

VERNA
AND
CHUCK

(Later known as)
“MOM & DAD”

THEIR
“LOVE” STORY

CHAPTER ONE

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

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OUR EARLY YEARS, GROWING UP AS YOUNGSTERS IN THE FORT ROUGE AREA OF WINNIPEG

Nostalgically, I recall sitting on a fence post in the front of our old family home on Osborne Street, having a snapshot picture taken by my father, papa Joe. That episode happened at least seventy three years ago. Psychologists tell us that our ability to remember begins about the age of three and a half to four years. Now in my mid-seventies, I can remember many places and events of my childhood. True to the psychologists claims, many of these events occurred when I was around three or four years of age.

My parents lived in an older, gray colored, two story home on south Osborne Street Fort Rouge. Our home about a hundred yards south of the Osborne Street subway of the Canadian National Railways. It was located on the Red River side of the street, two homes north of Don Avenue. My mother and father (Nanny and Papa Joe) rented this home because it was very close to the Canadian National Railways (CNR) Fort Rouge

shops. My father "Papa Joe worked for the railway as a locomotive fireman, and because we lived so close to the Fort Rouge round house, he was able to obtain extra work.

The railway round-house was an area that housed, serviced, and generally maintained the steam locomotives that were used to haul passenger and freight trains. Occasionally a mishap or an accident would occur on the railway lines. On those occasions, an emergency "wrecking" crew was immediately dispatched to the scene. It consisted of a large steam powered hoist or crane and ancillary flat cars carrying spare rails and other pieces of equipment needed to restore the railway line to service. This special train and all its equipment was called the "hook". It was always kept in a state of readiness to respond quickly if a "spill" occurred on one of the railway lines. A "spill" was the term given by railroaders to a major mishap, wreck, or serious emergency which would require the use of the "hook".

When an emergency occurred requiring the use of the special train hauling the "hook", the round-house office staff sounded a loud siren which was located on the roof of the round-house just above their office area. This siren could be heard several miles away. Its function was to call all the workers who were assigned to this special train, (the Hook) to report to work. It signaled that an emergency had occurred. Because my father and mother lived so close to the round-house, my father was called on many occasion to be the locomotive fireman on this special train.

Our family lived on the main floor of this home. My parents had placed two large double beds in the living room. They slept on one, while my brother Vic and I slept on the other. Vic was sixteen months younger than I. He was very frail and delicate, having had "rickets" when he was about a year and a half old. Apparently my mother tried to breast feed the two of us at the same time. As a result Vic did not receive enough nourishment. He did not receive enough calcium and the essential nutrients necessary for healthy bone growth and development.

He developed a condition which Doctors described as "Rickets". My mother carried him about the house on a large pillow, because his bones were so soft and fragile, and there was the danger that they could be fractured if she carried him in her arms in the normal way. My father called a baby specialist, Doctor Ross Mitchell Sr., who immediately placed him on a diet of goat's milk and massive doses of a special preparation then known as "Scott's Emulsion", which contained Cod liver Oil. This emulsion was very rich in Vitamin A and Vitamin D. On this regime, Vic rapidly grew stronger and healthier, and regained normal health. However, today he suffers from arthritis and one may wonder if this early illness during his infancy contributed in some way to his present medical condition.

At the time, my father and mother rented the upper level of their home to a young Italian family, the "Bellavi's". Mr. Angelo Bellavi was deaf and mute and worked for the CNR as a laborer, and he and his wife had recently had a baby. Periodically

Angelo's mother would live with them to help in the caring of the baby. Being deaf and mute, Angelo used sign language to communicate with others, and I recall my parents communicating with him in this way. Because of his hearing disability Angelo carried a small notepad and pencil. When he had difficulty in expressing himself in sign language, he wrote his message on the notepad and then showed it to the other person. They in turn, were offered the notepad and pencil to write their response back to him if he was unable to understand their signs and gestures.

At times, Angelo annoyed my parents at times because he liked to take off his clothes when he returned from work in the evenings. Our neighbors complained because they could see him through the upper level windows which were directly opposite theirs. They could see him walking around in the nude and considered that as being offensive.

We had several pet dogs during the two or three years that we lived in our Osborne street home. One was a little wire-haired terrier called "Trixie", and the other was a handsome good-natured collie which called "Prince". Unfortunately Prince was struck by a car on Osborne Street directly in front of our home. My father picked him up from the street and took him to a Veterinarian. Unfortunately the dog died. Around that period of my life, my parents took a take a picture of me, one which I still possess. I am sitting on a fence post at the front gate of our home. My hands, face, and knees are very dirty and I am wearing a set of soiled baby rompers. I have a very startled, and

frightened appearance. Today, I remember the episode of having my picture taken. I remember that I was very frightened that I would fall off that fence post.

I vividly remember our neighbor who lived immediately south of our home. Her name was Mrs. Kirby. She was a black lady with whom my mother had become very friendly. Mrs. Kirby was a widow with three grown sons who worked on the railways as sleeping car porters. I recall my mother saying that they were all very nice young men, and that they seemed to always smile and appear very friendly toward us. Mom and Mrs. Kirby spoke to each other frequently, especially in the rear yard areas of their homes. Mrs. Kirby kept a number of chicken in her back yard, and periodically would "kill" one for their dinner.

One of those occasions, when she killed a chicken, stands out in my memory. My mother and Mrs. Kirby were chatting in their backyards when Mrs. Kirby decided to "kill" one of her chickens. Her back yard was completely fenced with chicken wire, and as a youngster, I could see everything that went on in her yard. I remember the a large wooden chopping block with a short handled ax leaning on it. It was only a few feet away from our side of the fence. Mrs. Kirby "eyeballed" the chicken in her backyard, and decided on one of them that she would "kill" for dinner.

She chased the chicken around her back yard until she caught it. It seems that the chicken knew what was going to

happen, because it ran around the yard squawking and wildly flapping its wings. When Mrs. Kirby finally caught it, she held it by its legs. Holding the chicken in her left hand, she immediately walked over to the wooden "chopping" block. She quickly placed its neck and head on the block, picked up the ax with her right hand, and swiftly chopped off the chicken's head.

I experienced the horror of that moment, as a very little boy. The chicken's head remained on the chopping block, and its eyes were opening and closing, when Mrs. Kirby released the chicken's body. What a horrendous sight to see a to see a chicken's body running around the yard without its head, with blood spurting out of the arteries in its neck. It was terribly frightening for me as a little boy. It was a sight that I have never forgotten.

Don Avenue was just a few hundred feet south of our home. My first little friend was a little girl about the same age as me. Her family lived a few doors off Osborne street on Don avenue. There were homes only on the north side of the street. To this day, I remember her name was "Irene Yager". A few years later, after we had moved to our home on Jessie Avenue, I was pleasantly surprised to find that Irene was also enrolled in the same Grade One class as me.

I remember the salesman for the real estate company Oldfield Kirby and Gardiner (still operating today), placing a "for sale" sign on our rented home on Osborne Street. Nanny

Guarino immediately searched for a small home that they could buy. She wanted one that they could buy, rather than rent.

I vividly recall the very day that we moved from our home on Osborne Street to our new home on Jessie Avenue. I was about five years old. My mother, Vic, and I, walked from the old home on Osborne street to our new home on Jessie Avenue at the north side of the subway. It was the first time that Vic and I had ventured so far from our older home. We were both very nervous about going down the decline under the subway. A freight train was passing over the subway and the noise of the train movement on the upper level of the subway was very horrendous. Especially for two little boys who were hearing it for the first time. It felt like the upper level of the subway was going to collapse.

Both of us were very happy when we ascended the incline on the North side and reached Jessie Avenue. We made a left turn. Going about a hundred feet further, we had our first glimpse of our new home. It was the house was to be our home for the remainder our youth. Seeing our home on Jessie Avenue for the very first time, still stands out in my memory.

The little Jessie Avenue home was approximately twenty feet square. It had only four rooms; a living room, a dining room and two bedrooms. The yard was only twenty five feet wide and one hundred feet in depth. A "lean-to" shed was added to the rear of the home. It had been converted into a kitchen. A

platform about four feet square served as our front porch. The front door opened directly into the living room. Only one word could adequately describe this new home of ours. The word was "dilapidated".

About a year later, my father replaced the platform at the front of the home with a much larger verandah that covered three-quarters of the front of our home. He was able to obtain a wide assortment of beautifully colored glass windows from a church that had been demolished. These added a very cheerful and distinct appearance to our home. The glass windows had a wide variety of sections; some very large and clear; others were quite small and colored blue, green, amber, red and clear. When the sun shone through them, they gave off many brilliant colors and provided a warm, bright, cheerful atmosphere. Ultimately, our parents ultimately lived the remainder of their lives in this old home.

Our little "cream colored" home had only a three-quarter size basement. The basement entrance was from a small cupboard on the main floor, through a three foot square trap door in the floor. The stairway leading to the basement floor was ladder-like, almost vertical, and extremely steep. The floor plan of the home was very simple, with two bedrooms located along the west side of the house and a living room and dining room on the east side. It had no hallway and there was a large arch or opening between the living room and dining room and my parent's bedroom was off the living room.

Vic and I used the bedroom that was directly off the dining room. Both bedrooms were very small; about eight feet square. My parent's bedroom did not have a clothes closet. It was many years later when my father would build a "portable" clothes closet in their bedroom.

The bedroom that Vic and I used, had a small closet, however it had been remodeled into an area that housed the "toilet". It served as a small one piece bathroom, and we used the kitchen sink for our washing and bathing. In order to bathe, we used a small galvanized tub, about thirty inches and a foot deep. My mother simply placed it in the center of the kitchen floor. We filled the tub by using a pail, and by drawing water from the hot and cold water faucets of the kitchen sink and then emptying it into the galvanized wash tub.

Saturday evening was usually designated as "bath" night in our home. Usually, Vic and I would have our baths first, and my mother , if and when she indeed did bathe, would bathe later after Vic and I gone to bed and were asleep. I can't remember my father or mother ever having taken a bath in that period of our lives.

We had to descend two large steps from the dining room to access our kitchen from the front portion of our home. My mother had an "up-to-date" (for that day), coal and wood burning kitchen stove, with a smaller four burner gas stove, set beside it. Her favorite was the old fashioned coal and wood burning kitchen

stove.

Our home was heated by a hot water system. The furnace was a converted water heater from a small apartment building that had been demolished and from which my father had salvaged the water heater. The coal bin had doors that opened to the exterior from the rear wooden sidewalk or platform directly behind the kitchen. A delivery man carried the coal on his back, in large one hundred pound jute bags, from his delivery truck in the back lane to our coal chute. There, he emptied each coal bag into the tin-lined chute to the coal bin in the basement.

During our earliest years in our Jessie Avenue home, we burned "Souris" coal in our furnace. It was called Souris coal because it was surface mined from the Souris, Manitoba area, as well as Estevan and Bienfait areas of Saskatchewan. The Souris coal was very soft, and burned almost as quickly as wood. It also produced a large amount of ash when it burned. In the very cold days of winter, when my parents could afford it, they bought the harder bituminous "Drumheller" coal from Alberta, which would burn much cleaner, was hotter, and would last much longer, usually all night, and did not produce nearly the amount of ash as did the softer "Souris" coal.

However, the Souris coal was an improvement over using wood to fire the furnace. With wood (usually soft poplar), my mother had to go down to the basement area every three or four hours to add more wood to the furnace, and keep the fire alive.

This had to be done both day and night. So, heating a home in those days was a very arduous task. My mother tended the furnace, because my father was usually working. She also did not trust him because he tended to forget it. And, if the draft was not constantly watched and monitored on those old furnaces, the fire could get too hot and cause a chimney fire.

Many years later (1944 to 1953), when I worked for the CPR as a Trainman (passenger) and brakeman (freight), most of their steam engines were “hand fired” and burned coal. The coal that the CPR used was stored in huge piles at the west end of their yards, near McPhillip Street. The coal came from the Souris and Bienfiet areas and was terrible for heating steam engines. Being soft coal, it burned quickly, did not produce the heat that harder coals did, and had a tendency to “clinker” when firemen used a long iron rake to loosen up the coal. A clinker was a very hard, solidified mass that composed of green coal, and ashes. Sometimes a clinker in the firebox of a steam engine could be several feet in diameter. When clinkers started forming in a firebox, it greatly reduced the ability of the fire to create steam. As a result, the steam pressure in the boiler of the steam engines dropped. This reduced their hauling or pulling strength.

Laughingly at the time, a favorite saying was that the CPR placed fifty thousand tons of Souris coal in that huge stockpile. But when they dug it up with a clamshell, they dug up sixty thousand tons. In essence, there was a lot of “mud” in the coal that they dug up from their stockpile. Of course the major reason

for burning Souris coal, was that it was cheap. It was almost as cheap as burning wood.

Most of the homes in our neighborhood were similar to ours. The "Craig" family lived immediately to the east of our home. Mr. John Craig or "Jack" as he was commonly called, worked for the CNR as a carman. Easterly and next door to the Craigs lived the "Dodds" family.

Like the Craigs, the Dodds were English and Mrs. Dodds claimed the distinction of having descended from a family that had been in the service of the Royal Family in England. Mr. "Billie" Dodds also worked as a carman for the CNR. The Craigs had two children, the eldest a girl named "Dorothy", who was about two years older than her brother "Johnny". Both of them were several years older than Vic and me. The Dodds had three children, the eldest two were identical twin girls named "Emerald" and "Opal", who also were a year or two older than me. The Dodds also had a younger boy named "Vernon", who was about my age. Later, when we started school, at the old "Gladstone" elementary school on the north-west corner of Osborne Street and Corydon Avenue, we found ourselves in the same classroom.

West of our home lived a middle aged gentleman and his wife. Their name escapes me. I remember that he was a watchmaker. He had one leg shorter than the other, and thus had to wear a special built-up shoe on the shorter leg so that he could

walk more naturally. The family lived only a few years in this home, and sold to a family called Davis.

The Davis family had a boy named Reggie (their eldest child) and a set of triplet babies, two girls and a boy. Reggie was my age, thus we quickly became good friends, and he was also in my room at school. The Davis family lived in this home for five or six years and finally sold, because it was far too small for their family.

The new owners were Annie and Eddy Lake. Ed Lake was a fireman on the CNR. He had previously been a fireman for the Winnipeg Terminals railroad, which was located in the present "Forks" area of Winnipeg. When the Canadian National Railways was created it caused the amalgamation of the Canadian Northern Railway (which was the Railway that had hired my father, Papa Joe), The Grand Trunk Western Railroad, and the Winnipeg Terminals Railway. Eddy Lake and my father were employees of the same railroad, but they had started their careers with different railroad companies.

When the new seniority lists were compiled with the new Canadian National Railways (CNR), they were done on a ratio basis; five of the top enginemen of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad were placed at the top of the new combined seniority list; next three members of the Canadian Northern Railways were placed next on the new seniority list, and finally two members of the Winnipeg terminals Railway were placed on the new joint list.

The result was that my father had a much better seniority standing than Eddy Lake, and was called to be a "spare" engineer more often than Eddy. Since Eddy Lake's previous service on the Winnipeg Terminals Railway allowed him to experience railroad experience only in the greater Winnipeg area, he had no experience on the road, that is those lines running outside of the city.

There was a general feeling among the railroaders that the men joining the new Company from the Winnipeg Terminals lacked a great deal of experience and knowledge of road work, which was necessary for efficient operations. In short, the railroaders from the Winnipeg Terminals Railway were "looked down upon", by the railroaders coming from the Canadian Northern Railway, and the Grand Trunk Western. Although Eddy Lake and my father were friends and neighbors, my father maintained his air of superiority, as to being a "better" railroader than Eddy throughout their entire lives.

Eddy's nickname by his railroad friends was "Shortie" Lake. Others called him "Tight-pockets", especially his wife, Annie. She gave him this name because he was only five feet tall, and was very frugal. In a group of men, if money were required for any endeavor Eddy would go through a routine indicating great difficulty in getting into the pocket in which he kept money, thus the nickname "tight-pockets".

The "Richardson" home was two doors west of our. Their

elderly grandfather "Mr. Gault", lived with them and was a tremendous favorite with all the little boys my age in the neighborhood. His hobby was constructing toy wooden rifles that fired elastic bands. The elastic bands were made from old inner tubes of automobile tires. Cutting perpendicularly across the tubes approximately every half inch he fashioned half inch sized elastic bands. The bands were our ammunition for the rifles. Mr. Gault constantly worked at remodeling and perfecting them so they would work better.

We stretched an elastic bands from the front of the wooden rifle to a special trigger mechanism that Mr. Gault had fashioned. He positioned it the same area that a real rifle would have for its trigger. It was quite a stretch for the elastic bands, from approximately an eight inch diameter to almost twenty to twenty four inches. When the elastic band was stretched in this way and the trigger pulled, the band would propel forward from the rifle, just as a bullet would be expelled from a real gun. At close range the fired elastic band could "sting" if it struck someone, but otherwise it was very harmless and I do not remember anyone ever being injured.

Mr. Gault's grandson, little "Jackie" Richardson, was about my age and we were very good childhood friends. We loved to play in the large elm trees in the Richardson front yard. We built tree houses and forts and played "Cowboys and Indians", and "hide and seek" among them. I believe my brother Vic remembered how the trigger mechanism was fashion, and has

constructed some of the same type of "elastic guns" for his grandchildren.

Just west of the Richardson home, on the South-east corner of Pembina Highway and Jessie Avenue was a small general contracting company called "Langford and Birch". We believe it must have been a bank at one time, because it had large, very thick concrete walls which formed a vault about ten feet square built on its north-east corner, adjacent to the Richardson home. The office of the company faced Jessie Avenue. Their large yard held all types of lumber, concrete forms, and various pieces of construction equipment and was located to the rear and the side along Pembina Highway.

As youngsters, we loved to play in the Langford and Birch storage yard because there were so many places to hide in the lumber piles and pieces of equipment. Looking back now as an adult, it probably was a very dangerous place in which little children should have been allowed to play. The equipment or materials could have moved or dislodged and easily have injured or even killed us.

An old gentleman lived in a very small one roomed bungalow across the street from our home. Everyone in the neighborhood, including all the adults, referred to him simply as "the bachelor". He too, worked for the CNR as a "car-knocker". His little bungalow was painted white, and was just slightly larger than a present day single car garage. At the rear of it, he had

built a shed type addition with a lean type roof. It extended about six feet wider than the front portion, and was about eight feet in depth.

The additional section of his home contained the kitchen. Old Jess had a wood burning kitchen stove in the kitchen, which heated his entire home. A toilet was located in a small walled off section of the kitchen, which was about three feet square. The one and only door to the little bungalow was towards the rear section of the home that extended past the front section. Old Jess slept and ate in the front section of the little white bungalow.

We never did see anyone visiting the "old bachelor", during all the years that we lived on Jessie Avenue. We simply knew him as " the old bachelor" or as "Old Jess". He was well liked by the people in the area, and especially by all the younger boys. He had been a professional boxer in his youth, and in the center section of his kitchen he had installed a round wooden section suspended from his ceiling which allowed him to attach a "punching bag". He also had two matching sets of sixteen ounce "boxing gloves". They were enormous, and they felt like having a pillow laced on each hand when they were worn. Old "Jess" was very generous with all the little boys in the neighborhood, and would very willingly loan his boxing gloves to them. He also taught all the little fellows "how to box".

Later in our teens we graduated to boxing classes given by "Father Turney", an Anglican priest in the basement of St.

Michael's High Anglican Church located on Mulvey Avenue about a block west of Pembina Highway. Some of the youngsters that used these facilities became well known amateur boxers on the Manitoba scene. One family that I remember well was the Roberts family, who lived on the south-east Corner of Mulvey Avenue and Ainslie street and ran a small neighborhood grocery store.

The Roberts had three boys in their family. Tony, who later served in the Royal Canadian Navy, and was a champion boxer. Johnny, the youngest boy also served in "Canada's dry land navy", which we called the group that used the old firehall on Gertrude Avenue, near Osborne Street to train for the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve. All the Roberts boys were terrific boxers. Tony Roberts went on to win many championships in the smaller welterweight division. Even though he was very small in stature, weighing probably around one hundred and twenty pounds, he could easily beat a larger six foot, two inch opponent. And many a taller and heavier opponent carried a black eye, after an encounter with the smaller five foot, one inch "Joey".

There had been an older brother named "Felix", who became a famous jockey. He was killed early in his career, racing on a race horse track in California in which he was thrown from his horse and had collided with the inner guard rail of the race track. There were front page stories in the Winnipeg newspapers (The Winnipeg Free Press, and the Winnipeg Tribune) about his tragic death. His body was returned to

Winnipeg, and interred in St. Mary's cemetery on Osborne Street south.

The Gallo family was another Italian family that lived around Hetherington Avenue in the Riverview area as I was a young teenager. They had two boys, Joe and Mike, who both joined the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer reserve, and served in the navy during the second world war.

Pembina highway was a single lane highway at the time, and today that portion has become the northbound section of the highway. Along Pembina Highway, on the West side ran an odd looking streetcar, from Corydon Avenue to Dudley Avenue. It was called "The Dinkie". The little street car had been one of the original electrified street cars of the Winnipeg Street Railway and had finally been relegated to the half mile run along the West side of Pembina Highway.

South of what is now Grant Avenue, and extending westerly there was a very sparsely populated area of Fort Rouge, which was called "Rooster Town". This section of Winnipeg was heavily populated by Ukrainian immigrants who worked as laborers on the CNR. They also raised chickens in order to provide food and eggs for their own family use. It was because there were so many chickens being raised by each of the families in the area, that the it became nicknamed "Rooster Town". The "Harte" subdivision of the CNR ran along what is now Grant Avenue to the West, and this prevented the "Dinkie" from making

a connection with a street car line that ran along Jubilee Avenue.

Thus the Street railway line ran for approximately a half mile from its beginning at Corydon Avenue to its southern terminus at Dudley Avenue. People who lived south of Dudley Avenue had to either walk to Jubilee Avenue to catch the street car that ran along Jubilee Avenue, from the University of Manitoba to River Park and then along Osborne Street to downtown Winnipeg. Or, they could catch a street-car which operated from a turn-about at the south end of Stafford Street, along Stafford to Academy Road, Sherbrook Street and thence to Portage Avenue and downtown.

The little "Dinkie" had a total of four wheels, two at each end of the car. Since the tracks on which the streetcar line operated had no provisions such as a "Y" or turntable in order to turn the car around, the street car was constructed with controls at each end of the car. This obviated the need to turn it around. It had a "trolley line", at each end which allowed an electrical connection with the overhead wires. Thus, upon arriving at each end of the line, the conductor simply took the control levers from one end of the car to the other, and raised or lowered the appropriate trolley line at the other end of the car to the overhead power wire.

Another innovative summer ride for people using the street cars was the open air street cars that ran along Osborne street to Broadway and then east on Broadway to Donald Street, north on Donald Street past Eaton's store, then east again along Portage

Avenue to Main Street. Memorial Boulevard, and Osborne Street north had not been opened at the time, (they were later opened when the Hudson's Bay Store was completed around 1929.) At Main Street the car turned north and ran to the North End Car Bars in West Kildonan, at Carruthers Street, as I remember. They also ran along Portage Avenue West. These special street cars were completely open on each side, and people within the car were contained and protected by a heavy wire netting about six feet high.

The seats were made of cane or wicker, and could thus tolerate rain and becoming wet. Some Sunday afternoons, there were so many people just cruising the city in these open street cars that the Winnipeg Electric Company, who operated the street cars coupled two or three of them together (They looked like small trains). The Winnipeg Street Railway used to run the identical type of connected cars during the peak rush hours in the morning and evening, running along Portage Avenue from North Main along Portage Avenue out to Deer Lodge.

As a young boy, I vividly remember being able to take a street-car to places such as Selkirk, Stonewall, The University of Manitoba campus in Fort Garry, and Headingley. In fact, during my third year at university, I traveled by street car. I took the "University" street car, at Osborne Street and Corydon avenue, which traveled south on Osborne street to River Park. The line was double tracked to River Park, but changed at River Park to a single track line.

However, there was a turnaround area at River Park, where some of the streetcars could turn and go back northerly along Osborne Street. Since they ran to the end of Selkirk Avenue in the north end of the city they changed their nameplate to a "Selkirk" streetcar. Proceeding from River Park the line followed the Red River behind the race track at River Park to Nassau Street, where it turned north to Jubilee Avenue and then ran westerly to Pembina Highway. As I recall there was a short area of double track at Jubilee Avenue, so street cars coming the other way could pass.

There was an electrified signal system at each of the passing track areas that indicated if a car was coming the other way. At Pembina Highway the line turned south and ran along the Highway to University Crescent, where it followed the crescent to emerge on the campus immediately behind or west of the old Science building.

Somewhere on Pembina Highway, near McGillivray Boulevard, there was another section of double track for streetcars going in opposite directions to meet and pass each other. From the rear of the Science building it turned easterly again, running behind the Education building and ended up behind the Arts Building, extending back of the Agriculture buildings near the Red River.

The street cars used on this run had dual controls and thus did not have to be turned around at either end of their line. The

Conductor merely took his control levers from one end of the car to the other end, and took the trolley line down at one end and put it up at the other end.

In the winter, the streetcar conductor had to stoke and attend a "coke" burning furnace which heated the streetcar in addition to the electric heaters that were installed along the perimeter of the sides of the car. This large furnace was installed immediately behind his operator's area at the front of the car, and since the furnace burned "coke", it wasn't necessary to carry to large a supply of fuel. I believe they merely used to carry several large buckets of coke. Coke was a by-product of the City of Winnipeg central heating plant which was located just east of the present day Centennial Concert hall. The heating plant burned hard "bituminous" coal to produce gas which was distributed around the central areas of Winnipeg for cooking on gas stoves. Coke was the by-product of this operation. Since the gases had been taken off in the heating process, only the hard "coke" was left. This type of coal (although difficult to start burning) burned very intensely and produced a great amount of heat for much longer periods of time than ordinary coal. There was also very little ash produced. It was a very efficient way to heat the street cars that were used on Winnipeg's main streets.

One of the favorite playgrounds for all the children in the area was called "the field". It was located across the street from "Station A" of the Winnipeg Police Department, on the north-east corner of Jessie Avenue and Nassau Street. In the early spring,

we used the field primarily to play baseball, both softball and hardball and during the summer and fall we usually played soccer. The field was also the local "hang out" for all the kids, who used to meet at the "Scales", which was located on the South-west corner of Pembina Highway and Jessie Avenue. This weigh scales were operated by the city to monitor the weight of trucks and wagons using the City of Winnipeg Streets, much as they do today.

A City of Winnipeg Police Station (Station "A") was located almost across the Street from the field so as youngsters we got to know all the policemen working out of the station. In the nineteen thirties, there were no cruiser cars, and all policemen "walked a beat". During the course of walking their beat they were able to get to know all the people along their beat very well. A great many policeman thus had to walk along the stretch of Jessie Avenue and Pembina Highway, adjacent to our playground near the City of Winnipeg Weigh Scales. As they passed by, they stopped to talk with the youngsters; or watched us play baseball or football. Ultimately they got to know the youngsters very well.

An interesting phenomenon was how the policeman kept in touch with the station while they were walking their beat. Every few blocks, there was a very ornately decorated metal stand, on which was located a similarly decorated Police Box. In the box was a direct telephone line that allowed the constable to contact the Police Station.

At specific times the constable was obliged to call into the station. On the other hand, if the station wanted to contact a policeman, from the Police Station, they would turn on a red light located at the top of the telephone stand. Seeing the red light, the constable would call in for instructions from the Station.

Occasionally, a policeman would drive by our home on a two wheeled bicycle. We thought their bicycles were very large, because the policemen were unusually tall, and thus had to have bicycles that could accommodate their long legs. Later, when I was in my teens, I observed that policemen started using motor-cycles to patrol the major streets and some highways.

One of the policemen that I got to know well, and liked immensely was Mr. Minshell. He was one of the policeman that used to ride a bicycle, (the police have recently returned to using bicycles) and who later advanced to the group of policeman operating motor-cycles. He was also one of the policemen that got to know the youngsters well. Not only did he like to observe us playing sports and games, but he also loved music and took a great interest in everything we did.

Later, when I was in my middle teens, while walking a beat he often came by my parents home, and listened to my playing the piano accordion. He fell in love with the Piano Accordion and decided to learn to play one. A few years later, Papa Joe and I helped him to find an accordion, and I taught him to read music and play his accordion. He lived on Lindsay Avenue, in River

Heights, and occasionally I visited his home to give him a lesson, but most often he would simply visit us for his lesson, which I gave in our living room.

He was immensely interested in youngsters, and gave us a lot of encouragement in our studies and our sports. There were many policemen like him, and many of my buddies so admired policemen, that they wanted to become policemen themselves when they grew up. One was Robert (Bud) Wilson, who after serving in the Royal Canadian Air force during the war, and joined the Winnipeg Police Department after demobilization. Bud was the son of our self-appointed neighborhood spokesperson, who lived on Warsaw Avenue, close to what is now Rocky's barber shop. Another was Bill Graham, a very close friend and classmate of mine, who also joined the Winnipeg Police Department after serving in the Air Force.

My grandparents, Victor and Thebas Colonval, lived at 473 Warsaw Avenue. in a little home similar to ours. My Uncle George Colonval and his wife Felixine, my mother's brother and sister-in-law who were childless, lived with them. The home was divided into two sections. My Grandparents lived in the front section while my aunt and uncle lived in the rear area. My grandfather Colonval worked for the CNR as a "supply man", on the midnight shift. His work involved the keeping of records and the placing of all supplies that were placed on the locomotives preparatory to their leaving on their various trips. Some of the supplies that he placed on the steam locomotives, were water

cans for the use of the engine crew, cotton waste for cleaning and wiping oil from the engines, and fuses and torpedoes, oil cans, and red and white coal oil hand lanterns.

My uncle George Colonval (Nanny Guarino's youngest brother) was a "hostler", a person who moved the engines (steam locomotives), from one track to another and other places around the shop track area so water and coal could be placed in the tenders of the engines (Papa Joe had helped him to get this job). He also maneuvered engines around the shop track and round-house area so they could be turned on the turntable which was situated in the center of the round-house. In addition, he had to clean the fireboxes in the engines, or build fires in the ones that were "unlit". Also, he had to wipe off the engines with oil, using cotton waste. This cleaned the metal components of the engines, and gave them a shiny appearance. Most importantly, it prevented them from "rusting".

It was during this period of my life, that I can remember sitting on the concrete front steps of the verandah off our old Jessie Avenue home talking to my father (Papa Joe). He told me a story. It was about a very old Italian grandfather, who had become very feeble and a heavy burden on his son and the son's family. His wife (the grand-mother) had died many years previously and the old man could no longer care for himself. As he explained in his story there was an old folk's home built on a hill just outside of the town, and the son prepared to take his father (the grandfather up to it).

As they proceeded up the pathway and up the hill, the grandfather became very tired and had to stop to rest. They were almost two thirds up the very steep hill to the Old folks infirmary when he had to sit down on a large boulder. He sat there quietly for a long while, and then and then suddenly out in loud laughter. After the son quieted his father, he asked about his sudden outburst of laughter.

The old grandfather simply said,

"This is the same big rock that my father stopped, sat on and rested, , when I took him up to this same Old folks' home, many years ago."

It has been many years since I heard that story from my father. It is only in recent years that I have come to understand the "wisdom" and "moral" in it.

In many ways, the same pattern of life is repeated in each new generation. Nothing much changes as to the relationship that one generation has with another. In studying zoology at the University of Manitoba, many years later, I later learned that "Progeny repeats Ontology". (i.e. During the lifetime of an individual, the individual passes through all the stages that particular species has passed through during its evolution). Basically, each family in some way repeats within its own life span, what has occurred in older generations of that same family.

Reminiscing about the MORAL of my father's story

Each one of us will likely experience the same phenomena in our lives...."We all really trod similar pathways". My own experience of loneliness now, must have been experienced by my father "Papa Joe:" during the years he was forced to work away from home, at Atikokan, Ontario and Rivers, Manitoba as a "Junior" engine hostler. after having been demoted from a very senior position as a Locomotive Engineer. Because of this, he must have experienced extreme rejection, humiliation, financial difficulties and loneliness.

Nanny Guarino must have similarly had very lonesome periods while living alone with Papa Joe many years later, when he became incapacitated and confined to an "easy" chair in the living room of their old home on Jessie Avenue.

Similarly Nanny and Papa Baillie must experienced the same phenomena. This was indeed much more evident with Papa Baillie, after he had lost the "love" of his life, "Nanny Baillie". Coupled with the gradual deterioration of his sight because of cataracts, it must have been devastating for him.

Mom, the light of my life, was born in a little four room home on Dunvagin Avenue in East Kildonan (about two blocks west of Henderson Highway). The street was later renamed to “Hazeldell” and in the 1950’s our Upjohn Company friends, Gabe & Dot Van Tornhout lived on it.

Mom was born at home. Her mother, Nanny Baillie called a Dr. MacTavish to deliver Mom at home. Many years later, as a medical representative with The Upjohn Company, I called on him. He maintained an office in an old home on Hespeler Avenue between the Redwood bridge and Henderson Highway. He was a very nice old gentleman, but his practice had badly deteriorated. His son also became a medical doctor (and a very accomplished Curler), and later had an office in the same building as Dr. Joseph Ward (the Doctor that Mom had when Larry, Sandi and Debbie were born).

Papa and Nanny Baillie lived in this home for six or seven years. He commuted daily by street-car to his work as a carpenter (carman) in the Coach yard of the CNR Fort Rouge shops. Around 1930, he and Nanny Baillie later rented a nice story and a half bungalow at the west end of Rosedale Avenue in Riverview. By moving to the Riverview area, Papa was much closer to his work. He used a bicycle (which he shared with Mom) to go to work by entering the South gates of the CNR coach yard at Glasgow Avenue.

His brother (an older “Uncle Hughie”), lived on Hespeler Avenue. He and his wife “Aunt Martha” had a little bungalow on the north side of the street in the first block of Hespeler off east of the Redwood bridge. He had take early retirement from the Winnipeg Fire Department. He was involved in an accident when the Old Birks building on the Northwest corner of Donald St. burned down. Apparently he had been kicked by a horse (the fire department used them in his era, to pull the fire-wagons). He had been badly injured and lost his leg below the knee. Fortunately, he received some form of compensation, because I don’t think the ever worked again in his life.

Uncle Hughie and Aunt Martha had a daughter, Anne. She was a very lovely brunette, and later married a gentleman named Jack Rapier. Uncle hughie was a very robust man, always laughing and very cheerful. But Papa Baillie told us that in spite of his appearance, that he had a terrible temper, and in his youth had been involved in many a fracas. Unlike Papa Baillie, who was very quiet and peaceful, Uncle Hugh apparently loved a good “FIGHT”. And in his youth, he had many. Uncle Martha was a very stout, heavily built woman, and was the dominant one in the family. She was very loud, demanding, and without doubt, totally controlled her family.

The depression years of (1930 to 1939) with us, and Papa Baillie was ultimately laid off his carman’s job with the CNR. The Federal Government tried to alleviate the bad unemployment situation which prevailed at the time, by offering people like Papa

Baillie (who had served in the Canadian Army in the first world ward), a chance to “go back to the land”. In essence, instead of our “welfare” system as we know it today, many people who were offered the quarter section of land (free). People were expected to make a living from it, and maintain themselves.

Papa Baillie found land available in the Oak Hammock area, north of Winnipeg. Farmers around the Oak Hammock area farmed in potatoes, grain, and hay crops. Papa Baillie obtained a quarter section of land near Oak Hammock, and moved his little family and all their possessions onto it. They lived in an Unlined one room shack. It was heated with a wood stove. There were no bedrooms, but Nanny partitioned off the bedrooms with curtains. Papa used to go to Selkirk for groceries once a week with a team of horses pulling a wagon. They mainly bought flour, raw vegetables, fruit and other items in bulk. Uncle James used to go with Papa, but sometimes Nanny Baillie, Aunt Do (Doreen) and Mom also went along. The round trip took at least twelve hours, or a whole day.

Once a week, Papa Baillie hitched up an old horse and wagon, and made the trek to Fort Garry. The trip took all day. There, he and Nanny bought groceries, etc. for the next week. I believe that once in a while, (in the summer) they made a longer trip into Selkirk.

Mom had told me much about her life at Oak Hammock and how much she disliked living in a rural farm setting. She loved

being around people too much. While she didn't mind being isolated in a rural setting such as we experienced at our cottage at Grand Beach during a severe snowstorm, she adamantly stated that she would not like it as a permanent situation.

Mom detested the period of her life that she spent out at Oak Hammock. Because of it, she never really was interested in this home that I have been building at Belair. However, in retrospect, I now recognize that while Mom didn't have the zeal for it that I did, she wan't me to have it. It seems that she had some form of premoniton that she would die prematurely and wanted me to have our property at Belair.

Mom accompanied me on one of my appraisal assignments in the 1970's, while I was doing an appraisal in the St. Andrew's area. She showed me her old home-site on the old Fort Garry Road. The small wooden bungalow was still there. It was "unpainted" when Mom lived there, but later had been painted "white". Laughingly, Mom told me that the day that Papa Baillie received a letter from the CNR, (sometime in 1939), he was hoeing potatoes in their garden. After reading the letter requesting him to return to work, he immediately dropped the hoe that he had been using and quickly made arrangements to return to Winnipeg. She laughingly said

"I'll bet that hoe is still out there in the potato patch".

Papa and Nanny Baillie found a large two story home on the north side of Nassau street, (near the old Fort Rouge "Station A"

police station on the north-east corner of Jessie Avenue and Nassau Street). It was only a few doors from the police station, and a few homes east of Corydon Avenue. It was just perfect for Papa Baillie, because he only had two blocks to walk to get to the south gates of the CNR shops at Nassau Avenue and Pembina Highway. Mom attended Earl Grey School, while they lived in this home. I also attended Earl Grey School at the time, but I had not yet met Mom. Later Mom told me that my French teacher (a fiery Miss Johnson) was her room teacher.

Papa and Nanny Baillie lived on Nassau for only a year or so. It seems that Nanny found a home at 478 Beresford Avenue in the Riverview area. The Baillie's could not afford to buy their own home. so since "renting" was the mores of the day, they rented the home. 478 Beresford Avenue was only a few doors off Osborne Street, (now it was easier for Nanny to take the street-car, go down town to Eaton's and do her shopping once or twice a week).

It was a much nicer home than their older one on Rosedale, but the rent was much greater. However, Nanny overcame this obstacle, by renting rooms on the second floor level to other families, keeping one of the bedrooms for Doreen and Mom. James (their brother) slept on a chesterfied in the kitchen on the main floor, and Nanny and Papa had the master bedroom on the main floor which had been converted from a library or lounge). This was the home that Mom's family lived in when I first met her at Grand Beach.

The Baillie home at 478 Beresford Avenue was also reasonably close to the “North” gates of the CNR shops, on Glasgow Avenue. Mom changed schools. She had not liked Earl Grey School, and detested her class teacher a Miss Johnson. She enrolled at Lord Roberts, in the Riverview area and liked it much more, It was at Lord Roberts that Mom met some of her best friends. They continued friendships all her life. Three of her very best friends were Gladys Gooding, Phyllis Justice and (“Smuts) Shirley Coleman (her married name). Shirley later lived across the street from our home at 282 Montgomery Avenue, married to Bill Coleman. Shirley and Bill moved to Thunderbay, and then to Covina, California - a suburb of Los Angeles.

When I visited Los Angeles in the 1960’s looking for work, after having been “ousted” by Upjohn, I spent some time with Shirley (Smuts) and Bill. Phyllis and Gladys maintained a life long friendship and relationship with Mom. I still hear from Phyllis, We talk on the phone, and exchange Christmas cards with each other.

While Mom was a young teen-ager, she received the nickname of “BENAR” . Mom used to baby-sit Edgar and Ronnie McKane for (Mom’s aunt Winnie) and her little boys had a hard time saying “VERNA”. The simply called her “BENAR”. When Mom’s girl friends heard the name, they too, immediatly started calling her “BENAR”.

Mom loved her Uncle Bill McKane (Aunt Winnie’s husband).

They had a small two story home on the Pembina Highway on the north east corner of Summerville Ave. Uncle Bill was a painter employed with the T. Eaton Company. His work was superb, and he kept his small home on Pembina highway immaculate. He loved music, and played the bagpipes, and snare drums in Irish and Scottish Pipe and Drum bands. Surprisingly, he also played the violin, and could play many of the old square dances and jigs that Nanny Guarino played. Needless to say, Mom was his favorite niece.

Nanny Baillie loved good homes. After about six or seven years of renting their home at 478 Beresford Avenue, she learned of another home in the same block of Beresford Avenue that was “for sale”. It had been owned by a medical doctor, Dr. Strong. Nanny had a strong desire to own her own home. With only a thousand dollars down, she was able to purchase 513 Beresford Avenue. I think she bought it for about seven thousand dollars. It was a lovely two and a half storey home. It had hot water heating, and had been very well maintained.

One afternoon, during Mom’s long period of being bedridden on Athlone Drive, she told me about how she used to have crying spells during the period when they lived at 478 Beresford Avenue. She used to have them every afternoon, after returning from school. The crying spells continued on into her workingt live, when she would experience them after returning from work at Raton’s mail order. She also told me that the crying spells disappeared shortly after meeting me at Grand Beach, and

when we started going together. She had never had them again. It was the best compliment that any man could receive. I was so very grateful that I too had met Mom. Many years later (1945), Mom and I had a belated Wedding celebration at this Baillie home at 513 Beresford Ave. I loved Mom with ALL MY HEART! We thought and acted together as 'one'. She was my "better" half. Consequently, when Mom died half of me also died.

Mom had told me much about her life at Oak Hammock and how much she detested living in a rural (farm) setting. She loved being around people too much. While she didn't mind being isolated in a rural setting such as we experienced at our cottage at Grand Beach during a severe snowstorm, she adamantly stated that she would not like it as a permanent situation.

Many years later when we bought the land at Belair, I mentioned to Mom that we could live out there all year round. Mom adamantly stated that she would never go back to living in a rural setting. She had had enough of country living at Oak Hammock