and it was several weeks before it could be cured. I have serious doubts about the aseptic practices of the doctor because I think it was in his office that she became infected. Anyway she required treatment and nursing and I was able to take over that chore and in time she suffered little permanent damage.

During those years there were two incidents that involved brother Jim. Jim and Myrtle's first child Bobby became seriously ill and I can remember going to the hospital with a couple of my University friends to give blood. Tragically Bobby died in March, 1946 a severe blow to both Jim and Myrtle.

The second incident was happier. I think it occurred during a summer break and Jim and I were visiting our parents with our wives when Jim suggested we try an experiment in Mental Telepathy. He had come in contact with some of that type of thing while he was in England during the war. His experiment consisted of his holding a deck of cards and I was supposed to pick a card from the deck. We were sitting on the floor facing each other and as he held the cards with the backs toward me he was to concentrate on the position of some single card. At the same time I was to close my eyes and mentally visualize each card in the deck from the ace of spades to the deuce of clubs. That took a few minutes but when I was finished I said, "Ready" and he named the card. I had opened my eyes and could see the cards but I can remember the sensation of having my hand move up, almost involuntarily, and, indeed, pick the card he had named. The odds against it being pure chance are 52 to one and the sensation I had leads me to think that it wasn't just chance. Afterward I was mentally exhausted and I have never tried the same thing again. Jim and I never suggested it and I have never met anyone else who I thought was capable of the intense concentration needed. Mental Telepathy may be viable but it is hellish hard work.

Our family continued to grow and in October, 1946 our daughter Jeanne was born and on February 29, 1948 Betty came along. But my education continued and in the spring of 1948 I joined the parade in mortar board and gown and knelt and clasped hands with Fred McNally and received a brief word of recognition from him. I may have been the only one that he knew among the many hundreds he inaugurated that day.

Two incidents that occurred in the last weeks stand out in my memory. One was an interview with representatives of The Canadian Westinghouse Company who offered me a position as an apprentice engineer at their plant in Hamilton, Ontario. I was pleased and maybe a little surprised. My marks had been average or a little better but not outstanding. Having a job as an engineer changed my whole attitude toward life.

The second incident was with a life insurance salesman. It seemed that insurance salesmen descended on the graduating students like a horde of vultures and this one in particular seemed to think that we were too immature to withstand his high pressure tactics. His meeting with me ended as a friend opened my door one evening to invite me to go to dinner with him only to find this salesman backing out under the flood of invective I was hurling at him.

So I had a University degree and a job and a whole new world was opening up for me and mine. There was still a long road ahead but it would be a different and more promising road than it would have been.

In retrospect I try to evaluate the effect of that degree on my life and the lives of my family. The most basic thing was that I had reached a new plateau both socially and intellectually. It also gave me a steady job that lasted for 33 years although I often think that the things I learned provided about 10% of the knowledge that I needed for the job the other 90% would not have been available otherwise.

Even more important was the opportunity and the attitudes of our children to take advantage of the educational advantages that became available. I almost shudder to think of what our lives might have been like if I had not taken advantage of that Army Discharge Benefit.

For myself] still have an eclectic interest in new ideas and the discipline of that technical education has made things available to me that might not have been so easily absorbed in different circumstances. It hasn't been easy but the results more than justify

the sacrifices that Dot and I both had to make.

## VI Hamilton

So in early July 1948 I caught the Transcontinental train for the long ride back to Ontario again. I found the Main Plant of Westinghouse and went through the process of documentation as an employee and got to know something of the Personnel Department but I still had to find someplace to live. For the first couple of days I lived at the YMCA. It was cheap and available but their Macaroni and Cheese was good and in a couple of days I had found a boarding house within easy walking distance from the plant. It offered a very small room and my meals but, as I remember, cost me only \$11.00 a week.

My biggest concern was that I had a family in Ryley and I had to find someplace for them to live. It was a daunting situation. I didn't know the city: I had no idea of how to go about buying a home: and I didn't have anyone to turn to. It was a lonely feeling.

Somehow I happened on a Real Estate Agent who seemed to understand my problem and was willing to help. His name was Percy Walton, and though I never saw him again after the purchase he was a real life saver to me. He found a house just across the block from where I was boarding, at a price that I felt I could afford, and recommended a lawyer, George Gage, who did a good job protecting my interests in the purchase. I got to know the sellers and remember their complaints about what a nuisance my lawyer was making of himself. I tried not to show my satisfaction that he was making sure that when I took possession I had a clear title to the property. I learned something about buying and selling in that deal.

In the meantime Dot had the problem of not only looking after the family but of disposing of our house in Ryley and arranging to move herself and 8 children all the way to Hamilton. To make things even more stressful for her our son Danny had lost an eye in a childhood game. I heard about it in a letter from her. It was an awful shock.

Dot had the emotional and to some extent financial support of my parents and some of her relatives and in due time I received a cheque that allowed me to make a down payment on the house and George Gage was able to arrange the necessary mortgage.

Finally I went to Toronto to meet my family and escort them to Hamilton and their new home. We made something of an impact. The

arrival of a family with 8 children was not a common occurrence and, although I had not made it known beforehand we were welcomed and received a rather nice basket of goodies as a welcome gift.

We took up residence at 215 West Avenue North in time to get the kids registered in school that fall and with the purchase of some cheap furniture, like Army Surplus bunk beds we started to establish new lives. Our house was not very big and doubling up in the bedrooms was necessary. Also, we were not in the most high class neighborhood in Hamilton and one of my worries was how the kids would get along with their peers. But one day one of the bigger boys who lived just across the street came to me to complain that Alfred had beat him up. He didn't look very beat up to me and I knew that Alfred was not likely to be the one that went about beating up people so I just said that I would speak to him and let it go at that. I don't think I ever did speak to Alfred about it but I knew then that our children didn't have to worry too much about being picked on by the other kids.

Neither Dot nor I had any problems of any consequence. We had both been in similar situations before. We had a regular pay cheque and a mortgage so we joined the majority of our neighbors. Keeping food on the table and shoes on the kid's feet meant that we lived pretty frugally but somehow we managed to meet the mortgage payments so we had a measure of security.

Meanwhile, family life in Hamilton was developing. The kids had all got registered in school and, while there are always problems of complaints about the teachers, they all seemed to learn and that was the objective. I am still amazed at how children make friends quickly and our house was sometimes full of children, half of whom were not our own; the rest of ours were visiting somewhere else. Dot used to say, "At supper time you wash all their faces so that you can tell who they are. Then you send your own to the table and send the rest home". On Christmas day the bedlam went on all day except when we had our Christmas dinner.

One family incident that I still recall was in the fall of 1948. We were having our supper and were all at the table with me at one end and Dot at the other and the kids arranged in order of their ages from my end to hers. At the end of the meal Dot produced a birthday cake and we all stood to sing "Happy Birthday". It was Penny's birthday and everyone knew except her, so she sang away and looked around to see who wasn't singing. She was completely surprised. And somehow it seemed appropriate that the surprise was pulled on her. She was the one who would come down in the morning and ask, "What are we going to do as a big, happy family today?"

In a big family there must be some measure of discipline. Dot was in charge of the home but I made myself the final authority. I don't remember applying corporal punishment very often but the kids all knew I might and I've wondered how often Dot used me as a threat. I do remember giving Alfred a whack on the head for talking back to his mother. She had enough problems without having to put up with that. I also took charge of all things financial so that I was responsible for our being able to meet all our obligations and still put food on the table. We went grocery shopping every Friday night and I usually had a bill of about \$20.00 each week. We eventually got a freezer full of frozen food that was a convenience. One can't keep frozen food in an ice box. That freezer didn't save us any money but I think Dot was able to prepare better meals with less inconvenience to her.

One day I got a kind of panic phone call from Dot to tell me that she was pregnant again. There didn't seem to be anything to do about that but when you have 8 children do you really need one more? But in due time our son Douglas James was born on November 24, 1949. Jimmy was a lovely baby and became the darling of the whole family. It added one more responsibility for Dot but in time I think she enjoyed him as much as any. She was an excellent mother and the kids still tell me that she made all of them feel that they were her favorite child.

After Jimmy's birth Dot had a hysterectomy. As one nurse told me they removed the baby carriage but left the play pen. I was somewhat surprised that I had to sign a consent form to have the operation performed but that was the law. I don't know whether that still exists but I expect not. When we received the bill from the doctor Dot expressed amazement that I paid it immediately. "You pinch every penny all the time but when we get the biggest bill we ever had you pay it without blinking an eye". To me it was a matter of not having any choice and the sooner it was paid the sooner it was removed as a potential problem.

As time went on the kids were growing up and expanding their activities. Alf and Blaine both joined the Sea Cadets and quite enjoyed it. Their unit was commanded by Ernie Porthouse, who was Manager of Tool Design at Westinghouse and I had worked closely with him as a Manufacturing Engineer. Dot found a ceramics enthusiast that had a kiln and that allowed her to explore another facet of her artistic talents and to make a rather warm friendship as well. Dot produced some quite delicate work and got a lot of satisfaction from it. She also was friendly with neighbors, particularly Myrt Russ who lived just across the street. Myrt was an Irish Catholic

who had married a Rumanian. Myrt was a constant beer drinker and made the hottest pizza ever known. Dot got her recipe and amazed relatives and friends with the potency of her productions.

There was a second panic phone call one day from Dot. She had discovered that Alf had been out all night and had sneaked in through the bedroom window by climbing up on the garage roof. His mother was sure that he had been up to no good and, considering the neighborhood we lived in, she probably had some cause. All I could do was tell her that I would take care of it when I got home. That evening I had a talk with Alf and found out that the two friends he had spent the night with were not likely to lead him astray and that they had spent a good part of the night in restaurants and pool halls. They had been picked up by the police who wondered what they were up to but soon released when it became apparent that they were up to no harm. All they wanted was to find out what it was like to spend a night on the streets. So I told Alf that I would give him a key to the back door so that he wouldn't have to sneak in the window. I expect that took much of the thrill out of the all night wandering. I think Dot was rather amazed and maybe a bit doubtful but she didn't say so.

My parents came to visit for a few days. That was really an event. My father was not an enthusiastic traveler and seldom left home unless there was a compelling reason. Coming to see us was probably the longest trip he had ever made. We arranged a bus trip to Niagara Falls and I think he was impressed but by that time he had begun to fail and couldn't do much walking about. I think the big value for him and Mother too was to see that we were secure and able to eat regular meals. I think he was pleased. Mother visited us twice more, once on the way to and once on the way back from a trip to England. Dot's mother also visited us from California. She seemed to be pleased to see all the kids happy and healthy, even though we certainly were not very wealthy. Her big adventure had been the train trip and all the waits in stations while changing trains. Apparently she met some helpful people but was nervous about being taken in by someone with ulterior motives. I think the reason for her visit was the same as my father's, just to see that we were getting by in spite of everything.

We did have other activities, among which were the junior hockey games at the Forum and the Class D baseball games. We could walk to both places and, while the skills displayed were not very good; they'd look like champions one night and like bums the next; it was entertaining and the crowd was the same each night and we got to know the people in the stands and that was fun. The twins, Danny and Trudy also went to the baseball games and got to know some of

the players. And I can remember Dot and I going for long walks in the evening, sometimes in the rain and thoroughly enjoying it.

There were the usual 'meet the teacher' nights and Dot and I would go to find out how our kids were behaving in school. For some reason we had been a little apprehensive about Blaine, thinking that he could have been a problem, so that when we met his teacher and she said, "Isn't he a nice boy", we felt very pleased. I guess all our kids did okay because I can't recall having any problems. One small incident involved Jeanne. Dot and I were wondering when she would learn to talk but one evening Dot announced that supper was ready and Jeanne went to the door and called, "Come on kids". A family joke is that she hasn't stopped talking since.

Meanwhile I got involved with a Stan Sharkey who didn't seem to have any gainful employment but enjoyed coaching sports teams. We had a softball team in summer and a hockey team in winter. We didn't do very well competitively but it gave the kids something to do. My main job was selling raffle tickets to raise money for practice time for the hockey team. It had some satisfactions and one of our players actually made it to the NHL.

Meanwhile the company was changing. Plans were afoot to set up a new plant that would include most of my interests. It was rumored to be going to either Ste. Hyacinthe, Quebec or London, Ontario. Dot and I both got interested in the French Language but in the end the decision was made to build a new plant in the outskirts of London. We had acquired an automobile, a 1948 Ford Sedan which turned out to be a bit of a clunker but it served to give us more scope, including visits to Dot's Aunt Helen in Brantford and to picnics on Rattlesnake Hill. The view from the point after a walk through the forest was quite impressive. We also took trips to London to see the new plant under construction and get some idea of the city that could become our new home. It was on one of the trips to London that I had made alone in preparation for the move that the engine of the Ford gave up completely and I had to find a way to get another car. It turned out to be a 1952 Studebaker and it served us well until the body finally rusted away.

When we arrived in Hamilton Alfred was in his 10th year and Betty was barely 6 months old. So in the nine years there our family spent most of the formative years. It was not a high class neighborhood and there was plenty of opportunity for them to fall into bad company but it seemed that they could be exposed but not be taken in. I have thought that the exposure may have been good since they realize that there are all kinds of people in this world and some of them do not

make good associates.

Also it was the longest period when I could live at home with them after spending most of my time commuting to a construction camp or in the Army or at University. Whether that made a lot of difference to the children I don't know but it was a comfort to me and maybe my influence had an effect. There was another factor and that is the very size of the family. It has been said that one child takes up all of your time so it doesn't matter how many more there are they still take up all of your time. Dot and I couldn't be paying attention to all of them all the time so I think to a significant extent they brought each other up. One small incident was when Jim's grade 1 teacher wondered about why he was more warmly dressed than was necessary and Dot then realized that she had been too busy to get him ready for school so his older sisters had been dressing him.

I wonder now how our large family, all from the same genes could turn out to be 9 quite different people and still talk to each other and do things together. Living together in a house that was really not big enough for so many people but with both parents there and some standards of conduct applied that were not so restrictive that the kids couldn't live their own lives must have had an effect.

## VII Westinghouse

I guess my first impression of the Westinghouse plant was the size of the place since it consisted of several large brick buildings spread out over about three blocks. When I got inside I was even more impressed with the complexity of the operations performed there. But I was to be given the opportunity to find out what it was all about. I had no idea at the time that I would be working for the same company for the next 33 years.

To begin with I was on what was called an apprentice course which consisted mainly of visiting various departments and getting to know something of what goes on in a large factory so the duties were not very onerous. I had to go to work 5 days a week but seldom had to do anything but watch and ask questions. I had never seen any thing like it before and I was learning a lot. I was amazed at the size and complexity of the machinery and the skills of the operators.

I still remember one Alf Hounscome who operated a vertical boring mill that must have been built about the time the plant first opened. Alf knew the vagaries of his machine and how to make allowances for them. He also planned every job thoroughly and as a result made good money working to time studies. He could usually be seen sitting on a tall stool smoking a cigarette and studying the drawing for the next job while his machine continued to run behind him. He really demonstrated how patience and care in preparation can result in major improvements in efficiency.

There were two departments in which I was expected to do some work. One was in Order Service where I had to conduct correspondence with the salesmen in the District Offices; such things as quoting prices and delivery and answering other questions. One incident I recall was when a salesman, quite improperly, put an unhappy customer directly in touch with me over the phone. The poor guy had 3 small transformers on order for 3 years and had been unable to get a firm delivery promise on them. I tried but had no success and finally told him so. I wasn't any happier than he was but it was at a time, after the war when all the big utilities were ordering transformers by the thousands and it was hard to get much attention placed on a small order like his. I think I remember it because of my sympathy for him and my helplessness to do anything about it. Even then I felt that the mission of the company was to serve its customers and it wasn't happening.

The other incident was in the Service Department. There wasn't much to do for me in the office so, since most of their field personnel were technicians rather than engineers they decided to send me to Calgary to investigate the failure of a number of small special transformers that were designed specifically for rural service. I was pretty green on that kind of work and therefore not too sure of myself but I got a number of failed units opened up and had no problem finding that the failure was consistently in the same place and, in my opinion, were caused by an error in judgement of electrical stress in the design compounded by a bad design of the bushing seals. I got all kinds of suggestions from experienced engineers and was a bit hesitant, as a raw apprentice, to challenge engineers who had many years experience but finally decided that I was right and said so in my report. I got no thanks from the designers but the design got changed and the company built thousands of similar units later.

My two year apprenticeship was curtailed to one year and I joined the Methods Department in 1949 under the tutelage of one Earle Piercy. The Department Manager was Jack Leech-Porter, a slim, middle-aged, active man who seemed to be always busy writing reports or memos in his office, one of only two or three on that floor where there must have been two hundred people working. Jack wrote by hand and then had his secretary type his work. I think she may have been the only person who could read his writing. My communication with him was always verbal and I remember only a couple of comments that he made to me. One was that if he couldn't leave his office for a week without problems he wasn't a very good manager. The other was that if you put two people who think together in a room they will disagree within ten minutes.

Methods was really Manufacturing Engineering. and involved contacts with a number of manufacturing departments, sometimes with the workmen themselves. with production control and with the designers. There was lots of variety. One of the problems arose from the supply of a small, special brass nut that was made in our factory but was made from a particular size of brass bar. We couldn't get any brass bar, not even on the black market and we needed four of these nuts for every transformer. I worked for weeks with the designers and others to find a substitute and finally we thought we had an answer. One morning a day or two later the production man, Hal Humby, phoned me to say that our last hope had evaporated. For some reason I started to laugh and so did he. I guess the other people in our departments must have felt that we were both bonkers but there was nothing else to do. I don't remember how it all got solved but we made a lot of transformers after that. Many years later when I reacted

to a similar situation by laughing someone said that I must be immune to disaster.

That is only one example of the kinds of things I got involved in. I had got the impression very early that the company was being operated as an exercise for the accounting department because there were so many reports required for them. On one occasion I was asked to analyze the cost of an order to find out why it had been so expensive. I spent hours going through piles of cost records and finally found that a small piece of insulation that had a value of 15 cents had been recorded at a cost of \$15,000. I wondered why I had to do that because any clerk could have done it. Another experience was the assignment of the 'overhead overabsorption'. The accounting department had budgeted for overhead that at the end of the year was found to be too high. So a number of products had been overcharged for work that had been done in various factory departments. I was asked to assign a percentage of the work in each of the factory departments to the various products. It struck me that I was, in fact, determining the level of profit or loss for each of those products and I was doing it by gut feel alone. I didn't think that was a very good way to run the company.

Another criticism I had was of the inventory control. Westinghouse, at the time, must have had millions of dollars tied up in inventory and the records were kept on cards by about 40 inventory clerks who just operated from simple rules based on the history of each item. If an item had been used in quantity it was re-ordered in a corresponding quantity. One result was that a large order had been specially designed and a variety of parts was stocked to meet production requirements. However, when the order was complete the stock control department continued to re-order those parts. So a lot of money was spent on material that would never be used. I did my best to convert what I could into usable material but it wasn't a great lot. I also worked out a plan to improve the process but, while I got a hearing, no action was taken.

On another occasion I noted that we were very often waiting for delivery of copper wire to wind coils even though we had many tons of copper wire in stock. I was told over and over that none of it was the right size. I knew enough about how the wire was made to suggest that we set up re-drawing facilities so that we could use wire from stock to produce the size we needed at the time. Somehow the idea got through our purchasing department to Canada Wire and Cable, one of our principle suppliers, with the suggestion that I be given a tour of their facilities to give me a better idea of what was involved. The answer was a resounding NO! Then the President of Canada Wire

heard of it and I received a personal invitation to visit him, see his plant and discuss the problem. I did see the whole operation but I think he knew that I was not going to duplicate his drawing process without a lot more analysis and research. But he promised that any order from our plant would be delivered within two weeks which was much better than we had been experiencing. He knew that if Westinghouse were to get into the business, for whatever reason, he would have had one more competitor and he didn't want that.

I had let it be known quite early in my time at Westinghouse that I was not interested in promotion to a position of management. I had the opportunity to sit in on some of the planning meetings and observed that the objectives being set were sometimes ridiculous and often mathematically impossible. My cautions were ignored and then I realized that orders had come down from above and there could be no changes. I would have been very uncomfortable and would likely have got myself into serious trouble. I could be more useful dealing with things that I was in direct contact with. I might have sacrificed a wage increase but my major need was to have a regular paycheck and I was getting that where I was.

I believe there was another factor that influenced my whole career. My early impression was that the company was being operated as an exercise for the accounting department and that profit had to be emphasized at the expense of everything else. I realized that a company must be profitable to continue to exist but its main purpose must be to supply a service and if that service is out weighed by the profit it takes it is a detriment to society rather than an asset. Also, the accounting procedures used allowed some gross inefficiencies which I have noted elsewhere. As a common engineer without disciplinary responsibilities I could do my thing and ignore those aspects that might cause me problems.

Meanwhile I became involved in a major project of introducing grain-oriented sheet steel into the manufacture of transformer cores. The material was much more efficient but it required a complete change in the design of transformers and a lot of new equipment in the shop. In preparation I made visits to Westinghouse Electric Corporation's plant in Sharon, Pennsylvania and Moloney Electric in St. Louis, Missouri. I learned a lot about the process and found Moloney particularly helpful. Their process was more efficient and their equipment was less costly than that used in Sharon but they agreed to make the same equipment available to us.

Not only that but they treated us to a ball game at Busch Stadium. It was a pretty good ball game but I don't remember the score. I

think the St. Louis Cardinals lost because I recall seeing the great Stan Musial strike out as a pinch hitter. On another evening we saw a show in areal old-time show boat. It was just a barge tied up at the wharf and the show was a dreadful melodrama with an old kitchen chair as the only prop. And the audience got involved with, "He's in the closet", when the hero was looking for the villain. The funniest part was when the hero was delivering his impassioned speech to the heroine he put one foot on the chair. Someone yelled, "Get you feet off the furniture". So he put his foot down and forgot his lines. Finally the heroine said to the audience, "That's my chair and he can put his foot on it if he wants to". So the play proceeded.

We also visited the Wagner Electric plant. There was much doubt about our being allowed to go there because of a bitter law suit between Westinghouse and Wagner but when the manager found out that we were Canadian we were welcomed with open arms. He loathed Westinghouse but he loved Canada. It was a pleasant and useful visit.

Back home it was my job to prepare the proposal to spend a lot of money on new equipment and to justify that expense by showing the financial benefits that would accrue. The proposal was approved and I got involved in the purchase and operation of new equipment and actually made the first core myself. I didn't do a very good job but I was able to help the workmen who would be doing it do a better job. It was a rather exciting time because it involved the whole process of transformer manufacture from the design to the final assembly. But it all turned out to be quite successful.

Another project was the supervision of the construction of a Proton Spectrometer for The National Research Council. We had been supplied with detailed drawings but I had to find people and machines within the plant with the skills and equipment to build a semi-circular vacuum chamber and a pair of magnets to create a powerful magnetic field inside the chamber. It was an interesting project and quite different from anything else I was asked to do.

From time to time I had assistants assigned to me. Most of them were just bodies who moved on after a month or two but there was one who stays in my memory. He was introduced to me by Al Tite who had replaced Jack Leech-Porter as manager. Al couldn't pronounce his name so he just handed me a slip of paper that had the name Jan Borowczyk written on it. I think my experience with the variety of names I encountered while working for the Gas Company came to my assistance because I could pronounce it correctly. Jan was, of course, Polish and very proud of his heritage and his name. My being able to pronounce it correctly made him a friend. He was a good

worker although set in his ideas. He always insisted that he could make a calculation using paper and pencil and his log tables faster than I could with my slide rule. We never agreed on that but I always had his respect because I respected his name.

During my years as a Manufacturing Engineer I had close and constant contact with the design department for distribution transformers and had developed a warm relationship with the supervisor of drafting, one Leonard Stopps. Len Stopps had been supervisor of drafting for many years and was about to retire. Len was a cheerful fellow who liked to have a little joke once in a while and sometimes made little drawings of them. He was very active in Livingstone United Church and had made carvings of many Christian symbols as decorations for the church. When he had that finished he made a book, all by hand of the symbols with an explanation of their significance and origin. My relationship with him is— indicated by the fact that I got a complimentary copy after it was done.

Anyway, Len retired and I took over his job. I was a terrible draftsman but I had a staff of quite good ones and my job was to assign the work and initial every drawing to make it legitimate. That wasn't all because there were times when things didn't work out on the board and I had to give advice or get something changed so that things would fit properly. George Wilson was a meticulous checker of details and he checked every drawing before he gave it to me. Tom Laakso and I developed a number of design changes, notably a terminal board and tap changer, molded in plastic, that saved a lot of space and many hours of assembly work. We also changed the cooling system on the larger transformers to make them smaller and therefore less expensive.

Seth Duffus was the Engineering Manager and we also got along quite well. As a matter of fact we still correspond every Christmas and review the past year. We all had a good time on the job and I think did some very useful work.

Meanwhile the wheels of management were turning and the decision was finally made that Distribution Transformers and some other smaller products would be moved to a new plant to be built on the outskirts of London, Ontario. That meant that we would need to relocate all our engineering and manufacturing and marketing operations as well as the personnel involved. Some of my most experienced draftsmen declined the move and while I had two experienced draftsmen in Tom Laakso and Bob Cooper I had the responsibility of hiring new people in London. There were no experienced transformer draftsmen available in London and I'm afraid

I did not do the best job in selecting the ones that were available. So we had to start our London operation with limited capacity.

But the move was made in the summer of 1957 and with patience and perseverance we carried on. The word was that it takes three years for a new plant to become profitable and I wonder now how much that attitude had on delaying the onset of efficiency in our London plant. For my part I felt that I was doing the best that I could but I wasn't happy with some of the people I had hired.

So one day I found that I was no longer in charge of drafting and that I had been transferred to the Marketing Department. It was to become a major factor in my career.

## VIII Ilderton

With my transfer to the new plant in London came the need for a home for our big tribe in London. Others were buying small suburban bungalows but anything big enough for our family was quite beyond my reach financially. To start with I stayed in a rooming house during the week and ate in restaurants while prospecting for a new home. Things didn't look too promising but at least my family still had a home in Hamilton so I didn't panic. Also since I had been through the process before I had more confidence in myself. Finally I found an agent who knew of a large house somewhere in the country. He wasn't sure how to find it but one evening we did. It was a big old farm house just outside the Village of Ilderton, about a 20 minute drive from my job. The house came with two acres of land surrounded by farmer's fields and pastures and I think my rural background made that appealing to me. The size of both the house and grounds was an important factor and since it was old and in a rural setting the price was something that I considered within my reach.

It was owned by a Dr. R.W. Begg, a Professor of Medicine at the University of Western Ontario who was moving to Saskatoon. The real estate agent knew nothing about the house so all the negotiating went on between me and Dr. Begg. Bob Begg and I got along quite well and when he took back a second mortgage I had to send him a cheque every month with a short note that he or his secretary always acknowledged. I believe the two acre lot had been severed from the farm as a discharge benefit for Mrs. Begg, who had been in the services as a nurse.

The Village of Ilderton itself was a pretty little rural community with basic services for the village residents and the surrounding farms and it was close enough to the City of London to make shopping for other things rather convenient. So we had the advantages of a rural life without any serious disadvantages.

Both the house and the grounds were in need of improvement and care. The kids were impressed with 14 rooms, 3 attics and 4 basements but the house had originally been built in 1880 and added on to several times. Only a small part around the house had been mowed and one of the first projects was to identify our property with a fence and mow the grass. An early addition was a garage so that I could keep the car inside and have a place for shop work and tool storage. There was a succession of projects remodeling the house that continued until

I moved out of it 37 years later.

On July 2, 1957 I took possession of our Ilderton home. Dot and I had agreed that Penny and Trudy, our two oldest daughters, would go with me. We left Hamilton early in the morning and I think the girls cried all the way. After all, they were leaving their familiar neighborhood and all their friends for someplace they knew nothing about. I had no choice and sooner or later they were going have to make the change. When we arrived at our new home Stew Calvert, who owned the farm behind our house and lived next door in a newer, smaller house, climbed over the fence to welcome us and asked if there was anything he could do.

I think that had an encouraging effect on the two girls. I told Stew that I had a new stove and fridge being delivered that afternoon and that if he knew someone who could install them I would appreciate it. Then I had to go to work and leave Penny and Trudy to explore their new environment. That first meeting with Stew was to begin a neighborly friendship with him and his wife Addie and their two daughters, Nancy and Janice, that would last for some 35 years.

When I got home from work that evening Penny and Trudy had covered quite a lot of ground. The stove and fridge were operating and the girls had found a cherry tree with lots of ripe cherries and so they exercised their baking skills and we had cherry pie as our dessert for supper. It was amazing how quickly their attitude had changed. Within days they had made new friends and our new home in Ilderton was quite a happy one.

In the meantime Dot was in Hamilton and had to face the constant apprehension of someone coming to see the house there. Our agent was not very sensitive and it was not easy for her but in time we got an offer that was higher than I had expected and we sold our Hamilton home. In the meantime I took some of our possessions in the car to Ilderton in my weekend commuting and also gradually introduced the kids to their new home. Finally a moving company brought what was left and we were established as residents of Ilderton.

At the time our nine children ranged in age from 7 to 18. The four boys and five girls soon found friends and our home became a very lively place. I won't try to describe the activities, partly because there was too much for me to remember, and partly because there was a lot going on that I never even heard about. But I sometimes get reminded of the Euchre games, the Tiddley Winks and the Dart Board. And there were enough sibling rivalries and shenanigans to keep Dot and me from becoming bored. A typical trick was Blaine answering the

phone with, "Thorsley Stud Farm. Blaine speaking", with his hand over the mouthpiece. And he was delighted at the reaction he got from his mother.

My memories are that there was always a project of some kind going on. Either we were remodeling some part of the house or cutting the grass in what had been a calf pasture or trying to get a garden going or planting trees. I guess I was the initiator of many of those projects and I was still doing it until I left a long time later. But the kids had their projects too, especially the boys. It seemed to involve cars and at one time there were four automobiles parked in our yard.

The kids all went to school, mainly by bus but I remember my old Studebaker serving as a taxi transporting my kids and some of their friends to school or work in London on my way to work and back home in the evening. One incident that I recall was when the streets were covered in slush and I had to make a left turn and was being very careful because my car was full and traction was not good. It so happened that the driver behind began to blow his horn in frustration but I was not about to make my turn until I felt perfectly safe. Don Schram had just joined the London Police and as a cadet had a uniform. He happened to be sitting in the middle of the back seat and I asked him to put on his cap and have a good look at the guy behind. That sure silenced the horn.

The kids all got an education and one by one left home to make their own lives. Dot and I both considered that our purpose was to give them the basics and let them decide their own destiny. They have all done very well but all in a different way. None of them became engineers, following in my career, but I now have six grandchildren who did.

Somewhere in this record of overlapping events I must refer to the parties that occurred. We had some great Christmas dinners and Wedding receptions and in July, 1963 the kids organized a party for our 25th Wedding Anniversary. We had not been celebrating our anniversaries, thinking that was our private affair but somehow the word got out. Our parties were always successful. The big house made room for lots of people and the rural location seemed to foster a relaxed atmosphere. I have been told a number of times that just driving into the driveway made people feel relaxed. And even when Dot and I were alone I was encouraged to stay because it was such a great place to visit.

There were other interests. Dot had the opportunity to expand her artistic activities with classes in London and some very good

paintings, almost all of which she gave away and I have a few left just as memories. She also did some quite good wood carvings and made many apple dolls. She got to be known as the "Apple Doll Lady" and once got featured on the front page of The London Free Press. Dot never charged for her work. If she wanted you to have a piece she would give it to you and not expect to have you offer to pay. I recall one occasion when the conveners of a bonspiel called to ask how much she charged for the apple dolls that were a regular feature of that bonspiel. I took the call and had to remind them that when they talked to Dot they should not offer to pay. That would probably mean no apple dolls. Her art was mainly realistic but could occasionally introduce an element of impressionism that I found quite interesting, especially since I had no skills of that kind.

Another activity in which both Dot and I got involved was Curling . It began with a group of local people acquiring some curling stones and playing a few nights each year on the natural ice of the Ilderton Hockey Rink. It was a terrible place to curl but it aroused enough interest to start a club that rented ice in London for one night a week and when a new arena was built in Ilderton there was a core of some 40 or 50 curlers to get curling facilities included in the arena. The Curling club then became quite a success and both Dot and I were a part of its development. She loved to curl and, in one of her sketch books left a piece of doggerel, "She really should divorce him, Their marriage is on the skids, But then when she goes curling, Who would take care of the kids?"

The Curling Club gave Dot and me an opportunity to exercise our skills in constructing floats for the annual Ilderton Fair. We did a couple that we were not too proud of but on one occasion she made a figure of Big Bird from Sesame Street that attracted a lot of attention. On another occasion we combined my engineering with her art and built a replica of Bonhomme Carnaval that rotated on its stand and waved to the crowd as it turned.

Then there was the Oddfellows. I had renewed my membership but found that the local group was a rather dull lot who didn't seem interested in doing anything other than sitting around and going through the motions of holding a meeting. But one night, Cec Walls, a more active member, asked me as I entered the room if I could take the Noble Grand's chair in an Initiatory Degree. I hadn't heard of any new members so I just said, "Hell Yes, Cec" and walked on by. But before that evening was over I had introduced a new member to the Lodge and later got a couple of new young people to join.

I got interested enough to go to district meetings and shortly found

myself elected District Deputy Grand Master. That meant visiting several lodges on official visits and installing the officers of each lodge the following spring. I chose my installation team from younger members of other lodges, except for my Marshal, who was Tom Grant, one of the new members that I had brought in. The older Ilderton members were not pleased but we were a first class team. On one occasion an older member of another lodge remarked that he had never seen the obligations done so well to which Tom replied, "What the Hell did you expect?". Excellence was taken for granted.

There was too much of the old habits of inactivity and too many jealousies between members for my try at excellence to catch on and I found that the Curling Club was a far better place to apply what talents I had and I got real satisfaction from the things I could do there. The Curling Club expanded from the original 40 to about 450 and after almost 30 years is still just as successful.

It was in March, 1959 that I got one of the major shocks of my life. Bother Jim phoned to tell me that our father had passed away. Dot and I had visited my parents the previous year but other than that had not been in touch with him for some time but I guess I was feeling comfort from the fact that he was still there until, almost in an instant, he wasn't. I think I just walked around in a daze for the next day or two. But I wanted to go to his funeral and only with the help of friends was I able to corral enough money for a plane ticket. My duty at the funeral was to push my mother around in a wheel chair. I think she was beginning to lose her sanity and that didn't make things any easier for me. Brother Jim took charge and had her installed in a Nursing Home, much against her protests but there was no choice and she passed away there about a year later.

Father had left everything to our mother and Mother's will essentially left the estate to Jim and me. Jim was the Executor and while I was in Edmonton for Mother's funeral we began working on the details. My feelings were not as strong as for my father but the realization came that now I had no parents to refer to and I was completely on my own. I think I was surprised to find that bonds were being broken that I didn't realize were there.

It wasn't a large estate but Jim and I agreed by letters on how it would be divided. I remember taking mortgage payments on the farm as part of my inheritance so I was receiving cheques for a couple of years. The inheritance did have the effect of relieving our financial situation. The old Studebaker had practically fallen apart but we were able to purchase our first new car, a Plymouth Valiant for about \$2400. It was a station wagon that served us for about 10 years. We

got a lot of value out of it and I was sad when I had to let it go.

Dot and I began to do some traveling. In our first year at Ilderton I decided that she should, for the first time, get away from the kids for more than a couple of hours. Dot and I felt that the kids were then old enough to look after themselves for at least a few days. So we took off in the Studebaker for a short tour of Eastern Ontario. When we got back the kids were still all there and the house was intact but I don't think we ever found out all the things that went on there while we were away. It was a rather brief vacation but it seemed to ignite a spark. Dot loved to ride in the car and although she didn't drive became quite a good map reader and that was a help to me.

The following year we got a lot more ambitious. The Studebaker seemed to be running well and we wanted to do something exciting, so we drove to Alberta to visit my parents in Ryley and then on to Vancouver to visit Dot's aunt and cousins there. The old car needed some nursing but it got us there and got us home. We found my father in failing health but with a clear mind and he seemed to enjoy our visit. It was fortunate timing because he passed away the following spring. Our visit to Vancouver was also pleasant with Dot's Aunt May and cousin Louella and her family. It was my first view of the port and I still remember the adventure of crossing the old Second Narrows Bridge. It has since been replaced but I had several chances to experience the crossing of the rickety old structure.

I think the most scary part for Dot was our trip around the Big Bend road from Golden to Revelstoke. It was about 150 miles of unmaintained gravel road along the bank of the Columbia River. I had my attention focused on driving at a rather low speed but Dot was on the river side and could see how far down we could go if we went over the edge. The car rattled at every joint and seemed to cheer when we reached the pavement at Revelstoke. Like the Second Narrows Bridge the Big Bend doesn't exist any more. A more direct route was built through the Rogers Pass and the old road is now mostly flooded by the lake behind the Mica Dam. While neither of those feats was heroic they both still arouse memories of how things were and the experience I had that not many people did.

Our new Valiant station wagon gave us courage to go farther. Our first holiday trip was to visit Dot's mother in San Luis Obispo, California. We rigged the car up with curtains on the windows and used air mattresses in the back for sleeping so that we could stop almost anywhere. We had a Coleman stove and a food cooler and a couple of camp stools and we could prepare and eat our meals right on the tailgate of the car. In some ways we had a rash plan but we had

limited resources and we were determined to try to get to visit Dot's mother and we felt that we could do it with the resources we had.

We drove down the fabled Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica using a couple of the Los Angeles freeways at the end. Our route took us from the lush countryside of Southern Ontario and the Northern United States through a gradually drier climate to the deserts of New Mexico, Arizona and California. All of this was completely new to us and we were fascinated by it all. I can't recall all the details but we met interesting people along the way and took a side trip near Flagstaff, Arizona to see the Grand Canyon. I remember our standing on the edge holding on to a small tree and being impressed with the millennia of geological history we could see on the other side and how insignificant we were in terms of that history.

We stopped at a service station at Kingman, Arizona to get the bugs blown out of our radiator before crossing the Mojave Desert and had a jovial conversation with the attendant about what that experience would be like. It was indeed something of an experience for us. I found myself driving by the temperature gauge rather than the speedometer and drinking everything potable to try to quench my thirst. I ended up with a can of beer in one hand and the steering wheel in the other, quite illegal even in California, but I didn't have a drop of sweat on my skin. The air was so dry that sweat evaporated immediately.

Before leaving we had been told that the Los Angeles freeways were four lanes wide in each direction and that fast lane was on the left and nobody drove less than 85 miles an hour. When we got there I was a little apprehensive but so far my car and my driving had been as good as that of other cars so we went up the ramp and found that the speed limit was 55 and everybody was driving at the limit. The traffic was dense but everyone was quite courteous when I had to change lanes to get to an exit. I was pleasantly surprised.

From Santa Monica we drove north on El Camino Real, the Royal Road to San Luis. The road follows the sea coast just north of Santa Monica so we stopped to dip our feet in the Pacific Ocean. Dot went out a little farther than I did and when she turned to come back a wave caught up with her and she got drenched up to her waist. While she was trying to dry off I climbed up a few feet on the hill on the other side of the road and found the tufts of grass were so dry that they shattered at the slightest touch. The fires that occur in that area are no mystery. Los Angeles was built in a desert and only the water they pipe down from the mountains makes it a place to live.

San Luis Obispo is a pleasant little town nestled in the hills a few miles inland from Morro Bay and Pismo Beach. It is centred on a Spanish Mission, one of a series of missions stretching from San Diego to San Francisco. Dot and her mother had a great time visiting and we found the people very friendly. I was able to take a day to visit a classmate, Dave Cherry, in Palo Alto and when we left San Luis we went north to the elevated highways and bridges of San Francisco and Oakland and then through Sacramento and then eastward through the fabled Donner Pass and on to Reno and the State of Nevada. Reno was the only place of any size that we saw in Nevada and it was ablaze with lights advertising the gambling casinos but every little town we passed was advertising either gambling or fireworks or both. It was something of an odd experience for us both.

From Nevada we passed into Utah and across the Great Salt Lake to Salt Lake City. There was another range of mountains and then the great interior plateau and the grasslands of Wyoming. It was in Nebraska that we began to see landscape that was more nearly like Ontario. But there was another feature that made me think of the characteristic smells of places. I never did figure out what it was but the smell was strong and pungent as though some farm produce was being fermented. The sage brush of Texas had been far more pleasant. In Iowa it was the smell of pigs and that was everywhere. I had thought briefly of trying to find my father's birthplace but quickly decided to stay on the road home.

It was in either Nebraska or Iowa that I had the worst scare of my driving career. We were coming down a rather steep hill on an old two-lane highway when I noticed a car in the gateway of a farm at the bottom. I expected that it would stay there till we went by and at least would back out into one lane or the other. But that car backed out straight across the road, blocking both lanes. I was going too fast to stop safely but I managed to steer out onto a long sloping, grassy slope on the other side of the road and let my speed carry me by. When I got to the top of the next hill I had to stop and get out of the car to let my heart settle down out of my throat to its normal position. If that long slope had not been there it could have meant the end for both of us. The rest of the trip was not eventful but we could tell by the vegetation that we were getting nearer to home and that seems to be the best part of any trip, just getting home again.

That trip was a marvelous adventure but we would not have made it if we had not had the objective of visiting Dot's mother. We made a holiday trip almost every summer after that but always with some objective. We drove to Summerside, Prince Edward Island and to Gander, Newfoundland to visit John and Trudy; to St Paul,

Minnesota to visit Keith and Kathy; to Edmonton to visit Blaine and Pat. And we went back to San Luis Obispo a number of times but always by a different route. On a couple of occasions we went by air and had the experience of flying in a 26 seat aircraft that had four engines, a DeHavilland Heron, I was told, that flew from San Francisco to Los Angeles and stopped at San Jose and Salinas and Paso Robles as well as San Luis. The trip was short but the view at times was terrific.

Dot loved the traveling and I think got more out of it than I did. After all I had to concentrate on the driving while she could enjoy the scenery and more than once told me about interesting things that I hadn't seen at all. Finally, in the early 1970's Dot and I found ourselves all alone in that big old house. It was too big for just the two of us but I was still working and making improvements. It had been our home for so long that it was difficult to even discuss a change. An apartment was out of the question and we never could get to the point of looking for another house. We were kept busy just looking after the big place and felt that to be our mission though we realized that the day would come when we couldn't do it any more. In 1981 I retired and while that gave me more time to cut the grass and tackle other projects that story must while I relate the rest of my working career.

## IX Marketing

The switch to the Marketing Department was a major change for me. To begin with joining marketing was not much of an improvement. I found myself just keeping records that neither I nor anyone else saw any value in. But one day I found that I could make a difference. Our London plant was still in trouble meeting deliveries. One of the noisiest problems was with the switchgear plant in Hamilton. We were supplying small current and potential transformers and other small items for their use in large switching equipment and we were away behind in deliveries. There were repeated calls and complaints and visits by managers that resulted in not much more than a pleasant lunch and that was all. One day I made a visit to Hamilton and called on the purchasing agent at the switchgear division. For the first 45 minutes I had to listen to his vituperations about what a disgraceful operation we had in London. When he was finished I told him that what I wanted was to know which of the dozens of orders he wanted first. He said, "I want them all". That to me was the whole problem. My answer was that it was obvious that he wasn't going to get them all so which one did he want first. "I want the whole first page", he said. "Good, now which one on the first page do you want first". It took him a minute or so but he did pick one order. I then asked which one he wanted second and when I left I had a list of five orders.

The next morning I told the production supervisor in London which order was wanted first and before the day was out he came to me to tell me that order would be shipped in the morning. So I gave him the second order and before the week was out I was phoning Hamilton for another five orders. Within a month or so the problem was gone. It was amazing to me that all the attention by senior management had not revealed that you can't solve a major problem all at once. You have to do it a bit at a time and then it is so easy it's amazing. It's like laying bricks. The boss wants the whole house finished but the brick layer does it one brick at a time. Another satisfying experience was a visit to Edmonton to discuss mechanical strength of distribution transformer coils. The City of Edmonton had been a good customer but was having failures on short circuit and wanted to know why, although our Westinghouse transformers had not been a major problem. I took along a sample coil and explained how it had been designed and built to reduce or eliminate the problem that they were concerned about. I had a distinguished audience, including senior engineers and the Manager of Engineering, Stan Hampton. My

experience in engineering stood me in good stead and I guess I made a strong impression. We got a letter of thanks from Stan Hampton stating that for the first time they had been visited by an expert who really knew what he was talking about.

That experience seemed to establish me as an expert and I began to visit other utilities and soon became somewhat known in the industry. One rather odd occurrence involved our Division Manager, Stan Thurgar. One evening when everyone else had gone home he came out of his office and asked me to attend a meeting in his stead because he had somewhere else that he would rather be. He gave me a few words of guidance and that was all. The next morning I had to tell my supervisor that I would be away most of the day at the request of Mr. Thurgar. It happened several times until I became known as, "Stan's meeting attender". Stan was what I think of as a "people person", some one who recognizes that a company is primarily a group of people and that bricks and mortar and machinery were secondary considerations. On one of my early visits to a Canadian Electrical Association (CEA) conference I remember commenting to him that I felt my presence there did not justify the expense because I had found that I had nothing to do and the presentations were seldom of interest to me and were often very poorly presented. Stan's reply was that just my presence with "Westinghouse" on my name tag justified the expense all by itself.

I continued attending CEA meetings and one morning at a business session of one of the Divisions of CEA I suddenly became an active member with a job to do. Ted Hill of Westinghouse in Hamilton wanted to be relieved of his position and recommended me as his replacement. Part of the job was as co-chairman of a Committee to investigate voltage standards in Canada. My co-chairman was Paul Shane of Manitoba Hydro and that was the beginning of a very warm friendship.

Another member of the Committee was Ted Mackay of Ontario Hydro. Ted acted as our Secretary and did much of the clerical work of a survey of voltage practices in Canada and the preparation of histograms showing the probability of actual voltage readings for each designated voltage level. I remember being quite excited with the concept that the specification of say 600 volts did not mean 600 volts but some voltage near to it that qualifies as good service. It is not possible for any electrical utility to control voltage levels to a precise figure but it must be within some range that will permit equipment to function adequately.

When Paul Shane presented our report one of the members of the

Committee, Keith Provost, a Vice President of Alberta Power, declared that it was the nicest piece of committee work that he had ever seen and that the report had been adopted as the operating standard for his utility that morning. Paul Shane and I both served on the subsequent Canadian Standards Association Committee that essentially adopted our report as the Canadian Standard, the first one of its kind in Canada. I remember being surprised at how long committee work can take. I believe it was about 5 years from our first meeting to the adoption of the Standard.

I continued my association with the CEA and took part in their activities including organizing and chairing conferences and presenting papers, several of which got published. I was also a regular contributor to meetings of the Association of Municipal Electrical Utilities of Ontario, the AMEU, usually presenting papers related to the problem of installing electrical cables underground. It seemed that everyone had a different idea of how to do it and underground distribution was a fertile field for discussion for many years. I was quite involved and seemed to be considered as well informed. On one occasion at a small meeting in a customer's office we discussed an idea and after some exchange of thoughts I expressed the opinion that the customer's idea might be feasible if the transformer were designed for the purpose. At that point the manager left the room and returned a couple of minutes later and handed me a purchase order with quantities and ratings only. There was no specification and no prices. All he said was, "Phone me when you know what the prices will be." It was a pretty strong expression of confidence but I was scared. However I couldn't turn down an order and we did quite well. Years later the transformers were still operating well even after being submerged for months at a time.

That experience was an exception to the usual process. A Utility would submit a request for bids and we would respond with prices and delivery promises. A lot of thought went into those bids, mainly with regard to prices. Since most of our customers were Public Utilities they were very sensitive to criticism if they paid more than the lowest price. Even though we felt that our transformers had features that added to their value we were unlikely to get orders if our price was not the lowest. Purchasing decisions were not made by engineers but by a council that was primarily interested in their jobs rather than value for the money. The effect on our organization was that our engineers spent almost all their effort on reducing cost rather than improving value. To me that was not the right approach.

To try to influence that attitude my activities included quite a lot of promotional work of various kinds. One of the jobs involved long tours

that sometimes lasted for a couple of weeks and I think I visited every city in Canada making those tours. Typically I would spend the day visiting customers and then, in the evening, make a presentation to a meeting that had been organized by our local sales staff. The next morning I would be off to the next appointment. It was a tiring experience but that was compensated for by meeting some very interesting people and often renewing acquaintances from previous trips or conferences.

On occasion there were exciting experiences. One evening in Winnipeg I made a presentation on a new transformer product, that was designed to operate at much higher temperatures than previous designs and had some very significant advantages. My presentations were always prepared to last only 20 to 25 minutes with some content designed to invite discussion. On this particular occasion the discussion went on and on and at the end our local sales manager, George Flavell, expressed amazement that I had kept that audience interested for three hours. I was exhausted and needed the shot of whiskey he brought me. I couldn't have got it for myself once the adrenalin subsided.

Some of my trips were simply accompanying a local salesman on his calls to provide some technical backup as necessary. One of those trips produced a sort of 'once in a lifetime' experience and acquaintance with a most interesting man. We had toured Northwestern Quebec and Northeastern Ontario and ended up at the Town of Cochrane. It was there that I attended the Arctic Swimming Club and after a half hour in the Sauna immersed myself in the lake through a hole in the ice. The temperature was about -10F and I still think that being somewhat drunk helped me go through it but I've never felt so clean since.

The Bathmaster who made sure I completely immersed myself and gave me a certificate afterwards was Archie Kidd. Archie was the Manager of the Cochrane Public Utilities Commission which, at the time included telephone service. It was reputed that Cochrane had the most modern telephone system in Canada. Archie had a pleasant personality but he always operated at top speed, hard working, hard drinking and hard living. He had a vivid imagination and I had several phone calls from him about new ideas for electrical distribution. I recall one that was truly revolutionary and Archie wanted to know if it was possible to build the transformers for it. I could tell him that yes it was but they would be expensive. A week later he called to say that Hydro wouldn't let him do it. It was much too radical for them but I have often wondered what the results might have been had his idea been accepted. Archie died a few years later. I expect he just

burned out.

My reputation in Edmonton was good but it led to one very embarrassing moment. Roy Fitzsimmons, a big, gregarious Irish type and Manager of Stores for the Utility had asked me to do an investigation for him and I had agreed. Some months later on a visit to his office on a cold January day he asked me for my answer as I came in through his office door. I had completely forgotten about it and his question was like being hit in the stomach by a medicine ball. I didn't answer but deliberately took off my hat and coat and hung them up and then, ignoring the chair that had been set out for me, went right around his desk and helped myself to a cigarette from the pack in his shirt pocket. I asked him for a light and then went to my chair and sat down. By then I had composed myself enough to discuss the situation with him. I don't think Roy saw anything bizarre in my actions and accepted my apology quite amiably. It was a lesson that I never forgot. If you are faced with a problem situation slow down, don't react in panic.

Another activity that I got involved in organizing was presentations at home and at Trade Shows at various locations in Ontario. I found that the successful show required that I take charge and make sure all the participants conformed to my plan. Possibly the most exciting was an event that was titled " Action 69" and was held at the Holiday Inn in London. The audience was a group of our district sales personnel from all across Canada. It was organized in the form of a radio or television show with every presentation timed to the minute and no breaks except for lunch and it continued for two days. There were 19 people involved in the presentations, some of whom had never faced an audience before, but they prepared their own scripts and then I rehearsed and timed them in advance. I don't know whether Westinghouse got any more business from that event but the effect on the presenters and some of those that attended was very satisfying to me. Every presentation was very well done (except possibly my own) and I was repeatedly asked for the next three years when we were going to do it again. It sure raised the morale of all those who took part.

Another job that fell to me was problem solving. Even though we built good transformers there were sometimes failures. I regularly got asked to investigate problems of field failures. Usually it was rather boring but sometimes could be exciting. On one occasion I was sent to Rimouski, Quebec to try to find the cause of some failures that had occurred on distribution transformers that were designed to operate on a 25,000 volt system, a rather higher voltage than was common practice. When I arrived I found that the distribution engineer, one

Gerard Fournier refused to speak English to me. He was an ardent separatist and President of the local St. Jean Baptiste Society. He soon relented when he realized that we would get nowhere till he did and I persuaded him to have a transformer taken out of its tank so that I could look at it.

It took me about one minute to see the problem. Our engineer had made an error in specifying the high voltage connections. I phoned London to get a confirmation and then told Gerard what the problem was and that Westinghouse would fix all the failures and correct the connections. The effect was dramatic. He immediately became jovial and we were good friends from then on. I suspect he was being criticized for going to the high voltage and being held responsible in his own organization. When I told him that I agreed with his decision because he got lower construction costs and better service at the higher voltage he just beamed.

We later met at CEA meetings and had some good times together. But he insisted in needling me from time to time about being anglophone. One evening in a hospitality room he was at it again so I asked him if he had ever heard of the French Canadian who went to see a doctor with a frog on his head. When the doctor asked what he wanted the frog said, "How would you like to remove this growth from my ass?" Gerard looked stunned for a second and then began to laugh. I think that was the only time in my life that I have seen someone laugh so hard that they literally fell off the chair and rolled around on the floor but that is what Gerard did. I think I learned a bit about French Canadians from that. They can enjoy a good joke, even if it is on themselves. I made many friends among francophone engineers. I had little French but I respected their right to use their own language and I was often brought into conversations in French by someone interpreting for me. I noticed that it did not happen to all anglophones. The language would switch to English rather than being interpreted.

Not all my marketing activity was on domestic projects. I got quite deeply involved in export business. As a result I got something of an education in international trade; such things as Letters of Credit, forwarding agents, shipping lines and insurance and since some of our business was financed by CIDA I had the experience of dealing with some of their representatives. The process was more formalized than domestic business and usually required independent inspection and the submission of large bundles of documents. We had some successes, notably in Thailand and Egypt and they gave me the Opportunity to meet people from those countries.

I made two visits to Thailand, once to resolve a problem and the second as support for other people. Our business there was with The Metropolitan Electricity Authority which involved the City of Bangkok, a city of about 5 million people at the time and was a bustling commercial center in that part of the world.

I found the people of Thailand to be very polite, friendly and rather shy. They would go to great lengths to avoid embarrassing anyone but were expert negotiators and quite proud of their heritage and the fact that Thailand was the only part of the area that had never been under the domination of a European Power. Thailand is a Constitutional Monarchy and the Royal Family is highly respected. The King operates an Agricultural Farm and has made significant contributions to the crops in the northern part of the country. But it is a very fertile land and Dr. Tongtj told me that one of their proudest boasts is that no one goes hungry in Thailand.

My original mission there was to investigate transformer failures. I went with Stan Roberts, our Division Manager and he took a picture of me dismantling a coil with six Thai engineers leaning over me to see how I did it. Stan objected to them putting too much pressure on me but I had no problem with that. I finally found the fault and came to the conclusion that water had somehow got into the transformer, possibly through an improperly sealed cover. That led to my asking for a torque wrench so that I could check the tightness of the cover bolt. It took a while to find a torque wrench but with it I could show that none of the covers had been tightened properly and that was the probable cause of the failures. It would have been folly to say, "It's your fault and Westinghouse has no responsibility". After all, maybe we hadn't given them appropriate warning. There were a number of meetings but no agreement about what should be done until some months later when the Thais agreed to make repairs themselves and send the bill to us. It saved face for them and the cost of the repair was a fraction of what it would have been in our factory.

It wasn't all business in Thailand. Our host there was Prayong Ansinha, the manager of the Electrical Division of the International Engineering Company, and he arranged a number of entertainments. There were several dinners and I was proud to find that I could really eat with chopsticks. The food was very tasty and always safe for us to eat. Bangkok is not very clean and the water is badly polluted so our western stomachs were not prepared for the drinking water or some of the food. I did observe that there were little kiosks along many streets with a wisp of smoke rising from a small shelter and people on benches in front eating. They seemed to be eating all the time but they were all slim and quite active. Another observation was that they were

always dressed in long pants and sandals, no slacks, except for the Buddhist initiates who were in saffron robes and got free rides on all the transportation.

Also, there was a golf game on the Navatanee Course, tours on the canals and across the Chao Phraya River to a temple at Thonburi, very old and quite interesting. We had the privilege of entering the Temple of The Emerald Buddha, the religious centre of Thailand and quite an impressive place. Religion is a part of life in Thailand but it is not imposed. Our driver was Muslim but that didn't matter. One Chinese philosopher expressed the opinion that the average Thai peasant is 100% Buddhist because that is the religion of his country, 100% Brahman because that is his heritage and 100% Animist because he lives so close to living things. He compared that to the average North American who is 30% Christian and nothing else.

One incident that may provide some insight into the Thai character occurred during my second visit. I was sitting beside Dr. Tongtaj when he turned to me and asked why the price of Network Protectors was so much higher this time than it had been before. He knew that I had nothing to do with it but it was easier for him to ask a friend than someone who he had just met. The salesman who had just delivered the quotation was quite upset because he had no answer. His whole evening was spoiled while he tried to think of some response. I tried to tell him that, if he didn't have an answer, to ignore the question. Tontaj was just trying to get a reduction in price in as gentle a way as he could and if you can't give him one just let the quotation stand and don't get into an argument. His Canadian experience was that you have to answer; in Thailand you don't.

While Thailand was interesting, getting there and back was an adventure in several ways. On my first trip Stan Roberts had arranged a stop in Hong Kong on the way there and we had the experience of luxurious hotel rooms and a view of the frenetic activity as well as the great gap between the rich and poor; a poor old lady with a few sticks of wood climbing the hill to her little hut next beside the orate splendor of the Tiger Balm Gardens. Hong Kong is probably the most densely populated place in the world and it had everything if you could fight your way through the crowds to find it.

On our return home Stan and I spent a few days in Japan, partly in Kyoto and later in Tokyo. Kyoto was at one time the effective capital and we had the opportunity to see some of Japan's ancient history, including the Shogun's Palace and ancient gardens. Japanese gardens don't feature grass and flowers but feature stones and water, trees and moss. We were told that one of the gardener's problems was getting

rid of the grass.

We rode the Bullet train to Tokyo and while it was fast it was rather disappointing because every thing went by so fast you couldn't see it. As we approached Tokyo I caught a glimpse of Mount Fuji through a break in the mist and must agree that it is a very impressive sight.

My most exciting experience in Tokyo was Saturday afternoon on the Ginza, a wide commercial street where the traffic was not allowed on Saturday afternoons. The street is several blocks long and was quite active with people. My main impression was that they all seemed happy and relaxed and I compared it to our Canadian malls where everyone seems to be hurrying to the washroom and is afraid that they won't make it. On the other hand it was quite dramatic to see a gathering of men who bowed to each other. The social status was emphatically expressed by the number of bows one received. And there seemed to always be one individual who bowed to nobody.

I had one very pleasant experience on the Ginza. I felt that I should take home at least a couple of Japanese fans. So I went into a small store that had fans displayed in the window and expressed my interest by examining some of the ones mounted on a stand. A young lady came forward and produced at least a dozen more from the case below and I soon picked two that appealed to me but were quite different. I handed the fans to her along with money to pay for them and expected that she would put them in a bag and give me my change and I could go. I had foolishly gone into that store with a lighted cigarette in my hand and was anxious to get out. It was not to be but an older woman appeared out of the shadows and placed a small padded stool down beside a small table at the back of the store that had a characteristic Japanese cast iron ash tray on it so that I could sit and enjoy my cigarette while I waited. The two fans were boxed and wrapped separately and identified with different colored tape. The young lady then explained by motions that one fan would be for her and the other for me. In other words one was a man's fan and the other a woman's. My wife was a little put out to find that my fan was the fancier of the two.

Our Sunday morning was spent on a short tour of the sights of Tokyo, the main feature being a visit to a Shinto shrine ( Shinto is the religion of this life, Buddhism is the religion of the next). The afternoon was rainy so we spent our time in the Palace Hotel bar where we tried to agree on what we had seen and heard and in the evening were taken to the airport for our flight home.

We arrived in Vancouver and while I passed immigration and customs, Stan had to have his baggage checked. He emerged fuming and asked, "Where's the bar". I had to explain that he was now in Canada and that it was noon on Sunday. There wasn't any bar. There was, however, the first hitch in our schedule. Our flight was delayed because of a catering problem and as a result we arrived home late on Sunday night without our luggage.

I slept in the next morning and then went to the airport to pick up our bags. I got to work about noon and found Stan had been there for some hours and was completely disoriented. He had tried to ignore the effect of the time change and was paying the consequences.

My trip home after the second visit was not so well organized but was an experience none the less. We all had confirmed flights but two of my companions found that their business in Bangkok was over and wanted to go to Frankfurt. I could have left also but when I found that the next available space on British Airways was three weeks later I gave up. My two friends did get a midnight Qantas flight to Rome and were to meet me in London two days later. I kept my schedule and made the long flight from Bangkok to London but when I got to Brown's Hotel they had no room for me. I asked for a place to wash up and get a cup of coffee and a sweet roll. I got a whole pot of coffee, a plate of rolls and a quarter pound of butter just on the credit of my name. I felt quite a bit better.

I had some hours to kill before noon and spent them partly at Barkley Square and partly examining all the high class automobile agencies in the area. At noon I checked out The Duke of Albemarle and there found my two friends with a pint in one hand and a sandwich in the other. Within an hour I had a shower and was fast asleep. The next morning my two friends continued their wanderings and I caught my flight home. It had been an interesting if not a useful trip and I had circumnavigated the world, from Toronto to Los Angeles to Hong Kong to Bangkok to Bombay to London and back to Toronto.

Another export project that did not involve travel was a contract with The Egyptian Electricity Authority. I was a fairly major contract and I was asked to act as Contract Administrator. I recall telling our Manager that my first action would be to write the invoice. He was somewhat surprised but it allowed me to identify in reverse sequence every document that would have to be produced before we could issue an invoice. The plan worked very well and it turned out that my biggest problem was getting the product shipped.

Since it was going to Egypt it had to be carried on an Egyptian Shipping Line and I repeatedly found myself with the shipping floor full of product and no idea of when it could be shipped. The Forwarding agent couldn't help, repeated messages to Cairo went unanswered so I phoned the Purchasing Agent for the Canadian Consulting Engineers for some guidance. He was a big, black Trinidadian named Mike Walker and his advice was, "Cool it Lloyd. Those people have been there 7000 years and they may be there 7000 years from now. I'm quite sure we won't be here".

One of the requirements of the contract was that a number of Egyptian engineers would visit our plant to become familiar with the equipment we were supplying. I came out of retirement to host the visit and had planned that they would write their own instruction books as part of their training. I found that they were not familiar enough with English to do that and the books finally ended up as transcripts of lectures by my self and others. In any event they had come expecting a holiday and we had to arrange time and transportation to places such as Niagara Falls.

One enjoyable evening occurred when we held a welcoming dinner. I acted as host and the group included all the Westinghouse people that our visitors would meet during their visit. To break the ice I asked each person there to introduce themselves and explain the significance of their names. I went first and was surprised at how many others noted that my name included the name of the god Thor and how many others found similar connections. I was delighted at the young Egyptian who said his given name meant, 'beautiful'.

But my working life was over and except for a few social visits I didn't have any connection with work. It had been along time. I had learned a lot and had managed to avoid the seamy side of business so I didn't find myself forever defending against what I considered stupid policies.

## X Retirement

The rules of engagement at Westinghouse Canada required employees to retire at the end of the month in which they reached the age of 65. So at the end of July 1981 I became a pensioner. I continued to go to work for three days a week for a few weeks to finish some projects and allow a readjustment of staff and in March of 1982 I went back for a month to entertain about 16 visitors from Egypt. Westinghouse decided to pay me by the hour, not as much as I thought I was worth, but I think my supervisor was a bit surprised when we had a reception for our visitors and since I hosted it I put in a claim for an 18 hour day. But that ended my working life and I lived on pensions and interest from then on.

There seemed to be lots of things to do at home but I felt that I needed something as an intellectual challenge so I bought a computer. I didn't know anything about them and had only used the shared service at the plant once for a simple regression calculation. My first computer was an Osborne, a portable machine with a tiny screen and two 5 1/4 inch floppy disk drives. But it included a WordStar word processor, a Supercalc spreadsheet and a Basic programming language. Once I became familiar with the programs I did some very interesting things. I was able to produce the Curling Club Newsletter, do my Income Tax and write programs for games. And I joined a group at the University that used Osbornes and finally became President in time to preside over the demise of the group. But I had found that I could print column text with my daisy wheel printer with some macro programming of the rather rudimentary WordStar program, something my academic friends in the Osborne Group couldn't do. I used these skills to make the newsletter for the Curling Club into quite a respectable publication.

I had another project that I thought was of value. Our house had been supplied with water from a well and the water was good tasting and there seemed to be lots of it. My idea was to use that water to supply a heat pump to heat the house. Since the oil furnace that was in the house when we bought it had reached the end of its trouble free service the time was ripe. So I made some investigations and after a time decided to purchase and install a heat pump that would extract heat from the well water to warm the house. It turned out to be a very expensive experiment. While the well was adequate for domestic purposes and was always warm enough to supply heat there just wasn't a reliable amount for the purpose. I gathered a lot of useless

knowledge about wells and heat pumps but that was all. It did work well for air cooling in the summer.

Brother Jim passed away much too soon in March, 1985 after a long battle with prostate cancer and the effects of radiation and surgery. I felt the loss of a warm friend as well as a brother and went to his funeral in Edmonton. He was buried in Ryley Cemetery and it was there that I got rather a shock at finding the names of many friends and relatives. In visiting the graves of my father's parents I began to wonder about their origin. I knew that they were both born in Norway and had emigrated to Iowa before coming to Canada and that my grandmother had told me she came from Trondhjem but little else. My curiosity seemed to be awakened and after I got home I began to try to do some research on family history.

My first efforts didn't produce much but I finally contacted Gerhard Naeseth at the Vesterheim Genealogical Service in Madison, Wisconsin. He was able to give me information about my family in Sioux Rapids, Iowa and also my grandfather's family in Northern Norway. I wrote quite a few letters to relatives and potential sources of information and in time began to accumulate names and dates for both my family and Dot's. I found a program for the Osborne computer that I could organize the information on and soon began to feel that I was having success. I was able to get information, sometimes from the most unexpected sources, and began to feel that such research is a combination of stubborn persistence and blind, dumb luck. I had set a target of including any person who could be connected either by marriage or child-parent relationship with either Dot or myself and ultimately had a data base of over 1550 names spanning 12 or 13 generations.

My program had to be up-dated for more and more sophisticated computers but served well enough to allow my son Jim to convert it to other programs and publish it on the Internet. But the first data base was developed by me and I am amazed at the number of hours I spent accumulating and organizing the original data.

While our family gradually left home during the 1960's and by 1975 all were married there were regular family gatherings at our big, old house. There were other family events, notably a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Dot and me on July 2, 1988. It was a big gathering at the home of our daughter Penny and her husband Tom Brown and Dot and I were presented with a trip to the World Curling Championships in Milwaukee, Wisconsin the following year. We went and met many of the curlers, including the Canadian and Norwegian teams. We also found that the event was as much of a social gathering as a

competition. Many people were there mainly to meet old friends and make new acquaintances as to see the curling. I had been quite involved in curling and had been construction manager at the Canadian Ladies championships a couple of years before so I had some interesting talks with the people who were maintaining the curling ice.

At the time I was already planning a trip to Norway to visit the birthplaces of my father's parents and got some advice from Eigil Ramsfjell on what to do in Oslo while we were there. So in 1989 Dot and I visited Norway and England. The trip had been planned in detail and everything went off as planned. Dot was very impressed with the friendliness of the people and with our success in finding the actual birthplaces of my ancestors and being entertained by distant relatives and friends. It was the most exotic adventure of her life and she made the most of it. The whole story has been recorded elsewhere so I won't go into it here.

We continued our regular motor trip vacations with the main change that we took them later in the season, in September rather than July or August to avoid the congestion at motels. One of those trips included a visit to Sioux Rapids, Iowa to see whether we could find any information about my father's family there. We were received with lots of interest and spent a day searching cemeteries for records of burials without success. Our advice had led us to places outside of the City of Sioux Rapids itself but we finally met the local funeral director, Keith Paul, who had records of the Lone Tree cemetery in Sioux Rapids. I had handed him my card so that he would know who I was and that led him to the name Thorsley. He said he had a record of Mrs. John Thorsley so he knew where she was buried. Of course, she was my grandmother and I knew she was buried in Ryley, Alberta. Keith Paul had to see who was buried in that plot so he went with us to be sure we found it. The plot has a stone with the inscription "Christna E V wife of Peter Thorsley" and the date of her death in 1883 and her age as 63 years. That answered several questions that had puzzled me but there was an inscription on the base that we couldn't read because of the erosion of the stone. Dot and I went back later the same day and did a rubbing with pencil and paper and were impressed to find that it read "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die". That inscription is now on the stone at Dot's grave in Littlewood Cemetery.

Our last motor trip was in 1990. We visited Sioux Rapids again but Dot did not have the energy to go with me on my explorations. Our trip included a visit to Edmonton to see Blaine and Pat and they were concerned about her health. When we got home Dot went to the doctor and had a chest X-Ray that showed that she had cancer in her

lungs. I saw that X-Ray and should have known that her condition was very serious but I guess I fell into a denial and just proceeded with taking her to treatments and pretending that she would recover. I managed to maintain that for several months and, in so doing gave her some hope. It was a trying time for me with responsibility for meals and all the other duties as well as her medications and she several times expressed her concern for me but I just said, "Get better and I'll be more than repaid". I found the regular visits by a VON nurse were a relief to me. I at least knew what her blood pressure was and had someone to discuss things with.

Dot didn't want to die. She wanted to go back to Norway. She refused to take morphine because she felt that just signaled her coming death and I finally had to give it to her with a syringe in liquid so that she couldn't refuse it. Finally I had to tell her that I had no hope. It was an awful jolt to her but it gave her a chance to close her relationships with some friends. It also meant that we could say goodbye to each other. I think that was important to both of us though I write this through a mist of tears more than 10 years later.

Late in 1990 I had received a letter from a cousin, Jean Tupper, in Portland, Oregon who had heard of my work in genealogy and wanted to give me the details of her family. Part of that information was the news that my Aunt Agnes, my father's sister, was still alive and well at the age of 98. After Dot's passing I hoped that some travel on my own might help to fill the gap of loneliness and going to see Aunt Agnes seemed to be a great objective. I planned a fairly long trip, including a visit to Calgary to see Joyce Raines, who had given me some vital information for our trip to Norway. I also visited Edmonton and then Portland and finally Merced, California to see some of Dot's relatives. I had a travel agent plan it for me and he arranged flights to Calgary and Edmonton and then trains to Vancouver and from Portland to Merced. It gave me a variety of travel experience that I think was helpful.

The highlight was, of course, a visit with Aunt Agnes. I still remember arriving at her son Herb's home where she had been in the garden behind the house. When she heard us coming she got up to come and meet me. I saw her first with a cane in one hand and her daughter-in-law on the other arm but as soon as she saw me she hung the cane on a chair, shook off the supporting arm and came toward me with both arms extended. I wasn't sure how to hug a small, frail looking 99 year old woman but she turned out to be quite sturdy.

The visit to Portland was quite pleasant with a party in my honor where there were more relatives than I had any idea that I had in

Portland. Aunt Agnes was a delight. Her memory of things in the early part of the century and before seemed to be very clear and she filled me in with stories about people that I found quite interesting. Recent events escaped her sometimes and she never got it through her head that I lived in Ontario. She got me as far as Calgary but that was it. She was still enjoying life and I think that had a lot to do with her living so long. When I showed her pictures that I had taken in Northern Norway and pointed out that I had taken them at midnight because it was the Land of the Midnight Sun she broke into song. I got her to sing again while I had a tape running so I have a record of her singing. Agnes lived in her own apartment and survived to celebrate her 100th birthday but shortly after fell and broke her hip and never recovered.

While in Portland I stayed with Herb and his wife Irma. It was a very comfortable place. They were both relaxed and I just made myself at home. I have been sorry to hear that both Herb and Irma have passed away and that Herb's brother Norm and wife Aleen are now gone. So Jean Tupper and her husband Bob are all that is left of Agnes' family but there are many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

At Merced I got similar treatment. Merced was the location of Castle Air Force Base and the family there were all connected in some way to the military. Dot's brother had been a Transport Officer with the United States Army. His wife Margaret was at Merced and worked in the pharmacy. Her daughter Nora was married to Mike Lessard who installed flight trainers and I had the experience of flying a large military plane in one of the trainers. It was not a long flight but quite interesting. I didn't do too badly until I had the plane back on the runway and then didn't know how to stop it. Mike's emergency stop blew all six tires but a small adjustment at the control panel fixed that.

I was able to gather several details of family history from Margaret and found Nora and Mike very nice. I flew home from San Francisco after a worth while trip to visit people that I will never see again. Margaret passed away a few years ago. I still keep in touch with Jean Tupper in Portland and Nora Lessard, now in Altus, Oklahoma. They are my contacts with part of my past and, while I seem to be the last surviving member of my generation my contacts help me feel not quite so much alone.

The next 3 years were spent mainly just trying to keep up with all that needed to be done in the big, old house but then there was a major change which you will find out about in the next chapter.

## XI Vintage Green

Dot and I and the kids had lived in our big, old house for many years, completely surrounded by farm land. We had happy times there and our two acres had made us feel quite at home on a rural atmosphere. That was fine when we had a houseful of people but when they had all left to make their own lives and we were getting older we knew that, sooner or later, we would have to find another home. I remember suggesting an apartment and got nowhere with that. After having all that space and a view from every window the restrictions of an apartment were out of the question. Even moving to a smaller home got no enthusiasm from Dot. So we just stayed put and tried to keep up with all the things that needed doing without total success but as we grew older it became increasingly difficult.

Then, in the mid 1980's the farm across the road changed hands. Part of it became a park but the area immediately across from us came into the hands of a land developer and we had the view of big earth moving equipment making enormous piles and digging holes. The developer was Frank Van Bussel and Sons and I recall my neighbor Stew Calvert remarking that, "Those Dutchmen must be crazy. All they do is dig holes and fill them up again". In time the outline of streets appeared and when an outlet for storm water drainage was needed it had to go through our property and my approval was required. That's when I first got to know Gerry Van Bussel and later I met him regularly as I wandered across to see what was happening. One day he gave me a plot plan of a part of the property that was to be developed as a Senior's Community. It was to have individual homes with a recreational centre, some apartments and a nursing home. When I showed it to Dot I got the first sign of approval of a place she might like to move to.

To build his Senior's Community Gerry needed a sanitary sewage system and a disposal plant and the negotiations for that took several years. I attended the meeting regarding approval of the severance of land required for the disposal plant and I believe I was the only voice that was fully in favor. Maybe because I was an engineer and could sound like I knew what I was talking about the severance was granted and construction of the plant could begin after further negotiations and a few years later was completed. Gerry and his crew began installing the necessary services for the first stage of their Senior's Community and I kept watch to see how progress was going. I could see and was told that the essential services had been installed and that

they would soon be ready to start building houses.

In the meantime Dot died and I often speculate on how much different the events that followed would have been had she survived. Certainly it would have been more fun and much easier for me with someone to discuss questions with. And her presence in the new community would have made a difference much more than just easing the loneliness for me

One day a month or so later I received a notice of a Public Meeting to consider expansion of the Iderton water system because of expected growth. The notice included a map of the area showing those parts that were expected to be developed as "proposed future development". Included was the Van Bussel Senior's Community which I knew was already being developed. The next morning I phoned Gerry and asked, "When the Hell are you going to start building" Three days later Gerry came to visit me with a big roll of drawings and a new plot plan, not at all like the original, and the homes he intended to build first highlighted. That was the first of several meetings in my kitchen but with the advice of my son Alfred we decided that these would be well built houses but that I would prefer a smaller one across the street from the ones that were intended to be built first.

Finally, at one of our meetings Gerry wrote my name on the house I wanted, initialed it and we shook hands. That was the contract. There were no papers signed; no money exchanged. I didn't know what the price would be: Gerry didn't know whether I would be able to sell my old house. We just trusted each other and on May 2, 1994 the shovel went into the ground to dig the basement for my new home. I think I was there every day during the construction and, if I didn't come, Joe Van Boxmeer, the Superintendent would be over to my house to find out why. It was an interesting experience. I made a lot of changes to the original design and added some features that had not been included. I got to know the crew very well and made friends. I still am welcome to drink a beer or have a coffee with them whenever the occasion allows.

In the meantime I had my old house appraised and put it up for sale with an agent that I knew would be active and in a couple of months he brought me an offer that was quite a bit lower than my asking price but I realized that I had asked for quite a bit more than the appraised value and the family who had made the offer had small children and would probably have more. It was worth something to know that my old home would be useful to them. It was a great place for kids and the couple were young enough to cope with the work

entailed. So I accepted the offer but they had a house to sell and other concerns so it was some months before the deal was closed.

My new home was being completed and as soon as there was a lock on the door I began to move things a little at a time into the basement. As things were finished I began to move into the living space upstairs and, in late September, 1994 I had my telephone moved and 8 Vintage Way became my residence. I didn't own the place but that didn't seem to matter. In late October the deal on my old house closed and a few days later Gerry and Joe Van Boxmeer and I signed a very brief purchase agreement and drank some wine and I gave Gerry a cheque for the full price. At last I was legally the owner of the first new house I had ever had. While I owned a house, the land including the street, belonged to Van Bussel Construction and I was liable for a monthly lease payment as well as the costs of clearing the snow and mowing the grass. That was one of the main attractions for me. The community would be managed by a competent business organization rather than a committee of residents who might or might not know what they were doing.

At the time I moved in there was no finished street or driveway. I had a garage but I couldn't use it. A little later the driveway was in and one afternoon I was sweeping sand into the crevices of the driveway bricks when Gerry arrived with his wife, Wilma, and Gary Van Boxmeer, the Engineer. Gerry and Gary took over the brooms and Wilma and I watched. I soon suggested that there was no point in our watching those characters sweeping so Wilma and I went into the house and had a coffee. That was my first meeting with Wilma.

As time went on the seven homes on Vintage Way were partially or fully completed and the great mountain of topsoil behind my house disappeared to grade around the houses and sod was laid and trees were planted. With the paving of Vintage Way we had a street but I was the only resident. One of the other homes was finished as a home to show but for some months no one else bought.

Gerry and Wilma came every Saturday and Sunday afternoon to meet visitors and try to market their homes. People came and expressed interest. They were good homes. But buying a home is a major purchase and it takes time so sales weren't coming. After their weekend selling the two of them would come to my house and have a coffee before going home. I was sure that Vintage Green as it was called would succeed and that it was just a matter of time and they would just have to hang in until it did. At one coffee session I suggested that they needed a Marketing Consultant. Gerry said, "We'll take you. You're cheap". So my first advice was to be sure to get

the names, addresses and phone numbers of everyone that came and to send them regular reminders of what was going on. "Don't let them forget you". I helped Wilma with her first reminder letter and for some time edited them, looking for such things as expressions that might have a negative connotation. I feel that I was helpful and I think Wilma was quite grateful.

At last the homes began to sell and July of 1996 we installed a Time Capsule in one of the big, brick posts at the entrance. It has the usual time capsule things, like newspapers and currency, but it also contains a book with pictures of the several residents at the time and a little story about how they came to live at Vintage Green. It also shows pictures of the construction and of the crew and the equipment. I had a large part in preparing the book and taking the pictures. I also included the story of how I came to live at Vintage Green and a sort of dedication to two small boys who were often at the site and a suggestion that, fifty years later, they might open the book and recall their memories of the time when it was being built.

The installation of the Time Capsule took place on my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. That was a particularly significant occasion because my family got together and presented me with a modem for my computer and an Internet connection paid for one year. It has been part of my life ever since but I was impressed that the kids felt that it was a significant gift for an 80 year old. The electronic mail fascinated me and my first e-mail went to Lusaka, Zambia to a medical student, Dale Needham, the son of residents here. I remember getting 22 pages in reply telling of his experiences there. I became the communication line between him and his parents and it was a satisfying experience. I have since done a similar service to Senegal. And I keep in regular touch with my family and friends and sometimes get genealogical inquiries from all over the world.

By 1998 there were some 80 residents and there was a feeling that they would like to form an association. So a Steering Committee was formed and I found myself a member of it. I looked on that committee as a bridge to the formation of a formal association and spent some time drafting a Constitution and By-Laws for a Vintage Green Residents Association. There was quite a bit of consultation but in May of 1999 a general meeting of the residents approved them with one exception and elected an Executive Committee. The one exception called for officers to be elected for two years instead of one and as a result the Executive committee has evolved into a sort of Corporate Board of Directors with the usual corporate paralysis syndrome and little participation by the membership as a whole. It still bothers me that I didn't have the gumption to prevent that change at the

inaugural meeting. But it was remarkable how just the existence of the association seemed to inspire activities both within the Club House and especially the garden area around the development mostly by individual initiative.

When the Club House was completed it was found that the noise level when a fairly large group assembled socially was too high for comfortable conversation. I got involved and found that there was a lot to know about sound that I had forgotten if I ever knew and I spent a lot of time researching and calculating the acoustic characteristics of the room. In the end with the artistic talents of Tom and Merle Northam and many differences of opinion with Gerry we installed acoustic panels covered with burlap in a variety of colors on the walls so we added some decoration as well as sound absorption. It turned out to be quite successful and, while the room still has some noise, the background noise intensity was reduced about 90% and conversation is much more comfortable.

As the community nears completion I think my greatest satisfaction is in seeing the it grow into a friendly group, with people from very different backgrounds and different locations coming together and feeling at home with each other. As the first resident I take some pride in the fact that I started it. Partly as a celebration of that I had a Birthday Party on July 14,2001 with my family, including some of my grandcttdren and great grandchildren and almost all the residents of Vintage Green and other friends. It was a great party and I felt that the best present I could get was to see almost 150 people all having a good time.

Life has been good at Vintage Green. My warm relationships with Gerry and Wilma have been particularly comforting but I get support from other residents too. But the ravages of time do take over. In 1975 [— felt that I wanted to take one more motor trip so I bought a new car and drove to St Paul to visit Kathy and Keith and then on to Edmonton to attend the wedding of a granddaughter. I had experienced angina pains some years earlier but medication had controlled them and I felt in no danger. However, just two days after arriving in Edmonton — suffered a mild heart attack and had to spend a week in hospital. I recovered and Blaine drove home with me but I no longer can feel free of the possibility of another that could be the last.

Since then I have found that I have malignancy in my prostate but with medication it seems to be well under control. More severe has been the loss of sight in my nght eye as a result of a hemorrhage. I no longer drive but manage to get someone to drive for me. Most

worrisome is the fact that I seem to be losing energy and cannot walk as freely as I could. But my Urologist says he has trouble thinking of me as being 85. I sure don't act like it to him. I'm still here and have been able to celebrate 85 years. In 5 years time we can have another party. I may not be here but son Jim says, "We'll have a party anyway". That seems to be the right attitude.

## XII So What?

In the words of that Scottish villain, "Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage..... signifying nothing". Shakespeare's words punctuate the drama of the conclusion of his play but it is true that most lives simply pass and are forgotten. The exceptions are almost invariably records like the story of MacBeth, very intriguing and quite preposterous. That they illustrate human desires and horrors in an exaggerated way seems to be their appeal.

My story is just that of the poor player who had his hour and signifies nothing but the experiences of one common man who had the urge to record some of his memories. It also gives me a chance to test my ability to do it and that, in itself, gives me some satisfaction. And, of course, I had to feel that I had something worth putting in writing.

It is difficult to imagine that one life among the many billions could have any significance especially when one considers what a tiny speck of space debris the Earth really is and how it probably originated as a droplet flung off by an exploding star and then accidentally drifted into the gravity field of our Sun.

That tiny droplet happened to contain all of the chemical elements necessary for life and ultimately a species of life that had the ability to speculate on the process. Shakespeare himself is only one illustration of the capabilities of homo sapiens and the story telling that distinguishes Man from all other species and makes life so much more than just a process of survival. My story may have meaning as a record of just one ordinary mortal during one tick of time on that tiny planet.

I was born in the middle of the First Great War, "the War to end all Wars". Two years later it was adjourned for 20 years and the leaders of our society have managed to keep the conditions right for the continuation of conflict for as long as the species exists. It may be that has been the situation ever since humanity first emerged from the jungles of East Africa 50,000 years ago.

War has not been the only aspect of life on Earth. My first recollection of technology was a telephone and a few horse drawn farm implements. Airplanes and radios were just curiosities but the groundwork for much more marvelous elements was already being laid

and I write this on a high speed computer with instant connections all over the world. There is no need to rehearse all the developments but they affect the lives of everyone in the 'developed world' and will continue to do so into the future. Ways of life have changed and we now enjoy conveniences that were never dreamed of when I was a child.

I can't say that life has become richer except in the number of possessions. More people have to work to pay for the things that television and shopping malls and the Internet convince them to buy and they find themselves at the mercy of business managers and bureaucrats with little or no control over their own destinies. And the financial institutions and corporations and government grow larger and more powerful and less efficient in their role of service to the public.

As you will understand I have not been happy with all that has occurred but I had no choice but to live in the world that I was in so I did the best I could under the circumstances. I had neither the will or the capacity to change things so I just went with the flow. I mentioned my thought that telling stories was the one thing that distinguished Man from all other species and it probably began as soon as language began. I can well imagine the reaction of early Man to the crash and rumble on thunder clouds and the speculation about who was up there and what was He saying. And when a lightning stroke destroyed the tallest tree the presence was confirmed and interpretations multiplied. Of course, there were stories by the successful hunting party whose trophy occasioned a week of feasting and celebration for the whole tribe. Stories of heroism in the conflicts with neighboring tribes for living space would soon become common.

Certain individuals would become adept at storytelling and would soon learn that a good seasoning of imagination and exaggeration made the story much more interesting and gained them standing in the community. Since no record was possible all the stories that were exciting enough were told and retold and passed on from generation to generation for many thousands of years and, in the process got refined and seasoned with more imagination.

All this time Man was spreading around the globe meeting new challenges and the need for new ideas and responses. It is not surprising that new languages developed to express these new ideas and the stories changed and new stories were invented or grew from the responses to new challenges; the need to prepare for periods of scarcity or defense against a rival tribe.

In time the most compelling of these stories evolved into the world's great mythologies and religions. There were many of them but they all gathered adherents who needed something to believe in that could not be doubted. We know now that there is no grumpy old man with a long beard above the clouds grumbling thunder and firing lightning. But the existence of an Almighty Power that guides our lives still persists in the beliefs of almost everyone. It has become so firmly established that few can live without the comfort of a divine presence. I wonder if the fear of cold, want, disease and conflict was the inspiration of the ancient stories that developed into our present beliefs; not just religious, but the drive to accumulate power and wealth to prepare for the next period of scarcity.

It is often said that religion is the cause of wars. — don't believe that. Wars are caused by human greed or envy or anger or just plain stupidity. But the call, "God is on our side", is often the means for rallying support. God is on the side of the other guy too in his view and it is the same God in essence, sometimes by a different name.

During the past century scientific research indicates that physical and physical processes in the universe seem to occur completely by accident and that there is no way of predicting when a particular event will happen. If so, then the concept of an Almighty Power must be disregarded.

So what is one to believe? Maybe we can't believe anything but, in the development of religion and mythology a real sense of how humans should behave in their relations with each other, quite apart from any devotion to an Almighty power. Some of these grew from Eastern philosophers. Confucius is given credit for the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you". Closely related to Confucius is the philosophy of Lao Tzu, that is identified as, "The Way", a philosophy that can be a guide to the conduct of one's life. I only recently came in contact with the philosophy of Lao Tzu, who supposedly lived 2500 years ago in China. "Tao" or "The Way", can be the way of life or the way of a musician or a carpenter or a butcher. The ultimate Way can never be achieved but one should strive to get a little closer as life goes on. The details are far too long for this exercise but one element seems critical. One should try to promote harmony with everything and everyone about them and to use one's innate talents to find a better Way. It struck me that I had at least some of that character in my own life. I live with people whose religious and other beliefs I cannot accept as my own but I can respect their right to hold them as they wish if it gives them comfort to do so.

Also, while my story has little import on its own maybe it can be considered a microcosm of what each of us and mankind as a whole has had facing the challenges and responses in the struggle for survival.

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