

The Prairie in Me:

*Stories of
My Life*

~ Isobel Jones



The Prairie in Me: *Stories of my Life*



*With deepest gratitude
to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Martin Sr.,
and my brothers and sisters,
to my husband Gren, and our three children,
and my grand and great grandkids*

*This is my life ... my story ... my book.
It is written from how it was told to me, or as I recall things.
As has been said, "When writing the story of your life,
don't let anyone else hold the pen."
I hope you enjoy reading my life story as I remember it ... to this point!*

Isobel Jones

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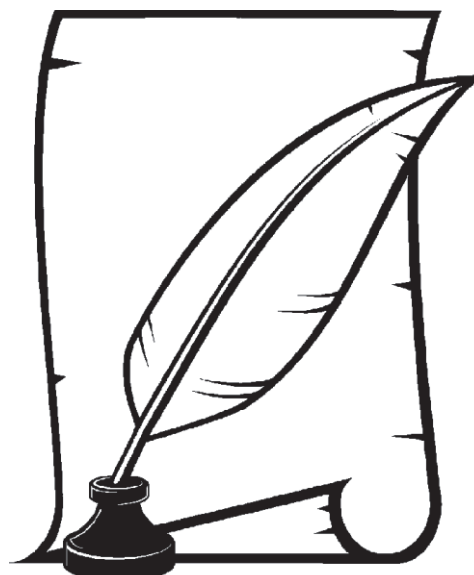
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*Printed at Globe Printers, Saskatchewan
217 Jessop Ave., Saskatoon, SK., S7N 1Y3*

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The Prairie in Me

The roots of us, as prairie people run deep, deep into the very beginning of our lives. Something makes us feel different – we are different – a tough, hardy bunch of individuals living on the prairies in the middle of Canada.

From my early childhood days, jogging along in a buggy with our horse “Fred” taking us back and forth to school along the side hills and around the sloughs, the prairie trail seemed to wind and bend into the unknown. The muddy trail in the spring, the sweet smell of the flowers and buffalo willows come summer, the straw-y smell of threshing grain and oh! when the winter arrived our buggy became a cutter and still old “Fred” took us over the snowy trails through some cold, snowy, stormy weather but always brought us home to the safety and warmth of our parent’s home. A prairie winter can be an unforgettable experience.

Over the years, I have seen many areas of virgin prairie soil covered with poplar trees and willow bushes, cleared, dug up and cultivated making it into rich fertile soil, suitable for growing grain. My farmer husband spent many tireless hours clearing land, picking rocks and roots for more arable acres and easier for tractor farming. He was indeed changing the prairie landscape. I didn’t always agree when my favourite Saskatoon and Chokecherry bushes were gone. My pleasant time of berry picking was over – at least on our own land.

I’m convinced that only people like me, born and bred to prairie immigrants, could wait so anxiously for the sound of the first crow to “caw” in the spring or see the saucy gopher poke its head out of its winter hideaway. To walk in the cattle pasture, over the rolling hills of Manitou Beach, among the blades of new grass, the crocuses starting to show off their fuzzy purple heads, I know within a few days the pasture will be covered in a mass of purple beauty. The sun is beginning to get warmer. I can open my bedroom window allowing the fresh air to come pouring in and listen to the sound of the friendly meadowlark – LISTEN – it is singing to me, “I was here a year ago.” Its song drifts and echoes over the still morning air. What a beautiful wake-up call! At the first sighting of a robin bobbing along on the lawn, word quickly passes from neighbour to neighbour that spring is here!

As I stood gazing across the vastness of this prairie landscape from one of the highest points in our area, what a wonderful view of prairie magnificence—the prairie sentinels and the traditional grain elevators—rising above the hazy skyline of distance. At one time five elevators and towns could be viewed from this vantage point. Grain fields like a patchwork quilt, rolling hills and deep valleys dotted here and there with trees and farm buildings as far as the eye can see. The beauty, the great distances and the shades of blue in the late afternoon sky stirs the prairie in me.

Where else could I view with awe the most vivid beautiful sunrises and sunsets? The Northern Lights change and dance, miraculous in the evening sky, the stars shining their brightest in the clear heavens above – yes – I can find the Big Dipper – no smog here!



Gardening, my favourite pastime, is a challenge on the prairies, but that prairie person in me never gives up. I tried desperately to grow and winter over hybrid tea roses in our Zone Two for quite a few years. With some determination in me, I said to myself, "Try one more prairie winter for success." In spite of our hot summer July sun and dry southern winds, either too much rain or not enough, some hail storms here and there, I still managed to grow a first prize yard and garden. I find such great solace tending and caring for my plants.

Time passes and seems more precious as years roll by. Each day brings a fuller appreciation of life and all the precious memories that the prairie has contributed to my happiness.

Isobel Jones



1 What is the story of your birth?

This is how my Mother told it to me.

It was a warm, sunny August day. Harvest was in full swing on the farm. My Dad and a crew of six were busy bringing in the crop. Mother and her helpers were expected to feed these hungry men, three meals per day, starting very early each morning. At the same time, she also had four children scampering about!



First known picture of me, 1934, age 4

My Mother was very much pregnant. She had already made arrangements to wave a white cloth when help was needed. This was to alert my Dad who would then get our neighbour Mrs. Lord (who was like a midwife), and the doctor. I remember my Mother mentioning she had some very good women neighbour friends who helped each other in times like this, and Mrs. Lord was very capable in keeping everyone well organized.

Mother's due date was around the end of August. However, amidst all the busyness of that particular day, her time had come to give birth. Anxious me, I arrived early--August 25, 1929, at about 12 noon. I was born at home, as pretty much all rural babies were at that time, so my birth certificate reads Section 7, Township 30, Range 26, West 2. I don't know if the doctor arrived in time or not. In those days, as long as the baby arrived safely, with a good set of lungs, that was all that was important. In my case, it was a busy harvest time so life went on!

My Mother's birthday was August 31. I was named, Isobel, after my Mother. My second name, Margaret, came from my Dad's sister and also my Dad had an Aunt Margaret.

This is how my life began. As the fifth child of the family, I joined my parents Isobel and Robert Martin, 3 older sisters—Rhoda, Muriel and Ethel and an older brother, Bob.

My life's journey began that bright sunny autumn harvest day, amid all the busyness and with a depression looming on the horizon when no one knew what the future would hold for me and my family.

2 What is your earliest memory?

It was nearly Christmas, always a very exciting time for us as youngsters. The Christmas concert was about to take place at Mount Lorraine school house that was three miles from our home.

With my Dad driving a team of horses, we took off over the crisp snow in a sleigh box with runners, under a starlit December prairie sky and bundled beneath warm blankets. I was in the sleigh with my three older sisters and brother. There was chatter and laughter as we travelled along the snowy trail.

But my small child mind was very confused....where was my Mother? ... and why would she not want to go with us to the Christmas concert, that very special event of the year?



About a week later, we all learned the reason why Mother could not accompany us. We had a new baby sister named, Evelyn Mary. I would have been almost three years old at the time.

Back, L to R: Rhoda, Evelyn Mary, Muriel, Bob; Front: Ethel, Isobel; 1934

3 From your child's eyes, what did your first farm look like?

The farm where I spent the first ten years of my life, was a typical early Saskatchewan homestead setting.



The homestead house was a square type-of-bungalow, built by my Dad, with help from the neighbours. It was a far cry from "the shack" where my Mother first kept house and where my oldest sister Rhoda was born. They must have figured the new house, that I first called home, was a palace!

My first home: NW 7, 30, 26, W2

The barn was built into a small hillside, to house the horses, cows and chickens. I don't remember there ever being a hen house--just a few boxes of straw in the barn for a nest in which to lay their eggs. There was a low slanting roof on the barn. In the winter we would climb to the top, then roll and tumble down.

One thing a farm always needed was an outhouse. It actually was the first on the list of construction when the farmstead was being built! Every Saturday (in summer), we swept and washed it out. And yes, the Eaton catalogue was used. A piece of tissue paper was unusual thing to come by!

Other buildings in the yard were granaries for storing the grain. As Dad made more arable land, more granaries were required. But these granaries served more than one purpose. In summer, one granary was designated as our bedroom. It was a get-away from our usual sleeping place in the attic and the constant irritation of the bed bugs! We just loved our summer place.

Another building in the farm yard was called "the car shed." Why it was called that I don't know because we did not have a car until sometime later! However, it was where Dad had his tools, and where he worked under shelter to repair horse harness and the buggy.

I remember the farm yard "in the hills," as we called it, had many trees that Dad had planted. He loved trees, favouring the quick-growing type, such as Manitoba Maple and Caragana. They would form a shelter belt. The garden had trees surrounding it, keeping it from the winds.

We always had a big garden, with a large potato patch. There were a number of mouths to feed. There was always the task of keeping it weeded, and ... how we, as kids, disliked picking the potato bugs off the plants, and putting them into a can of "coal oil" or kerosene!

My Mother "put down" many jars of preserves from garden produce, wild berries and rhubarb. Every farm garden, including ours, had a generous-sized rhubarb patch.

One other thing I remember, was getting a well with a supply of good drinking water for human and animal consumption. Having a good well in those days was a real asset. Many wells at that time were dug by hand. Or, you could hire a man with a drilling rig that was driven by a horse harnessed to go in a circle around the designated spot, but that was costly.

Ours was dug by hand. A wooden crib was put inside it so that it wouldn't cave in. There was a wooden cover to stand on while you brought the water up to the surface, using a rope and bucket. That was our sole water source although in winter we melted a lot of snow in the reservoir on the stove. Eventually, we got a pump which was really great.

My memory drifts back to our playhouse out in the shelter belt among the Maple trees. It was one of my favorite places on the farm. First, we swept away all the leaves and branches, to bare ground, then decorated by hanging old calendars and pictures we had drawn, from the tree branches. Our "furniture" was usually an old apple box or a pail turned upside down. We even pretended to preserve as we had seen our Mother

L to R: Ethel, Isobel, Evelyn and Muriel



doing, using weeds and wild flowers. We also made mud pies. Many hours were spent in the playhouse, using our imagination.

4 What do you remember about your paternal grandparents?



My Grandmother, Elizabeth Susan *nee* Lamond was born at Rattray, Perthshire, Scotland in 1854. She married my Grandfather John Martin, who was seven years younger; he was born in 1861 at Glenshee, Forforshire, Scotland. They wed at Kinloch, Scotland on November 27, 1885 and had a family of six children--four boys and two girls (Elizabeth, b 1886; John, b 1888; Margaret, b 1890; James, b 1892; Robert, b 1894 and Tom, b 1901).

In Scotland, Grandfather Martin farmed land as a "ploughman." He was a foreman at his work, employed by someone else who owned the land. Wages were poor. He could barely make a living for his wife and family. My Grandma worked as a "domestic" until she had her own family to care for, at home.

As their children grew into young adults, depression hit Scotland. There was very little work to be had, in the early 1900's. So all of their children except their teenaged son Tom, decided to emigrate to Canada—a new country, a new adventure. They were young and hoped to find work and start a new life there.



Word reached my Grandparents in Scotland that Canada seemed like a pretty good place! Why not join the rest of the family? So, they did just that in 1912! Tom finished his schooling in Canada. Grandfather obtained some land, not far from where his son Robert, my Dad, had started farming.

Grandfather had a horse or two, a few head of cattle, and no doubt a pig and some chickens. Grandfather's farm had a big hip-roofed barn—lots of room for housing animals and space to store feed for them. “Barn dances” were held in that big barn when I was a child. The barn was only a few miles across the field from us, so as kids we were fascinated by and familiar with it! The barn is still standing but it was moved some years ago on to the Ulyott land in the coulee near Simpson.



Grandfather John Martin

Now, the story I was told, is that the emigration back in 1912 was too much of a change for my Grandparents. They were not young when they arrived. Winters were especially cold. And then my Dad, struggling financially, enlisted in the military in

1914, leaving his farm, hoping to return after the war. My Grandparents were very lonely in Canada without my Dad. There was also the Depression years. They endured years of hard work with not much to show for it.

It took its toll on them. In 1930, at age 69, my Grandfather suffered a massive heart attack and died. He was found lying between a pair of work horses in the barn. I was only one year old when my Grandad died.

It now fell upon the members of the family to look after Grandma and Tom. Tom was old enough to work for my Dad or other local farmers. The extended Martin family took turns having Grandma stay with them. It must have been difficult for her to be shifted around like that.

When Grandma was at our house, she would help my Mother do some jobs around the house and look after the children. There would be five of us by this time. I was told that I grew a head of long blond hair that my Mother could twist into ringlets. It would get tangled up when it hadn't been brushed for a while.

Then, I would cry when the task had to be done. My Grandmother, tired of my fussing and crying, repeatedly said, "Cut the bairn's hair off!" My Mother relented and my curls were cut off. They never came back. I was probably about two years of age.

I remember Grandma spent a great deal of her day, rocking back and forth in her high-backed rocking chair. 'Never heard her singing but she would be humming away to herself. If it was a nice day, she liked to sit outdoors to enjoy the sunshine and the birds. I also recall seeing Grandma sitting in her chair, shelling an apron full of green peas.

Grandma had a quiet nature. She wasn't a complainer about her lot in life. She was round and plumpish (like Grandmas are supposed to be) with pure white hair, fastened in back to form "a bun."

I recall going to visit Grandma when she was staying at my Auntie Maggie's home. It must have been her turn to care for her. Auntie Maggie gave us a large, white sugar cookie with a big raisin in the centre. Just what a child would enjoy. We were ushered into Grandma's bedroom. She was lying in bed, her pure white hair against the pillow. That was my last memory of my Grandmother Martin.

Grandma lived to be 83 years old, called up yonder in 1937. I was old enough to remember the day of the funeral. My parents went, of course. I don't think my older siblings went. I know we younger ones did not. Dad called us together after the funeral. He told us that Grandma looked as though she was sleeping peacefully. She had a beautiful red rose lying on the front of her dress.

We all loved our Grandma very much. She was patient and always kind to us as young rascals. I was about 8 years old when she died.

My Grandmother and Grandfather Martin were laid to rest in the Watrous Cemetery.

5 What do you remember about your maternal grandparents?

My Munro Grandparents, like my Martin Grandparents, were Scottish but their home was Blairgowrie in Perthshire. While my Martin Grandparents emigrated to Canada, I only knew my Munro Grandparents by letter, picture and information passed on to me.

Grandmother Munro's name was Elizabeth *nee* Hagen but she was often referred to as "Blair Granny." I never met her. She was born in 1869.

My Grandmother Munro was of small stature. In our pictures of her, she was often in the garden, rarely seen without wearing her "pinny" (her apron).



As my Mother described, my Granny had a very determined nature, was eager to accomplish things and worked hard to accomplish those goals. As a result, she "came down" pretty hard on Granddad at times. Granny would scold him when he wasn't working. But as a stone mason, if the weather was not suitable, it was not possible to work. He'd respond by saying, "I kenna make the weather, Liza."

Apparently, Granny was always discontent with the house she lived in, so they moved to quite a number of locations around Perthshire. My Mother especially remembered the house on

David St. in Blairgowrie, where she spent her young adult years with her parents and family.

I understand too, that "Blair Granny" was a very generous person, often baking fruit breads for example, and giving it to people in need when barely leaving enough for themselves.

Granny always remembered her grandchildren in Canada. I recall being on the receiving end of many, many care parcels coming from her in Scotland. She

always had a pair of needles in her hands thus, we received many knitted articles. My Mother often expressed how she appreciated those parcels in helping to keep her growing family warm on cold winter days.

One particular blue wool sweater I wore to school, had the initials "MB" embroidered in red letters, on the chest upper right hand side. It had belonged to my maternal cousin Muriel Bishop. I loved wearing that sweater. It was warm and cozy during cold winter days. It may have been second hand but that sweater was probably knit by my Granny.

Known to us as Grandfather Munro or Grandad, his name was William Blair Munro. His mother's surname before marriage was Blair. After she married John Munro, he kept the name Blair but went by the surname Munro. In and around Blairgowrie, he was called "Wullie" Munro. Our pictures show him with a sturdy build complete with broad shoulders, and smoking a pipe. I never met him. He was born in 1868.



As a stone mason, he was reportedly, very good at his work. One of his achievements that I saw for myself is the weir, known in Blairgowrie as "the crowie." Made of stone and concrete, it was built across the River Ericht to regulate the flow to accommodate a woollen mill, downstream. The woollen industry was very important in those days. Mills were powered by flowing water.

Grandad also did stone masonry on many houses. One in particular, my Mother described to me as, my "Grandfather's masterpiece." She took me to see it in 1969 when I travelled to Scotland with her. The house has an interesting masonry archway as the entry. My Mother was very proud of her father's "works of art."

Grandad was also an ardent gardener, known for growing many beautiful roses. I was old enough in 1947 to remember when the news came by mail that Grandfather Munro had been taken to the hospital and had died from

complications due to stomach ulcers. My Mother never saw her father again after she immigrated to Canada.



*Grandma & Grandpa Munro
in their rose garden*

When my Mother and Dad returned to Scotland for a visit in 1947-48, "Blair Granny" was still alive but that was the last time that my Mum saw her Mother. She died in 1949. They were both laid to rest in the Blairgowrie Cemetery in unmarked graves.

Together, my Munro grandparents gave birth to nine children: Catherine, b 1890; James, b 1892; William, b 1893; John, b 1896; Isabella (my mother), b 1898; Margaret (Peggy), b 1900; Carlyle, b 1901; Ronald, b 1905; Mary Ann, b 1908.

6 What were your favourite activities as a child?



Growing up in a large family, there was always lots of fun and games! Along with my three older sisters, there was plenty of opportunity "to pretend" ... to use our imagination.

My mind takes me back to when we pretended to put on a Christmas concert. Christmas was one of our favourite times of the year.

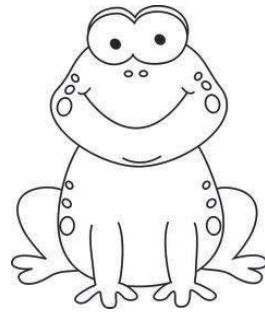
*Back, L to R: Evelyn, Ethel, Isobel
Front, L to R: Kay, Wayne, John*

Our parent's bedroom was divided from the living room. There was no door, just a velour-type curtain. Just what we needed, as it was similar to what was used at the school concerts. When performers were ready, someone pulled the curtain. Our stage was "the bench" we used at the

kitchen table at meal times. Worked perfectly. The big deal was just getting the whole thing set up.

Now we were ready for the performers. Each of us planned what we would do for the concert, while the others watched. When it was my turn, I remember reciting a poem I had memorized in school:

*Twenty froggies went to school
Down beside a rushing pool,
Twenty little coats of green
Twenty vests all white and clean.
We must be in time said they
First, we study, then we play.
That is how we keep the rule,
When we froggies go to school.*



Each of us, of course, took a bow when finished, while our audience clapped. It was one performer after the other—drills, singing, recitations and then some pretend treats and gifts. I don't ever remember there being a Santa Claus but perhaps? We always closed with singing "O Canada."

We also used our imagination in cutting figures of people out of the Eaton catalogue. That same catalog served many purposes ☺. As soon as we were allowed to handle a pair of scissors, considerable time was spent cutting out different figures and fitting them with their new wardrobe, of pretty dresses, coats, jackets, hats and shoes. When cutting, one had to be careful to leave two tabs to bend over to hold dress or coat onto the figure, and two at the waist also.

Great pride was felt as we created our new pretend family of Mother, Dad and children. And then they had to have an imaginary place to go--perhaps a dance at the school house or to Sunday School. Many playful hours were spent in this respect, for a five or six-year-old, with my constant companion, my sister Ethel, who was just two years older.



*Back L to R: Rhoda, Ethel, Isobel, Bob, Muriel;
Front: John, Wayne, Kay, Evelyn*

Winter fun was also on our minds as kids. Our parents could not afford skis or skates but a snow fort wasn't out of the question! There was a big slough close to the yard, with trees and shrubs, around it. Huge banks of snow piled in there. It was an ideal spot for a snow fort. We'd search to choose just the right location. It needed to be quite a high bank of firm snow.

Digging and shaping of our fort occupied our time for hours, even days. It would need to be high enough for my oldest brother and sister to be able to stand up in it, and about 5 or 6 ft. wide. I remember there being a bench carved out of packed snow, attached to the side of the snow fort. There were some pails and a log for sitting on, a hole in the roof for ventilation. The dog really liked going into the fort with us. Sometimes Mum would give us a treat--a thermos of hot chocolate and a cookie to eat inside. Those were really fun times!

7 Did you have any disappointments as a child?



We were going by car, some sixteen miles, to the Roxy Theatre in Watrous to watch a movie featuring Shirley Temple! We were each given a few pennies for a treat. We packed into Dad's car, three or four in the back seat, two adults plus a least one kid in the front. We were all nicely dressed

The Martin girls (Back L to R): Ethel, Kay (baby), Rhoda, Muriel; (Front L to R): Isobel and Evelyn

for the occasion. The time came for our departure, and we were finally on our way. There was a bit of a knoll to climb, corner to turn, and then onward on a straight road. Everything going along fine for the first quarter mile, then the car started to sputter. It made it another half mile, and then stopped. My Dad, frustrated and bewildered, tried everything to make the car go again but was unsuccessful. A very dejected bunch hopped out of the car and walked home. It was the end of "our exciting day" when hoping to see the Shirley Temple movie... no sweet dreams for us that night!!

8 What was your first school like, and your first day at school?

The first school I attended was situated about three miles from our farm. The school was called Mount Lorraine, after a place in France where My Dad had served in WW1. My Dad was the Chairman of the School Board, and had been the instigator of Mount Lorraine. He wanted a school that was closer to the farm for his children to attend. Prior to the establishment of Mount Lorraine, my oldest sister Rhoda and brother Bob, attended Hawkshaw School. Mount Lorraine was a bungalow-style building with an outside stair entrance. There was one large classroom for all grades, one to twelve.

The school was equipped with wooden desks with a single arm that had a drawer for storage underneath the seat. On the desk top, right hand side there was a round hole for an ink bottle, and near the top a ten inch groove to hold a pencil so it wouldn't roll away. These desks came in different sizes, to accommodate students of all ages.

There were blackboards with a chalk and brush ledge on two sides of the room, and the third side was all windows. It seems to me, there was a built-in cupboard at the back of the room for book storage.

At the front of the classroom was the teacher's large oak desk, with a pretty fancy looking chair. Along the front was a row of text books, and to one side, sat a big school bell. On the floor beside the desk was a mesh-like wastepaper basket and the teacher's leather briefcase. To a young rascal like me, it looked like a pretty nice-looking case. I was curious as to what it might contain...

Above the blackboards, in the center of the wall, hung a picture of King George VI and to one side a clock—the pendulum-type that was in every school at that time. On the other side of the wall, hung a large map of the world, quite evidently provided by Hershey & Co., because it had a large colored picture of a Hersey chocolate bar on the lower right-hand corner. Mmmm...

Cloakrooms were at the back of the class room on either side of entrance, one for boys and one for girls that were equipped with coat hooks along the walls and bathroom facilities. We also stored our lunch buckets in there.

The basement was spacious. It was used in the winter months for games and other group activities, when it was too cold and stormy to go outdoors. It also contained a coal and wood furnace for heating the school, and storage bins for the fuel. I really remember the cross bars between the floor joists in the basement. Someone would hoist you up to grab the first bar and then you could begin swinging from one bar to the next until you reached the other side. There was lots of laughter with such fun.



*Front row: Isobel and Evelyn, third and fourth from left, respectively;
Second row: Muriel, first on left and Ethel, first on right*

I looked forward to my first day of school with much anticipation. You had to be age 6 by September in order to start grade 1. My birthday was in August. I could have started in the fall of 1935 but my parents thought it was not a good idea for their youngest tyke at the time to start school, since it would not be long before it was winter and it would mean riding for 3 miles in an open cutter. So I started school after the Easter break, in either April or May.

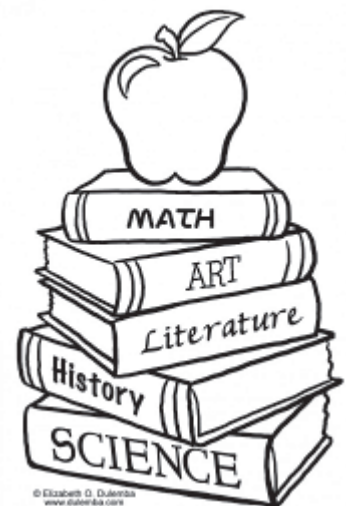
So when spring arrived, it was time for me to start school. We rode to school in a buggy, with our trusty horse "Fred" leading the way. My older sister Muriel was usually handling the reins.

Because I had older sisters, I kind of knew what to expect on my first day at school. With my syrup pail, that contained my lunch, my name initialed on the side, I entered the school, leaving my outerwear and lunch in the cloakroom. The bell rang. We were assigned a desk. Being that I was in first grade, I sat up front. There were three of us in first grade--my cousin Leslie Coutts, Basil Hodgson and myself.

My first teacher Mr. Chester Teal was quite strict. I remember him giving my sister Ethel, a warning. She seem to have difficulty staying in her desk. He threatened to get a rope from the barn and tie her in! Since this was the beginning of a new venture for me, I was just a bit concerned! I guess he was trying to teach us all a lesson.

As the school day began, I recall standing to attention to sing "O Canada," followed by the recitation of The Lord's Prayer. Next on our school agenda was the health hygiene inspection. Were our hands and fingernails clean? ... hair combed? ... teeth brushed? I think there was a chart we marked every day. Everyone looked around at each other observantly to see if someone was caught with dirty fingernails or their hair not combed 😊

We were given two scribblers (notebooks), a pencil, maybe a ruler, and a box of wax crayons. These were provided by



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the school district. We were told "you sharpen your pencil only once a day. Make it last. We cannot afford extravagance with supplies."

I always looked forward to recess time. In summer, we played "pick-up-sticks." Some of the boys played with marbles and traded them amongst themselves. I think we had a teeter totter and some swings. The older kids played catch with a softball.



Students were assigned chores in order to keep the school neat and tidy. Someone attended to the furnace. Someone else was to raise and lower the Union Jack on the flag pole.

In 1939, we moved to a new farm which meant I began to attend the Renown School with 3 of my siblings. The loss of four students at Mount Lorraine School left a big hole in the student population. The school didn't operate long after that. It was sold and eventually moved into Watrous and made into a house on Sixth Avenue.

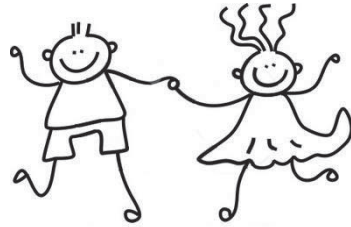


Mount Lorraine students 1937—Isobel in striped shirt in front; Evelyn to her immediate left & Muriel second to her on the right

9 What were some of the memorable things you learned as a child?

Because I was too young to remember, I only know this from what my Mother said: "Isobel was three years old and not speaking. Not forming words or sentences. We were worried. Was something wrong with this child?" Eventually I did get around to talking much to the relief of my parents! However, jokingly, my Mother said, "And once she started talking, she never quit." I think I did not need to talk because I had four older siblings who did the talking for me. So my first big accomplishment in life was learning how to talk!

When youngsters are having fun, they like to run and get excited. One night, when playing with my sisters, we were running round and round the dining room table, chasing one another. Unfortunately, I had a scotch mint in my mouth. As I drew in a deep breath, it lodged in my throat and I couldn't breathe. I don't remember the incident but apparently there were a few anxious moments. Instinctively, my Mother turned me upside down, and slapped me vigorously on the back. Out popped the mint! I lived to tell this story, told to me no doubt, in hopes that I'd learn from it.



Well, as I mentioned earlier, I DID finally learn to talk. This talkativeness got me into some pretty serious trouble a bit later on in life! On the living room ceiling was a register that allowed heat to rise into our upstairs bedroom. One evening, instead of being in bed and going to sleep, we were naughty. Peeking down through the register, we listened to, and watched what our parents were saying and doing.

The next day, I went to school telling my friends, that my parents had cracked open the box of chocolates that had been purchased as a gift for the teacher's Christmas gift. Mind you, they did intend to replace the box. But, when my parents found out what I'd done, I was in big trouble! I was severely punished, and told never to do that again or my tongue would be tied to the bedpost! Well! That was one big learning: mind what you are telling and repeating to others, it could get you into a lot of trouble!

L to R: Ethel and Isobel, off to school



Our home was about three miles from Mount Lorraine School which we attended in winter by an open cutter drawn by a horse. On this particular day, in the winter of my first year at school, the weather was calm in the forenoon, but by the end of the school day, a snow storm had come up. Blizzard conditions were making visibility and the prairie trails, very bad. The teacher, then Miss Davidson, decided it was just too

risky for a young one like me to be out in such conditions so I went to the Hovell home, where the teacher boarded. I was very nervous and frightened to be staying in a strange house with the teacher and Mr. and Mrs. Hovell. I had never stayed anywhere before, away from my home and my parents, for a sleep over!

The Hovells were an older couple with no children. The other occupant in this house, besides the teacher, was a large collie dog called, "Rover." He was gentle and well-trained by Mrs. Hovell, who gave him the commands. After we were served a nice warm supper, Mrs. Hovell filled a plate, and called "Rover" to come. He had exactly the same supper as we had and in no time licked the plate clean, went quietly away to lay down nearby. This was very different than what I was used to seeing at my home!

That night, I slept with the teacher in a big bed. I had no pyjamas so I slept in my underwear. Needless-to-say, I did not get much sleep. In the morning, I had no tooth brush so there was no star on my hygiene chart that day! What a big learning for a young one like me—my first overnight experience away from home. Something I remember in detail, even to this day.

10 What was your father like? Did you have a special connection with him?

My Dad had a lot of grit and courage to venture out to Canada as a young man. He had his seventeenth birthday aboard the ship the "Empress of Britain" that he took to cross the Atlantic in 1911.

RMS Empress of Britain, built in 1905 at Govan in Glasgow, Scotland



With a great deal of enthusiasm, he left his birth place on an adventure that he hoped would provide more opportunities than were in Scotland for him at that time. He did have some family already in Canada. He arrived in Canada on June 9, and journeyed from Quebec, the port of entry, to his sister's home, my Aunt Maggie, who was a "domestic" in Watrous.

Upon arrival, Dad had only a few coins in his pocket, but he knew how to work. Farming was in his blood. He soon got employment, working for local farmers. The economy at this time was at rock bottom but, even so, not long after Dad came to Canada, he obtained legal papers to a small parcel of land.



Robert Martin, with his oxen, before 1914

In 1914 when war was declared, Dad had no money, and again with a thirst for adventure, and willingness to sacrifice, he enlisted in Saskatoon on October 27, 1914 with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force, 28th Battalion. This strong, energetic young man, who was willing to fight for his country, was soon in France on the front line. After four years and being wounded twice, he returned to his homestead in Canada when the war ended.

During the war years, he met a "Scottish lassie" during one of his furloughs, who was interested enough in this Canadian soldier to be willing to make the trip to Canada. She came in August 1920 to become his wife and life partner. He had no living accommodation to offer her, only a one room shack. But as I mentioned earlier, Dad was a hard worker. He continued clearing land, with

oxen, to add a few acres each growing season into arable land. Dad soon built a house--a home for his family that was growing quickly in number!

I would venture to say that Dad's biggest achievement in life, that gave him the most satisfaction was first, his family and second, his purchase of the Grest farm in 1939. For him, this farm was a dream come true. It was good land and only one mile from the village of Renown which meant closer to a school. It also meant being much closer to Watrous, the larger centre.

The same year we moved to the Grest farm, war again entered the picture. Two years later, my oldest sister Rhoda, and brother Bob, joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. Gone was Dad's help from son Bob, on the farm. He had to depend on his girls for the farming duties! Under Dad's supervision we worked like men. Packing that big loft with hay in July temperatures with sweat rolling off the brow, I can still hear Dad calling up to us three girls: "Jump on it, pack it down!"



Dad's first combine, 1945

Come harvest, it was stooking, threshing, pitching bundles into the feeder of the threshing machine. I remember threshing and blowing the straw into the loft. Sometimes everything didn't go as well as expected, and a few not-so-nice words were uttered. I admit my Dad could show a bit of temper at times. I don't think he fully realized he had three inexperienced girls as workers. Muriel and Ethel were older than me and able to do more work than I could so they were often on the receiving end of his temper.

My Father was a very busy hard-working farmer, who spent most of the day away from home, in the fields, with not much relaxing time. Dad took a walk most every evening after supper in the summer, before he called it a day. He'd walk through the fields of planted grain, picking a weed here and there, and sizing things up for the future harvest. But generally, he went to bed early and got up early.

Dad worked hard, day in and day out, and expected each of us to do the same! He was on an "on-time type-of-guy." Like dinner was at twelve and supper at six, and it needed to be ready at those times!

Thinking back ... when we still had horses to do the land work, I was riding with my Dad on the seed drill. There was a step for standing on so I went along with him. It was an eight-horse team with only Dad handling the reins. It was customary to hitch some slower horses with some faster high-spirited ones, in hopes of having all eight pull at an even pace. I don't know what caused it, but the team took off, mighty fast, pulling that seed



drill, with Dad straining, pulling on the reins for dear life, and me clutching on to the lid of the drill box. Dad was persistent. He hung in there, finally getting them under control. It was an experience I don't think he soon forgot, nor me ... the time we had "a runaway" with the seed drill!

I seemed to like to be around Dad when he was with the horses. At noon, when Dad came in for dinner, I would be there to help him take the muzzles down off their head so they could eat their hay and oats. Muzzles were worn to keep the flies away from their mouth and nose. Dad would have his dinner, a short nap and then I would help him put the muzzles back on. The horses didn't like them much, shaking their heads in disgust. Usually Dad would be driving either a four or six horse team. I was always there to help Dad. He often thanked me and in an affectionate way called me, "Kurtsa Anne." I don't know what it meant but I do know he was showing his love for us when he said this. Dad did not show his emotions very much but he always meant well.

Dad was a good provider. Even with a large family in the depression years, we always had enough to eat. Each year, he planted lots of potatoes. We helped but he did the hoeing and hilling.

Dad loved nature and planting trees, especially around the homestead in the hills. He planted mostly Manitoba Maple and Caragana because they were hardy and fast growing. Another favorite of Dad's was rhubarb. It was cheap fruit and everyone enjoyed Mum's rhubarb desserts.

Dad was kind and generous to his neighbours. He gave numerous people seed wheat or oats to get them started, never expecting anything in return. He was sharing his good fortune. I will always remember one incident that showed Dad's love for humankind. He learned of a family in Renown, not long after we moved to our new farm in 1939. They were poor. The father was a war veteran. The five children did not have enough milk to drink. One child had died. Our Dad said, "We cannot throw milk to the pigs and have children starving." Every morning after that, we carried a large syrup pail of whole milk to that family.

Although Dad was frugal with his money, he was kind to us as kids. His money had come with hard work, and I respected him for that. But I remember jumping up and down as a bunch of over-enthusiastic kids when he unpacked the groceries. The last thing to come out would be a small brown bag containing some "sweeties." Our Dad portioned them out. His deep blue eyes said it all.

When the work for the day was finished, I so remember Dad's face--so dirty, just two round circles for eyes, and dirt around his lips. He would collect a wash basin of water, and standing outside, he'd wash the dirt off. Then, we actually recognized him again! Dad enjoyed his supper and then relaxed by curling up on the couch. He'd maybe doze off as he listened to a hockey game on Saturday night. He always left enough space at the end of the couch for me, another way he shared with me. It was my favorite spot to knit or do embroidery. Quite often on a long, winter evening, Dad would get up off the couch and come back with half of a rosy red apple for each of us. He was always a thoughtful provider.

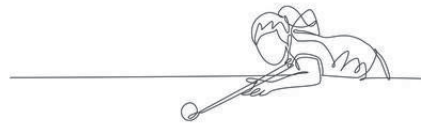
At Christmas time, Dad and Mother, somehow always seemed to scratch up enough money, probably sacrificing themselves, to give us each a gift, even if it was small. Usually, I received a book for reading or coloring, crayons or paints. They knew, even when I was young, of my interest in art. One year, I received a small Bible, with Mother's signature in it. I still have it.

Dad was an avid reader of books, especially of history and biography. He also read whatever farm newspapers that were available. If Dad got engrossed in a book, in winter, he would continue reading well into the night. He would often share some interesting parts about the book he had read with us. I found him to be knowledgeable as he kept up with what was going on in the world.

As for other things ... Dad liked to listen to Kate Smith singing "White Cliffs of Dover." I'm sure it was a reminder of his days in the war. I also remember the fun of playing cards, mostly Rummy, with Dad. We learned this card game when we were young and needless to say it could get a bit serious at times!

Dad also loved playing billiards, especially "snooker." He was almost unbeatable! In fact, he owned the Renown Pool Hall for a few years. After closing hours, Dad would let us girls attempt to play pool. We loved Dad for that!

That again, showed the fun and generous side of our Dad. He also had chocolate bars for sale, which we snuck one or two at a time. We didn't think he would miss them. At least, he never caught up with us!

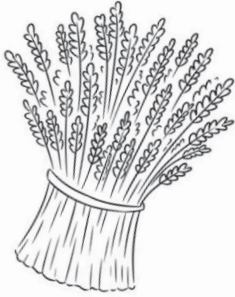


When I was keeping company with my then boyfriend Gren, Dad would sometimes drive me to Watrous, even in winter, where I would meet Gren for a couple of hours. I appreciated Dad's generosity in doing things like this. Then once I finished high school, and decided I wanted to get married to Gren, he went to ask my Dad for my "hand in marriage." Dad answered, "Yes, provided you take good care of her."

After we were married Dad liked to come to our place for a visit. He and Gren got along well together. Dad gave us his old truck when he got a new one, which under our circumstances, we thought was very good of him. He also helped us with feed for our cattle one year when we were hauled out.

Dad was never one to look back, but always looked to the future, to make things easier and more prosperous in his life time on earth and to leave his legacy of farming for those to follow.

11 When you were ten years old, things changed. What happened then?



Our homestead farm was eight miles from the village of Renown and about sixteen miles from the town of Watrous. This is where I spent the first, nearly 10 years of my life. Any way you look at it, we were very isolated. We now refer to that time as when we lived "back in the hills."

We went to school, to Sunday School or to visit the neighbours by horse and buggy or by "shank's pony" which means walking. Or, sometimes we were invited to Uncle Ronald and Aunt Alice's farm to have lunch which was a nice little change for us. So distances were great and we didn't have that many times away from the farm to visit or see others.

We had to create our own recreation at home. We had our playhouse in the trees or we would put on a tea party on a nice summer day. A swing was usually erected between two trees. Sometimes we had a softball, but most of the time I remember the stitching was coming out it, and the ball was falling apart!

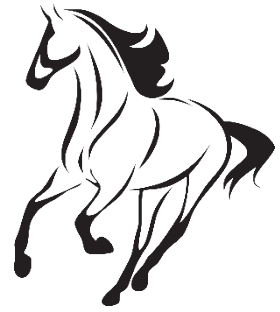
Once school age, we had homework. As soon as we were able, we were assigned chores such as doing dishes and sweeping the floor after supper. I started milking cows at the age of ten, and helped to turn the cream separator handle. Collecting eggs was a daily chore, which we were taught to do very carefully.

We always had pets. A must was a good dog--friendly with kids but able to chase animals and to warn of approaching strangers. Sometimes we had more than one cat and baby kittens. Every spring there was batches of little chicks, most of them raised from own clucking hens.

Hens were not one of my favorite creatures to be around! I did not like putting my hand under a hen to gather the eggs. The old hens got "broody." They were called "clucking hens." They wanted to sit on the eggs and hatch them into chicks. So they would cause a fuss when you went near them, and even "pick at you" because they did

not want you touching the eggs beneath them. Some roosters you could not trust. They would chase you!

The pasture, where the horses grazed, was a couple miles away. Two or three of us would be sent to bring the horses back home. One horse called "Ruby" had an evil eye. She could not be trusted. She would double back on us, causing us no end of trouble! But once the gate was dropped, they would usually head for home, knowing there was a feed of hay and oats awaiting them.



One incident I remember quite well, happened when we were on our way to Hawkshaw School, about three miles away. We were going to Sunday School. Our trusty old horse "Fred" was hitched to the buggy. I think we hit a bump in the road. I fell off the buggy seat, and landed down in front of the buggy wheel. It went right over me! I was very scared but not injured. I think it was quite sometime later before that episode was shared with my parents ... 😊

Hawkshaw Sunday School picnics were a highlight of our summer holidays. If it was in later July, it usually took place at one of the Hedlin farms. The Hedlin women were our Sunday School teachers. They were Lutherans. I remember Mrs. Hedlin let us loose in her garden. What delicious little red tomatoes we found there! These times together were so much fun!

I also remember trying to learn how to ride a horse. It was recess time at school. We were taking turns learning to ride a trusty old nag. When it was my turn, someone helped me up, but I didn't go far, when I fell off! Oh boy. The result was a cut on my head so I had to admit to the teacher and of course my parents, what had taken place.

Living on the homestead farm was busy, with lots of adventures. We were one big happy family, and our social life beyond the farm with our friends and neighbours, revolved around school, Sunday School, picnics and the Christmas concert in winter.

Our family with our Munro cousins, 1940:

Back Row L to R: Rhoda; Ethel holding Wayne; Ronald & Alice Munro holding Janet; Carl Munro; my Dad, Robert Martin

Front Row L to R: Kay; John; Ron Munro; Helen Munro; Isobel; Evelyn; Allan Munro; Douglas Munro



But when I was about to turn 10, things were about to change. We were so very excited when Dad announced to us, that come spring 1939, we'd be moving to a new place—the Grest farm. We would have only one mile to walk to school!

On one of the moving days I insisted on riding the eight miles to our new home, on top of the stuff loaded on the truck. As we drove along, I remember my hair blowing in the wind. I was so carefree, ready to start a new chapter in my young life. Leaving the homestead, early childhood school friends and faithful neighbours was indeed painful, but on the other hand, I was excited about the future. I wondered, what lay ahead for "the Martin family?"

The move must have been somewhat bittersweet though for my parents too. They were leaving their first home built with my Father's hands, the birth place



for eight of us. Yet, the prospects of improving their lot in life, with a large family, seemed the right thing to do.

*The Grest farm,
near Renown, SK
early 1950s*

Big changes were taking place in our lives. For instance, we now had a truck. Our horses were loaded up and taken away. There was sadness as we bid farewell to our faithful companions, even our high-spirited "Ruby." In fact, we cried. Dad still kept a team of horses on hand to hitch to the stone boat to clean the barn or for emergency conveyance in winter. Tractors took over the field work.

When we left Mount Lorraine, the school district held a farewell for the four of us who were students there. In our new location, we walked to school every day, summer and winter. In the winter, my sister Ethel led the way because we decided she had the longest legs so could break the trail ☺

I was nine years old when we moved. It was quite a large step for me, coming from a small one-room rural school. Our new school in Renown had three rooms and three teachers! The high school teacher was the principal. I was overwhelmed. There were so many new rules and regulations! It was a big change for all of us to accept.

Grades one to four were in one room; five and six in "the chemistry room" and seven to twelve in the third room. Because the school population had grown so much, "the chemistry room" was converted into a classroom. I spent two years in that room. It was small and crowded. There were heating pipes going down the sides of it, with desks positioned here and there around them. There was no blackboards, no cloakroom and no place for book bags and lunch pails.

Our parents supplied everything we needed for school including text books. There was no assistance from the school board like there had been at Mount Lorraine.

I missed the beginning of the fall term in 1939 when we were starting school at Renown because I had fallen ill. That probably also made my adjustment to the new school a little more challenging.

I was in a coma for several days. My Uncle Carl brought "smelling salts" for me to breathe in, to relieve the delirium but to no avail. I was never diagnosed by a medical doctor but my Mother believed it was sun stroke, or heat stroke. She

thought I was carrying water to the harvesters in the field on a very hot day, and perhaps not wearing proper head covering.

A new school also meant we now had to make new friends. Recess was different. Most everyone played softball. There were three ball diamonds in the school yard. Some older students would take a stroll downtown, but our parents forbid us to leave the playground. We didn't mind except on Mondays when a business man who operated a sweetie shop, would give away a handful of "Monday candy." You can imagine how envious we felt, as they came back to school enjoying their treat. But our parents never relented. A rule was a rule!

Our family picnic time that we'd enjoyed "in the hills," was no more. Instead, in Renown, it was called a "Sports Day" where everything was a competition. High jump was one of my best events. There was sack racing and of course softball. My favorite position was catcher.

As we grew older, we melded in with the town kids instead of being "country bumpkins." But, we rarely participated in after-school activities. We had a mile to walk back and forth. We also had farm chores and sometimes homework.

I loved my early childhood homestead home where I have very fond memories of sad and fun times, growing up in a large family of brothers and sisters. On the other hand, I was eager for change and approved of the move to our new home and our new location, even if meant quite an adjustment. My childhood didn't come to a noticeable dead stop at age ten but when we moved to the new location, we seemed to leave behind the kinds of things we played at as children. After the move, we seemed to do more "grown up" activities and of course we were responsible for more chores.

12 What were the chores you had to do at home?

Doing chores was a "must" for every member of our family. As we came of age to help, you were assigned chores. Even when we were very young, my sister Ethel and I were asked in the summer to gather a small handful of kindling for Dad to light the coal and wood stove each morning. He would get the stove going, put on the porridge and then head out to do the barn chores. My older

siblings would split logs and fill the coal scuttle. There were many chores to do and each of us did our share, according to our capabilities.

From a very early age, we were constantly reminded to make our bed, tuck our pyjamas under our pillow and keep our room tidy. By school age, when we got home, we changed out of our school clothes making sure they were hung up, ready for the next day. Lunch pails were cleaned and left to air out.

Saturday was the weekly cleaning day. This day was for Mum to have help with household chores. "The spoon drawer" was cleaned out and the cutlery tidied. Mum would instruct us to "wipe the spots off," which meant cleaning the outside of the cupboards from sticky fingers and such like, as far up as we could reach. The walls in the homestead house had blue and white checked vinyl-like table cloth material glued on the walls. It was easy to wipe clean and more serviceable than wallpaper.

When I was young, I wasn't able to help much. My turn came after we moved into our new and much bigger home on the farm near Renown. We had a large kitchen floor to scrub plus three steps going upstairs. My sister Ethel and I shared this work once a week, always on Saturday. We had an imaginary line. Each did one half. It worked out quite well!

In the summer, when we finished the kitchen floor, we took the warm, soapy water and scrubbed the outhouse--seats and floor. And we would put out whatever we had for toilet paper. Another job accomplished! In winter, we had a toilet pail in our bedroom because it was too cold to go outdoors. Our chore was to have it emptied as often as necessary. This was one chore none of us liked doing but it had to be done!

Another Saturday chore was to fill up the gas lamp which was our only source of light in the evenings. We also had to put "coal oil "or kerosene into three or four lamps and also the lantern used for barn chores. The glass chimneys on the kerosene lamps had to be carefully cleaned on a regular basis. There was no power on the farm until 1947. But from 1939 - 1947, we did have "wind electric" that supplied us with limited energy for lights. Not many farms had this. There

were a series of batteries in the basement for storing excess energy. We were harnessing the wind!

Our coal and wood stove had, on one end, quite a large reservoir. Our chore was to gather as much clean snow as we could carry in a container and dump it into the reservoir. It got warmed somewhat from the heat of the stove. Keeping the reservoir filled with an ample supply of water was important! This was also our source of bath water on Saturday night. Mum used the water on Monday when she did laundry.

Speaking of wash day-- Mum was a firm believer of keeping things like sheets as white as snow. Even in the winter, they were hung outdoors, pinned to the clothesline. What a chore it was to bring them in as stiff as boards and then to hang them over an indoor clothes line to dry where we had to dodge in and around them. There were some very cold fingers with that chore!

I will always remember the day I started milking cows. I was ten years old. I took a syrup pail and an old stool, and went out to the nearby pasture, where the milk cows were grazing. I called "come boss." The old cow stopped. I sat down on the stool and she stood still right there, and let me milk her. Well! That was it. From that day until I was married, I milked cows.

Sometimes I milked two or three, one right after the other. There were lots of incidents. A dirty old tail switching in your face or a fidgety cow threatening to put her foot in the milk pail. All part of milking cows.



I did not like the dark mornings in winter, lantern in hand, trudging through the snow to the barn for milking in order to be done before getting ready for school. I don't know why I was assigned the chore of milking cows. I was just doing as I was told, I guess, and I also had a knack for it. Plus, to disobey meant being sent to one's room or missing supper! When I was at home, my Mother also milked as did my sisters Ethel and Muriel.

The milk was put through a screen into the cream separator bowl. You had to turn handle on the separator at a steady pace to separate the cream from the milk. The cream was of course, the most valuable in ingredient within the milk. It was stored in an ice well. Ours was a hole dug in the ground, about 5 by 8 feet across. Dad would cut blocks of ice from the frozen slough, put them down there and cover them with straw. A ladder was the only way up and down.

The cream was stored in a special "cream can," with your surname painted on it. It sat on top of an ice block to keep it cool, until it was picked up from the farm once a week by truck and taken to the Co-op Creamery at Young, Saskatchewan. Later, the cream was shipped by train from Renown to Young. It was graded according to its freshness, its butter fat content, etc. The cheque for it was received in the mail. That cream cheque was very important. We depended on it to pay for our groceries. And it all came as a result of "old Bossy" the cow!

Milking was a day-and-night everyday-of-the-week job. Some whole milk was saved for our use but the separated milk, we took back to the barn to feed the young calves. You corralled a calf in the corner, stuck two fingers into its mouth, lowering its head into the pail of milk. It sucked on your fingers, drawing up the milk. That is how we taught the young calves to drink milk. They soon learned and didn't need the finger anymore.

I must not forget the cats. We usually had two, three or more eagerly waiting for some nice warm milk. I would squirt the milk right from the cow's teat into the cat's mouth. How they enjoyed that! They would sit so still in that posed position, waiting for more 😊. As well, they were always served a generous bowl of milk in the barn!

We had many fun times doing chores. On Saturday afternoon, we could bake a cake or jam- filled cupcakes, which were a favorite, or cookies. These would be a treat for Sunday but also to put in our lunch buckets come Monday. Sometimes we made homemade ice-cream. We had to share cranking the handle but it was worth it to be able to have such a delicious dessert!

13 What was your mother like? Did you have a special connection with her?



My Mother was Isabella Blair Munro but known as "Lovey." She had an active life in Scotland. She is seen on the left, with her best friend, Nel Findlay.

My Mother came to Canada as a war bride following WW1. She and my Dad had "fallen for each other" during one of my Dad's convalescent periods after he had been wounded, when he was visiting Scotland. He promised to bring her to Canada to become his wife when he returned.

She boarded the ship, "Saturnia 1910," (see below) in Glasgow, Scotland arriving in Quebec City on August 15, 1920. She was 21 years old.

Soon after, my parents were married in Winnipeg on September 17, 1920. Dad, at this point, was employed in railroad construction but come spring, he headed west to his farm in Saskatchewan, with his new bride.



Their living accommodation was an uninsulated one-room "shack." Can you imagine spending a prairie winter under these circumstances?

This was the beginning of many rough days ahead for my Mother, as she began her homestead life. When she first arrived, she stayed with a married couple for a while instead of moving into "the shack." There, she experienced criticism.

They made fun of her and laughed for example, at the clothes she had brought to Canada in her trunk. This was very hurtful, and so she said to Dad, that she ready to move to the shack!



My parents, early homestead days

It was not long and my oldest sister Rhoda was born there, with no medical doctor in attendance. A couple of neighbour women helped with the delivery.

Fortunately, everything went well. Mother and baby checked out alright when the doctor arrived, some time later.

My Mother had some experience with sewing in Scotland. She had worked with a milliner, making hats. The clothes in her trunk were not wasted. They were remade into garments for her children to wear.



My mother with Rhoda, Bob & Muriel in clothing made from garments she'd brought from Scotland

Later, when Rhoda was old enough to treadle the sewing machine Mum taught her how to sew. She then became the dress maker for the whole family, especially for us girls. The pattern and material came from Eaton's catalogue. Most of our clothes, including our Sunday dresses, including Mum's aprons, were all made by Rhoda. Mum's aprons are worthy of note. She was not dressed without her apron! Even on Sunday, she wore a nice clean, light-colored one. Those aprons served many purposes such as wiping tears, hiding behind, gathering eggs and picking peas.

My Mother often spoke of the many lonely days she experienced after her arrival on the prairies. Having left her parental home in Scotland, it was often many months between letters from, or about her parents. As each year passed, the relationships grew more distant. Then, she would receive a letter of their passing. Because of the great distance, she had only those fond memories of her younger life with them.

With Dad being out in the field, working all day, she looked forward with anticipation to his safe arrival home each night. And, with having started their family, Mother was so thankful to have little ones around her. Mother liked music. She had sung in the choir in her Presbyterian Church congregation in

Scotland. So while she rocked her babies to sleep, she could be heard humming one of her favorite hymns.

Upon taking up the duty of feeding a hungry husband, and later children, my Mother was the first to admit she had to learn how to cook, from the very beginning. There were many "trial runs" before she could produce a good loaf of bread or a delicious rhubarb pie. Dad must have been patient and didn't complain if all was not perfect! (I could feel for her because I didn't know much about making bread and pies when I was first married.) She learned mostly by experience and from her neighbours. She often spoke of her kind and thoughtful neighbours. They were her only source of communication with other women.

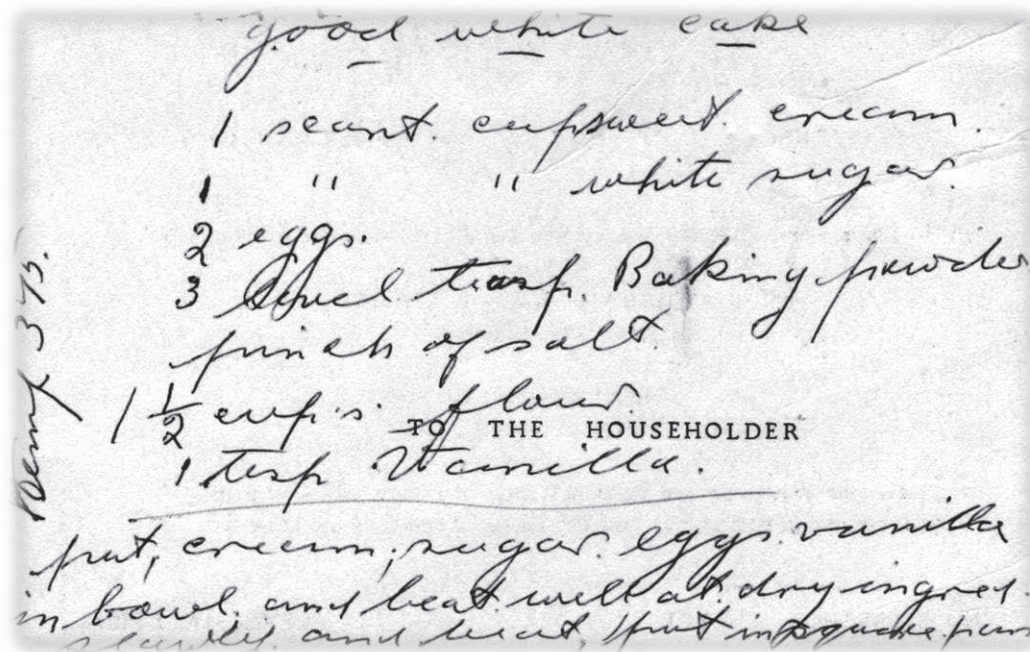
My Mother believed that only essential work was done on Sunday. She never washed clothes or ironed on Sunday. There was no sewing or mending. The baking was done on Saturday. It was the Lord's Day and it was important to keep it Holy! That was how she was brought up. I don't remember Dad hitching up horses and going to the field on Sunday. During threshing time, the crew did not work on Sunday.

When the threshing crew was on our farm property, it was a very busy time for Mother. It meant three meals a day, plus an afternoon lunch while she also had young children to look after. One of my sisters and I were both born in the middle of harvest time too. It would have taken a lot of stamina to cope with all the demands.

Mother always had a garden. Under her supervision, when I was very young I learned the difference between a weed and a garden plant. I learned how to pull a pea pod off a plant without damaging the rest of it, and indeed, how to pick and shell many pails of garden peas! And, it did not end there!!

The produce needed to be processed in jars for future meals. The basement shelves would be lined with jars of vegetables, meat, some pickles or relish but I don't remember seeing much jam or jelly or jars of fruit although we did pick

wild berries and preserve rhubarb. My parents were feeding a large family in the most economical but nutritious way they could. We never went to bed hungry!



One of my Mother's favourite recipes in her handwriting written on a scrap of paper.

It seemed to be an accomplishment and a source of pride to be able to prepare a good light, quick and easy, white cake. My Mother's favorite recipe, in her hand writing, is included above. It was an easy desert for threshing time. It made a large cake that could be cut into many pieces and topped with sauce made from locally-picked Saskatoon or home-grown rhubarb sauce. It was delicious!

I shared many chores with my Mother such as making butter, feeding young calves, or slopping pigs. We also milked cows together, and she would share the cream cheque with me, which showed the generous side of her character.

I recall the year 1942, when the new farm produced an abundant crop. The bins were filling up because we had so much wheat coming off the fields. WW2 was on the go, and my oldest sister Rhoda and brother, Bob had left for the War. Hence, Dad was dependent upon the rest of the family for help. Mother and I had the job of auguring the grain into a big bin. The method of getting it there was very trying to say the least! It mean cranking an old gas motor by hand, and

the use of an old, home-made auger. But working together, we managed the task somehow. We pushed the grain to every corner of that bin to try to make room for more. It was bulging at the seams!

Mother was always willing to take on most tasks. Unfortunately, she never learned to drive a car. I think she regretted this later in life when all her drivers had left home ☹️

What my Mother and I shared most of all was our love for knitting. She showed me how to knit socks at age ten. We knit socks for the soldiers in WW2. The Red Cross supplied the wool. We would put our name and address inside each pair of socks. I got a reply. I thought that was great!

My Mother and I did not always see "eye-to-eye." Sometimes, we had a bit of a clash perhaps because our personalities were similar. When I asked my husband about this, he thought the same thing. She and I were both determined and had a streak of perfectionism.

My Mother was also a disciplinarian. When she asked us to do something, or to go and return at a certain time, we knew orders must be obeyed! With six girls, things could get out of hand! When Gren and I were courting, I would be coming

home at a later hour. Just when I'd be trying to sneak quietly upstairs, Mother would call out, "Is that you, Isobel?" She was just letting me know that she was awake and keeping track!



My Mother wanted her children to achieve in their lives and to grow up to be good citizens. She saw to it that we were baptized into the Christian faith and she wanted us to attend Sunday School. At times, she struggled to achieve these goals, but to her credit, she tried.

My Mother and I, on her 80th birthday, in 1978

My mother shed tears over her family. She never quite accepted the death of her son John, when he passed at age forty nine. She had shared quite a few trying times but her love for every one of us never wavered. We were born of her, and once a Mother, always a Mother.

I shared some very fond memories with my Mother when in 1969, my husband Gren and I, travelled with her to Britain. My Dad died in 1968, and after his death, she wanted to go back to her homeland one last time.

My stories of that trip, where she was able to show me all the places she knew so well, are included in a later chapter. The time in Scotland brought back a flood of memories for her. I was so fortunate to be introduced to her family and friends there. It was a dream-come-true for my Mother, and I was happy to make that dream happen for her.

Following my Dad's passing, Mother lived seventeen more years. She continued to live in her beloved "little house" in Watrous where they had retired. Then, the last four years of her life, she resided in Manitou Lodge. She longed to go back to her house as she never quite accepted the life offered at the Lodge.

A hard-working prairie pioneer woman, our loving Mother rests with my Dad in the Martin family plot in the Watrous cemetery. I was fortunate to be named after her, and to be her daughter.

14 What did you like/not like about being from a big family?

In pioneer days, large families were quite common. For one thing, it was handy to have lots of help on the farm but not only farm folks had large families. The lack of effective birth control methods could also have been a factor.

We were considered a large family with six girls and three boys. I was the fifth child with four older and four younger than me. As a large family, I think we learned a number of lessons, one of which was to share--our toys, our clothes, sometimes food or treats.

I know my Mother liked children and my Dad liked the help on the farm. In the early years of their pioneer life, children around my Mother's knee is what kept her from feeling lonely and isolated. Caring, feeding and talking to her children occupied her day when Dad was away for hours-on-end while working in the fields.



*Back Row, L to R: Bob; Isobel; Evelyn; Rhoda; Ethel; John
Front Row: L to R: Muriel; Mum and Dad; Wayne and Kay*

Dad was the "breadwinner" so his way of raising the family was of a different nature than Mum. He had a growing family with several mouths to feed. As we matured into helpful teenagers, we did spend more time with him, working alongside him on the farm. We listened to his

adventurous life stories and in his gentle way, he prepared us for the future and what may lie ahead. I like to think Dad appreciated each member of his large family as was expressed in how hard he worked to be a good provider.

Growing up with many siblings in one household was challenging. But, the older ones took care of the ones younger than them. My oldest sister Rhoda, born in 1921, was more like a mother to me. My Mother stated many times, that even when Rhoda was quite young, she depended on her to help look after her younger brother and sisters. She had a definite role in our up-bringing.

I understand Rhoda and then Bob, only a year apart, were great companions. Bob, born in 1922, would even play with dolls with his sister. Bob also had a very favorite pussy cat. He could do anything and everything with it but the cat never objected. He would even lay on the floor using the cat for a pillow. Because I was younger, I can't of

course recall too much of Bob's early years. I know his cousin Jimmy Martin was his best buddy. They were the same age, and spent much time at one another's homes. (The Jim Martin family--my Dad's brother were our farm neighbours. They had a large family too--two girls and seven boys.)

Rhoda and Bob had finished school by the time I started at Mount Lorraine. When we rode to school with horse and buggy, it was Muriel who was the driver. In winter, while we were cozy under a fur steer robe, Muriel would be standing holding on to the reins. She always had a good pair of warm mitts to wear. One pair I remember, were made of fur.

Muriel, born in 1924, was good with figures and worked as a store clerk with our Uncle Carl Munro in the village of Imperial. As youngsters we often "played school." I recall my sisters Muriel and Ethel helping me understand numbers, which helped when I went to real school. Ethel went on to become a teacher before taking up nursing.

Ethel, born in 1926, was two years older than me. She had long legs and was a good runner. We participated together in summer sports activities. We would practice ahead of time in hopes of winning a race. If you did, you'd be given a piece of paper to take to the concession stand that said, "one free ice-cream cone" or "one free bottle of pop or lemonade."

Ethel and I were close sisters over the years. We probably got into lots of mischief but nothing serious that I can recall. We liked to get dressed up in our "Sunday best," to go to Sunday School. We spent hours playing house in the trees.

I never had a doll of my very own. At that time, the big fad was the "Eaton Beauty Doll," but I never got one. But, I did have a set of china dishes that were a Christmas gift. My sister Evelyn, two years younger than me, was carrying my dishes down the stairs. I don't know why, but the result was a crash and the set of dishes broke into many pieces. I know some tears were shed over that one!

Evelyn, born in 1931, tagged along with Ethel and I. She started school at Mount Lorraine but when we then moved to the farm near Renown, she had quite an

adjustment with a new school. Evelyn was of a more shy nature. She was a good scholar though and when she finished high school, she became a teacher. There's a little story about Evelyn and I for which I have a picture for proof! One day, after having washed the kitchen floor, when on her way to the outhouse with a pail of soapy water in hand, we met one another. I guess I passed some remark because she lifted the pail and let me have it, full force. I was drenched! Evelyn ended up, feet sticking out of the large garbage barrel. Guess who is holding the broom?!



Evelyn in the garbage barrel

Another reality of being in a large family was learning to share our Mother's love and concern. I am thinking for example, when every one of us came down with a communicable disease at the same time! Mum was called upon many times to wipe tears or a sweaty, feverish brow.

One of my favorite pastimes was colouring. At school for Mother's Day, I recall making a letter holder using two paper plates, colouring flowers on it and attaching a string for hanging it. I was so proud of my achievement, and I hoped my Mother would like it and be proud of me too.

The youngest three members of our family—John, Kay and Wayne, born in 1934, 1937 and 1939 respectively, arrived during more affluent times. Life had changed and our family had been effected too. In a period of ten to twelve years, times were different. There was no longer a depression or hardships like had been known during the lives of the first six of us to be born in this family.

I did not know as much about the three of them as youth because they were much younger than me. Wayne was only 9 years old when I left home to be married. This is another reality of being a large family—the older ones didn't grow up with the younger ones.

We were, I would say, under the circumstances, quite a happy lot as a family. I think we showed respect for one another. There was a "hiccup" now and again. We were human. Each of us had our own personalities. Sometimes Mother or Dad had to step in and settle an argument, but life carried on. Some time in our growing-up years, Muriel and Ethel had "an outing" with one another, which lasted quite a while. This brought some sadness to our large family but thank goodness, reconciliation finally happened. Love in a family runs very deep and I like to think such was the situation in our large family, with never a dull moment. As those days passed into years, I think our family bonds grew stronger.



Martin family, 1965 on the occasion of my Mum and Dad's 45th wedding anniversary

Back Row L to R: Kay; Wayne; Evelyn; Bob; John & Isobel; Front Row L to R: Muriel, Mum, Dad, Ethel & Rhoda



15 What did you learn about the WW1 from your father?

My Father was a veteran of WW1. Most of what I know about his experience is from what I remember being told in my growing up years. Some information has also been added by my daughter Teresa who has done research on my Father's military service.

When the war broke out, as I have said earlier, my Dad had already emigrated to Canada. He had

"proved up" his homestead some distance in the hills south west of Watrous. To encourage settlement in Western Canada, the Government offered a grant for a free homestead of 160 acres (also known as a quarter section) for a \$10.00 registration fee to those individuals and families who were prepared to live on and cultivate the land during a qualifying period of time. The process of fulfilling these duties was referred to as "proving up" the homestead. Once this was done, the ownership of the land was transferred from the Crown to the homesteader.

Initially, when Dad filed for a homestead, and then went to see it, he found it was just a "pile of rocks." He soon exchanged that land for another quarter section that became his homestead. Dad also worked for other local farmers and ranchers during the summer. But, winters were pretty tough. He was eating a daily diet of boiled wheat to survive.

The army offered a sure, comparatively substantial, pay cheque. Still "footloose and fancy free," the army looked pretty good to him. So he decided to join up, only months after war had begun, assuming that it wouldn't be long and he'd soon be back on his homestead.



*Robert Martin: 2nd from right in the second row from the bottom
4th or D Company, 16th platoon, 28th Battalion*

Dad was an energetic young man. Just what the army was looking for! He signed up on October 27, 1914 in Saskatoon where they were recruiting for the 28th Battalion of the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force. His Regimental number was 73622. The 28th Battalion was mobilized in Winnipeg and he left Canada on May 29, 1915 bound for England. On September 18, the 28th Battalion left England for France.

Without a lot of training, Dad soon found himself in the middle of war! He saw action for a full year before he endured a wound to the neck in September 1916. On the front line, he was severely wounded by a piece of shrapnel that whizzed by the back of his neck. A fraction deeper, it would have ruptured the main artery. He was rushed to the field hospital and then to a military hospital in Liverpool, England.

Dad spoke of being a proud soldier and committed to his duty. He was awarded a "Good Conduct" medal in 1916. When talking with our family, he did not dwell on his time spent in the war even though he was in the midst of conflict in a number of well-known battles. He did tell us stories of how he survived the ordeal of the trenches when trying to sleep with rats and other critters climbing all over them to get into their knapsacks for food.

After Dad was wounded the first time, it was only ten days before he returned to action in France. He was there for another 3 months when he came back to a military convalescent hospital in England. Then in Spring 1917, Dad was moved to the 15th Battalion and promoted to Corporal as a physical training instructor at Bramshott, England, a Canadian training camp.

A year later, he was returned to the 28th Battalion where he reverted to the rank of Private and went back into action in France for five months. He was wounded in the back and side in early October 1918. He was transferred to a military hospital in Colchester, England. Dad was on his way back into action, after convalescing from this injury, when Armistice was declared. In the south of England, he was in a good location then, for the return to Canada, and thus, was back home before Christmas in 1918.

Dad served for four years in the military, with 18 months of that, in France, in action. At the time of discharge, his file describes his character and conduct as "very good." Because of his two casualties, he was entitled to wear two gold stripes on his uniform. He was awarded three medals: 1914-1915 Star, sometimes called the Mons Star; the British War Medal 1914-1919, and the Victory Medal 1914-1918. His medals were given to my oldest sister, Rhoda.

Dad was among the first groups of soldiers who arrived back in Canada after Armistice. On arriving, he was discharged from his duties as a Canadian soldier. A series of questions were asked, including one concerning his health. Dad was so relieved to have survived the war, to be getting out of the army and to be once again on safe ground, he said, "A-1, okay!" That sealed it. He ended up with absolutely no veterans benefits or war pension.

Once he realized his mistake, it was too late. How he could have used those extra dollars on return to his homestead and in later years, to support his growing family! This story was told many times over the years. Obviously it was something for which he had regrets. But as I said earlier, he didn't dwell on his years in the military.

I do recall Dad demonstrating his marching skills to us and using the broom handle as his gun and then as his bayonet which was his only means of defense against the enemy. His storytelling almost made you cringe. It did not happen often, but at times, he would cast his mind back to the horrific days of war.

Now, I often wonder what my Dad's thoughts were as he sat on a plough seat, hours at a time, driving a team of oxen under a blue prairie sky, when he was free of gun fire, barbwire barriers, and someone shouting orders at him ...

Did my Dad suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder? I don't know. He did complain of severe headaches, and because of abdominal surgery, he suffered from a very bad back. Dad had a special chair that had its' legs shortened so he could slip on and off, easily. He also wore a specially-made leather back brace. But with a strong constitution, he took life in stride and did not do a lot of complaining about his past experiences. However, I do think my Father's

years in the war--the injuries and the stress he endured, shortened his life. He died at age 73.

My Father was always a Legion member, but he really disagreed with the way his military comrades were treated. Some suffered from post-war ailments, for example, after having been subject to gas attacks. Some had "shell shock" resulting in speech impediments. The Legion did not offer them any help which disappointed Dad very much. When they really needed a bit of help after giving their lives to serve in the war, the Legion let them down.

Then in 1939, Canada was again involved in war despite WW1—the Great War being "the war to end all wars." Of course, the start of another war reminded our Dad of his past experience.

Our cousin Jimmy Martin was of military age and joined the Forces. My Dad's advice to him was "Do not volunteer for anything." Jimmy did not heed the advice from a former soldier who knew the horrors of war first-hand. Before long, Jimmy volunteered to train as a paratrooper, and then served with the Armed Forces of the USA. To our knowledge, on his first trip over enemy territory, he was shot down and killed. He was 23 years of age. This brought much sadness to my family, especially to my Father. He was heartbroken to hear that news. For him, war had again raised its ugly head. Jimmy had been around our home so much as a good buddy of my brother, Bob. Jimmy's resting place is the Anzio Beach Head cemetery in Italy.



16 What memories do you have from your time at the Renown School?

After our parents announced to us that we would be leaving the homestead, and moving everything we owned to relocate to a much larger farm and a two-story house, our excitement grew each day until that eventful time arrived! It was the spring of 1939, and this move also meant we would be going to a new school. We were a lively bunch of kids, and those of us still at home were ages six to fifteen, at the time. We would be walking one mile now on a trail

across country to a large three-room, brick building located on the outskirts of the village of Renown.

The new school meant settling into a much different routine than we were used to at Mount Lorraine. The students were divided up between the three rooms according to grade, and there were many more kids in each grade than had been the case at our rural school. Our class room had rows of desks to accommodate quite a number of students. There was possibly six or eight in my grade three class. The desks were even of a different style. We put our books and belongings under the desk top.

Obedience seemed like a word that was used more often too. There was a strap in the teacher's drawer. One could be sent out of the classroom or even sent to the principal's office! This left us doing some thinking! Maybe shuddering a bit too. If I remember correctly, I was said to be a bit on the defiant side. The teacher was making an example of my answer to a math problem in front of the entire class. I took offence! I must have said something to her which landed me in the adjoining room to cool down!

Yes, the new school was a big change for us, quite different in comparison to Mount Lorraine. At first, it was overwhelming for me and my siblings. Some of us were now teenagers. Our study habits needed to be established, and coordinated in relation to our chores and other home responsibilities.



Me and my friend, Lois Patterson at the Renown School

Because we were farm kids, we were not able to take part in many after-school activities such as baseball. But, my sisters and I enjoyed participating in recess activities, and also the "Sports Day" which was a special time for athletic students. Each of us seemed to bring home a few red ribbons to proudly show to our parents!

Something quite unique happened when I attended Renown School. We had a "Student's Strike!" We

actually stood our ground. As the morning bell rang out, we threw open the big windows fully wide, and one by one, we threw some of our books out the windows, then stomped out of the classroom. The provocation for the unrest had something to do with being assigned extra homework over holidays. We had tons of fun planning the strike and carrying it out! The teacher was pretty much stunned by this but he did bring things under control as we continued on with morning exercises. He was an older-type guy, kind of a push-over. I don't remember suffering any consequences following this event!



Evelyn and I on our way to school

My all-time favorite class at Renown School was art. For an hour every Friday afternoon, I studied artists and their work, and then I spent time coloring or painting. At the end of the school year, the teacher picked out the best art pieces each student had done and sent them to the Craft Department of the Saskatoon Exhibition, where they were judged and marked accordingly, with a ribbon and/or money award given to the artist. I looked forward to showing some of my pictures at that event where I won some awards and money. One piece that won an award was of an Indigenous man wearing a colourful head dress, and others, were pictures of flowers.

In grade 12, I wrote a final exam on art. All final exams were sent and marked by the Saskatchewan Department of Education. The other subject I liked was social studies which included history and geography.

After nine years at the Renown School, I graduated from grade 12. By then, I was the only student left in my class to graduate! My classmates had been mostly boys, and one by one, they quit, and I was left. Moreover, the school population had decreased at an alarming rate in those nine years. Some kids left in grade 8 because they didn't want to go into high school. Most of the boys left to go to work. None of these students were of the age to join the military but perhaps because their older siblings had "joined up," they were needed to work

on the farm. Getting a higher education was also not emphasized then as it is now.



Renown School Girl Cadets

WW2 started in 1939. The same year we started at the Renown School. Of course, schools were involved in the war effort. Ours too. There was "Saving

Stamps" and "Savings Bonds," but we had little or no money to invest. Our teacher at this time who was a WW1 veteran, was instrumental in organizing a group of girl army cadets. My sister Ethel and I were members of this group. Our uniforms included khaki shirts, brown skirts, brown tie, and a small beanie-style cap. One person was the leader. I remember doing marching drills. Posture was stressed to no end as we heard: "Throw your shoulders back!" At that time it seemed like it was part of the school curriculum.

I am always very proud and grateful to have obtained most of my education at Renown School.

High School days





Renown School students, 1947

*Front row, 4th from left, Wayne; second row, 2nd from left, Kay;
Third row, 4th from left, John; Top row, 4th from left, Evelyn; 5th from left, Isobel*

17 Who were your childhood and adolescent friends?



L to R: Kay, Rhoda, Isobel & Evelyn

My first friends were my sisters. We spent many hours in the company with one another. We played together. We laughed together. We cried when one of us did not feel well or had been hurt.

One day, Evelyn and I were playing around the wood pile, throwing logs from one place to another to make the wood pile higher. Two little kittens were enjoying our company. Evelyn pitched a log and accidentally struck one of the kittens. It was motionless on the spot. We felt so bad, especially Evelyn, as she had thrown the log. In fact, she was horrified! We both cried and cried.

My cousin Millie Martin and I shared some summer holiday time. She was one year older than me, and lived close by. It was usually raspberry picking time. We picked together, and then I got to bring some home to share with my family.

At Mount Lorraine, the rural school, my classmates were my friends, both boys and girls. In preparation for Valentine's Day, considerable time was spent making cards for each person. They were dropped into the Valentine box which was always nicely decorated. There was lots of excitement on February 14 when the box was about to be opened, to reveal all the beautiful handmade cards. There was also lots of teasing that went on over who got a Valentine card from whom!

Once we moved to the Renown School, I made new and different friends. Girls—some older, some younger, grouped together at recess time. We often took a stroll down to the local post office to see what mail had come in, or wave to the conductor as the train passed through at the station.

The Davis family moved from Sylvania, Saskatchewan, where they had been farming, to operate the Renown Co-op General Store. The family lived above the

store. Mr. Davis, a WW1 veteran, had serious health problems. This left Mrs. Davis as the store keeper. The Davis family were kind and generous people. Mrs. Davis—Lois--was one of our Sunday School teachers.

I liked to visit the store. Being a General Store, it had a little bit of everything, including of course, what all kids like--comic books and treats. There were four girls in the family: Ruth, Kay, Evelyn and Joan. They were good friends of ours and they all worked in the store. We saw them nearly every day because our Mum usually had something she wanted us to bring home from there.

During my growing up years, Renown was quite a transient community in the sense that there were many families who came and left. The train station was very busy. The station masters and section foremen changed frequently. There were also three grain elevator agents. These men brought their families with them into the community. Sometimes close friendships were made, and then we were sorry to see them move on.

My very special friend at Renown School was Marie Merinsky. We shared many girlfriend secrets. I don't think she was in the same grade as me, maybe one grade lower. Together, we enjoyed music and singing. I have an ear for music. I could pick out a tune on the piano, but obtaining a piano was not on the family priority list at that time, so I didn't have the opportunity to learn how to play it. But my friend Marie played a button accordion very well. With patience, she tried desperately to teach me how to play it, but it just never worked.



Both Marie and her sister Louise played the accordion. Putting our heads together, we decided to form a band using homemade instruments. We called ourselves "The Hill Billy Band." I was about age fourteen at the time.

My sister Ethel played "the drum," using a wash tub with a beater that was a cloth-covered wooden spoon. Louise Merinsky played the washboard with a clothes pin for a pick. My instrument was a wooden bread board with two

kitchen dinner knives. The only "real" instrument we had was Marie on the accordion. Viola Reid could tap dance, so she was our performer.

The Hill Billy Band

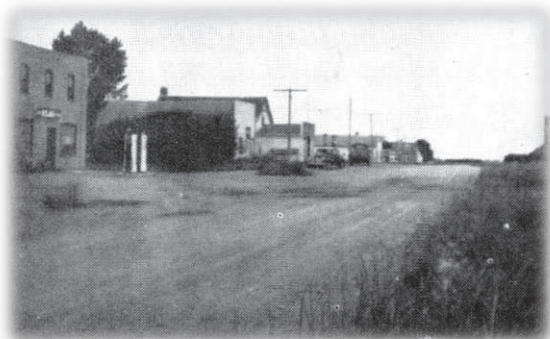
Back row, L to R: My sister Ethel; Louise; Marie and Isobel; Seated: Viola.



We played mostly polkas, fast-type pieces. Of course, we all dressed up "hillbilly- style." Ethel as a man with cowboy hat, big boots, mustache and all. Viola had a tall black hat and using her pogo stick as a baton, she did her tap dance routine to our music. Marie dressed as a kind of "musician guy." Louise and I had a babushka-type headscarf with a long skirt.

We just had a ton of fun practicing and performing at concerts, mostly at school, and we became fast friends while doing it. We were together a couple of years but then Viola left school and Marie and Louise moved away.

Always interested in arts and crafts, I tried to learn how to tat from Marie. She could make some nice designs. I got a hook and cotton yarn and tried hard but my fingers seemed to be all thumbs. I finally decided knitting and crocheting were better activities for me!



Main St/Railway Ave, Renown; about 1955

It was really unfortunate when my friend Marie and her family moved away from Renown. Her father was a grain elevator agent. He had a problem with the law and I believe he ended up in jail. The family went into hiding and had no contact with anyone. I never heard from Marie again. After I married, my husband tried to find her but without any result. I really regret having lost touch with her.

Some students came to Renown School when nearby Highwood School closed due to low student enrolment. Glenna Shortt was one of them and soon joined our circle of friends. She and her family were Indigenous. They lived in what we referred to as the coulee where Saskatoon berries were plentiful. Mrs. Shortt used to contribute to the family income by selling a milk pail of berries for a dollar.



Me at "the Kelly house," about 1945

When I was about fourteen years of age, my Dad bought "the Kelly house." It was two-storey, and the largest and most modern house in Renown. We moved from the Grest farm house near Renown we'd moved to about four years earlier, into Renown. But our move into town did not last long. Two years. It was not a good idea for young teenagers. With too much free time, we started getting into "the fast lane," with our friends. So, before we strayed too far "off line," we went back to the farm. Dad also did not like farming from town.

During our high school days, dances were held most week-ends in Renown Community Hall. My sister Ethel and I went to some of these where we learned how to dance at about age fourteen. Our Mother always found a reason to go along too, although she didn't dance. She was usually serving lunch, as well as keeping an eye on her girls!

My friends today are very special to me, just like my childhood and school friends were, as well as my sisters who I will always cherish.

18 What did you learn about your Scottish heritage, as you grew up?

My parents were both from Scotland. They called Blairgowrie, in the County of Perthshire, their home although my Dad was born in Forfarshire in the County of Angus. Like many Scots, and other nationalities, economic hardship and the prospect of a new life and a brighter future, brought them to Canada.

All of my Dad's immediate family and two of my Mother's brothers came to Canada. They spoke often about their friends in Scotland and the country they left behind. It was quite evident they loved Scotland and were proud of their homeland.

My Mother's brother Ronald, when first arriving in Canada, stayed with us and worked with my Dad for ten years. He was more like a brother to us than an uncle. My parents and Uncle Ronald often talked of "the old country." They would reminisce about their friends and the many places they knew like "the kirk," that is, the church. And with their recollections, spoken of course with their Scottish accent, we could almost visualize ourselves taking a stroll with them down Main Street Blairgowrie, or standing next them at a pipe band concert at the Wellmeadow, a small park in the town centre that hosted markets and outdoor entertainment.



Visiting the well in The Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie, 1997

One thing that always stirred the soul of my parents was the sound of the bagpipes. Don't all Scots like the sound of the pipes and the drums? 😊 They also enjoyed the singing of Kenneth McKellar and James Nesbitt. Some of our parent's favorite musical pieces were: "Ring out the Blue Bells of Scotland," "My Ain Folks," "Song of the Clyde," and "Roamin' in the Gloamin'."

I remember My Dad always made oatmeal porridge for breakfast every single morning, summer or winter, rain or shine. An obvious sign of his Scottish upbringing! I remember my Mother making Scottish scones on the top plates of the cook stove. When the temperature was hot and just right, the flour was put on. Browned on both sides, with a bit of jam, they were delicious!

I cannot forget to mention Scottish shortbread! Grandma Munro used to send many tins of it to us. Mum also made many "rounds" of shortbread at Christmas which was a great treat. I followed my Mother's example and turned out numerous "rounds" myself, or shortbread cookies. Scottish shortbread is traditionally formed into one of three shapes: one large circle that can be divided into pieces (which is what my Mother made), individual round biscuits or, thick rectangular fingers, which is what is most commonly purchased in Canada. To my Mother, the very best shortbread came from Broughty Ferry, near Dundee. We purchased some of that special shortbread from that very place when we visited Scotland.

Yes, I had the great privilege of travelling with my Mother to Scotland in 1969. If I learned nothing else about Scots from having visited there, I found out that they never had "a cuppa tea" without the pot being kept warm with a tea cozy which come in all shapes and sizes! We came back to Canada with no less than eight tea cozies to give to family and friends. Of course, some were plaid!

Speaking of plaid. As we grew up, we also learned the significance of the Scottish highland dress as worn by the lads and lassies. My Mother liked her girls to wear a colourful plaid skirt of the Cameron tartan because the Martins are a sept of the Cameron clan. I had an all-round pleated skirt made of such material, usually worn with a white blouse, as my Mother preferred. Mum also had a favourite pin called a cairngorm that can be worn on the front closure of the kilted skirt or as a brooch. At its centre is usually a larger colored stone. Mine is purple and I wear it as a brooch. I am sure every one of her girls had a cairngorm pin. Historically, the stones for these pins were mined in the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland.

As youth, we soon recognized the various symbols that meant something to our parents and how they were connected to our Scottish heritage. For example, the large purple-headed thistle. I have a fancy little dish in the shape of a thistle, given to me by my Mother. She brought it from Scotland when she came to live in Canada.



Then, there is "the bonnie purple heather." My parents told us of the fields of heather with its lovely color and fragrance when in bloom. My Mother had a wee sachet of heather to tuck in her dresser drawer and an embroidered design of heather on the corner of a handkerchief. Perhaps she brought these in her belongings when she came from Scotland or they were sent to her as a gift. She proudly showed them to us. A cherished reminder of where she had come from. I too, have a little plaid sack with dried heather in it, as a keepsake from my visits to Scotland.



From time-to-time, we also heard Mum and Dad speak of Robbie Burns, the great Scottish poet. Coincidentally, my Dad passed away on Robbie Burns Day—January 25. We could recite a few verses of his poetry like "Ode to a Mouse" when Burns was emphasizing that every creature has a right to live. We also learned about Robert the Bruce, the famous warrior King of the Scots, mostly through reciting a little ditty about him which we must have been taught ... "Robert the Bruce killed the louse, up on top of the hen hoose."

Even after all their years in Canada, my Father and Mother never lost their Scottish accents. When in Calgary being fitted for a new suit, only weeks before my Dad died at age 73, the store clerk asked him, "And how long have you been in this country, sir?" After 57 some years, that Scottish brogue was still very much a part of him!

From the time we were born, we listened to our parents speak with their accent but we also repeated many of the words and phrases that they brought with them from Scotland. I think of the word "snib." It is the closure on a cupboard or outhouse, usually whittled out of a piece of wood and designed to keep the door(s) closed. I smiled when I heard my sister's husband using the word. My own family, the next generation, uses it too sometimes.

Another word used frequently, that I use myself a lot is "wee," meaning "small." My Mother often used this word, always referring to her little house in Watrous, the last house she lived in, as her "wee house."

As children, we were often called "bairns." That's a word that hasn't caught on so much!

Not long before my Dad passed, my husband and I and our children were visiting him and my mother in their Watrous home. My sons had just acquired a reel-to-reel tape recorder that they concealed behind a large arm chair. Without telling their grandparents, they decided to make a recording.

Mum and Dad were in an especially jovial mood that night. As we sat visiting on that winter evening, Dad talked freely and began singing some old Scottish tunes. Mum joined him. Dad loved, "Stop Your Tickling Jock," and "Just a Wee Deoch and Doris." Unfortunately, we didn't realize how significant that taping would be and it was erased. But etched forever in our memories is the merriment of that evening when the Scottish brogue was thick and my parents, so very full of life.

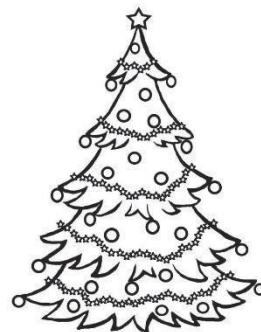


My parents, "Lovey" and Bob Martin at a family picnic, Manitou Beach, 1967

19 Tell about when your family was recorded by the CBC

In the late fall of 1945, CBC was looking for a prairie family for a "Christmas Day Special" to be broadcast to the nation. The program would originate from CBC Winnipeg and be transmitted by CBK Watrous.

The Martin family, our family was chosen to be that family. A CBC reporter named Jean Hines spoke to the staff at CBK, and then to the minister at the Watrous United Church, asking if anyone knew of a large family, whose father and mother were immigrants, and the father, a WW1 veteran. My boyfriend Gren Jones, worshipped at the United Church, and our family immediately came to his mind. I was sixteen years old then.



Our family was contacted, interviewed and the process began. Jean Hines from CBC Winnipeg was organizer/interviewer. We had two or three rehearsals. We had to go over the script several times to get it perfect. Our time on the air was to be approximately 10 minutes.

In the script, Jean asked us questions, such as how we went about celebrating Christmas Day, what our part was in preparing for the day, and for the Christmas meal. I recall her asking my Dad about his family helping him with the farming. Dad answered saying he was so pleased his daughter Ethel had helped him with the combining and bringing in the harvest.

All rehearsals and the taping took place on our farm. It was recorded so it would air Christmas morning 1945 for all of Canada to hear. The farm house was quite large, but by the time they got all the equipment set up, it seemed rather small. CBC had to bring their own power source as rural Saskatchewan did not have power then.

One of our neighbours was on a ship in the Pacific Ocean on Christmas Day 1945. They heard our broadcast! Other people in other parts of Canada also told us they had heard us, attesting to the strong signal CBK was sending out.

A record of our "Christmas Day Special" was cut from the inside out (center to the outside) which was to be played with a special diamond needle. It could only be played 25 times. It was like a 78 rpm. The record was given to our family. Unfortunately, it and the diamond needle wore out and the record is no longer audible. The recording was not saved in the CBC Archives.



On June 28, 1996, the CBK Watrous transmitter celebrated their 60th anniversary of broadcasting. I spoke on air (see left with ear phones) on behalf of the Martin family at that gathering to tell the experience our family had in addressing the nation about how a prairie family celebrated Christmas. A unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience!

20 When you were on your family's farm, who were your neighbours?

I don't think it matters where you live, one always has neighbours. We had some interesting ones, when we lived on the homestead and, when we moved to the farm closer to Renown. As my Mother used to say, "It takes all kinds to make a world." And even our little world had lots of diversity in it.

When we lived on the homestead farm, before telephones came to be a means of communication, neighbours made personal calls by horse and buggy. At times, neighbours really depended on one another. A good neighbour meant a lot when you were living in an isolated situation. Often at times like harvest, childbirth or when family members were ill, a neighbour was called upon for help.

I like to think Mr. Jep Jepson was one such neighbour. Living but a quarter of a mile across the field from our place, he was an early immigrant homesteader, like my parents. A private person, he must have been a carpenter/handyman in his

former country. He was a big help to my Dad when building the homestead house. He was called upon to do all the lath and plaster of the walls, and did a very professional job. I will always remember Mr. Jepson's motto, that he lived by: "I neither borrow nor do I lend."

Two other gentlemen neighbours were Mr. Eric Greaves and Mr. Ole Nelson. They were originally from Norway. As youngsters, we listened intently to the way these two men spoke English. They were bachelors. Mr. Greaves was an excellent bookkeeper. How handy he became when they needed his skills in the early days of forming the telephone district, the school board, the Wheat Pool and the Co-op!

Then there was Mr. Art Hill from the Hawkshaw School District. He was the telephone installer and repairman. When trouble arose, Mr. Hill would arrive to fix things. After considerable time, visiting included, he would stand, with his hand on the door knob and exclaim, "By Ga'd sir, I think I should go!" Then he would continue to talk, and this phrase would be repeated several times, over a prolonged period of time before he finally went on his way. That was just him!

Mrs Maude Lord and my sister, Rhoda

Mrs. Maude Lord was a neighbour and also a friend of Mother's who was called upon at the time of each of our births. She moved into the household and took control. She not only looked after my Mother's needs, she did household chores and was the babysitter for a couple weeks until Mother was on her own again. Mrs. Lord could "lay down the law." She was strict with us, and we obeyed her! She baked many loaves of bread for our large family. She would put them up to rise on the top shelf of the stove, but before doing so, she gave each loaf a poke in the center with her finger. That is how I remember Mrs. Lord.



My Mother often spoke with gratitude of her kind and generous women friends and neighbours, who came to her aid. She often spoke lovingly of Martha Waite,

who became a close, personal friend, one to have a good conversation with, when times were tough and the winter days seemed particularly long. However, during the early 1930s, Tom & Martha Waite, found it too difficult to make a living on their farm, and decided to move to Carrot River, Saskatchewan, in hopes of a new life and a better living. Thus, my Mother and her friend were separated by many miles. Mum missed Martha's company very much.

It was the summer of 1939, not long after we moved to the Grest farm, when the most frightening thing happened! We had just moved to our new farm. Dad came home and announced that our neighbours, the Schenstead's, had a case of anthrax among their cattle. They lived only a half-mile from our farm; our cattle grazed not far from their pasture. Anthrax is a very serious disease—contagious amongst cattle and can sometimes also infect humans. It can be detrimental for pregnant women and their unborn children, and my Mother was pregnant with my youngest brother Wayne, at the time. The Department of Health was very concerned about the situation. Our herd had to be thoroughly tested as well. The Schenstead cattle were all destroyed, burned and buried six feet underground to eliminate absolutely any source of contamination. We spent a very anxious year and into the next, until that farm was declared free of the disease.



We also had a neighbour by the name of "Doc" Durham. The title "Doc" got attached to him because he thought of himself as veterinarian of sorts. He arrived in the area after we'd moved to the Grest farm but it was never clear how he got there. A bachelor in his late 60s or 70s, and without a vehicle, he walked over to our farm on occasion to visit. Sometimes he walked to Renown and took the train to the town of Young which was the next station. He called it "Young town." It was a big trip for him. He was a very superstitious individual. He believed in planting his potatoes by the light of the moon. Forever etched in my memory is the experience of attending his funeral. His casket was a roughly-hewn pine box. His final "arrangements," most likely were administered through social

assistance. The funeral was attended by just a few neighbours. This left quite an impression on me as a young person.

Then there was Aunt Lou who was not really my aunt. Her proper name was Louise Gill but was known to everyone affectionately as "Aunt Lou." One evening, she invited me, and I think my sister Ethel, to her house for a séance using her Ouija board. We sat around a table, similar to a card table, with the palms of our hands down on the table but with our fingers touching each other. Our eyes were closed. Then we would ask a question of the board. The legs would lift off the floor, twice for 'yes' and once for 'no.' Each person vowed they had nothing to do with the movement. To this day, I don't know how this all worked but it left us mesmerized. My parents disregarded it entirely but Aunt Lou was a firm believer!

We had other neighbours, too, when we lived near Renown—the Anderson, Westby, Gross and Reid families. We shared in community and school events together but our relationship with neighbours in that time period were different from our neighbours when we lived on the homestead. Our family had begun to grow up and be more self-sufficient so we weren't as dependent upon our neighbours in the same way.

21 How and where did you meet your husband-to-be?

Many of the romances took place in that era when nearly every community had Friday or Saturday night dances. Various local bands supplied the music, consisting of polkas, two-step, schottische and the favorite, "the old time" waltz. The waltz was reserved for your dancing partner of the night. If there was someone there who could call a square dance, the crowd of perhaps 50 or so, just loved it! They would get up, showing off how they could swing the ladies off their feet!

During my earlier days in attending dances at Renown Community Hall, the band I remember most was the Hicks orchestra from Simpson. It was made up of family members. Helen Hicks was really good on piano. Another member was Lowell Diamond who played saxophone and drums.

In the later stages of WW2, around 1945, "the boys" were beginning to return home. So there were a growing number of young men with whom to dance. My sister Ethel and I were allowed to go to the local dances in Renown. At that time, we lived in "the Kelly house," just across the street from the dance hall.



Lunch was always a big "drawing card," a feature that attracted many to the dances. The "lunch waltz" would happen about midnight. Couples would pair off for that dance, and then eat together. My Mother, a member of the Renown Ladies Club, was on the lunch committee and one of the ones who baked the cakes. One of these ladies attended the dances, in turn, and helped to organize the serving duties. Quite often, it was the daughters of the

organizer who would do the serving that night.

I was doing the serving on this particular night for my Mother. The chocolate cake I was serving was obviously the favourite of one young man! After passing the cake to him a few times, that was it! It was the beginning of the romance between Gren Jones and myself. Over the years, he always said it was that chocolate cake that started it all!

After meeting, we began dating, attending dances, not only in Renown, but also in Venn. Later, we went dancing at *Danceland* at Manitou Beach. We loved to dance together. Gren was a very good dancer. He was very light on his feet. Also when dating, on some Saturday nights, Gren would drive to Renown to pick me up and we would go to a show at the Roxy Theatre in Watrous. The owner, Mr. Crawford was a kind gentleman. He would usher us into the back seats. He knew what two "lovebirds" had in mind 😊

On my first real date, Gren asked me three questions: Did I smoke? Did I drink alcohol? What were my religious beliefs? He was checking out this person he was keeping company with, and that was alright with me.

My Mother consulted my older brother Bob about my boyfriend Gren. She wanted to know if he was a suitable, respectable fellow for me to be keeping company with. My brother approved, so the courtship continued. Gren joined our family for Sunday night suppers many times over the three years we were courting.

With my future husband being a farmer, my Dad and he had much in common. Dad didn't seem to have any problem "giving his daughter in marriage" when Gren asked for his consent.

Gren's "courting horses"



I chose my direction in life at that point--to marry, or to go to "normal school" to become a teacher and stay in that profession for four years. My husband-to-be was a bachelor. His Mother had recently passed. He was anxious for a partner. I accepted his invitation to marry. We were engaged following my high school graduation.

We seemed to get along well together. I think I knew after spending three years courting we were meant for each other.

22 Tell about the events leading up to your wedding

Courting days usually leads to an engagement, as it did for us. To celebrate my grade twelve graduation at the end of June, we went to the Saturday night dance at *Danceland* at Manitou Beach. During those quiet moments during intermission, a beautiful Bluebird diamond ring (which was a stylish bridal engagement ring at that time) was placed on my finger. Our first vow was exchanged, with plans to get married, to follow.

We decided on a fall wedding. When marrying a farmer, it would happen, of course, after harvest. October 11, 1948 was the chosen day. It would take place in Watrous United Church at 2 p.m. Reception to follow.

During our four months of engagement, preparations took place for the big day. I think choosing my wedding dress was one of the most exciting parts of the preparation. The dress had to look good, fit well and be within the right price range. With my sister's help, it was chosen! It cost \$200.00, with a three-quarter-length veil, included. What a far cry from what today's bride would pay for a wedding dress, but we are talking 70-some years ago! I was able to wear my wedding dress for our 25th wedding anniversary celebration 1975, as well as our 40th anniversary in 1988.

Most brides-to-be, in those days, had what was called a "hope chest." I was no different. My fiancé gave me a beautiful cedar chest as a gift. I was always doing embroidery work on tea towels, dresser scarves and pillow cases. So my cedar chest contained these articles plus bed linens, blankets, and an afghan, some of which were given as gifts and useful articles for our new home.

One other pre-wedding event that took place, that still happens to-day, was a bridal shower. It is a gathering of family and friends showering a future bride with good wishes and many household articles to help her and her husband get started in their new home. For me, this event was overwhelming. The hall was tastefully decorated. There was a kid's wagon all loaded with gifts and two youngsters dressed up as a farmer and his wife, pulling it.

My sisters and Mother helped open the many gifts. So many people came to wish me well. I counted 8 teapots among the gifts. I was able to serve many cups of tea over the years from those pots! Renown was a very kind and generous community. And, I remember I was a very nervous young woman giving my thank you speech!

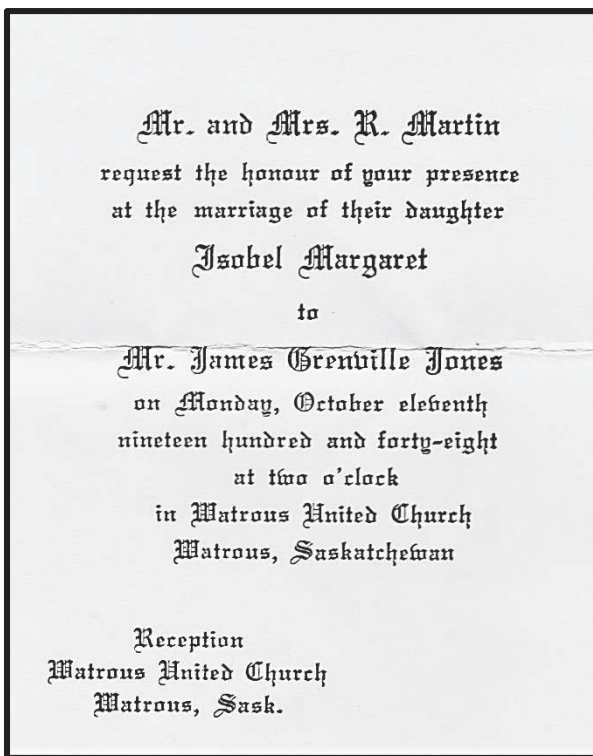
Finally, it was my wedding day. On that morning, I arose as usual, put on my chore clothes and went to the barn. I milked my share of the cows, cleaned up the separator bowl and went back to the house. The day was like any other day except for one thing. This was my wedding day. I would very soon change my name, and a new life would begin for me.

I dressed in my wedding attire at the farm. As I was standing before the bedroom mirror, in my wedding dress, my Mother said to me, "The next time we see you, you will be Mrs. Jones. You have made your bed, now you must lie in it." Always, in my mind, I wondered... was my Mother happy for me or was she worried about my future as a young bride? I would no longer be under her care and guidance, and

I was only 19 years old. My parents had to sign a legal note of consent for me to marry because I was not yet 21. My Mother also knew about marriage. She had chosen to come to Canada to be married, and it hadn't been an easy life. So naturally she was worried and hoped that everything would work out.

23 How did things go on your wedding day?

With having the wedding rehearsal the night before, we were all ready for the big day! October 11, 1948 ... "This was the day the Lord had made ... !" Our day ... when James Grenville Jones and Isobel Margaret Martin would exchange wedding vows. It was a nice autumn day. Harvest was finished in most areas.



And, it was Thanksgiving. We were grateful for all the many blessings bestowed on us that day.

First, it came time to get into that beautiful white wedding gown that had been purchased in Saskatoon. With the help of my sisters, we managed to get the long row of tiny buttons fastened, that went all the way up the back of the dress. The style of the dress was otherwise quite simple--double net skirt over taffeta, with long lily-point sleeves and the same lily-point design on the waist of the skirt. The tiara headpiece was

made of orange blossoms and lily of the valley. The three-quarter-length veil fell gently from the tiara. I wore a double strand of pearls, a gift of the groom.

With Dad and Mother, away we went to the Watrous United Church at the appointed time. Rev. Rob McGregor was the officiant. Gren's good friend and hockey buddy Bill Manson, was the best man. My sister Evelyn was my bridesmaid and sister Kay, junior bridesmaid. Kathryn Jones, Gren's niece, was the flower girl.

I was a bit nervous about Kathryn on the wedding day. During the rehearsal, she had refused to do as she was told which led to her being escorted to the back of the church by her mother, Eileen. We overheard a gentle "smack." Kathryn returned to the front of the church, behaving just like an angel. During the ceremony, I wondered if there was going to be a similar problem. She made me nervous when she began tugging at the flowers in the floral arrangement at the front of the church but she soon settled down.

Another memory I have of the service was the solo sung by my soon-to-be father-in-law, W.J. (Bill) Jones. He had a wonderful tenor voice that everyone loved to hear. During the signing of the register he sang "Because," a song that was frequently sung at weddings, at that time.



*Because, you come to me, with naught save love,
and hold my hand and lift mine eyes above,
a wider world of hope and joy I see,
because you come to me!*

*Because you speak to me in accent sweet,
I find the roses waking 'round my feet,
and I am led through tears and joy to thee,
because you speak to me!*

*Because God made thee mine, I'll cherish thee,
through light and darkness through all time to be,
and pray His love may make our love divine,
because God made thee mine!*

*(music and lyrics by Guy d'Hardelot;
English lyrics by Edward Teschemacher; originally
published, 1902)*

Following the ceremony, we didn't go down to the reception in the lower hall right away. After being showered with confetti and handfuls of rice, we got into Gren's 1936 Chevy car that was all polished up for the occasion! With a sign "Just Married" on the front, and a raft of tins cans tied on the back, we toured the town with our bestman driving and honking the horn in celebration!



We arrived back at the church for the reception that took the form of a cold plate luncheon for about 60 guests. I recall the cost was .85 cents per plate although Mum had supplied quite a bit of the food from the farm. My Mother made the three-tiered wedding cake and had it decorated by the local bakery. There was a very cute china bride and groom on top of the cake which made a more recent appearance on the wedding cake of our granddaughter Megan and her husband Evan O in November 2019.

Left: wedding cake of Gren & I, 1948. Right: wedding cake of Megan & Evan O, 2019

During the reception, our good friend, Mr. B. Claffy, who operated Claffy's Hardware in Watrous, proposed the toast to the bride. He had taken a liking to me and my family for some reason so I asked him to do me this honour. He was very gracious and kind.

I threw my bouquet. I believe Jean Osborne, our best man's girlfriend, and soon-to-be wife, caught it.

Once the reception was over, the fun and games began! When Gren and I left the church, riding in his gaily-decorated car with cans trailing along behind, there was an awful onion smell that took over. Onions had been cut up and placed on the motor under the hood. Gren had to take the car to a garage to

remove that, and put it up on the hoist to remove all the cans and debris tied to the undercarriage with wire.

There were a number of folks eager to play pranks on Gren and I because he was well-known as one to do that to other newly-married couples. No one ever admitted anything but I know my sister Ethel was in on things and Bill Manson, our bestman, and probably Poplar Park neighbours like the Allin boys and the Trebles. Bill Manson must have supplied the cable wire because he was a mechanic at the garage at the time.



Gren & I in our "going away" outfits

They were also looking for our suitcases. My mischievous sister Ethel was doing everything possible to get her hands on them! But we'd anticipated this, so we secretly left them at the manse—the minister's house. On our way out of town, Gren and I were in such a hurry as we drove to the manse, the car jumped the sidewalk! The minister hurriedly flung the suitcases at us as we passed his door, and Gren had the car door open ready to receive them! Away we went!! Our suitcases were intact. We were off on our honeymoon!

Our first stop was Moose Jaw. Ethel hitched a ride home with us from the wedding because she was training to be a nurse there. We booked into the Grand Hall Hotel in Moose Jaw for our honeymoon evening.

We hadn't had any wedding photos taken yet so first thing the next morning we hunted up a photography studio. After getting into our wedding clothes once again, I realized I did not have my wedding bouquet! Did I mention this studio was under renovation? When I told the photographer that I didn't have my wedding bouquet, he said, "Just a minute.."



and he reached up to a top shelf, dragged down a bouquet of roses, took one big puff to blow the dust off and thrust it into my hands! And what he took became our only indoor wedding photo.

Our honeymoon was about a week during which time we visited relatives. This sort of honeymoon wouldn't happen now-a-days! We visited with relatives from my side of the family in Tugaske and at Bengough. My Uncle Carl and Aunt Edna Munro lived in Bengough where he was manager of the Co-op store. I remember that it was a long terrible road to get there and on our way, we hit a sunken culvert. Sure shook us up and shook the dust out of the 36 Chev!

This is all 73 years ago now ... the beginning of our lives together.

24 What made your husband Gren, special to you?

Did a bunch of lights flash on the first time I met Gren Jones, when I was serving chocolate cake at a dance in Renown? No, not really! But, as we dated and were in one another's company, we learned about one another. I realized he was interested in me and my life, and perhaps what the future could be for us, as life partners.

Gren was a very good dancer. I admired him for that. He just loved to dance, and I loved being his partner. A fast polka was one of his favourites. I preferred to waltz across the floor at a place like *Danceland*, with the lights dimmed to

"Somewhere My Love."



Gren was also an avid hockey player (1943)

Our courting days took place while I was finishing high school. I found Gren considerate of my education, as well as my health problems, which were beginning about that time. He showed concern for my well-being by constantly showing his love for me and his desire for me to get better. Given my health situation, I would need a whole lot

more of that love as the years unfolded. I also admired his resilience in troubling times.

I was not used to politics being spoken around our family table until I met up with Gren. I soon realized that politics were an integral part of his life and his family's life. This was a "Jones way" of expressing their feelings toward their fellow human beings.

We both liked to socialize. Gren really enjoyed going to "whist drives" to play cards where he could chat with friends and neighbours. This is also where his socializing mixed with politics. A whist drive, which was very popular community event in rural Saskatchewan, is a playing card tournament where the winners of each hand move to the next table to play the losers of the previous hand. The Watrous whist drives were sponsored by the New Democratic Party Ladies Club, and the MC for the evening would be NDP members such as John Airey or Verde Allin. So of course, there was political talk throughout the evening and over lunch!

I admired Gren for his enthusiasm for things, and soon I was interested in helping him in his endeavors. He had many admirers of his talents and how he so generously offered his time in planning programs to make lives better for everyone, in every respect. For example, when Gren was on the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Board for ten years, we spent considerable time together--he at the meetings and then taking part socializing with Board members and their partners. We both enjoyed this time in our lives.



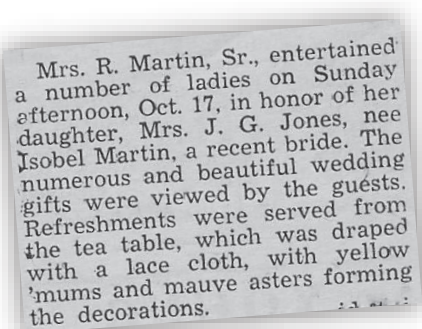
As I mentioned, I had health problems in the early years of our marriage. Gren was always by my side, never wavering. He took me to many medical appointments in search of a diagnosis. We had started a family and I was not able to do my share as a Mother because of my illness. Gren remained faithful and devoted. We had numerous hills to climb but he remained courageous in the face of adversity. I knew he truly loved me. Finally, it was

determined that I had Celiac disease, and from then on, I gained energy and strength. I was then able to "pull my weight" on the farm with this man I had chosen as my partner.

One day in harvest time, as we were combining and I was collecting a load of grain, Gren stuck his head in the truck window, to give me a kiss. With a big smile on his face, he said, "It isn't every farmer that can give his truck driver a kiss."

There are numerous times in our forty-four years of marriage, when I considered myself a very fortunate person to have chosen Gren as my constant companion and special partner. And I was very fortunate to be chosen by him, to journey through life together, with its many joys and challenges.

25 What were the first few years of life like at your new home?



Mrs. R. Martin, Sr., entertained a number of ladies on Sunday afternoon, Oct. 17, in honor of her daughter, Mrs. J. G. Jones, nee Isobel Martin, a recent bride. The numerous and beautiful wedding gifts were viewed by the guests. Refreshments were served from the tea table, which was draped with a lace cloth, with yellow mums and mauve asters forming the decorations.

After spending a week or so on our honeymoon, we were ready to begin our lives together on the Jones home farm, located on the north side of Little Manitou Lake, twelve miles from Watrous and ten miles south of Plunkett.

The Jones farm home, NW23.32.25.W2

When we arrived at the farm, Gren's father, W.J. (Bill) Jones and Gren's brother Vaughan's wife, Eileen Jones, were there to greet us. As was the custom, Gren gathered me up in his arms and carried me over the threshold. Thus began my life as his wife and life partner.

Our bedroom was one of three small bedrooms in a very old farm house. Gren had freshly painted our room. But when I pulled back the covers on the bed, I was taken aback. I kept my disappointment to myself. Grey flannel sheets. They were new and clean but



where I came from, they were used on the beds of hired workmen not on the bed of a newly married couple ...

It was nice 'open' fall in 1948. That meant there was time to do outside farm work before freeze-up. Thus, for a number of days following the return from our honeymoon, Gren was out working in the fields.

Mr. Jones stayed with us the first two or three years of our marriage. His wife Sarah, also known as 'Sally' had died of cancer in March 1947. Living with my father-in-law in the same household was not easy.

The Jones' didn't play cards or board games. This was different than my family. They did listen to battery-operated radio. We went to worship at the Poplar Park School on Sundays, and most Sundays we went some place to visit. Sometimes we went to Renown to visit my family or we went to visit one of the neighbours in the area.

There was a lot of politics spoken in the Jones home, especially around the table at meal times. I hadn't anticipated this. When Gren was around my home, nothing was said. My parents did not speak politically. I did not even know how they voted in an election nor was I was interested. But after listening to Gren and his father, it sounded like they were both quite involved in politics! I was a bit "put out" at times, as none of it seemed relevant to our lives. So I just sat and listened ... and sometimes thought..."What did I get myself into?" 😊

Another difference from my family home was the practice of asking a blessing on the supper meal. I "stumbled on this" when I visited my future in-laws some time prior to our marriage, and felt quite embarrassed. I learned that blessing comes first, then the eating!

Winters were tough in the old farm house. The floors were cold because there was no basement or foundation under it. The house itself was heated by a kitchen cook stove, and a coal and wood pot-bellied stove in the living room. It was stoked with coal for the night but with severe weather, water in the wash

basin had frozen by morning. The house was banked up outside with manure from the barn to preserve the heat inside, but it didn't do much good.

My health problems were continuing and I could not stand these cold conditions. Gren decided we needed to build a new house. He started digging the basement not far from the old house. Being a "Jack of all trades," Gren drew up the plans and would build the house. Eventually, the old house was sold and moved to another farm some miles away.

When we started to make plans for a new house, we did not own any land. The title for the farm land was all in his Mr. Jones' name, and here we were building a house on this property! We owned about ten head of cattle and four milking cows. We shipped cream and waited on the cream cheque to arrive before we could buy groceries. Gren had a "no credit" policy. You had money to pay and if you didn't, you did not make a purchase. We didn't have anything to "back up" credit anyway.

I knew before our marriage that we did not marry each other for money. I had never worked outside my parent's home, so I brought nothing into the marriage, in that way. Gren had worked all his life with his father on the farm, but he had never received a wage or share of the crop. He made a bit of money maintaining the telephone lines or doing other jobs around the area for folks.



We had a total of \$500.00 in the bank when we started to purchase materials to build the house. I sure remember the excitement as the pile of lumber arrived and was neatly stacked on the lawn. The most reasonably-priced windows we could find were ordered from Winnipeg. We'd seen an advertisement in the *Western Producer* and had them

shipped to us. The floors, throughout the house, were oak. Gren's father was Chair of the School Unit trustees. They were putting this wood into all the

newly-built schools. They had a surplus of unused flooring, so we purchased it for our new house.

The year was 1950. The building of the new house went along well in the summer time. Dennis, our first born, arrived on October 27, 1950. We were still in the old house. I remember bathing him in front of the cook stove to get warmth from the oven.



We moved into the new house in December, baby Dennis and all. It was a terrible cold wintry day. At that point, the new house was barely a shell, but Gren had installed a coal and wood furnace. It was so much warmer than the old house. So much better for me and Dennis, who was soon crawling.

Dennis Robert

In September the following year, the crops were good, when in the middle of the month a terrible hail storm struck! Our newly-constructed house suffered seven broken windows. We tried to save the panes by holding pillows up against them but it was all for naught. There was water all over the floors, and Dennis, then a toddler, was frightened and howling his head off.

Needless to say, there was absolutely no crop in 1951. The beautiful oat crop that had stood waist high was completely hailed out. You could see the small stones in the field where the oat crop had stood. Since we didn't own any land, there was no crop insurance for us. We had also lost the feed for the cattle.

I started a garden on the farm in my first year of marriage. But my garden that year was completely hailed out as well. But since the hail storm came in the

middle of September, I had already done quite a bit of preserving. There was no deepfreeze at this time but I had canned quite a few things.

Following this crop year, so-to-speak, Gren's father offered the farm to Gren and I. It was a tough way for his father to end his farming days. Even though Gren was not easy about taking out a loan, we went to the Farm Credit Corporation to pay his father for the land. It was a loan with a low interest rate but it was many years before we paid it off. Our house-building project only continued as we could afford it.

So that first year of owning the Jones farm was a rough one. That fall, my Dad and brother Bob gave us enough feed just to get our cattle through the winter. Gren was able to get enough seed from land he was renting near Plunkett that had not been hailed as severely as the home farm. It was enough for next spring's planting.

Overall, the first years of our marriage had some big hurdles. As a result of living with my father-in-law, struggling financially, experiencing a crop failure and my continuing health problems, I 'caved,' and had a nervous breakdown. We were ordered by the doctor to get away for a break. So Gren and I borrowed his brother Vaughan's camper truck and went to Waskesiu for a few days while

Vaughan and Eileen looked after our son, Dennis.



Gren and I in Waskesiu

As we continued to sort things out, Gren's father announced he would be moving to Los Angeles, California. We knew he had been corresponding with a former friend

from Wales, who lived there. He had also met her in Vancouver. Mr. Jones decided to move there and sometime later, he and Frances Jones were married. Yes, his first wife's surname was Jones, as well as his second wife, before he married them.

26 Who were your neighbours in the early years of your marriage?

My closest neighbour, Marie Findlay, lived a quarter of a mile east down the road from us. She was a single lady. Her father Will Findlay was a Presbyterian minister and in 1914, he had married my in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Jones, in the farm house in which she still lived. The Findlay's originally came from Gladstone, Manitoba.

Marie was a dear soul, a considerate person and very kind to me as a newly-married young woman, who was also new in the Poplar Park District. Being a long way from town, I sometimes "borrowed" from her. I recall needing some sealer rings when it was time to can; she was only too willing to help out. We often dropped off a pint of cream for her. Marie never had a car, or drove one in my time of knowing her; she was dependent upon her neighbours for groceries, or for simply going anywhere. She boarded the local school teacher at her home for quite a number of years.

Gren often did small repair jobs for Marie around her house. On one occasion when she called for help, she'd had a skunk take up residence under her house! So Gren and I went down to her place. I confess, I stayed in the truck while Gren did the job of "doing away with it." Oh, what a smell ... If her place hadn't stunk enough before we got there, it sure did after we left!

Occasionally, Gren and I would walk down to Marie's on a winter night when it wasn't too cold. With the moon shining brightly overhead, we'd find our way, along with our family dog who was always on the alert for us. Perhaps a rabbit or weasel would startle him and he'd let us know! After a short visit and a cup of hot tea, we'd make our way home again, having enjoyed our time with Marie and feeling refreshed from a walk under a star-studded sky where we were able to pick out the constellations.

Most of our neighbours in Poplar Park—the Allins, Fishers, Trebles and Habermehls, all had young children, like we did a couple years after our marriage. We visited with everyone, as well as those like Bob and Delores Wilson, who lived north of Poplar Park on what we called "the Plunkett road." Delores was also a young married woman with children. We'd talk about our lives and swap recipes

while the men talked farming, raising cattle and how each was struggling to make a living. A visit with the Wilson's usually included a game of Kaiser. Plunkett-area people seemed to prefer this card game whereas in Watrous, it was always whist.

Mabel Fisher was another neighbour who lived in Poplar Park. She was the teacher at the school when we were first married. She often visited with us. Since she lived just down the road at Marie Findlay's, it was just a short distance for her to walk up for a chat, or to visit on her way home from the school which was situated a quarter mile west of our house on our home quarter section. Mabel seemed to enjoy Gren's Dad's company, as he was part of our household at that time.

For many, many years Gren had walked back and forth to school since it was nearby, even after he finished studying there, to light the fire in the coal and wood furnace. He would go early in the morning. On one particular mid-winter

morning, no different than any other, with kerosene lantern in hand and bits of kindling in the other, he went into the furnace room to light the fire.



Rather startled, Gren noticed what looked like an older person huddled in the corner. Even in the darkness, he could tell it was a woman. She was shivering in the cold and groaning about her family turning her out in the cold. Gren shone the light back to the furnace to get it started but made sure he never turned his back to this "odd stranger," all the while wondering and worrying what he should do about this situation.

Mabel Fisher in her prankster outfit

Finally, this "odd stranger," could not keep her composure any longer. It was none other than the prankster Mabel Fisher, the school teacher! She had pulled a real "good one" on Gren, who had been known to pull pranks on her!

We always marvelled at how this prank required such courage, organization and spunk on Mabel's part. She had to walk past the Jones farm far enough off the road into the field so as not to disturb the dog who might bark to alert us of a passerby. And, she had to arrive in the early morning darkness at the school, enough ahead of Gren to get herself positioned in the furnace room in preparation for his arrival.

That morning, I had two people arrive at my door, full of laughter, looking for a hot breakfast! Over the years, this story has been told numerous times, and caused many a chuckle over how the teacher scared the school furnace lighter one cold winter morning!

Another of our neighbours who lived nearby (and across the road from Marie Findlay) were Mr. & Mrs. Jake Drediger. They were older; their family had mostly grown and were working away from home but daughters, Susan and Agatha were often there when we visited. Their brother Ed had been a very good school friend of Gren but had left to pursue a career in Ontario.

Gren and I visited the Drediger's, especially at Christmas to pass on our "Season's Greetings." Oh, how I remember Mrs. Drediger's Christmas baking! It always included two varieties of cookies: peppernuts and ammonia cookies. Both were both quite different from the baking we did for Christmas! The Drediger's were German and probably these came from her family of origin. We always came home from our Christmas visit with a box of Mrs. Drediger's delicious and unique treats, tucked under the arm!



Mrs. Mary Gay was also a very welcoming neighbour. She and her husband Vic, lived past the school corner and to the west of us. As a war bride, she also knew what it was like to be a new person in the district. Mrs. Gay invited me to pick Saskatoon berries. They grew in abundance in and around their yard. Their house was small and I was fascinated by the interesting antique articles throughout that probably had been brought to

Canada from England. We always had a cup of tea, served in a lovely china cup, complete with saucer.

We had many neighbours throughout the area. We met at picnics and Christmas concerts in Poplar Park, and the neighbouring Plymouth School District. The two districts also played hockey and baseball against one another. We used to laugh at the little ditty that the Poplar Park team would chant at their opponents:

*"Peaches and cream for the Poplar Park team
Hay and oats for the Plymouth goats!"*

But it was all in fun. Gren often dressed up as Santa Claus for the Plymouth concert. Everyone was pretty welcoming of newcomers like me, and everyone got along well.

27 What were the joys and challenges of becoming a mother?

When Gren and I were married I was quite young. We agreed with my parents that we should not have children until I had reached the age of 21. We kept our promise. In the meantime, we planned for when we would become parents, and of course, me taking on the big task of becoming a mother.

I like to think I was ready for what was ahead. We knew life was going to be different. That new little member of our family was going to change the way we did things. Becoming a mother would have its challenges. However, even with all this planning, I found out there was quite a lot to learn about looking after a newborn!

The weather was quite cold and frosty when Dennis, our first born, arrived. As we were still in the old farmhouse at the time, diapers were stretched across the kitchen from one side to another in an attempt to dry them. Gren, the handyman, made a cradle on a stand to swing to and fro'. I can still see my hand reaching out, rocking that cradle, hoping and praying that little one would settle down and go back to sleep so I could get some much-needed rest. The baby had some dietary problems but he soon became a chubby little individual.



About a year later, Dennis was about to be joined by his brother Grant. After having some experience of mothering, things came much easier for me with baby number two. Born on May 9, 1952, Grant just seemed to grow and thrive. That year, my cousin Ron Munro helped Gren with the farming so he could help me look after the two young children.

Grant William with me

When Grant was a baby, we travelled to Calgary in the truck to see Gren's sister Thora and family. Gren made a sling for Grant to sleep in between us, from the back window to the front dash. Dennis was beside me or on my knee. No seat belts or child car seats in those days! It was a very dangerous way to travel but with care and attention, we made it.

Oh, we had our calamities! When 13 months old, Grant fell off the front step, breaking his collar bone. He was bound up like a roly-poly and had to remain for 6 weeks in his crib in order to heal. That did not deter Dennis! He just climbed into the crib with Grant. Ha! Two energetic boys playing in a small space but all turned out well.

Yes, Dennis was a climber. As our farmhouse was located alongside a main road, for safety sake, we erected a chain link fence, about five feet high. That didn't stop Dennis! He would climb up one side and down the other side, just like a monkey. It was a full-time job watching the boys.

One day, a neighbour couple, who were constantly teasing Dennis and Grant, pretended to steal their favourite toys when stopping for a visit. They put the boy's front-end loader and grader into the trunk of their car and closed the lid. The boys, pre-school age, were frantic. Meanwhile, our neighbours laughed, thinking this was a big joke. Sometime later, we paid a visit to these neighbours. The boys were playing outdoors. We learned a few days later that all the cabbage seedlings had been pulled up in their cold frame. We scolded the boys but they replied, "Well, they loaded our toys in the trunk of their car!" Now what do parents do in a situation like that? 😊

Being that they were only one year apart, the boys were good companions for one another. They spent countless hours in the basement doing things like taking apart old telephones and putting them together again.

Teresa Dianne

Then five years after Grant was born, we were blessed with a daughter. Teresa was born April 9, 1957. My health was still not great so we hired June Reinbrecht, a neighbour girl, to help me look after the children. It was quite different for our family to have a little girl to share in our lives. The boys loved her. She liked to do what they were doing, whether it was skating or riding a bicycle, she attempted to do it all. And, she was, as the saying goes, "the twinkle in her Father's eye." Teresa liked to sing, and as a pre-schooler, she could be found sitting on a rail in the barn singing to her Dad as he went about his chores.



Dennis attended the Poplar Park School for grade one but then that school closed, and he went by bus to Watrous. All three children rode the school bus 12 miles to attend elementary and high school there. As parents, we were always anxious for their safe return home each day. In winter, they left in the dark and arrived home in the dark. Since the bus driver was one of our neighbors, our kids were amongst the first on the bus and last off at night. They loved to come home to a freshly-baked cinnamon bun or to raid the fridge for leftovers.

In spite of the fact that my health was not good when the children were growing up, I tried to attend their sports and school activities. I did not miss many "home" hockey games. Teresa, as the Jones boy's sister, got quite well known around the hockey rinks. Unfortunately, when Grant was 13, he had his two front teeth knocked out while playing hockey. It was very hard for him but also very tough for me!

As a family, we never had a lot to spend on travel or expensive holidays but we had some memorable times together. At Easter and Thanksgiving, we often travelled to Calgary or Bow Island, also in Alberta, to visit Gren's relatives. I especially remember a visit to Bow Island when they went pheasant hunting. We went to Greenwater Lake where the swimming was good, and on various fishing trips in northern Saskatchewan.



Left: Me with my 3 kids at Christmas 1961, from left to right: Grant, Teresa & Dennis

Below: Me with my 3 kids at a family wedding 2010, from left to right: Dennis, Grant & Teresa



28 How did your interest in gardening evolve and take shape?

I have often wondered if the love of gardening or, having a "green thumb" is inherited. I say this, because my Grandfather Willie Munro in Scotland was an

avid gardener. Among his many gardening talents, was his ability to grow many varieties of beautiful roses. I like to imagine I could have inherited my love of gardening from my Grandfather who I never met.



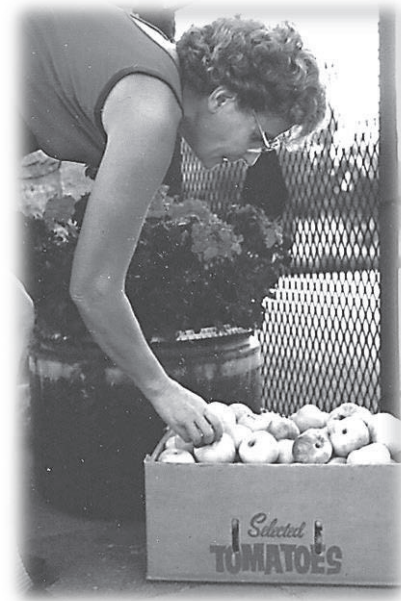
From my earliest recollections, I have marveled at the miraculous way that nature works. Out of the smallest seeds, planted in some earthy soil, comes a glorious display of different colors, sizes and shapes including flowers with all kinds of different fragrances--some more profuse in the morning and others waiting until evening to fill the air with sweet smelling perfume.

Look at those carrots!

Gardening during my childhood years was essential for our large family to sustain life especially during the Depression years. Preserving garden produce and whatever one could collect from the wild had to feed a family over a long prairie winter. I had been taught how to sow and tend a garden from my parents. When I married, the responsibility was now mine to do the things I had learned.

When I had my own vegetable garden, flower beds to look after, and a yard to landscape, I loved every minute of it! I cannot remember my very first garden exactly, as to what I planted or how successful I was, but I know I had a garden! I have had a garden every year of my life, in some shape or form, since the spring after I was married, at the age of nineteen.

I simply liked being outdoors, mowing the lawn and caring for the plants. They would always reward me with their abundance or in a show of beautiful blossoms. The affirmation of passersby also was gratifying. When driving past our farm, one person remarked to us, "It is like coming to an oasis in the desert."



Some years, it was more difficult for me to get my garden in at the right time. In early May 1952, our son Grant was born. As soon as I was able to get at my gardening, I put netting over the carriage and took him outside. We had a large Manitoba Maple. Grant slept the hours away in the shade of that tree at the bottom of the garden, while I did the planting.

What is quite clear in my memory is when we began to landscape the front yard. In the fall of 1950, we experienced a terrible hail storm, as I have mentioned before in this journal. It destroyed the trees and also a honeysuckle and lilac hedge. Everything that was damaged by the storm had to be removed. This was our opportunity to begin landscaping for the future. Much time and effort was spent nurturing young trees. It was certainly not all accomplished in one year; we improved some part of the yard each year we lived there.

Although I did most of the gardening, my husband was very good at seeing I had the tools to do the job. He always took time to repair the rototiller, and to have the little John Deere tractor, ready for me to either mow lawn or to cultivate the trees.



Receiving a Life time membership in 1999 in the Saskatchewan Horticultural Society for outstanding achievement in the Watrous Society

Over the years, my gardening knowledge increased as a result of being a member of the Watrous Horticultural Society. I learned a great deal about gardening in general but also about pruning trees and landscaping, from other members of the Society and guests who came to our

meetings. With being on a farm, having space to grow whatever I wanted, was no problem. I experimented with many varieties of fruit trees, shrubs, vegetables and flowers. I was always up for a challenge!



Before planting time at our McClure Place garden

Whether it was my first, or any up to and including my last, my gardens have been one of the best parts of my living on this earth. I find deep solace out in "my space." To quote,

"...the nearest feeling to God and Creation is being in the garden." To feel the gentle breeze of early morning, to hear a bee buzzing as it does its searching or to hear a wren building its nest in yonder crab apple tree... this is the life I love, in which I relax.

My garden had additional meaning and purpose for me after my husband's sudden passing in the Fall of 1992. It was clean-up time in the garden. I spent many solidarity moments in my yard, getting everything ready for winter, aware that I not only did not have his help that year but wouldn't in the years to come. As the years passed, my solace was time spent in the garden. It kept my mind and body busy.

Now at age 93, and still growing a garden, albeit a much smaller one, it is great just the same, to watch things grow and especially to enjoy those fresh vegetables! I am hoping that some of what I have learned about gardening has and will be passed on to my children, grandchildren and yes, to my great grandkids! Maybe the love of gardening will pass down through the generations from their Scottish Great Great Grandfather and touch the hearts of these young ones. It would be my dream come true!



Grandchildren Megan & Evan learning to garden, circa 1996

29 How did you learn to quilt?

Over the years, I have found quilting to be a rewarding way to spend time. I really enjoy gardening but quilting comes a close second!

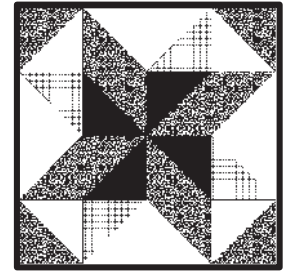
Quilting for me began when I became a resident of the Poplar Park district. I soon learned that if you live in this district, you learn how to quilt. My Mother was not a quilter, so the art of quilting was not passed down to me. I learned to quilt from an older woman called "Bea," who lived in the neighbouring school district of Plymouth. Given that I was taught to respect my elders and to therefore to address them as such, I always called her Mrs. Fisher. She was a very good teacher.



Mrs. Fisher's whole life revolved around quilting. She loved making quilts, especially what we called "crazy quilts," when you use up scraps of fabric to form interesting, colorful patterns. They were warm and you could easily make either a single or double bed size. Warmth was important. Mrs. Fisher used to say "You don't know how good a quilt is until you have slept under it."

Mrs. Fisher had a small house. At times, there could be six or more of us sitting around a big quilt at one time. On one occasion, we quilted three large quilts in one day, for a family who had lost everything in a house fire. One was even being worked on, while draped over the dining room table. Once we began rolling it, things were much easier but "where there's a will, there's a way."

A typical quilting day at Mrs. Fisher's went something like this: We would arrive early in the morning. She would make a pot of soup for lunch. We never stopped to do dishes. They were put in a large dish pan and placed on the steps going upstairs where they were "out of sight and out of mind." After eating, then it was back to quilting.



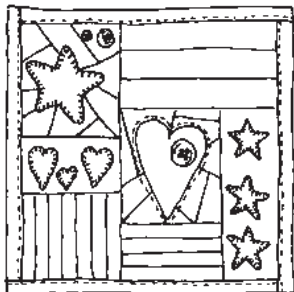
About middle of the afternoon, tea time at this point, Mrs. Fisher would sit down at the old pump organ. While pumping the pedals, she would start playing and singing "Work for the night is coming." Did we have a laugh! We did get a little rest for our busy fingers, while enjoying the fun times. On these days, the men were home babysitting and making their own lunch.

As the youngest member of this enthusiastic quilting group, it was a real learning experience! I knew nothing about quilting frames or how to put the material in the frames with a batt for filling. At one time, wool batting was used as a filling but we used polyester because it was easier to wash. I also didn't know how long the thread needed to be or what size of needle to use in order to make small stitches. I did know how to embroider so that helped and I was quick to learn how to use a thimble!

The group of us who quilted at Mrs. Fisher's were members of the Watrous United Church Women (UCW). Our group made many quilts and pillow shams as fundraising projects and for donation, and we made quilts for ourselves. For example, we made

quilts, each with a unique design, for my Mother to give to each of her daughters. Every new arrival had a quilt on their crib made by loving hands by our quilting group.

I still enjoy quilting. At McClure Place, I belong to the "Quilting Group." But my, how quilting has changed! We don't sit around a quilting frame set at a convenient height for stitching. In this group, first, we cut the different coloured materials into various shapes and sizes as we follow the outlined pattern. We then sew them together, sometimes create a border, and off it goes to a professional with a "long arm" machine that does the "quilting."



I am the only person in the McClure group who hand quilts. Recently, I quilted a double bed-size quilt for my bed using a small crib portable frame. It worked out just fine and I am pleased with the result. I can still thread the eye of a small quilting needle! My stitches are not quite as small, even and neat as they used to be but I thoroughly enjoyed doing it. This may be my last quilt.

Me working at a quilt for my own bed, 2020

Besides bed quilts as large as a queen size, and many crib quilts, I put my skills to quilting table runners, a tote bag, cushion tops and a quilter's brooch.



Whether in days gone by at Mrs. Fisher's or now when we gather in the Church Craft Room, the socializing is an integral part of the experience. It is not gossip but good old friendly chatting about what is going on in our communities, the joys and the sadness. We are sharing with one another while we enjoy working with our hands. This adds to my enjoyment of doing something I love doing.



The Quilting Song - written by Charlotte Airey, Watrous UCW

*In the basement, in a home, sat the quilting Unit 4,
Needles flying, fingers bleeding, always making one quilt more*

*Chorus: O my darling, O my darling, O my darling, Unit 4
 You are bound to sew forever; always making one quilt more*

*Tiny stitches, lovely patterns; patience sitting at a frame,
Cooking experts, Government critics;
but t'was quilting brought them fame! Chorus*

*Now we're talking, now we're eating... quilting could be such a bore
Tired and weary, backs are aching BUT we'll do "one quilt more." Chorus*

*Then one day, we're sure to enter into Heaven's Holy Door
There's St Peter, waiting, saying,
"Please, will you do one quilt more?" Chorus*

*Up in heaven, we're still quilting, silver needles, frames of gold
Silken fabrics, heavenly patterns... We can quilt forevermore! Chorus*

30 How did your interest in politics begin and continue over the years?

Politics has been an interesting part of my life. But it all began from a place of learning.

Going back to my growing up years with Mother, Dad and my siblings, I can never remember anything connected with politics even being mentioned. I certainly don't recall any political discussion! I'm pretty sure my parents voted, but I have no idea for which party they cast their ballots.

Gren and I courted for three years prior to our marriage but I did not realize politics was something the Jones family participated as part of their everyday lives. Things were about to change quite a bit for me after I was married!



surprise

Gren's mother had passed a year before I joined the Jones family. Mr. Jones lived with us after we married. At meal times, it was nothing but politics--morning, noon and night!! This was a big change for me. Both Gren and his father went to meetings and conventions, as well as listened to speakers on the radio. Gren took time to explain the situation to me, and why they thought the way they did.

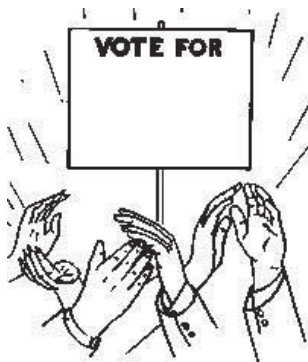


In the early years of our marriage, I did not go with Gren to the meetings and conventions. I stayed home to look after our small children, but Gren, upon returning, would be so enthusiastic! He told me what had taken place, what

the speakers said and so on. Soon, he invited me to go with them and listen to the speakers for myself. I was becoming very much involved as a democratic socialist.

Not long after that, political people began to come to our house to talk with us about the electoral process. MP Les Benjamin came one day. We talked with him well into the night so we bedded him down on the chesterfield since all our beds were occupied. In the morning when our kids came down stairs, they were surprised to see a bald head poking out from under covers on the couch!

I also recall MLA Gordon MacMurchy stopping at the farm. He was 'on the hunt' for a candidate for the Watrous constituency. This wasn't the first time Gren had been asked to run for office. We talked it over and decided no, but that we would work for the candidate of our constituency and the Party. Gren worked as a campaign manager, electing MLAs Don Cody (1971) and Ed Tchorzewski (1975).



When Don Cody was our candidate, we had no campaign office. So our home became the office where it all took place! Pamphlets, signs, you name it, were all over the place. With Gren as campaign manager, we elected Don, right from our

farm house! It was very busy, with our kids, at this time, being teenagers.

Often during elections, workers would come from other places to help. That is when the Alberta NDP Leader Grant Notley arrived at our farm, to stay for a month. He became a good friend and part of the family while working on the campaign. We were very sad when some years later, he was killed in a plane crash in northern Alberta, ending a wonderful political career. Grant is the father of the present Alberta NDP Leader, Rachel Notley.

On another occasion, just before becoming Federal NDP Leader, David Lewis came to the farm for dinner. I remember being quite nervous but found out later that I didn't need to be. He fit into our household very well! As did Allan Blakeney, then Premier of Saskatchewan. These people would come to ask our opinion on various programs while they were still in the planning stage, especially as to how they would impact rural people.

I was involved in the NDP Ladies Club. It was already organized before I married Gren. Two women that I remember as being the leaders were Mrs. Dave Fotheringham and Mrs. Eddie McCurrie. We met once a month at our homes, with usually eight or ten women in attendance. I was president of the group for a number of years. Our main role was fundraising. One event we organized was "The Irish Night," a variety concert of local talent that turned out to be very popular! It was held several years in Watrous.



Another notable endeavour of our women's group was "The Strawberry Social." Held in July at our farm, it was also well-attended. We worked hard to have the yard and gardens looking their best. The women made angel food cakes and I supplied the strawberries, as we had a large patch at that time. Everyone looked



forward to coming to the farm for an afternoon of games, horseshoes as well as time to wander through the gardens and of course, to eat a delicious dessert. The event provided an opportunity for the membership to socialize and to visit with the NDP candidate, or sitting MLA and/or MP during the event.



Tommy Douglas, former Premier of SK and Leader of the NDP

Gren and I attended many political functions, a number of them with Tommy Douglas as speaker. The last one was in Regina. We knew at that time that Tommy's health was failing. It was a memorable event. Tommy was short in stature. The crowd was huge. He stood up on a table so all could see and hear him. At the end of his speech, everyone chanted and clapped for him for many, many minutes ... the longest ovation I have ever heard for anyone. It was a great expression of how much everyone thought of him. How much we appreciated the time and effort he put into making the lives of all people more prosperous and healthy.

Although not a strictly political involvement, Gren served on the Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) Board of Directors for ten years. SGI is one of the provincial crown corporations. He was on the Building Committee when their new office building was constructed in Regina in 1979. The meetings were held once per month, and I accompanied him most of the time. We met many new people, some we became quite good friends with. It was a great learning experience that both of us enjoyed. When Gren retired from the Board, he was presented with an engraved silver tray.



Gren and I during "the SGI years"

My active life in politics slowed considerably when my "political partner" Gren, passed in 1992. I continued to do some canvassing during elections and participated in some local meetings but it was not the same. Looking back, I enjoyed the journey. Politics was an interesting and rewarding part of my life, and a way to contribute towards a more comfortable, affordable life for everyone.

Now, while living at McClure, I don't talk politics much. I don't want to offend someone. But, I watch the news every day as well as "Power and Politics" so I stay current with what is happening in the world.

31 How did being diagnosed with celiac disease affect your life?



When I was about ten years old, I was already having health problems. This is when I started seeing doctors. After numerous examinations and x-rays, they seem to think I had stomach ulcers. I was put on a strict ulcer diet plus given medication.

As time passed, the doctors seemed to think the ulcers were healing but my situation was not improving. I was told not to ride my bicycle to school because it was using up too much of my energy. At recess, as an energy boost, I was to eat soda crackers and milk. Later, I found out those crackers were what was making me ill!

Anyway, I was definitely in a bad way. In 1947, I had exploratory surgery. The doctor found nothing unusual so still, there was no solution. The following year in 1948 I married and my ill health continued. I spent one month in the Watrous hospital. My diet consisted entirely of rice. In the morning, it was fresh, and the other two meals, it was reheated! Later, I was admitted to a Saskatoon hospital. Not having any idea of my condition, they gave me bran muffins. We now know they are "deadly" for me!

It was a terrible challenge for my husband and my children. I was losing weight. At my lowest point, I was less than one hundred pounds and needless to say, I had no energy whatsoever, so much so, when my youngest was born in 1957, I needed blood transfusions before her birth.

It was when my daughter was six months old, my husband went to the doctor who had delivered her and told him how poorly I was. I was so weak I couldn't do any of my work or look after two small boys and a baby. We had to have a hired girl to help me.

Well, that doctor saved my life! He told my husband he had been reading about celiac disease. During the WW2, Holland was invaded by the Nazis and then occupied for most of the war. As a result of their deprivation, the people had no wheat to make into flour and as a result, they discovered that something called "celiac disease" all but disappeared.



The doctor wrote down these words on a piece of paper and gave them to Gren:
"Absolutely no wheat. Read all labels." The simple answer was that I had celiac disease which is a bowel disorder.

My system could not tolerate wheat or wheat products. After learning this, I gradually gained weight by learning how to eat a different way. For me, there was no bread, pies or cookies! I learned how to bake and cook, using only gluten free products. At that time, there were very few if any gluten free products on the market.

In Canada, very little was known about celiac disease, until into the 1950s. The doctors in the U.K. were more knowledgeable and it was when doctors immigrated to Canada from the U.K., that they brought this knowledge with them. I had a British M.D. at the University of Saskatchewan who helped me over some hurdles so that I became able to live with this disease. We also went to the university, where they had sessions on learning how to live with this "diet for life" disease.

One thing I have grown to live with is that I cannot venture very far from my diet of "no wheat." I experience challenges such as eating at restaurants or potluck suppers where I don't know where wheat products have been used in the food preparation. Potato chips fried in the same oil as battered fish is also a problem, or turkey stuffed with bread filling then "contaminates" the meat so that it is problematic for those of us who live with celiac disease.

I was very fortunate to have an understanding partner throughout this whole ordeal when I think back on all those years of illness, not knowing what was wrong with my body and being hospitalized for weeks at a time. I understand, as they tell me now, that my boys were frightened, as to what was happening to their Mum, while I was in the hospital. I remember the tears flowing down my cheeks, as I watched out the hospital window and waved good-bye to my two small boys, who were missing their Mum and having to go home without her once again. I just can't imagine what was going through those small innocent minds....

But once I had a diagnosis, life changed! I was now able to do my housework, raise my children and work beside my husband on the farm.



Jones farm aerial view, circa 1964

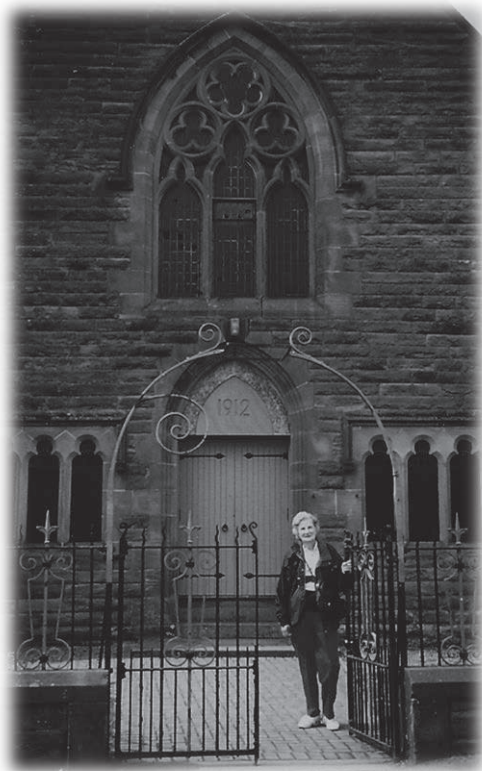
Celiac disease is an illness that can be inherited. My parents had no idea from whom I happened to inherit it. None of my brothers or sisters had celiac disease. My daughter is wheat sensitive but apparently, gluten is not the issue. So far nothing has shown up in the grandkids or great grandkids.

At age 93 years of age, I feel blessed to be quite healthy after maintaining my gluten-free diet for all these years. I enjoy birthday cakes but ones made out of ice cream cakes are my favourite!

32 How did you learn about God and to express your faith over the years?

My Mother attended a Presbyterian church throughout her life in Scotland, and she was determined to pass her faith on to her children. One Christmas when I was quite young, she gave me a small Bible that I still have after all these years.

From an early age, I knew all about Sunday School. Dressed in clean, ironed summer dresses, we went by horse and buggy to Hawkshaw school where two women taught Lutheran Sunday School. Having emigrated from England, they married the Hedlin brothers who were Norwegian. They were wonderful teachers who knew the Bible very well. We memorized Bible verses and sang hymns like "Jesus loves me." There was no Sunday School during the winter months.



My 1997 visit to my mother's home church in Ratray, across the River Ericht from Blairgowrie

In the summer of 1939, now living one mile from the village of Renown, I was able to walk there to attend a non-denominational summer Bible School. It was held in the school every morning for a week. We learned passages from the Bible like the Beatitudes and the 23rd Psalm, and I learned to recite and sing all the books of the Bible which I am still able to sing today! We had fun. It was a great way to spend part of our summer holidays.

About this time, plans were made to have an Anglican priest come

from Watrous to lead Sunday services at the Renown Community Hall. My Mother arranged for me and some of my siblings to be baptized by him. We attended Sunday School in Renown. I remember Mrs. Lois Davis; she was a wonderful teacher. One always came away from her class with a clearer idea of God's love for us.



When Gren and I decided to marry, we attended confirmation classes and became members of the Watrous United Church. I was a member there for 64 years until I transferred my membership to McClure United in Saskatoon in 2012.



While attending the Watrous church, I became a charter member of the United Church Women (UCW) in 1962. There were several UCW "units." Unit 4, to which I belonged, originally included those of us who lived north of Manitou Lake but later, others joined when a number of us moved into Watrous. We were known as the "Quilting Group" as we made many quilts that

were donated to those in need and to the United Church education centre then called Prairie Christian Training Centre at Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.



*Watrous UCW Charter members celebrate 55th anniversary, 2017
I am the furthest from the left*

I thoroughly enjoyed being a member of Unit 4. It was rewarding to be able to give to the community through the activities of the UCW. I also have fond memories of planning fun events like our annual Christmas party. We had humourous skits, usually a few games and of course, our scrumptious baked treats!

Also while worshipping in Watrous, I sang in the church choir. So when I transferred to McClure, I joined the Choristers where I continue to learn and have fun singing! Being involved in the church in different ways such as the UCW and choir, have been an integral part of my life.



McClure Place Choristers 2018; I am in the front row on the right

Reflecting personally on my faith ... When Gren passed so suddenly, leaving me to continue life's journey alone, many times, I found solace in my garden. It felt like someone had a hand on my shoulder urging me to continue on while saying, "You are not alone. We live in God's world." (*words from one of our UNITED CHURCH Creeds*) Supported in my beliefs by my daughter Teresa, who is a United Church minister, I have come to depend on God for the strength and love that is there for us all.

33 What hobby has given you the most pleasure over the years?

I have enjoyed so many different crafts over the years, it is hard to choose just one!

When I was ten years old, I was home, sick with heat stroke. Trying to comfort me, my Mother asked what would make me feel better. My answer was "...a colouring book." This was the beginning of a craft-filled life for me, whether it be quilting, rock painting, leather craft, sewing, knitting or creating pine cone wreaths.

During the war years of 1939-1945, the Red Cross sent out a plea for knitted socks, balaclavas and gloves for the soldiers. The Red Cross supplied the yarn. My Mother answered the call. This is when I began to knit. I was 10 years old when I began to knit on four needles! I knit many pairs of socks and when each pair was finished, we attached our name and address to them. To my surprise and delight, I received a reply from a soldier who was very pleased to receive a handmade pair of socks!

But, much later in my life, when only Teresa was still at home, I started doing leather craft. Mrs. Beatrice Baycroft, who lived at Manitou Beach, was an experienced teacher and leather crafter. Several of us from the Poplar Park District went to her home once

a week to learn from her. She loved working with leather, and generously offered her time and talent, to her friends.



*Mrs. Baycroft, after a ride
in my son Grant's Model A Ford car*

When we arrived, Mrs. Baycroft was always ready for us, with the proper tools and a piece of slate on which to do our pounding. We were very fortunate to have someone encouraging us to try new designs, and if a mistake was made, she would be quick to say, "We can fix it!" And, most often she *was* able to find a fix!

Mrs. Baycroft created a friendly atmosphere in the learning and in the socializing! Mid-afternoon, the kettle went on, and all activity came to a halt for a cup of tea. But when it was time to resume, it was business again. She would instruct us, "Wash your hands now, you are working with leather."



Under Mrs. Baycroft's direction, many useful articles were created that could last a lifetime--wallets, handbags, belts. One of my greatest achievements, that I am most proud of, was the making of deerskin leather gloves, completely hand-stitched. They were patterned to fit each individual hand. I continued to make gloves over the years, with the last pairs being made in 2019.

Long after others in that group of women stopped going to Mrs. Baycroft's, I continued to learn from her. She became a close personal friend. When she was finished working with leather, she gave me some of her tools. I am so grateful to her for helping me to learn a craft that gave me a great deal of pleasure.

When a person enjoys doing crafts or has a hobby, each day brings the excitement of accomplishment. It is that way for me, and for Gren and me together, when we were producing wooden replicas of grain elevators.

We both liked working with wood--oak, maple, mahogany or pine. In his shop, Gren made the elevators--large size (8 inches), mid-size (6 inches), and small ones were salt and pepper shakers. If it had an annex attached, holes made in it for use as a pencil holder. On the side of each elevator was a round circle drilled out to hold, as Gren used to say, "Some of my #1 wheat." ☺ Next, it was my turn to finish them by sanding and varnishing. A decal with the name of a Saskatchewan town was glued on each elevator.



The finished product was very unique and lovingly made by the two of us. Working together, we were able to make over 500 elevators. The 500th was oak. It sat in the centre of a floral arrangement on Gren's casket at his funeral. It was a wonderful tribute to a talented crafter.

This little piece of memorabilia—the elevator, has been given to all members of the Jones and Martin families, who we have had contact with and who wanted one. At the time of my 90th birthday, an elevator formed part of the centerpiece on each of tables, and then was given to a family member who didn't already have one.

Craft projects have occupied a good part of my senior years. Now, in McClure Place, I have been able to pass my knowledge of various hobbies such as ceramic painting or adult coloring on to other residents. Most recently, rock art has been occupying my spare time. "Rocky Smiles" have been delighting many residents and visitors to McClure Place.

34 What is your favourite things to cook or bake?

I learned as a farm wife that being able to cook and bake were necessary skills. From not knowing how to bake bread as a young bride, I eventually learned to make bread and buns for my growing family. I would bake twelve loaves of bread or sixty buns at a time! My husband seemed to have a sense when those buns were ready to come out of the oven. He would come in from the shop just at the right time, to enjoy his favourite--a freshly-baked bun with Roger's Golden Syrup.

I don't make bread or buns anymore but I really enjoy making cookies of all different kinds. Some days, a feeling just comes over me, and I know, it is time to make cookies! I often make muffins too. I have learned how to substitute various ingredients with gluten-free flour because of living with celiac disease. I have a very forgiving family. No one ever complains if their favourite cookie or muffin just seems to taste a little bit different!

One of the times I tried hardest to please my family was in making their birthday cakes. To the best of my ability and with the limited supplies I had in my farm kitchen, they seemed happy with my efforts. Most often it was an angel food cake with a few surprises tucked inside!

One of my proudest baking and cooking endeavours was to put together a recipe book for each of my four grandchildren, containing a number of "Grandma's favourites" from her kitchen. It was a fun thing to do. I hope they use the recipes and enjoy them!

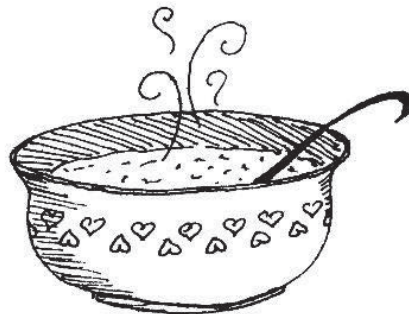


One of my pastimes—recipe hunting

Now in my very senior years, I am still wearing my apron, baking cookies or making supper dishes like Shepherd's pie ... and loving it! From an accumulation of recipes clipped from here and there, and many well-worn books, I have chosen to share the following two recipes I make often. Try them and enjoy!

Old Fashioned Chicken Rice Soup

¼ cup butter
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, diced
1 rib of celery, diced salt
cooked chicken, diced
1/3 cup flour
3 cups chicken stock
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
2 cups milk
1 ½ cups cooked rice



Method: In a large saucepan, melt butter. Add onion, carrot and celery. Cook gently for 5 minutes until fragrant and tender. Sprinkle with flour, cook 3-4 minutes, browning slightly. Add chicken stock and bring to a boil. Season with salt and pepper. Cook 15 minutes then add milk, bring to a boil, then add rice and cooked diced

chicken and cook for 5-10 minutes. If soup is thicker than you want, add more milk. If thinner, cook uncovered for 5-10 minutes.

Variation: If you wish to make chicken noodle soup, add 1 ½ cups of cooked noodles instead of the rice.

My 'Never Fail' Banana Muffins

2 eggs

1/3 cup margarine

2 tsp baking powder

3 mashed bananas

1 cup + 2 tbsp flour

½ cup sugar

½ tsp soda

Pinch of salt

1/8 tsp cream of tartar (optional)



Method: Combine all ingredients. Mix well then pour into greased muffin tins, one-third full. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-18 minutes.

Variations: Add blueberries or raisins or chocolate chips. Alternatively, you could add pumpkin or squash, and if you do, add 1/8 tsp of each of cinnamon, nutmeg, all spice and cloves to your flour.

35 Why do you talk about weather a lot?

I am a prairie person and a farmer's wife of forty-odd years. The weather over those years played a major role in our productivity and our financial situation. It only takes one hail and wind storm during the growing season to dash one's hopes of making a profit that year. Or wet weather during harvest can mean grain lying in the swath for weeks. As each day goes by, it means a lower price for the grain as it sprouts and decays. In a mixed farming operation such as ours, we also needed to grow a crop for the cattle. Weather can "make or break" a farmer.

I recall my sister Rhoda saying that when she phoned our Mother long distance from British Columbia that the first five minutes of their conversation was always about the weather! Mum wasn't focused on her own well-being. No, first and foremost, was the weather! My Mother too had been a farmer's wife. And maybe after all those years, taking note of the weather is just part of who we are as prairie people.



During my farming years with my husband, we endured a few devastating blows from the weather. I remember the summer of 1976. A plough wind went right through our farm at night.

Gren and I sat in the middle of the living room floor, peering out into the darkness as the storm tore apart our farm yard. We must have gone to sleep at some point, as I recall Gren coming to my bedside in the morning. He'd already been out to see the yard. With tears in his eyes, he said, " I wish you didn't have to see what has happened to our well-kept yard, after all your hard work."

As I opened the door of the house, I remember seeing shingles from the roofs strewn from one end of the yard to the other. Grain bins, the barn, garages, and other outbuildings were badly damaged, some beyond repair. Amazingly, the house was spared. The shelter belts were a mangled, mixed up mess. Larger trees, including eighteen twenty-foot spruce trees were uprooted and left neatly piled one after another in a row in the garden.



Thankfully, the plough wind did not do serious damage to the crops. It came early enough in the growing season that the crops were just coming up. If there had been mature fields of standing grain, it would have been another story!

Nevertheless, I was overcome with sadness about our farm yard. Mother Nature had dealt us a very bad one. It was an act of nature I would not want to live through again!

Winter weather on the prairies can be challenging at times. When I was young, many people had a cutter, also known as a caboose, for winter travel. It was a closed-in

wood-framed structure built over a set of sleigh runners. Most cutters had a small wood-burning stove in them so there was a small pipe sticking out the top for a chimney. With a team of horses up front, a cutter got around regardless of the winter conditions.

My husband built his own cutter (seen at right, 1951) but my Dad used an open wagon box on sleigh runners because he felt it was safer. Many times, my Mother anxiously watched out the window for my Dad's safe return in the midst of a snowstorm. The horses were clever. They sensed the way home, putting their heads down to buck the storm.

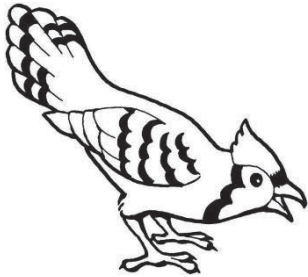


Winter storms can come up suddenly on the prairies. One time this happened when my brother Bob and sister Rhoda were visiting the neighbours. They set out for home on foot. It was cold and windy, with a below zero temperature. They battled the storm, finally arriving home. Rhoda suffered severe frost bite to her legs and fingers.



Jones farm yard having "recovered" about 8 years after the 1976 plough wind

But the weather is not all about doom and gloom. The prairies are known to record more sunshine per day than any of the other provinces. My favorite time of the day is morning when the sun beams into my east-facing suite at McClure Place. As I sit in my chair, I soak up the sunshine as I watch Mr. Blue Jay carrying a whole peanut in his beak to deposit it in one of my balcony plant pots. I enjoy the tranquility and peacefulness of a calm, sunny morning. Mother Nature and the weather can also be kind to us.



Come spring, it is goodbye winter and new life begins again. The sun gets warmer, daylight stretches out and we welcome the return of the birds. I am able to get outdoors for my daily walk and to visit my box garden where I eagerly anticipate another growing season, come what may.

36 Who was this special little dog called “Bonny?”

Our dear “Bonny Dog” came to live with us on the farm as a wee six-week old puppy.



My husband Gren had been at a meeting in Colonsay. While there, Don Eley announced they had a batch of puppies to give away. Gren came home with this cute black and white female pup. Missing her mum and companions, she whimpered all night in her new home.

In the morning before Teresa got up, Gren nestled the pup on her bed covers. Teresa had often expressed a desire for a dog. She now had her wish! After tossing a few names around, Teresa settled on Bonny because she was such a “bonny wee dog.” She was a happy dog with energy and intelligence.

Her pedigree was Terrier and Pomeranian, crossed with Dalmatian. She grew to be a smaller-type animal, mostly black with white features. She had black paws with touches of white, a muzzle with white on one side

and black on the other. The same with her whiskers. Her chest was spotted like a Dalmatian. She carried her tail like a Pomeranian, and her nose and nature were Terrier.

Bonny learned to fetch and do tricks quite early. Our son Grant started it off by throwing his gloves when he came home from work, with a command that she fetch them. Next, she learned to go as far as the main road to fetch the daily newspaper. She had been taught that the road and cars were dangerous. She would go out the lane, and turn, see us, and after a whistle, pick up the paper and return to the house. Of course she looked forward to her reward!

All members of our family loved her and took turns spoiling her. She remained Teresa's dog until she finished school but once she left home, at this point I must admit I laid claim to her. She followed me everywhere I went, and she would look at me with such sad eyes if I told her she had to stay behind.

When we were going someplace and she'd been invited along, she would lie peacefully between Gren and I, on the front seat, with her nose on Gren's knee. Except on Sunday! When we drove to the pasture to check on the cattle, her back paws were on the seat while she stretched up to see out the front window. She sensed she might see a rabbit, and if she did, she would get all excited! She loved running around in the pasture, up and down the lake hills, but never venturing too far from us. When we were ready to go, Gren would give a whistle and she would come running.

I spent considerable time training her. She was quick to learn and obedient, and was always happy to do tricks. She'd allow you to put a treat on her nose and hold it there until you said "yes," then quick as a wink, she'd toss her head, and snap! into her mouth the treat would go. She would jump through a hoop or climb a five foot ladder and sit up on top until told to come down. If the closet door was open she would on command "fetch" my slippers, and didn't need to be told to bring the second one.

She and I were asked to perform at concerts in our local area. Bonny didn't mind being dressed up in her tutu skirt, with hat fastened around her neck when strolling across the stage on her hind legs! The audience just loved watching her.



Bonny performing at an event at Watrous United Church

Bonny traveled many places with us, camping included. She pulled heavy on her leash because she was never on one at the farm. She wandered away from us once when we were camping. We were calling her name frantically. Gren was whistling for her. A minute seemed like an hour. Finally, she came scampering out of some pretty dense forest. I think she got carried away while chasing a rabbit or squirrel--her favorite camping pastime 😊

On one occasion, we smuggled her into a hotel for the night. To get by the desk, we wrapped her in a blanket and told her not to bark. In the room, she laid beside the bed all night and never made a sound. She raised her head a few times if she heard something but never barked. In the morning, we packed her up again in the blanket and continued on our travels.

Life wasn't all concerts and travelling for Bonny though. One of her jobs on the farm was to keep the rats at bay. The Terrier instinct showed up, as she snapped her teeth into the rat, gave her head several firm shakes and then threw the dead rat aside, and went looking for more. She carried her head high, proud of her accomplishment!

Bonny was also a faithful companion. She came with me when I was hauling grain from the fields. She would join me in the garden, resting in the shade under the big maple tree until I was finished for the day.

Our neighbors and friends loved our Bonny dog. When we travelled overseas, our senior friends—Mr. and Mrs. Elve (George and Lucy) stayed at our farm to look after things but especially to care for Bonny. On one occasion, Albert Kimmig was looking after the place. He came and even slept overnight beside Bonny on the floor because he didn't want her to be lonely. Now that was dedication in caring for our dog!

Bonny was so gentle around children. She never snapped or jumped up on them. But she loved it when they made a fuss over her. Our granddaughter Bronwyn had fun with Bonny and also Colleen and Russell Fisher's girls would often come for a visit when they were young to see her do her tricks.

We celebrated Bonny's birthday every spring. Her "pretend cake" was a pile of packaged dog food with a candle on top. She loved to pose for pictures!

Apart from becoming a bit deaf, Bonny remained quite energetic until she died in my arms of a heart attack on August 31, 1985. She was about 15 years of age. We were totally blessed to have such a loving creature share in our lives. Gren often said, "That dog can do everything but talk." She seemed to understand everything.

Gren made a special box for her body. She rests under a big poplar tree in the garden on the farm. Gren and I had a special little funeral service for her to express our gratitude for all the love she had given us over the years.

Bonny was really missed. I missed her especially because she was my constant companion. Many times after her passing I went to the garden, the place where she lay now and where we spent so many hours together, and shed some tears for her. She brought so much pleasure to our lives. She will always be fondly remembered as a member of our family.



*Me, Gren & Bonny having our noon-time nap on the floor
(Gren's arm is around Bonny)*

37 Tell us some fishing stories

There is nothing more exciting than going fishing on the cold, rippling waters of Northern Saskatchewan!

When our boys were young, they went north with their Dad and Grandpa Martin, to fish on at least one occasion. My Dad was an ardent fisherman. They got a good catch, returning home in a car so covered in mud, you couldn't see the colour of it, *and* having made some lasting memories.

As the years passed, those who went along on the annual fishing trip, changed. After harvest one year, Gren and I, the boys and Teresa, went to Jan Lake. Teresa had never been fishing before; she was anxious to learn how to cast. She was practising it from the shoreline when she felt a tug on her line. Lo and behold, with a little help from her Dad who was nearby in the boat, she brought in a 17 lb jackfish! Perhaps beginners luck?

Usually though, we liked to go on our fishing trip in the first week of June. Seeding was done by then, and the fish are easier to catch earlier in the season! Jan Lake was a favourite spot but we also went to other places like Pelican Narrows, Sandy Bay and Little Bear Lake. In our later farming years, it was usually just Gren and I who went fishing. It was good quality time we shared each year on these trips when we were able to get away from the farm to relax.



At first, our mode of travel was a truck camper. It was top-heavy, making me nervous when driving into a strong wind. Next, we purchased a second hand twenty-three foot camper trailer which was nice inside, equipped with all the essentials and self-contained, so we could park anywhere. We pulled a sixteen foot boat behind the camper. It was a great set-up but perhaps not the best for highway driving!

In front of our camper trail, showing off our day's catch

Gren launched the boat and did the driving while I did the fishing. Sometimes he would drive and fish, if we were both trolling. I had it pretty good... he took the fish off my hook after each catch, and would re-set it usually with my favourite lure—a red and black diamond. Gren also did most of the filleting.

On one of our earlier trips we went to Cowan Lake. It is not a large body of water but it was very productive for those trying to catch fish! It had a lot of reeds and cattails but that is where the fish were! Even when we were taking the boat out of the water, the fish followed us right to the shore. We could see them swimming and flipping as we dragged the boat out of the water! We ate fish every night for supper on that trip. What a hey day!

In those days, there were no restrictions on your catch. We took home enough to last us all summer. There is nothing like the pickerel or jackfish (Northern Pike) from those cold, northern lakes! I loved fishing!

Some of our fishing trips were a bit on the adventurous side and hard on the nerves when we were “land people” and not used to venturing out in a boat out a vast body of water. Sometimes we would be fishing in a quiet bay not realizing that over the open water the waves were starting to roll. Such was the situation one time when Teresa was with us. Gren realized we should head homeward. The wind and waves were tossing about our little aluminum boat. But our trusty driver got us home safely.

Gren with his “Captain’s” hat that he often wore on a fishing trip

Another time, we were out fishing with friends, Jean and Neil Hanson. We made it a rule if it was our boat on the water, Gren was at the helm. The northern lakes in Saskatchewan are huge, some with islands, making it easy to get confused. We needed to head for home. We were in the middle of a “white out.” Neil thought our campsite was one way and Gren



thought the opposite, but he was the driver. So full throttle ahead! The spray was flying back giving us a soaking. Our good fishing net also went flying. But, with Gren at the controls, I felt confident we were heading in the right direction. What a relief when the trees of the campsite came into view. We calmed down and sailed into the dock, safe and sound. At the end of that experience, we counted our blessings, got a bonfire going and enjoyed a fish fry!

Yes, we did a lot of eating on our trips...and not just of fish! I would "stock" our camper with plenty of food. And Jean Hanson always seemed to have homemade fruit cake in her camp box much to the delight of my husband. His favourite treat!

The last time I was able to get into a boat and enjoy some fishing was on my eighty-fifth birthday when visiting with Teresa and her partner Kay. It was a total surprise when they asked me if I would like to go fishing. I was quick to reply—YES! Kay's brother-in-law Robert Anderson had a boat and equipment so we traveled to his home on Lake Muskoka.



My Muskoka fishing trip in Robert's "Aqua Belle"

Robert took us to where he knew it was a good fishing spot and anchored the boat. We used live frogs for bait. Robert got a catch, and then when we were preparing to go home, I was reeling in my line. Much to my surprise, I also had caught a fish! It weighed in at 2 pounds which I understand isn't all that shabby for bass! Robert filleted the two fish and we ate them for supper that night. What a wonderful ending to

my fishing days .. my love for casting out, and being rewarded with a fish for supper on the end of my line!

38 So how has been to be a grandmother, and now a great grandmother?

How fortunate I am to be Grandma to four Grandkids and Granny to five Great Grandkids! I remember the joy and excitement I felt when each one made their entrance into this world! All arrived as healthy babies and made their parents proud.

The morning after Bronwyn arrived on November 14, 1979, her father Dennis, went to his office with a bounce in his step. Everyone there knew the baby was due soon! So that morning, he simply pinned a sign on his door: "Bronwyn is here." ☺



Four generations: L to R: my son Dennis; my mother; myself and, my daughter-in-law Diane holding baby Bronwyn; 1980

Bronwyn was our first grandchild, and Gren and I were thrilled! Dennis and my daughter-in-law Diane, lived in Regina at

the time, so we were able to enjoy Bronwyn's early growing years. I remember ... when she was just learning to talk, she'd say one of her favourite things to eat were "mussrooms." She liked to play with our dog Bonny, when they visited our farm.



Holding my grandson Morgan not long after his birth, while his big sister, Bronwyn looked on

On May 27, 1983, our first grandson, Morgan Gren John, arrived; a second child for Dennis and Diane. Unfortunately, not long after he was born, he and his family moved from Regina to Ottawa. As a result, Gren and I didn't experience much of Morgan's first few years. The pictures we

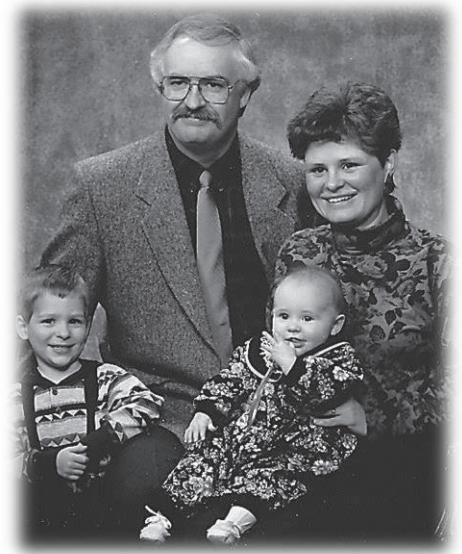
received of him, showed he had a full head of dark hair and dark brown eyes, enough to make any Grandma proud! Thankfully, it wasn't long and they moved to Winnipeg.

While Gren, their Grandpa Jones, was still with us, we attended several Ukrainian dancing festivals there. Dressed in their colourful costumes, Bronwyn and Morgan both danced very well. We also attended many ringette games that they played in. I was able to attend their graduations from high school and university. It was special to

have Bronwyn playing cello at her high school graduation exercises. Now in the workforce, Bronwyn is a civil engineer with the City of Winnipeg, and Morgan with his Bachelor of Commerce, is employed by Manitoba Hydro. His wife Arlee is a special education teacher.

My son Grant, daughter-in-law Shirley with their children Evan and Megan, 1993

My son Grant and daughter-in-law Shirley welcomed Evan James on August 7, 1990. His arrival brought lots of excitement at the Jones farm! Gren and I were living in Watrous by this time so we were able to enjoy seeing Evan learn to walk and talk. We babysat him and spent lots of valuable time with him. When Gren went to the farm to help, he took his lunch kit and thermos with him. Evan was curious, hoping Grandpa would share his lunch and whatever he had in his thermos ☺ When he had just passed his second birthday, his Grandpa passed away.



Long after, Evan remembered that thermos as belonging to Grandpa. Evan had brought another generation to the Jones farm which made Grandpa very proud.

Our fourth grandchild Megan Sarah joined her brother on May 3, 1993. Now I had two grandchildren close-at-hand to cuddle and babysit. Given that Megan and Evan grew up on the farm, only 12 miles away, they were often in and around "Grandma's place," in town. It was a real joy to watch them grow into young adults. They were also able to help me, after my husband died, to cope with a changing future without Grandpa.

After Gren died, I continued to visit the farm. I taught Evan, my first "gardening grandchild," then Megan, about how to grow a garden. We made rows and planted seeds. I dug the spade in, and they popped the potatoes in the hole, right side up, ready to grow. Valuable lessons for later in life.

For a little fun and adventure, we often made a trip to the barn loft by climbing the ladder attached to the wall. It was neat to have a view from the loft door. They would explore to see what was up there... maybe there they would find a cat and some kittens nestled in the hay bales.

As they grew older, I enjoyed going to watch them at their sporting activities. I went to the rink where Evan learned to skate, and later, played hockey. Grandma was also there whenever he was curling to cheer him on! With Megan, it was basketball and long-distance running. And then there was the annual "Sports Day," always a cold and windy day when both kids took part, and when I brought along blankets to keep them warm!

I was so privileged to attend Evan's high school graduation, the beginning of his entry into the working world. He is now self-employed with his Saskatoon-based home renovation business.

Megan's high school graduation, also from Winston High School in Watrous, was an event I thoroughly enjoyed attending. She later graduated from the University of Regina and then the University of British Columbia, before becoming a speech pathologist. Megan married Evan Otto Kjorven on November 9, 2019 at McClure United Church in Saskatoon, my home church. Megan and Evan O reside in Prince George, BC. where they are both employed, she as a speech pathologist and he, as a power engineer.

Four of my Great Grandchildren—Nathan, William, Calla and Sabine, live in Winnipeg.



So my involvement in their lives is limited to the occasions when we are able to visit in person or by Zoom!

"The Grands and the Greats" L to R: Evan; Morgan; Nathan; myself; Bronwyn; William; Megan; Calla June 2017

Nathan and William, Bronwyn's twin boys, were born February 14, 2012. They were very small babies on that visit when most of our time was spent feeding, burping and bouncing up and down on the knee. I was also there for their first birthday. Instead of a big birthday cake, it was a cupcake with a candle in it. I am sure they couldn't figure out what all this birthday fuss was about! They both liked books and I remember them sitting quietly while I read to them.

Bronwyn asked me what I wanted the boys to call me. I said I would like to be called "Granny", so Granny it is! Calla and Sabine, Morgan and his wife Arlee's girls, also know me as Granny. Morgan and Arlee were married on August 13, 2011. Calla was born on October 22, 2013 and Sabine, March 4, 2017.

Dennis, Diane, Morgan and Arlee own a cabin near Kenora, ON.. There, I was able to spend some time with my "greats and grands" in the summers of 2015 and 2018, during which time we celebrated my 86 and 89th birthdays, respectively.

In 2018, all of our family were there. Grandpa Dennis, Uncle Grant and Evan built the kids a very nice tree house. Aunt Teresa and Kay led a treasure hunt and a nature walk. We played board games. The favourite was "Sushi Go." Sabine was just barely walking at the time but being full of energy, she made her presence felt, while Calla and I "got down" to some serious colouring together.

They all came to celebrate my 90th birthday in August 2019 in Saskatoon. Calla presented me with a corsage, and they all made gifts for me. During the singing of "Happy Birthday," William carried in the birthday cake, while Nathan brought in the big birthday balloon, Calla gave me a tiara to wear and Sabine, a special Happy Birthday button. It was great to have each of them participate!

The latest member of the family arrived on October 15, 2021, when little Scarlett was born to Megan and Evan O, in Prince George, BC..

Of course, without my daughters-in-law Diane and Shirley, I would not have any grand or great grandchildren. I thank them for being really good mothers. I also appreciate my newest daughter-in-law Kay who married my daughter Teresa, June 24, 2017, and with their marriage, I acquired a step-grandson, Aaron, who lives and works in Toronto.

I am so proud to be Grandma and Granny to such a fine group of Grandchildren (and their partners) and Great Grandchildren. Through the technology we have today, I can keep in touch with them; it helps us to feel closer to one another.

Four generations:

L to R: Me; my son Grant; and, my granddaughter Megan holding her daughter, Scarlett; December 2021



39 How was it for you to move from the farm to living in town?

The time had come, when my husband and I began to think of retirement. Gren was now 65 years of age and wanted to take things a bit easier. I had been working by his side for some forty years.



Our house and front yard about the time we left for Watrous.

Our son Grant took over the farming operation. Gren and I moved into Watrous to a duplex. We called ourselves "semi-retired farmers" because for the next few years we went back and forth to the farm from town, to help Grant. Our "home away from home" on

the farm was our camper trailer. It was fully equipped for me to prepare a meal and Gren could stretch out at noon for a nap. I spent my time puttering around the yard, doing things like cultivating trees. We always went home for supper, finished for another day.

The first few years in town, Gren spent a considerable amount of time upgrading our duplex with new kitchen cupboards, installing a dishwasher (which I never had on the farm), building on a carport and making himself a carpenter shop in one corner of the garden, with a small portion of it, serving as my garden house.

I had left many gardens that I had developed on the farm, and was trying to accept semi-retirement in town. To my delight, I had a nice big garden plot, where I was able to grow many flowers, fruits and vegetables. I also added an oak barrel circulating water pond, where I had two gold fish that I really liked looking after. Growing several varieties of roses was a particular interest. Many of the flowers I grew were exhibited at the Watrous Horticultural Show or sold at the local farmer's market.



Me selling my wares at the Watrous Farmer's Market which on this day was mostly baking & preserves

So even though now being retired, my life continued to be busy with crafts, horticulture and church involvement. We were able to do a bit of traveling in 1989, when we went to Cuba with a church group out of Edmonton; and 1991, when we took out one of our RRSPs and accompanied Jean and Neil Hanson to Australia and New Zealand.



We really enjoyed seeing all the old cars in Havana

But, this is where my life with Gren came to an abrupt stop and things would change forever. Harvest had been delayed. We had a spell of wet weather. Gren was quite stressed about trying to get the crop off as it was deteriorating each day that it lay in the swathe. We finally got started combining on September 21 but when having some problems with the combine, Gren suddenly said, "I am having a blackout." He had atrial fibrillation. He was gone.

It was a terrible shock and now many changes had to take place for me. I was now a widow with many responsibilities. At this point, my transition from farm living, semi-retirement to retirement and residing in town, really began. As winter came the first year, I was without Gren's help to prepare. Winter driving was something I hadn't done much of, and I had to learn very quickly!

Trying to keep occupied, I joined the church choir. Although I am not a great singer, I was contributing in some small way. I continued to belong to the UCW and the New Democratic Women. One accomplishment I feel particularly proud of was the establishment of the "50 Plus" Educational Programme through our local Community College. We organized various workshops over several years, such as "Know Your Car," and "Religious Points of View." I enjoyed this involvement very much, with meeting many new people with different perspectives. It was a very worthwhile project!

Now with extra time on my hands, my craft enthusiasm took over! A ceramic shop opened in town; so I started creating and painting ceramics. I loved it. A gracious looking, thirty inch high, horned owl, sits aloft my computer desk as a reminder of one winter's work at ceramics.

Traveling now without my partner was not as interesting but I did make a trip with a group of seniors out to British Columbia by bus. We travelled the Sunshine Coast and Vancouver Island. I recall seeing many beautiful gardens and a butterfly collection. It was a very worthwhile and enjoyable trip!



So in leaving my farm life behind, I tried to keep my mind and body busy. I missed the farm. I missed Gren. But, I had no choice but to "buck up," and face the future. Fortunately, my children and grandchildren helped me do just that!

Having a ride with my son Grant on the combine while wearing my "Semi Retired Farmer" shirt ©

40 How about a few travel stories?

After my Dad's passing in 1968, my Mother expressed a longing to return to Scotland, one more time. She still had her only sister Kate, one brother Willy and a sister-in-law Rita, and many good friends there. Gren and I did a lot of thinking about this. Neither of us had been on a plane before. But a reasonably-priced charter flight came up, organized by the Saskatoon Co-op, so began the plans for our visit to England, Scotland and Wales in summer 1969.



My Aunt Kate (my mother's sister), myself & Uncle Len

We started our visits in Southampton, England where my Mother's sister Kate, and her husband Len lived, as well as their daughter, Joan who toured us about the English countryside in those parts. While Mum stayed on to visit there, Gren and I travelled to Wales where he had relatives such as his

beloved Auntie Annie, his Mother's sister. She was a dear soul and so very pleased to see someone from her sister Sarah's family in Canada, who she never ever expected to meet.



Gren with Auntie Annie Jones at Dolwar, Carrog

Wales is a beautiful country. In the area we visited, there were green rolling hills with an abundance of sheep on those hillsides. This is the birthplace of both Gren's parents. He discovered many relatives from his Father William Jones, and his Mother Sarah Jones' respective families. Auntie Annie made sure she introduced them all to "the Canadians."



We stayed with Dan and Enid Davies who lived on Gren's grandparent's farm called "Tan-y-Coed," near Carrog. Although not adopted, Dan had been raised by them and became part of the family. He remained very loyal to the Jones family and cared for Auntie Annie throughout her life in the village of Carrog.



After our time in Wales, we re-connected with my Mother and headed north to Scotland where she gave us a complete tour, from the time she was born at Woodside Cottage near Blairgowrie.

Woodside Cottage, in Carsie, nr Blairgowrie, 1969

Gren & I on the road into Blairgowrie, 1969

She took us many places where she had lived before coming to Canada. And there were numerous homes, as my Grandmother Munro liked changing houses and neighborhoods! Grandfather Munro was a well-known stone mason; we viewed his many accomplishments, with awe. Mother



was also able to meet up with a couple of her old friends-- Peggy Low and Ena Napier.



One of the homes Grandfather Willy Munro worked on as a stonemason. This one is located on Keay Street, Blairgowrie (as seen in 1997).



The Munro clan crest

My Mother's brother John, known to us as Uncle "Dot," had passed some years before but we went to visit my Aunt Rita Munro, my mother's sister-in-law, and her son, Ian. Visiting with them was such fun! Rita was a real comical person, enjoying life to the fullest, always with her "wee bit sherry" before bed time.

Uncle Dot (my mother's brother); date of picture, unknown

My cousin Ian took us to numerous places. We toured Forfarshire where my Father's family originated, and where he went to school at Glenshee. We went to see Edinburgh Castle which Ian referred to as "nothing but a heap of stains" but we found it interesting with the famous view looking down Princess Street, and the artillery high up, keeping guard over the city.



As far as we know, Ian never married but did have a lady friend named Margaret. He was a mechanic with his own garage. He was very close to his Mother and was really grief-stricken when she died.



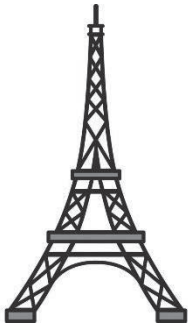
Uncle Willy (my mother's brother) and Auntie Murray (1969)

One day, during our stay, Ian and Rita took us to Dundee, to visit my Mother's brother, Uncle Willy and his wife Miriam, known to us as "Auntie Murray." We were just nicely on our way when Aunt Rita told us to look in the shopping bag in the backseat where we were sitting. In it, was a container of sweets, fudge being among them—one of her favourites. She had a really sweet tooth!

oOo

In 1973, we made another trip to Britain with our then 16 year-old daughter Teresa, and combined that with some time "on the continent." We wanted to show her the highlights of London so we spent a few days there before boarding a ship from the White Cliffs of Dover then across the English Channel, to begin our bus tour of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Germany and Holland.

We really enjoyed Holland. The people were very friendly. The cities and the streets were so clean and tidy. I loved seeing the tulip fields, and it was fascinating to go to the international flower auction. There were cheese factories and interesting places like Volendam—a colourful fishing village where Teresa dressed up in traditional Dutch garb and had her picture taken! We took a cruise on the canals in Amsterdam at night which was beautiful with all the evening lights glowing. The tour also stopped at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery containing the largest number of Canadian WW2 dead in the Holland. Holland never forgets those who liberated them from Nazi occupation in 1945.



In France, we visited Paris, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, L' Arc de Triomphe and had a boat trip down the Seine. On occasion, we had to find our own restaurant meals. Teresa knew some French so was able to help read the menu. However, we did get some "interesting dishes" that we hadn't anticipated like a fish with head and all! One night, we were taken to "a show" in the Bastille district, not realizing it was strip-tease show! A lot of red-faced Canadians headed back to the bus pretty quickly after that event, I can tell you!

Out in rural France and Germany, we were told not to trust the water but to drink wine instead, at meals. That made for some "tipsy" evenings—another new experience for us!

oOo

On our third visit to Britain in 1979, Gren and I had decided we were going to find my estranged Aunt Madge, the wife of my Mother's brother, Jim (James Blair) Munro. He had passed as a young man some years ago, and his wife Sarah Margaret, known as "Madge" had remarried. She was now Mrs. White. We found her residence in Southern England around Strawberry Hill. After listening to our long explanation, she realized we were her first husband's relatives from Canada. It was rewarding to meet her. She was a lovely, friendly person.

From that meeting, we learned about her children and my cousins—Jean (Munro) Bailey, and also James (Hamish), Isobel and Ian. Jean was the youngest and not very

old when her Father died. We visited her and her husband, Vic. Then later, Jean came to Canada, after she was widowed, to visit us when she met my sisters Ethel and Rhoda. She passed in 2019.

oOo

My fourth and last trip to the UK was in 1997 with my daughter, Teresa. We began by staying with Gwen and Tony Vokes at Guildford, near London. Gwen (Rowlands), originally from Wales, was married to my cousin, Ron Munro. After he died, Gwen remarried and moved to England from Saskatchewan. They were very gracious hosts. In addition to other local sites, Gwen, knowing that I like flowers, took us to Wisley Gardens, operated by the Royal Horticultural Society. Beautiful!



The entry of Bryn Celli Ddu on the Island of Anglesey, Wales

While in Wales, when visiting relatives there, Teresa wanted to go to the Island of Anglesey and see some ancient burial mounds. She had a book about them so we set out to find them. We rented a car, and Teresa was behind the wheel. The most impressive one was Bryn Celli Ddu which means, “the mound in the dark grove.” From what I remember, it looked like a huge mound of earth, grassed over. We crawled in an opening—a stone passageway, until we could stand straight up inside in the burial chamber. We found it very interesting. Something to tuck away in our “history department.”

In Scotland, we retraced all the places of interest in my Mother’s life before coming to Canada that she showed me in 1969. I was now passing this knowledge on to Teresa so she could share it with others in the family, interested in visiting their ancestral homeland in Scotland.

This time, in visiting the UK, things were quite different. My life had changed considerably since Gren passed in 1992. When Teresa approached me about going, she hoped our trip would include some hiking. I was now 67 years old but I had been

doing considerable walking every day around Watrous. We decided I would do what I felt up to and she could go and do what she wanted.

In northwestern mainland Scotland, we joined a week-long "walking tour," led by Jean Stewart. Surprise! There were only four of us, including Jean, on the tour so she really catered to our interests. The first day, after being picked up at Strathcarron, we travelled across the Pass, the highest point in Britain, to Applecross, by car, just to see the scenery. It was a lot of "uphill and down dale." I was riding in the backseat but thankfully before my car sickness kicked in, we arrived at our destination!



My daughter Teresa & I on the hike to Loch Damh

Jean's home was named, "Fox Gloves." She took us on a walk through the forest one day, where she went to her "secret place," to collect wild, chanterelle mushrooms. These yellow, interesting-shaped mushrooms became part of our supper that evening. She made many of our meals for us but one night, I remember going to a special restaurant to have red deer, which thrives in the Highlands. Delicious!

Each day was planned with walks and picnics, visiting sites and even attending a modern bagpipe concert. The scenery was splendid, with mountains, valleys and small bodies of water. One day, we went to the Isle of Skye. Beautiful, even when a flock of sheep blocked the road so nobody could pass! The "jam" happened right at the "Old Man of Storr" so we had lots of time to stare at the rocky hill, and see if we could actually pick out the face of an old man! Another day, Jean and Teresa went on a more strenuous hike; I stayed behind. Well, rain is just part of life in Scotland. They came back, soaked right to the skin! The overall tour had proved to be a great adventure for me, but I was glad I had stayed home at our little suite, that day!

I feel very fortunate to have gone to the UK four times, and thank my travel companions for accompanying me on these wonderful, interesting journeys.

41 What is the furthest you have ever travelled?

It is a long flight to New Zealand and Australia from Canada. So we flew to Vancouver, overnighted there with Bev Bedard, Gren's niece and her husband, Don, and then made another stop in Hawaii before reaching our destination. It seemed like a bonus to stop in Hawaii—a place we'd never seen, but we found it very commercialized, American, rainy and cold. So we were happy to get back on the plane to get to our real destination!



The trip to Australia and New Zealand was a dream come true for Gren. When I went through his files after he passed into spirit, I came across numerous brochures about Australia and New Zealand. I think Gren's interest in these countries was piqued by Jess Rosenberger, a Poplar Park friend from his youth. Jess had spent time there and brought back wonderful stories that he shared with Gren. Only a year before his death, Gren's dream of travelling there, came true in 1991.

We enjoyed New Zealand very much. The air was fresh and clean. The flora and fauna unimaginable! Being a horticulturist, I loved the beauty of the wisteria, bougainvillea, the hedges of fuchsia.

We had great guides as we toured. In the countryside, there were many, many sheep. Instead of a traffic jam, we encountered a "sheep jam." They had the right-of-way so we just waited our turn to continue our journey!

We were teamed up with a New Zealand couple of similar age and interests who took us to their home for a delicious home cooked meal and an evening of visiting. What a great idea!

Australia was quite a contrast to New Zealand. The climate was very hot, and because of this and the greater distances between places, we flew from one location to another. In all, we had 17 flights!

The concerts staged by the Australian Indigenous peoples were one of the most interesting experiences. Their regalia was colourful as they danced and played the didgeridoo.

Ayers Rock was magnificent in all its beauty, from our view early in the morning as the sun shone brightly on it, and again, in the evening when the sun was setting. Its colour changed and left us awestruck. The Indigenous people consider it to be sacred.

oOo

My last trip of great distance was in 2007 to Cyprus. My daughter-in-law Diane went there as the building project manager for two airports, in Larnaka and Paphos. Dennis accompanied her, as they were there for 3 years. This provided a great opportunity to visit them and the country. Teresa, her partner Kay and I went together.



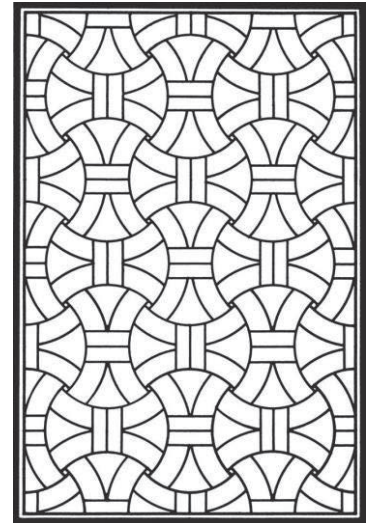
Christian Basilica ruins at ancient Kourion, Cyprus

During the two-week stay, Dennis made the perfect guide. He had been there for some time already, surveyed the island and researched the history. We traveled many miles sightseeing along the beautiful blue Mediterranean Sea with its many rock formations. One that particularly attracted our attention was a sea stack said to be the birthplace of Aphrodite--the Goddess of beauty, love and fertility. The legend is that she arose as a maiden from the foaming waters that surround the rock. It is a popular wedding destination for those who are hoping for good luck in their marriage.

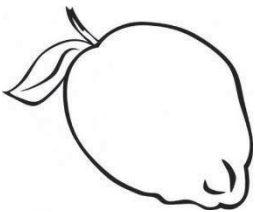
Cyprus is a very ancient land. We visited many historic sites such as the ancient city of Kourion that dates back to the 12th century BCE. There is an outdoor amphitheatre, originally built in the 2nd century BC, and Roman baths where you could see the structures used to heat the waters. Mosaics or tiled floors with intricate designs and pictures could be seen. In the picture, I am looking out over the Mediterranean from

the remains of an early Christian basilica, dated 5th century. An earthquake destroyed the city in 365AD, and then was partially rebuilt recycling ancient masonry to build this church.

One day, we drove to Paphos, on the southwest corner of the Island, especially to see the floor mosaics showing scenes from ancient mythology in the Roman buildings that were only discovered in 1962 by a farmer! These buildings were built in the 2-4th century AD, during a time when Paphos was the capital of Cyprus. Rome had taken over Paphos due to its strategic location. The buildings during this period reflected the importance and prosperity of the time, and the influence of the Romans. The mosaics were amazing—so many tiny pieces, as well as gold paint used in creating the images.



Biblical history is also evident in Cyprus, a place where the apostles Paul and Barnabas, visited. In Paphos, we saw St Paul's pillar, where according to tradition Paul was flogged before the Roman governor of the day, was converted to Christianity.



A trip to the Farmer's Market in Cyprus was also memorable. I have never seen piles of newly-picked lemons, at least 12 feet high! There was a good variety of all fruit and vegetables although quite expensive. Fresh fish was in abundance.

Travelling to Australia, New Zealand and Cyprus were fascinating trips. These are just a few of the highlights from my travels. Thanks to family, I was privileged to have the opportunity in my lifetime, to go to these places.

42 You've had a couple of pen pals; tell us about them.

Mr. Stenhouse, our principal at the time in Renown School, asked me if I would like to correspond with a pen pal. He was originally from Scotland, and he was acquainted with a teacher in England who had a friend whose daughter Irene, was interested in writing to someone in Canada that was about her age. I was about 14 years old.

This began our life-long letter writing relationship. We exchanged gifts, especially at Christmas. Even after I had children, Irene would find a little something from Sheffield for each of us. She and her husband Norman were not blessed with any children.



Gren and I with Norman and Irene Palmer, 1969

On our first visit to the UK in 1969, Gren and I visited them at their Sheffield home in England. We'd probably corresponded for about 30 years by then. I was really curious as to what it would be like to finally meet my pen pal, in person! Well, we had a great visit, filled with a lot of laughs, and were introduced to the

English pub which were like restaurants, with games and entertainment, depending on the night.

To our astonishment, a few years later, word came that they were going to visit us in Canada! They loved the prairie skies, and the clean fresh air that was notably different from the City of Sheffield, known for its steel production. Gren and I spent two weeks showing them Western Canada. They were awestruck at the sight of the Rocky Mountains. Norman would have liked to move to Canada but his age would have been against him for employment.

It was always very interesting to me just how much Irene and I had in common. She too lived with celiac disease, diagnosed later in her life. We were really great pen pals... or "pen friends" which is the English way of referring to a corresponding relationship. We continued writing until her sudden passing from a brain aneurism. Norman wrote to tell me he had lost his partner, and I, my life-long pen friend.

I now, yes, at my senior age, have a new pen pal! She is a very young school girl in grade 2, here in Saskatoon. She wished to correspond with me. Her name is Isabel, spelt with an "a" and my name Isobel is spelt with an "o." We have already found some things we both like such as painting and drawing, the color red, and her favourite animal is a dog. I am looking forward to having some interesting correspondence with my new pen pal!

43 Medicare has always been important to you; tell us how it began?

Our health care service before Medicare was like this ... Each municipality had a doctor. You could either travel to the municipal office to see the doctor or in serious cases, the doctor might be able to travel to your home.

For example, in 1939, my Mother called the doctor at our municipal office located in Simpson which was about 27 kms away, to check on me when I was very ill from what was believed to be heatstroke. Later, after I was married, I visited the Viscount municipal doctor, many times which was about 32 kms from our farm. There was a cost for each visit as well of course, for medication and travel. The total cost was something we could not afford. In many cases, people died because they didn't have the money to pay for medical service.



In June 1944, Tommy Douglas became Premier of Saskatchewan. The first budget devoted 70% of its expenditures on health, social assistance and education. Pensioners were granted free medical, hospital and dental services. By 1947, Douglas introduced universal hospitalization at a fee of \$5 per year per person. "It is paid out of the treasury," he said. "Instead of the burden of those hospital bills falling on sick people it is spread over all the people." It was not until 1959 when the provinces began receiving Federal monies toward healthcare that the province was able to announce the coming of a medical care plan which would be universal, pre-paid, publicly administered, providing high quality care, and be accepted by both providers and receivers of service. In 1961, the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act was passed, and Medicare was born on July 1, 1962.

However, it was a very tough fight all the way. First, there was a provincial election in 1960. Medicare was the main issue. While the opposition parties did not oppose it outright, the medical establishment with the backing of the American medical establishment and the media, mounted a propaganda campaign with substantial financial backing. Every household received printed propaganda and advertisements flooded the radio and newspapers. Public meetings were held throughout the province and were addressed by prominent doctors and supporters.

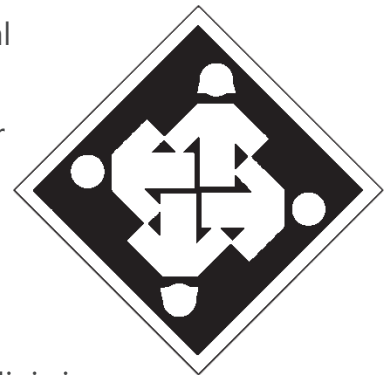


Despite this, the CCF won the 1960 election and it would have seemed that this endorsement of Medicare by the people was a green light for the plan. However, on July 1, 1962 when Medicare was to start, a Doctor's strike began, lasting for 23 days. In Watrous, our two doctors closed health services entirely, for the town and surrounding rural area. This was common across the province. Doctors warned their patients that most doctors would leave the province if "socialized" medicine was introduced.



Woodrow Lloyd (seen at left) had become Premier of the Province. He was under immense pressure to withdraw Medicare. He reportedly received death threats. Local Keep Our Doctors (KOD) Committees emerged across the province. Communities were divided between those who supported the doctors, and those who were in favour of Medicare. Things actually got quite nasty. There was a lot of anti-Medicare propaganda. Ross Thatcher, the Liberal opposition leader, was anti-Medicare. He was removed from the Legislature for his behaviour, and later photographed kicking at the legislative chamber's doors during the height of the strike. Through it all though, Lloyd and the Government of the day held firm. With mediation, the strike came to an end and Medicare went ahead.

Community clinics were also part of the vision for delivering medical service in Saskatchewan. As with Medicare, the hope was that community clinics would provide more access to medical service for all. Gren and I joined the Saskatoon Community Clinic in 1962. I still attend the Clinic. It has served me very well over the years. It operates on the same basis as a co-operative, with a small membership fee each year and the opportunity for members to participate in the direction of the Clinic. I give each month to the Clinic in Gren's memory.



Medicare was the greatest thing that could happen to our healthcare. It is for rich and poor alike. But even today, it is not a "done deal." There are politicians and organizations trying to undermine it. Present and future generations will have to be very vigilant or we will lose it or at least lose the essence of universal health care for all. Both Gren and I have required a considerable amount of healthcare during our lifetime.

Many times, we have been so thankful for Medicare but it was not something that came into being without a lot of vision, perseverance and hard work!

44 What happened when the Martin family held its big reunion?

Our one and only Martin family reunion was held July 1994. Not everyone on the list was able to come but the vast majority of my siblings, their children and some grandchildren were in attendance for a total of 85 persons. Some family members had not seen one another for many years, while some younger members met cousins for the first time.

Evelyn and Cal, Ethel and I did the planning. We decided on using venues in Watrous and Manitou Beach, with a bus tour through the Renown area.



My brother Bob speaking at our evening program

Brother Bob was the tour guide and brother Wayne, the bus driver. The trip for me, was a journey back through time. First, we stopped at Mount Lorraine school, where some of us attended classes. We spent a few moments reminiscing about the fun times we had going to school there.



My brother Wayne, our tour bus driver

At the homestead farm, the yard and the trees surrounding the area, all looked familiar. Our cousin, Harry Martin (son of Uncle Jim Martin) and his wife, Kay were living at the house on the homestead at the time; they graciously opened their home to us. This was the birth place of eight of the nine of us.



The homestead house at the time of the reunion

What a flood of memories came over me, as one by one we climbed up the old stairs to the one room where we all slept. Once upstairs, snippets were shared with our children and grandchildren about what life was like in those bygone days such as the invasion of bed bugs that descended upon us, along with the extreme heat in the summer that forced us to temporary sleeping quarters in an empty granary.

Being at our homestead farm and seeing the house and where we slept made an impression on the younger generation. What a difference from what our children and grandchildren have been blessed with! But Mother and Dad provided the best they could afford under the circumstances. We were never cold or went to bed hungry.

The tour ended with a trip around the former hamlet of Renown. While the town only then consisted of a couple buildings, due to grazing, the foundations could be seen of what used to be there. From there, we went to the farm home of my nephew, Todd Martin, my brother John's son, for a barbecue. This was the home we moved to from the homestead, and the place my youngest brother Wayne was born.

In the evening, we enjoyed a catered meal followed by speeches made by family members who reminisced about Mum and Dad, heard vocal selections by my nephew Blair Martin, son of my brother Bob, and saw home movies kept by Todd and his brother, Scott Martin. My favourite picture of our parents hung on the wall. I could

feel their presence among us, and how proud they were of their family—their children and grandchildren.

The next morning after brunch at Manitou Beach, my siblings, their partners and I placed a floral arrangement at the local cemetery in memory of Mother and Dad, as another way of remembering two special people who raised us to become who we are, and also influenced the next generations. We also took time to visit the final resting place of our brother John and my husband, Gren.

As I look over my photo albums, I relive the reunion and that time of remembering. Also tucked in my album is a letter from my oldest sister Rhoda and her husband, Allan, expressing their appreciation on behalf of all those attending, for such a well-planned event. It brings tears to my eyes every time I read it.

Now in 2022, out of nine siblings, there are only two of us left: Kay and myself. Rhoda (d 2014), Bob (d 2000), Muriel (d 2020), Ethel (d 2006), Evelyn (d 2022), John (d 1984) and Wayne (d 2018), have passed into eternal life. The torch is being passed ...



*In 1994, at the Reunion, we were:
Back row, L to R: Ethel, Isobel, Muriel, Kay & Evelyn;
Front row, L to R: Bob, Rhoda and Wayne
Missing is brother John, who passed into spirit in May 1984.*

45 What has it been like for a rural woman to move to the big city?

I am very much a rural person. My life began on my parent's farm. There, I grew up as I have mentioned earlier--going to a rural school, doing farm chores, enjoying the closeness of family and neighbours while living at a distance from a town.



Enjoying a fall day on the north side of Little Manitou Lake

The rural way of life continued for me when I married a farmer and moved to the north side of Little Manitou Lake. Here, I enjoyed the prairie skies, and roaming the lake

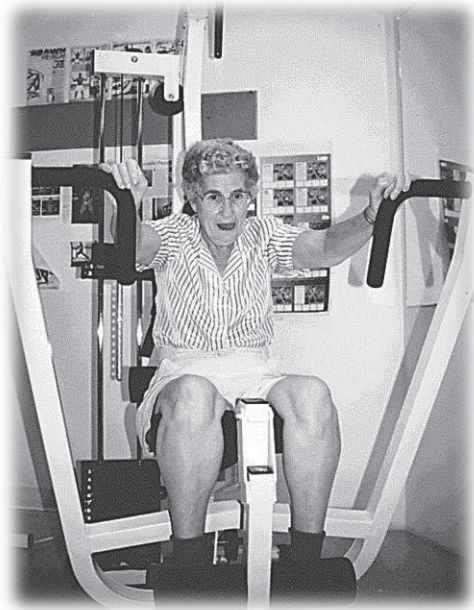
hills with my husband Gren and our dog Bonny, as we checked on our cattle. I loved the changing seasons with the hills covered in purple with crocus in spring, to the colourful yellows and browns foliage in autumn.

Our cattle in the lake pasture



But time does not stand still for anyone. I said goodbye to my rural way of living and moved with my husband, to become residents in the town of Watrous. I must say, it was a very big step to leave the farm with all our memories. This was the place of our first home, where we pursued our many dreams, where our three children were born and raised.

But the decision was made and we journeyed onward trading our rural way of life for town living. My first realization that we had made a change of lifestyle was that our next door neighbours noticed our movements of coming and going that we didn't encounter on the farm. It felt like we had left behind our freedom. However, our duplex was comfortable with ample space inside, and a patio in a spacious fenced backyard that was quite private.



Once living in town, I began "working out" at the Watrous gym

As we got settled into town living, I became more involved in activities offered in and around the area. I attended more church programs, and for a number of years looked after the church flower beds. I was also able to assist Jean Shantz in judging horticultural shows throughout Saskatchewan, that I enjoyed doing while improving my knowledge of exhibiting in our own local show, and in turn passing it on to other gardening enthusiasts.

Given that we were only twelve miles from the farm, Gren went out there, most days. I accompanied him quite often. Life for us seemed to be moving along quite nicely. But, into our sixth year of living in town, Gren suddenly passed into spirit, leaving me to continue the journey of life alone. After his death, I didn't go to the farm as often. Instead, as the years passed and my farm grandchildren grew, they came to visit me, staying for lunch or supper before we went together, to their sporting activities. I enjoyed having them come as they helped me fill the void left by the love of my life, their Grandpa.

After living some twenty years in Watrous, the years were catching up with me. Although still able to walk the perimeter of the town, with my trusty "Walkman," I was finding it more difficult, for example, to start the lawn mower. I had to start thinking about my future and where to spend my remaining senior years.

After much consideration, I chose McClure Place. A move from a small town to the growing city of Saskatoon. So began the very large task of downsizing from living in a house to an apartment. After three yard sales and a few trips to recycle centres, I took up residence in #208 McClure Place in 2012.

What attracted me to choose McClure you might ask? It is co-operatively owned. It is attached to the McClure church, providing enriched seniors housing in the Tower, and assisted living at Amy McClure. It has proved to be a good move! I am enjoying my two-bedroom suite, with installed Murphy bed for overnight guests. It has an east view where the sunshine comes beaming in most mornings, a large balcony where my love of growing flowers can still nurture my soul, as well as a raised garden out back which I cherish .



Right: My "box garden" at McClure Place; Left: Learning to play ukulele

The many activities here, especially prior to the pandemic, have contributed to my life. I participate as much as time allows, keeping mind and body busy. I immediately joined "the Choristers" singing group, and even got to learn to play the ukulele, which I never thought I would ever be doing! I have made many steadfast friends; we care for one another and are enjoying our senior years.

A part of me always wanted to live in British Columbia because I heard that in the lower mainland you could grow almost any kind of plant. I loved the farm but when it came

it time to retire, I enjoyed living in town and now the city of Saskatoon. Every place has its advantages... I've enjoyed them all. But I guess it is surprising that I once lived in an isolated rural situation and now I'm in a big city!

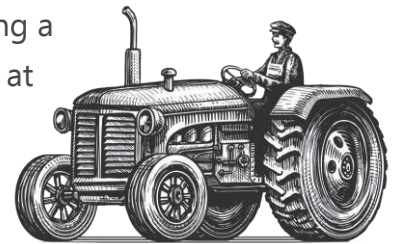


*Our winning rink in the McClure Place floor curling tournament, 2019
L to R: Me, Roni, Isla, Edie*

46 What technological changes have you witnessed over your lifetime?

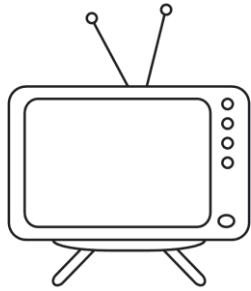
Through the years, I have been aware of many technological changes.

First, as far as agriculture is concerned, when my Dad began farming he drove a team of oxen. By the time I was a child, he was using horses, then tractors took over. Dad purchased a threshing machine and before he died, he was driving a combine. In his 73 years of life, modernization marched forward at a terrific rate.



As a child, I remember our family, sitting around relaxing on a Saturday night while we listened with rapt attention to the radio

for the play-by-play calls of Foster Hewitt. The Toronto Maple Leafs would be playing and the cheers would go up when we heard, "He shoots, he scores!"

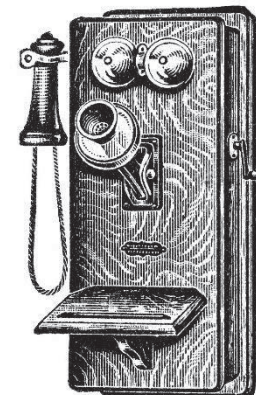


Then radio gave way to television. I recall when word came that we were actually going to be able to see a picture of whatever was going on, instead of just listening to a radio telling us what was happening. My Dad was totally mystified by this. "That is just totally impossible!" he said. But it happened. He loved watching television! The first program he took to was boxing.

Television was in black and white, no colour just then, but that would change too!

Our Jones residence didn't have television until the early 1950's. When Gren was working for Kirkham's Hardware in Watrous, putting up TV antenna on roofs, we got a secondhand set. Some of the programs I remember listening to in those early days were "The Happy Gang" and the Sunday evening episodes of "Bonanza." And of course, we always watched Hockey Night in Canada on Saturday evenings!

We had a telephone in my birth home. I always remember it being it there. Two rings was a local call, one long ring was a "general call," in that it was a message meant for everyone on that telephone line such as on special occasions or an emergency such as a fire. There was a telephone operator in a central location who made the connections between one party and another. You could listen in on the conversations of others on your line, if you happened to pick up the phone. It was called "rubber necking!"



Initially, all telephones were battery operated. My husband's family had a crystal set. They could make local calls with it. From the battery-operated telephone that attached to the wall, to the much smaller telephone box, then to the desk model phones, modernization took place quickly.

In our household, the many advancements in telephones did not go unnoticed as Gren was the repairperson for the Plymouth Rural Telephone Company, our local member-owned telephone company north of Little Manitou Lake.

Gren installed many, many telephone poles, and built new telephone lines. And then he would climb the poles with his telephone "spikes" and his equipment fastened round his waist in order to make repairs. He could climb a telephone pole like a monkey! Telephone lines were very costly to maintain with high wind storms, heavy hoar frost or farmers ripping the lines down with their machinery or when moving buildings. People were also shooting the insulators off the telephone poles.



The next thing we knew, telephone poles came down and all lines were buried underground, with only a ground-level pedestal box. The work of the repairperson was to troubleshoot when problems arose. Gren had untold frustrations with rodents chewing and exposing bare wires in the pedestals, causing telephone outages. Many repairs could now however take place in the office, instead of being made by those in the field.

Now all that many of us have is a small handset in every room, and a telephone "jack" connecting us. Some people only have a cell phone, doing just about everything a person needs for communication. These many devices show just how our world has changed and is changing.



My latest device is called a "nest hub" and is operated through the internet on my computer. Used like a telephone, I can ask "Google" to connect to any phone number in my contact list, at no extra charge. I find it can do many magical things for me such as play videos, music and photos, which I enjoy from the comfort of my recliner chair! All I have to do is say, "Hey Google... ." I don't think it will replace my computer which I have used for many years now, to keep in touch with my friends and far away family members by email, and Zoom, where we can talk and I can see them, especially my Great Grandchildren!

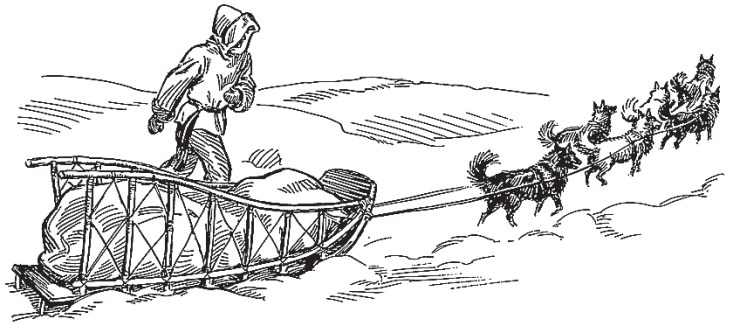
There are many more devices and appliances that have become household items today.

Electric cars are being talked about a lot these days, and no doubt we will see more of them. I feel fortunate to be living in this very modern, up-beat world where every day something leaves you in awe such as the recent trip to the planet Mars. We have no idea what will come next!

47 If you were to live 50 more years, what would you like to do in that time?

There are quite a few things I would like to do if I was on this earth another fifty years! Mostly, I would like to do some more travelling.

I would like to go to some places that I think would be quite interesting—places like northern Canada, the Arctic. Maybe have a cup of tea in a real igloo, or enjoy a caribou stir fry, bear or rabbit stew, and some gluten-free bannock. I would love to have a dogsled ride over crisp white snow and perhaps the Northern lights would do their utmost to favour me with some of their fantastical dancing.



A leisurely trip to visit the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador would also be great! It would be interesting to see how the people there live, and taste some of their unique cuisine such as lobster and all of those other interesting sea foods that live in their coastal waters.

I wouldn't mind visiting Australia and New Zealand again too! There was so much to see and do there. We didn't have enough time when we were there to see and do it all! I would need a good travel companion to go with me--someone interested in taking time to observe and enjoy the flora and fauna that are magnificent in those countries.



Kowhai, New Zealand's unofficial national flower

I am totally grateful for the travel experiences we were able to have on our limited finances but it is still wonderful to be able to dream of faraway lands, isn't it?

48 What are you most proud of?

How could I as a parent, grandmother and great grandmother not be proud of my family? Our three children, born and raised on the farm, all went on to obtain a university education. Dennis became a wireless telecommunications executive; Grant, a mechanical engineer and Teresa, a United Church minister. Along came our four grandchildren. What a delight it was for us to be Grandma and Grandpa to them! I have watched them mature into young, healthy adults, making their own way in life. And I feel so grateful to have lived this long to meet five great grandchildren who have joined our family! Four are old enough to know "Granny" and talk with me through the wonderful technology called ZOOM.



My family when gathered for my 90th birthday in 2019

Back row L to R: Daughters-in-law Kay Heuer & Diane Jones, son Dennis, granddaughter Bronwyn, grandson Evan, son Grant, granddaughter Megan & husband Evan Otto, grandson Morgan & wife Arlee with great granddaughter, Sabine. Front row L to R: Daughter-in-law Shirley Jones, great grandsons Nathan & William, myself, great granddaughter Calla, daughter Teresa.

Missing: Great granddaughter Scarlett, born in 2021.

49 Do you have any regrets in life?

I was married and left my parent's home, right after completing grade twelve. I needed financial support if I was going to further my education and become a teacher. My Dad gave me a choice. He would spend the money on my education but I had to teach for two years following this, or, I could choose to get married. I chose the latter. I had no regrets choosing Gren, my lover and best friend, and establishing ourselves on the Jones farm.

The concern for me, and what I regretted was that I had no trade or profession to fall



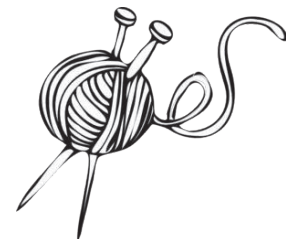
back on, should Gren become disabled, and not able to farm and support our family. I regret I never knew what it was like to receive a pay cheque or have a bank account. I was totally dependent on my husband. It was after I became a widow, I learned what a term deposit was, how to budget and other financial matters.

If I had my life to live over again, my advice to myself would be not to get married quite so young before establishing a way of supporting yourself, should life go awry.

50 What makes you unique?

At 93 years of age, I am fortunate to be of sound mind, and to be able to see and hear well. These three things contribute greatly to me being able to do many crafts. I do believe I am gifted in this respect, and that this makes me unique. My hands are never still! As of 2022, I have been knitting for 82 years!

I began crafting at an early age with knitting and embroidery. Eager to learn how to read a pattern to crochet, I was later rewarded when I was declared a winner at the local art show.



After I married, I learned to quilt. Over the years, I was able to make many beautiful spreads, completing my last double bed-size quilt at age 91.

As mentioned earlier, I also was a leather-crafter, making many useful and beautiful things, with the tutoring of Mrs. Beatrice Baycroft. Making a pair of deer skin gloves, tailored to fit a particular person's hand, was so rewarding. I loved working with leather—the feel of it, and the moulding of it. And now in the last few years, I have enjoyed rock art, adult colouring, machine-sewing projects as well as continuing to knit.

51 What is your deepest wish for the world?

The world is a pretty big place and my space in it, is pretty small. But, I think about the turmoil in many countries these days. My mind especially turns to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We are witnessing the suffering of so many, the loss of human lives, the devastation of cities, town and villages. So, my first wish is for peace, the end to conflicts the world over. Peace on earth for all.

As I think about Canada, I choose to focus on health, among my wishes. In the 1940s, Tommy Douglas was able to bring Medicare to Saskatchewan. His goal even at that time was to have a drug and a dental care program for everyone rich and poor, as part of Medicare. This has been talked about for many years. Now, within the last few months, it seems the Federal government, just might make this happen. My greatest wish is that this will come true.

And finally, now going into the third year of the Covid pandemic, I along with many others, are wishing it would soon end. That hospitals would return to "normal," that families who have been divided over this would gather again, and love for one another, restored. I pray my wish may be granted.

Amen.



Acknowledgements:

My sincere thanks to my daughter Teresa for helping me get my book ready for print. It required many hours of editing, scanning prints, formatting and working with the publisher. Also, many thanks to my daughter-in-law Kay Heuer for copy editing.

Thanks to historian, John Hetherington from North Bay, who obtained and shared the picture of my Father's platoon group: 4th or D Company, 16th platoon, 28th Battalion, and filled out some of the background on my Father's military history.

My personal story on Medicare is supported by information that you can read on websites such as: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicare_\(Canada\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicare_(Canada))
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saskatchewan_doctors%27_strike
https://esask.uregina.ca/entry/doctors_strike.jsp

I also want to acknowledge the Martin family website on www.myheritage.com that my son Dennis, created and manages. It proved to be a helpful resource to support my memory. I commend the website to all Martin extended family members.



