Life in My Boots

By Paul Lintott

I want to dedicate my story to the two people who had the most positive influence on my life: my parents, Erle and Nellie Lintott. Probably the most important legacy they left me was the example they set for me with their faith. I have never met anyone else who had a more profound faith. Even though they didn't often tell me, I know I was loved. They were quite strict but always fair. Everything I have become in my life I owe to God and my parents. This is the legacy I hope to leave to my family.

I am also writing this story of my life for my four children, Jim, Angela, Bill, and Rob, and my ten grandchildren, Jeff, Brad and Mila, Chris, Daniel, Hannah, Isaac, Makenna, Hayden, Rilyn, and more to come.

Nellie Lintott (1901-1999)
Erle Lintott (1899-1997)

IN MEMORY

To my wife Diana, the love of my life for 63 years, who left us too soon. She stood by me all those years, through good times and some not so good. I miss her every day.

Diana Lintott (1942-2021)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my granddaughter, Hannah, for helping me put this book together. I couldn't have done it without her.

Also, thank you to my son, Rob, for creating the wonderful cover.

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My Roots

I was born Paul Austin Lintott on September 30th, 1937.

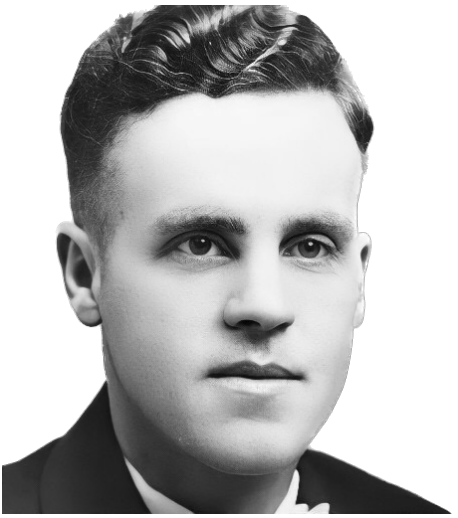
First, I will give some history of my parents. My father was William Erle Lintott. My mother was born Nellie Alice Beswitherick.

I have traced our family tree on my dad's side back to the 1600s. George Lintott was born in Walberton, Sussex, England on July 22nd, 1810. He married Charlotte Turner, born 1814 on July 21st, 1832. They moved to Ontario, Canada soon after. They had tweleve children: Sarah Anne, William, John, James, Mary Jane, Mariah, Margaret, Charlotte, George, Rebecca, Thomas, and Charles. My great grandfather was William, the second oldest.

William was born in 1836 in Thornhill, Ontario. He married Ruth Dorman, born 1843, daughter of Jeremiah Dorman and Catherine Matthews. Uncommon for the times, he was able to read and write. Their children were Sarah Anne, Jeremiah, Henry, Catherine, Wilhelmina, and William. Jeremiah was my grandfather, also known as Jerry.

My grandfather, Jeremiah, married Loretta Nichols, born 1876, daughter of James and Esther Nichols, in 1892. Their children were Lilian Esther, born June 6th, 1894, William Erle, born December 26th, 1899, Myrtle May, born in 1896 and died in 1901 age 4, and James Elmore, born June 9th, 1908. All of them were born in Alisa Craig, Ontario.

My mother and father had four children: Lloyd Ernest, born Dec. 28th, 1930, Gretta May born November 17th, 1932, Paul Austin, born September 30th, 1937, and Robin Erle, born June 16th, 1943 and died May 14th, 1953, age 9.



My Father

William Erle married Nellie Alice Beswitherick on November 24th, 1928. They were married in her parents' home in the Arizona district near Sidney, Manitoba. Their children were Lloyd Ernest, born December 28th, 1930, Gretta May, born November 17th, 1932, Paul Austin, born September 30th, 1937, and Robin Erle, born June 16th, 1943.

When Dad was a kid, he lived with his family in Sparta, Ontario. His father owned a water-powered grist mill, where Dad said he enjoyed living. There, they had a stream dammed up for a pond to power the mill. He said you could swim in it during the summer and skate on it in the winter. When Dad was about twelve, he accepted

the Lord as his saviour. He had been a devout Christian all his 97 years.

He worked in the mill until his father bought a farm near Mosemin, Saskatchewan, when he was about sixteen. His father sold the mill to his grandpa Nichols. When they moved, they rented a whole boxcar to transport their belongings, as well as some livestock. While they were there, they attended a Baptist church. Dad said they had a pastor who was good with youth. That's when dad became interested in ministry.

While in his 20s, Dad attended Moody Bible Institute for one year, then a year at Northwestern Bible Institute. Then, he finished bible school in Winnipeg. That's where he met my mother.

He lived to be 97 years old.





My Mother

Anthony Beswitherick, born October 4th, 1825, in Lanlivery, Cornwall, England, married Ann Jane Hamilton, born 1831 in Ireland. They had six children: John, James, Robert, William, Elizabeth, and Margaret Jane.

My grandfather was William Thomas. He married Lydia Ann Pugsley on April 7th,1885, daughter of Edmund Pugsley and Lydia Ann Schoup. They had nine children: Adeline, born August 1st, 1886, William George, born July 23rd, 1888, Ernest Urban, born September 23rd, 1890, Lottie, born December 13th, 1892, Elsie Elvira, born May 23rd, 1897, Clara Alma, born March 21st, 1899, Nellie Alice, born February 23rd, 1901, and Archie, born March 11th, 1902.

My mother attended Arizona school up to grade eight. In those days, most people did not go beyond grade eight, but that was not the end of her education. She studied piano, passed grade eight exams later, taught piano lessons, and played music in churches. She accepted the Lord into her life at age 18.

In her mid-20s, Mom attended Winnipeg Bible Institute and graduated four years later. Of course, that's where she met my father. They were married on November 24th, 1928, in her parents' home in the Arizona district, near Sidney.

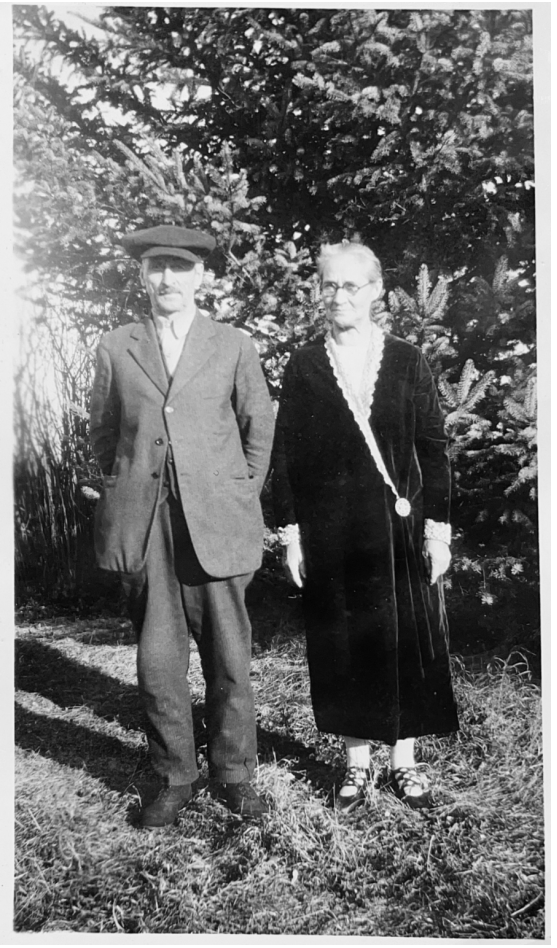
People generally say, "If you are not aboriginal, you are an immigrant to Canada."' That's not always true. My ancestors came to Canada in the early 1800s, before Canada became a country in 1867. So, they did not immigrate. They had just moved to the British colony of Canada. My great-great-grandfather on my mother's side, Edmond Pugsley, came to Canada by way of New York on a sailing ship in 1833. I have a copy of his journal that he wrote each day he was on the ship. The journey took about five weeks. My great-great-grandfather Lintott also came to Canada in the 1830s.

My great uncle, Sylvester Pugsley, was also one of the first settlers in what is now Saskatoon. He came by wagon train from Moose Jaw in 1883 and built the first house in Saskatoon, a sod building. But he didn't stay—he went back to Ontario.

My family moved several times before I was born. The first place was to Saskatoon. Dad was assistant pastor at a non-denominational church that later became University Ave Alliance church. They lived near Luceland, Saskatchewan, where Dad was pastor of Harts Hill Alliance Church. My older brother, Lloyd, was born there

in the Kerrobert hospital on December 28th, 1930. They also lived near Grandvue, Manitoba, where my sister was born on November 17th, 1932.

My mother lived to be 98 years old.



Grandma and Grandpa Beswitherick





CARBERRY, ARIZONA DISTRICT (1937-1940)

I was born in Carberry in the home of Mrs. Smith, where many babies were born as there was no hospital in Carberry at the time. Dr. Waugh was the doctor who delivered me. My family lived in a small one-room house that later was used for a single-car garage. It was across the lane from my Beswitherick grandparents' house on a farm in the Arizona district. The house was so small that my brother, Lloyd, had to sleep in a bed up near the rafters. I have a very vague memory of that house. I was about two-and-a-half when we moved.





The house I was born in



PLAINVEIW GILBERT PLAINS (1940-1950)

In 1940, we moved to a farm northwest of Gilbert Plains, Manitoba. Dad worked for a farmer named Mr. Meyers while also conducting a Sunday school in the Plainview School. I really liked living on that farm and was not happy to move to town. One big event happened while we were there: we got our first radio. Since we had no power, it had to be battery powered. The dry cell battery cost about ten dollars. That was a lot of money in the forties, so it was used very sparingly. I remember Dad had to put a long pole up in the yard for the antenna to make it work.

We all attended a Christmas concert at the school one year. I would have been about four. It was my first time seeing Santa Clause. They jingled sleigh bells before he came in, so I thought he had come in a sleigh like everyone else, and I thought the North Pole was somewhere up the road north of us. It seemed that believing in Santa in those days was easier than it is today.

In the winter, the only way to go to town was by horse and sleigh, as the roads were not open in winter. Some people had little covered rigs with a small wood stove in them. There were two livery stables in town where people could leave their horses while shopping. We only had an open sleigh, so we could only go to town on warm days.

Dad had a 1928 Chevrolet that he would use in the summer. In the fall, the car would get cold as it had no heater, so he would take along a kerosene lantern for a little heat. I still like the smell of a lantern burning.

In 1943, we moved to the town of Gilbert Plains, where we lived in four different houses. One was owned by a store owner who Dad worked for. It was a huge house, three stories and at least five bedrooms. They rented it for fifteen dollars a month. Two important things happened while we lived in that house: my younger brother, Robin, was born on June 16th, 1943. Later, about November of that year, when I was six, I was born again. We attended a little Pentecostal church at the time. On Sunday evenings, they would have an altar call at the end of the sermon. I knew I needed to be saved. I went forward and Dad came up and prayed with me. That was over 70 years ago. It was the best thing to ever happen to me in my whole life.

I started school in September of 1943. I was still only five until September 30th. World War II was still going on at that time. I was old enough to know everyone was very worried about the outcome. Most families had someone in the war. It was what everyone was talking about. I remember VE day (Victory in Europe Day). People were downtown shouting and even burned Hitler in effigy. Everyone was so happy the war was over.

In school, I had a good friend named Bobby Brown. We spent a lot of time playing together. When we were in grade seven, we had a male teacher who we thought picked on us. He was quite mean we were both quite small. We used to say, when we grew up, we would come back and beat him up. Many years later, we were living in Hinton, Alberta, and I was selling Fuller Brushes. I knocked on a door and my old teacher answered. The first thing I thought of was what Bobby and I had said. The problem was, he was still bigger than me.

I'm not sure what year dad bought a small house in Gilbert Plains, but I remember it had a large lot on the edge of town with a barn on it. We had lots of fun playing in the loft. At that time, Dad had a school bus route, and I would sometimes go with him. He supplied his own vehicle—a 1935 Ford Sedan Delivery. In winter, the school supplied a covered van on sleighs. Dad supplied the horses, which he kept in our barn. The van had a small wood heater in it. Dad would go to the bush with the horses and sleigh to cut wood, as we burned wood for both heat and cooking.

When I was a kid, I always enjoyed outdoor activities. In the summer, we swam in the river. No one seemed to worry that no adults were around. I learned to swim in the Valley River there. In the winter, there was

skiing and hockey and sleigh riding, but there were also lots of chores. My job was to keep the wood box full. I also had to bring in snow to melt for clothes washing.

About this time, Lloyd and Gretta May were away at a boarding school in Saskatchewan. Robin had started school at Brickburn School, and I was in grade seven. In April that year, tragedy struck our home. Robin became seriously ill. At first, he was diagnosed with polio as there was an epidemic in Manitoba that year. A man from our church offered to drive my parents and Robin to Winnipeg to the children's hospital. There, they found out he had meningitis. Because they thought Robin had polio, we were quarantined, and I had to stay home alone. Later, the United Church minister, who lived two doors down, asked me to stay with them. I said I couldn't because we were quarantined. He said they were not afraid of polio. That night, Lloyd came home for the holidays. Of course, no one was home, and we didn't have a telephone, so we didn't know he was coming. The next morning, he was quite upset because he didn't know where everyone was.

When I eventually came home, I found Lloyd there. He and I were stuck at home for the Easter holidays, so we decided to make some maple syrup. There were maple trees all around our house and more in the bush behind. It was spring, so the sap was running. We would drill a hole in the tree near the bottom and use a lid from a tin can bent in the middle, then drive it into the tree below the hole. Then, we used Mom's wash boiler over a bonfire to boil the sap. It takes a lot of sap to make a little syrup. After several days of boiling gallons of sap, we ended up with about 2 quarts of syrup. I think we both

enjoyed making the syrup. It was one of the first times we ever did anything together.

My mother had to stay in Winnipeg with Robin, who was in the hospital for a long time until he recovered. During that time, my parents sold our house in Gilbert Plains to move to Saskatchewan near where Lloyd and Gretta May were going to school. So, Mom was in Winnipeg and Dad was moving us to Saskatchewan, and I was sent to live with Uncle Ern and Aunt Addie, where I finished my grade seven in a one-room country school. I have always said it was the best two months of school I ever had.







Paul and Rey



Robin and Paul



TWO RIVERS BIBLE INSTITUTE (1950-1955)

In the summer of 1950, we moved to northeastern Saskatchewan, near the hamlet of Carlea. Dad bought a house and had it moved near Two Rivers Bible Institute. Later, when Dad joined the staff, it was moved again to the campus. Years later, when I had the building moving business, I moved it again to the town of Carrot River.

Lloyd and Gretta May had been going to high school and bible school there. Robin and I went to a one-room school on the campus. It was from grade one to eight. I was in grade eight and Robin was in grade two. We had a good teacher, Mr. McKerzie. I think I got my

best marks that year. Dad was teaching in the bible school. I made a few friends there, and one was David Baxter. We had a lot of fun playing outdoors as there were two rivers nearby and lots of bush. We trapped weasels and rabbits and sometimes sold the skins. One big problem there was that the rivers would sometimes flood in the spring. Some years, the school would be cut off, and the only way out was by boat. One year, our house was flooded almost to the upstairs floor. Eventually, the school had to move to Nipawin because of the floods.

That year, Robin became very ill again. He started to have convulsions and had to quit school. My parents, again, took him to Winnipeg to the children's hospital, but they couldn't help him. We lost him on May 14th, 1953, just a few days before his 10th birthday. It was a very sad time for our family. The other people on the staff were a big help since my parents had little money, as did the rest of them. They all pitched in. Grampa Wannop, a carpenter, built the coffin, and another lady prepared him for burial. They used a pick-up truck for a hearse. School kids brought flowers, and some of the men dug the grave. I was very close to Robin. I was fifteen at the time. I miss him very much. My parents grieved for him the rest of their lives.

That same year, when we lost Robin, I had to have an appendix operation at the Nipawin Hospital. We didn't have a car then, so Dad had to borrow a friend's truck to take me in. It was about 20 miles. They operated as soon as I got there. I was put under with ether, a type of anesthetic. Not a very nice experience for a teenager. I was in the hospital for a week. They didn't send people home as soon back then.

That summer, as soon as school was out, I went to work for Uncle Ern on the farm where I was born. At least, that's where my folks lived when I was born. I really liked working for him. He was never married, so he had no children of his own. He treated me like the son he never had. I didn't want to go back to school that fall, but my folks thought I should. I learned a lot that summer. He trusted me to drive his tractor and truck. I had also worked for him on the farm the year before, when I was fourteen.

I never did like school. I couldn't wait to leave, but the best part of that school—a Christian school—was that I made good Christian friends, some who have been lifelong, such as Johnny and Russell Dell. l left home that summer in 1955 to work on a farm near Biggar, Saskatchewan. That fall, I bought my second car: a 1951 Henry J. It was probably the worst car I ever owned.



Our house



Paul and Lloyd, circa 1954



Russell Dell (standing) with us during the flood

HAMILTONS' FIRE (1953)

When we first moved to Carlea, there was another house next door where Mrs. Hamilton and her two children lived. One evening, their daughter, Patsy, came running over, shouting that their house was on fire. Dad was not home, so I ran over a path through the bush and over a footbridge to get help.

I went into the boys' dorm where a staff member was working and hollered, "Hamiltons' house is on fire!"

So, he shouted to the students, "Bring your slop pails and come with me!"

There was no sewer and water in the dorm, so everyone had a slop pail. The staff member told the boys to jump in the truck, and they headed for Hamiltons' by the road. It was winter, so the river was frozen. I said I would go to the river near Hamiltons' and our place, where we got water, and chop a hole in the ice. By the time I got there, the boys had shown up. I don't remember how many there were. I filled each pail as they came down, and they would run up the hill and throw it on the fire. By that time, several men were there helping, and we succeeded in saving the house

HITCH HIKING (1955)

It was the spring of 1955—Easter holidays. I was in grade 12 at Two Rivers. Most of the students had gone home for the holidays as it was a boarding school, but since my dad was on the staff, we lived on the campus. My friend, Lloyd Abrey, was also there as he couldn't afford to go home. His home was near Grandview, Manitoba. My uncle Ern lived on that farm near Sidney, Manitoba, so Lloyd and I decided to hitchhike to Manitoba as we had no money. We left home with a few sandwiches my mother had made. Hitchhiking was not very good because the roads in Saskatchewan were so bad in April that some places were impassable. We walked many miles over the worst part of the road. When night came, we looked for shelter, and we finally found a rural school. It was locked, but the porch was open, so we spent the night. We didn't sleep much because it was so cold, and the floor was very hard. And, of course, we had no blankets.

The next day wasn't much better. We had a few dollars between us, so we bought some bread and bologna. By the next day, the bread was dried out, but we were so hungry it tasted like candy. We even thought we should hop a freight car, but it was too hard to get in. By the second night, we had made it to Tomkin, Saskatchewan. We asked a farmer if we could sleep in his barn, but he said no.

Finally, in Tomkin, we found a small railroad station, the kind where people just waited for a train, so it was unmanned. There was a wood stove and plenty of wood, so we lit the fire and stayed warm that night.

The next day went better. We made it to Grandview. The last ride we took was with an RCMP officer. Lloyd got out at home, and the policeman dropped me off outside town. I soon had a ride to the next town, Gilbert Plaines, where we had lived from 1943 to 1950. I stopped in at the store where my folks used to shop. The owner, Mr. Pipe, was also the town's mayor, and he invited me for supper at a restaurant. That was the first meal I'd had since I left home. I went to call on some friends and folks from the church, the Nicolsons, and they asked me to stay the night. The next day, Mrs. Nicolson made me some lunch to take along. I got a ride to Brandon, then another one to Sidney.

I was lucky to get that ride. The man who picked me up said a priest had been murdered the day before by a hitchhiker. In those days, hitchhiking was quite common. I guess we were a little foolish, but we were bored, and it was a great adventure.

My Uncle Ern picked me up at Sidney and took me out to the farm where I worked for him for a few days. Then, he paid my train fare back home.



MY FIRST CAR (1954)

My first car was a 1930 Model A Ford. I was working for a farmer near Waterous, Saskatchewan. I bought it from the Ford dealer in Waterous and paid fifty dollars for it. That is less than a tank of gas today. It used oil real bad, so I overhauled the engine myself. I was sixteen years old at the time. I drove it home at the end of the summer. We lived in northeastern Saskatchewan at the time. I couldn't drive it in the winter since it had no heater.

The following spring, my brother Lloyd and I drove the car to Saskatoon to find work for the summer. He had just started teaching, and I was just done high school. It was about a 200-mile trip. We had seven flat tires on the trip, which took us two days. We slept in a tent at night. When we got to Saskatoon, I left the car at a friend of Lloyds' place. We both found jobs for the summer on farms. That was the last time I drove that car. Later, I gave it to Lloyds' friend to make a trailer out of it.

OUT ON MY OWN (1955-56)

Some moments in your life stand out more than others. The next few months were one of those times. There was very little work near where my parents lived in fall and winter, so I thought I would look for work in Alberta. Lloyd was teaching at a school on my way, in western Saskatchewan, so l stopped to visit him at a place called Court. I was snowed in a few days since it was November.

I later went on toward Calgary by way of Red Deer. I had my first glimpse of the Rockies on that trip. I reached Red Deer that evening, and I decided to sleep in the car as I didn't have much money. My battery was not very good, so I parked the car on top of a hill so I could push it down if it wouldn't start the next morning. This was my ‘51 Henry J. I had to start it on the hill the next

morning. It started, but it was very cold that night and the car had no antifreeze in it. The water had frozen. It boiled over, breaking the rad hose and killing the engine.

To make matters worse, when I came back to get my suitcase, as I had decided to look for work in Red Deer, the car was gone. I phoned the police, and they told me it had likely been towed. I found where it had been towed to—a repair shop. Since I couldn't afford to fix it, he said I could leave it there until I could find the money at no charge.

I had very little money, but you could get a hotel room back then for three dollars, so I decided to find a job in Red Deer. The next day was Sunday, and as my custom, I looked for a church. I went to a big church in the morning and never really met anyone, but in the evening, I found a small Baptist Church. I'm sure God led me there. There were only 25 or 30 people in attendance, but after the service, everyone came up and spoke to me, asking me what I was doing in Red Deer. One man said he maybe could find me a job. I had just walked the streets for three or four days looking for work but found none. The only job offer I had was on a farm, hauling feed with horses twelve hours a day, seven days a week, for fifty dollars a month. Finally, my money ran out, so I decided to go and see the man who said maybe he could find me a job.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening. It was cold and I was hungry. He invited me in and offered me a meal. While I was there, someone called to ask if they knew where that young man who was at church on Sunday was. The man put me on the phone. They said their son had just joined the air force and they had an

extra room if I would like to stay there. I guess God was looking out for me.

I got a job in a few days in a poultry packing plant for ninety cents an hour. Good pay at that time. Another lady, a widow, said I could board there. I was able to get my car fixed, but the job only lasted until Christmas. I decided to go back home for Christmas, but my car broke down again, so I took the bus home and came back for the car the following spring.

I spent Christmas that year at home in Carlea. There was no work there in the winter, but I had heard from a friend from school who lived in Snow Lake, Manitoba, a mining town. He said to come there for a job in the mine because the pay was good. His parents offered for me to stay at their place until I secured some work. But then, I found out you had to be 21 to work in the mine. I was only 18. However, I was able to get a job on a cat train as a breakie loading and unloading freight.



THE CAT TRAIN (1956 - 1958)

Back in the ‘40s and ‘50s, there were small communities in northern Canada that had no roads connecting them to the outside world. There were only two ways to get supplies to them. One was by air, which was very expensive, and the other way was by Cat train. Cat trains were made up of crawler tractors pulling large sleighs, much like the horse-drawn sleighs used by rural people at that time, only much bigger and heavier. The term Cat was a generic term used for all crawler tractors. There could be three or four Cats and eight or ten sleighs for freight, and a caboose at the end for sleeping and

eating. They would run 24 hours a day, one shift driving and one sleeping or eating. Because there were no roads, they mainly travelled on frozen lakes in the winter. It was a hard life working in the cold since there were no cabs on the cats, and there was always the danger of going through the ice. If there were any repairs to make, they were done in the freezing cold.

I worked on these Cat trains for two winters: 1956 and 1957. The first time began when I was at home in northern Saskatchewan for Christmas in 1955. There was no work available in that area in winter, but I was told there *was* work with good pay at a mine in Snow Lake, Manitoba. A friend of mine, Teddy Seymore, lived there and said I could stay at his home until I found a job. When I got there, I found out you had to be 21 to work underground. I was only 18 at the time, but I heard of a job as a swamper on a Cat train nearby. A swamper does all the hard jobs like loading and unloading sleighs, helping to hook them up, or any extra jobs that needed to be done. The pay wasn't very good, but it was enough to get by. This Cat train was hauling construction supplies to two radar sites where there were no roads, just frozen muskeg and lakes. The radar sites were like the distant early warning (D.E.W.) line. Only, further south, it was called the mid-Canada line.

This Cat train had three Cats, two TD14 internationals, one D6, nine sleighs, and a caboose. After a couple of months, we had completed our work, and I got a job working on one of the radar sites doing construction—mostly cutting trees and digging holes in the frozen muskeg for the anchors for the tower. I left there at the end of May and had to ride out on a muskeg tractor to the Churchill Rail Line, then I caught a ride on

a jigger to the train station. I also learned to drive one of the cats that winter. That was my first experience on a Cat train.

The summer after, I worked in Kindersley, Saskatchewan for a building mover. I went to Kindersley because two of my good friends, John and Russell Dell, had jobs there and told me there was lots of work. That fall, when the building moving work was done, I needed a job for the winter. I heard of a job working on a Cat train out of Lynn Lake, Manitoba. There was a construction company in Eston, Saskatchewan, near Kindersley called Northcott, and they were looking for someone with experience on a Cat train.

Jack Northcott, the owner, wanted a man named Laurence Hansen and I to go to Lynn Lake ahead of the rest of the crew to get things ready to start the operation. We drove to Prince Albert in a company truck and left it there to be sent to Lynn Lake by train. As we got into Manitoba, we passed by The Pas and Cranberry Portage, where we changed to a one passenger car at the end of a freight train. We were well into December by then, but there was poor heat on the car and no food available. It took twelve hours to get to Lynn Lake, and we were getting quite hungry. Only six passengers were on the train, so the crew invited us all back to the caboose for some coffee and to warm up while we watched them eat.

We got into Lynn Lake at about ten that night, where the temperature was forty below. We checked into a hotel to get out of the cold and have something to eat. The plan was to stay at a rented house at Eldon Lake just outside of Lynn Lake. The Town of Lynn Lake had been moved from Sheridan by sleighs and Cats in the winter, travelling over lakes and muskeg for about 200 miles.

They moved everything: houses, stores, schools, and churches. These were the sleighs we were to use for hauling freight that winter.

When we got to that house the next morning, the oil heater didn't work, so the house was ice cold. The only source of heat was a small wood heater, but there was no wood, so the first night, we "borrowed" some from the next-door neighbour. Our beds had to be moved close to the heater to keep warm, and we had to stoke the fire every two hours. After a couple of days, we finally got the oil heater working. Thankfully, there was one truck up there that would be used to haul freight out to Reindeer Lake, so we had transportation until the rest of the crew arrived.

We spent about a month getting ready for the trip to Reindeer and beyond, building decks and sides for the sleighs that we used to haul freight. We spent the holidays at Eldon Lake, where Jack Northcott's Wife cooked a Christmas dinner. At 19-years-old, it was my first Christmas away from home, but that was okay because I was having the adventure of my life.

Around the first of January, we hooked up all the sleighs, including the caboose, with a load of freight and headed for Reindeer Lake—about 60 miles away on a bush road. The lake was about 200 miles long and 60 miles wide, covered with Islands. There was no way anyone from the outside could find their way around it, so they hired Native guides who lived there. One of them would always drive the lead Cat.

We were hired to haul supplies to villages such as Brochet in the north and Southend in the south, and to anyone who lived on one of the many islands. There were a lot of commercial fishermen on the lake, so we would

haul frozen fish as a backhaul. They would ice fish in winter and fish by boat in the summer. They had a filleting plant at a co-op point that was also where the trucks would haul the freight to before loading it onto the sleighs. One good thing about using a Cat train over trucks on the lake was that if you got into trouble, you always had the warm caboose and food.

We started out on our first trip to Brochet at the north end of the lake. The lead Cat had a snowplow that plowed down to the bare ice, leaving a strip of snow in the middle so the sleighs could pull easier. We were travelling for about four or five miles an hour for eight hours, then took eight hours off to eat and sleep.

For about four or five months, the caboose became our home. It was 24 feet long and 8 feet wide with four double bunks for the drivers, one for the cook, and one for the boss. Inside was also a wood-burning cookstove and a water barrel. When we needed wood, we just stopped at an island and chopped some, and when we needed water, we chopped a hole on the ice since the water was pure enough to drink. By spring, the ice was about four feet thick.

The caboose was warm, but the floor was cold, so we could keep meat frozen under the beds. We had plenty of meat and potatoes for meals. As for bathroom facilities, there was a step at the back with a short rope attached to it and a knot at the end to hang onto. I'm sure you get the picture.

Originally, the plan was for the trucks to also haul on the lake, but it didn't work out because, when the temperature dropped, the ice would contract like metal and leave a crack about a foot wide. Water would then pool on top of the ice and cause slush that would freeze

to the runners and make it very hard for pulling, even when it was very cold. When the temperature got warmer, the ice would expand and create heaves up to eight feet high, making it difficult to cross. When we came to one of these open cracks, we would place 24-foot-long planks, which we always carried, across the crack so that the Cat could drive over it. At the back of my mind was always possibility that the Cat could break through the ice. That was why we couldn't have cabs on the Cats—so we could jump off in an emergency. We did have canvas on the sides of the engine and a windshield, so we had some heat.

To cross the crack, we had to take one sleigh at a time with one Cat and a 100-foot cable attached to another Cat in front until we had all the sleighs across. At one crossing, when I was driving the Cat crossing the crack, water kept flooding on top of the ice. I was standing on the seat, ready to jump, when one track broke through. I kicked the throttle to speed it up. I was about to jump when the cable from the other Cat tightened and pulled me out. After that happened, I lost my fear of going through the ice.

We carried on to Brochet, crossing more cracks. While most of the lake is in Saskatchewan, Brochet was a small village in Manitoba at the north end of the lake. A weather station was there, and we hauled their year supply of fuel all in 45-gallon drums. Sometimes, we loaded the drums by hand. Two guys would grab hands behind the barrel then lift on the bottom rim straight up. A full barrel of fuel weighs 500 pounds, so this was no job for wimps. One time, when we were unloading bags of cement, a big Norwegian man was carrying five bags,

each one weighing 85 pounds. You were considered a wimp if you couldn't carry three.

The Brochet population was mostly Native people who made their living fishing and trapping. The village had no streets, and houses were scattered here and there, along with a Catholic church and a Hudson Bay trading post. The trading post was very much like trading posts were 100 years before. It had two counters: one for fur trading and one for buying goods. The trappers would go to the trading counter and sell their furs, then with a voucher go to the other one and purchase their goods, usually spending it all. One good thing about the Reindeer Lake area was that alcohol, which was such a curse in many northern communities, was not available. This was because Lynn Lake was the only place it could be bought, and it was in Manitoba. The only road there crossed the border into Saskatchewan, and at the time, there was a law that you couldn't bring alcohol across a provincial border.

Something different about northern villages was that day or night didn't seem to make any difference to them. We made several trips to Brochet, sometimes arriving in the middle of the night. Since it ran 24 hours a day, there would always be people up walking around the village.

On one memorable trip, when we arrived, the temperature was 60 below. There was no winter diesel fuel available then, so we had to leave the Cats running at all times. We would only shut off one at a time to service them. We didn't try to move that night since the metal was so brittle when it got that cold. It would be like pulling a sleigh on sand.

We hauled most of the year's supply of food and supplies to the store and the weather station since it could only be hauled in the winter. One staple we hauled was lard and ten-pound sacks of flour. The trappers would take the flour and lard on their trap lines to make Bannock, which was what they lived on. Before snowmobiles, everyone travelled by dog team, so the dogs would live on the frozen fish.

On one trip to Brochet, I went to visit an old gentleman in his eighties. He was a retired RCMP officer who was originally with the NWMP. I spent several hours with him as he told me stories of his experiences and showed me photos of his life. It was quite an entertaining evening.

We made several trips around the lake picking up fish. We would weigh each 100-pound box and dump it into the sleigh. The fish were either whitefish or lake trout, which could weigh as much as 30 pounds. They were the best for eating, and sometimes the cook would ask us to bring one in off the load for a meal. I sent a big one by mail to my parents, who were at the bible school then, so they fed it to everyone. If they found a large one that looked good, the fish plant would send it to a fancy restaurant with the head on.

Another trip we made was to Southend, a village at the south end of the lake. It was about the same distance as Brochet. Most northern lakes had a current, so Reindeer flowed south into a river. As you went south, the current grew stronger. One place that narrowed between two islands had ice that was too thin to drive on. Because of that, we had guides that knew where the ice was safe. Here, we had made what is called a portage, so used that to drive across a large island and back on the

ice. As we got near Southend, we came to Deep Bay—a bay that was 700 feet deep, which they say was the site of a meteor landing. We could also see open water because of the currents. Some parts never froze over, so it was a little scary to see open water while driving on ice.

The longest trip we made was to another lake: Wollaston. It was much smaller than Reindeer Lake and about 35 miles north of it. If you look at a map of northern Saskatchewan, you can find both of them quite easily since they are the biggest lakes in the province. First, we headed west from Co-op Point, about 60 miles towards the west side of the lake. That was when the fun began.

As we were nearing the west side of Reindeer Lake on the way to Wollaston Lake, I saw what I thought was a mirage. It was a very cold day, sunny with ice crystals in the air. I could see a small lake that looked like it was just above the trees. The lake was actually over a small hill and could not usually be seen until you went over the hill. The sight was breathtaking.

No one had ever taken a Cat train this route. The trip took us over land, then across a series of small lakes. I don't think any of them even had names. It was easier going on the lakes than over land. That part of Saskatchewan is in the Precambrian Shield, now known as the Canadian Shield, where there is little soil, and the rock is either right on the surface or just below. Also, it was quite hilly. As we would come to a lake, there would be deep snowdrifts that we would have to unhook and plow through, which became very time-consuming. Then, there was a large steep hill we had to travel down. When pulling several sleighs down a steep hill, there is a chance of jackknifing, which could be very dangerous. The

procedure was to take one sleigh at a time with one Cat in front, and one behind, holding it back. The way you steered those old Cats was to use two steering clutches: pull the right one to go left and the left one to go right. But on a hill, you had to do the opposite, which was called cross clutching. We were taught to steer that way anyway, so we made it down okay and finally arrived at Wollaston Lake.

When we got there, no one knew where the trading post was, so we had someone—I think it was me—climb a tree to take the antenna wire high enough to reach the trading post with our two-way radio. These radios were supplied by the government for people in the north to communicate with each other, but they were only good for about 35 miles. When we were able to contact them, they sent out a man with a dog team to show us the way in. As we neared the post, we saw a bunch of young men come running out to meet us. I guess they had never seen a Cat train before, so they wanted to ride back on the sleighs.

When we stopped at a fish camp on Wollaston, we would often be asked in for something to eat. I was always impressed by how primitive their homes were, yet very clean. Most houses were just one room, and the furniture would be handmade. Sometimes the bed was a pile of hides. When we visited, they often offered us tea and homemade caribou jerky. On New Year's Day, a native guide and I took one Cat and a sleigh to a nearby fish camp to pick up a load. We didn't have the caboose, so we brought our own lunch, which consisted of a can of Prem and tea. He always brought his tea pail, so we started a fire to make tea from melted snow and heat the Prem. That was our New Year's dinner.

Wollaston Post was new and becoming a small village. There were a few houses, a government trading post, and a fish filleting plant. We had brought in lumber and building supplies to build more houses and a church. For a back hall, we hauled frozen fish. This time, they were packaged filleted fish. While we were there, we went to fishing camps around the lake and hauled fish back to the plant.

The manager of the trading post, his wife, and their small children had lived their whole lives in the north, so they were hardy northerners. One January, he took his whole family on a trip to Lynn Lake, a distance of about 150 miles. They travelled by dog team and would stop each night, building a lean-to out of spruce branches and a fire to cook their meal. They would then sleep in their eiderdown sleeping bags that were good for -40 degrees, which it often got down to at night. The dogs would just bury themselves in the snow to keep warm and were fed frozen fish.

Another story I heard about him was that he had raised a timber wolf from a pup and trained it to be a sleigh dog. These dogs were not pets and were always kept chained up. He had one young son who would take out one dog and a sleigh and drive him around the village. But one time, the timber wolf got loose and attacked his son, injuring him quite badly. They had to fly the boy out to Lac La Rounge to a hospital. While they were gone, one of the neighbours shot the wolf. I guess they still can't be trusted even though it was raised in captivity.

Just one note about people in general: prejudice is not limited to any group. On Reindeer Lake, most of the Native people were Cree. On Wollaston, they were mostly Chiawyane. They didn't like each other. On one trip to

Wollaston, a young man wanted a ride with us to Co-op Point. It would take a couple of days to make the trip, so he asked one of the guys who happened to be Cree if he could sleep in his bed while he was driving. He said, “No dirty Chip is going to sleep in my bed.”

One other trip we made showed the resourcefulness of people who worked in the north. We were travelling back to Co-op Point one night when one of the Cats broke down. There was a howling blizzard going on, but we tried to work on it anyway. We carried a large tarp that we tried putting over the Cat, but the wind was too strong, so we couldn't hold it down. One of the guides who knew the lake well said he knew of a place on an island not too far away that had a shed where we could work on the Cat, so we went there. We waited till morning to do any work, and when it got light out, we could look back where we had been because of the track marks in the snow. We had gone straight from where we had stopped directly to the island. The man who owned the shed had an old Model T with skis on the front and tracks on the back. That was the reason he had the building that, sure enough, was big enough to get the Cat in. It would move under its own power, but it wouldn’t pull anything. There was also a wood-burning heater in the building.

When we got the Cat apart, we could see it needed a new part, so we radioed Lynn Lake to Jack Northcott by relay. He then phoned Winnipeg for the part. They put on the plane to Lynn Lake, then transferred it to a small plane that landed on the lake beside us. It only took about twelve hours from the time it was sent. Not bad service.

It was May by the time we made our last trip that winter. The trip was south of Co-op Point to a new mine

starting up. By that time, it was quite warm, but the big northern lakes didn't melt until around the end of June. The heaves across the lake had become very high by then—some over eight feet—and there was always water on both sides. Sometimes it would be over the tracks. It was a little scary, and we hoped there was ice under the water. Luckily, we made it back without any mishap.

When we were done for the winter, we drove the Cats back to Lynn Lake. Two of the trucks had broken down, so we had to pull them back. By the time we got back to Lynn Lake, I had been up for over 24 hours. I got on a plane to fly to Flin Flon to catch a bus to Winnipeg. I was so tired by the time I got on the plane that I couldn't enjoy my first passenger plane ride. I slept all the way to Flin Flon.

My adventure on a Cat train was over. I learned a lot that winter, like how to overcome difficult situations and stick it out to the end. It would be of benefit to me my entire life.

One thing that stood out from that winter was looking up to the sky while driving at night, nothing above me to stop the incredible view of the millions of stars and sometimes even an unforgettable northern light display. It was like nothing I had ever seen before or since. I couldn't help thinking of the verse from the bible, "The heavens declare the glory of God."

When I got back to Lynn Lake, I took a plane to Flin Flon and a bus to Winnipeg. I bought a car there, a 1952 Ford. My sister, Gretta May, was in nurses training there, so she and her friend, Maryanne Wyess, rode back with me to our folks' home at Carlea, Saskatchewan. My adventure wasn't over yet. When we got home, the river was flooded, so we had to go the last way by boat.

I am glad to have had the chance for adventure those two winters. When you're 18 and 19, you are not afraid of anything. I saw parts of the country I would never have seen if I'd stayed in the south.





Load of frozen fish







KINDERSLEY (1956-1958)

While working near Snow Lake, I was writing back and forth to Russell and Johnny Dell. I was looking for a place to work in the spring, so they told me I should Come to Kindersley. They said there is lots of work there, and lots of good-looking girls in the church. They were right about that—I ended up marrying one of them.

I arrived in Kindersley around the middle of April 1956. I was 18 years old. I had just come from Red Deer, where I had bought my '48 Dodge. I had all my belongings an old suitcase and my ider down sleeping bag. I knew Russell Dell was working for Calvin Baker on

the farm. I phoned him, and Mary invited me for supper, then I stayed the night. Johnny Dell was working for Johnny Graham.

I met Ben Francisco—he was part owner of a building moving company and offered me a job as soon as they were to start work. I got my first license to drive a truck there. In the meantime, I got a different job on a farm with Andy Fornwald. I also started attending the alliance church. There were lots of young people in attendance, and I enjoyed it very much. I was invited to a Social at Scllinbergs farm. We played ball and I think had a wiener roast. Coming back to town, a couple of young girls rode back in my car. They were Lynn Harris and Diana Noble.

I also worked for Harold Francisco on his farm near Faxcome. Ben's Dad was a very eccentric person, but we got along well. The provincial election was happening, and Ben was running for social credit. Harold was really into politics. He had been involved with William Abrahart when social credit started in Alberta. Every night, after work, he had me listen to tape recordings of Abrahart's speeches. I guess that's where I began my interest in politics. After that, I started to work for Ben Francisco and Gordon Tiessen moving buildings. I enjoyed it very much.

I started boarding at Carl Baker's house, Calvin Baker's father. During that time, Mr. House had just left pastoring at the alliance church and Mr. Jasper was replacing him. He had a very positive influence on my life at the time. Since I had been raised in a Christian home and been converted at the age of six, my Christianity seemed to be connected to my parents, who were devout Christians. Kind of a three-way relationship between

myself, my parents, and God. One night, I woke up and it seemed that God's presence was in my room. After that, my relationship with God was only two-way: him and me. I took my Christianity more seriously from then on. Mr. Jasper encouraged me to be baptized. The baptismal service was on Mr. Thornton's farm, in his dugout. Several young people were also baptized, including Diana Noble.



KINDERSLEY (1960-63)

During those years, there were many changes in my life. I worked at several jobs—I won't necessarily list them in chronological order. Besides moving buildings, I tried selling Fuller Brushes. I did quite well at it. I worked for the Fuller Brush company for several years later, so I will come back to that. I worked for a short time at a construction job building a gas plant in Colville. My job was going into Kindersley every day to pick up parts and supplies. The boss was from Oklahoma. When he was in a hurry for something, he would say, "Put your hat on backwards and make it look like you're coming back." I

liked that job, driving a brand-new truck and driving as fast as I wanted. When the job was done there, I had to look for other work. That was when I went up north to Lynn Lake.

A friend I went to school with, Miles Haugan, worked for a plumbing and heating company. They were looking for employees. Miles was in the heating area installing furnaces, so I began to work at the sheet metal trade. Later that year, I began an apprenticeship. That January, I went to Saskatoon for my first year of trade school. In the fall before—it must have been 1958—I began to date a young lady named Diana Noble. We met at the Alliance church in Kindersley. During my time in Saskatoon, we wrote letters back and forth. I think we still have them. That was the beginning of our courtship. That summer, 1959, Diana's mother wanted to go on a trip to the west coast and offered to pay expenses if I would drive. Her father was almost 80, about 30 years older than her mother, and didn't want to go. I had just bought a 1957 Ford car and jumped at the chance. Besides Diana's mother, her grandmother, and her cousin, Ron Jicking also came along. We were well-chaperoned. It was the first time any of us had seen the mountains. We were very excited.

The first stop was Calgary. We stayed with her Uncle Bill that night. The next day, we stayed in some cabins at Baker Creek near Lake Louise. We will probably always remember that night as that was when we had our first kiss.

The number one highway was much different in 1959 than it is today. We were told of a spectacular sight west of Lake Louise: Takkakaw Falls. We took a narrow road with a few switchbacks to get there, but it was worth

it. The falls are about 1200 feet high. We have gone back there many times over the years.

The road between Golden and Revelstoke went away north. It was called the Big Bend—a narrow, gravelled road. The Rodgers pass hadn't been built yet. It took eight hours to go from Golden to Revelstoke. We stayed at Diana's Aunt Marion's place in Revelstoke. The next day, we went to Prince George to another aunt's place, Aunt Annie. We stayed there for a couple of days, then from there, we travelled down the old Fraser Canyon Road. It was much different than today. In some places, the road was so narrow you had to wait to meet a car. You wouldn't find any trucks on that road.

Arriving in Vancouver, we saw our first glimpse of the Pacific Ocean. We took a ferry from English Bay in downtown Vancouver, across to Nanaimo, and then to Victoria. Diana's mother and grandmother wanted to see the Butchart Gardens. They were very nice, but I think Diana and I were more interested in each other. On the way back, we drove through Washington, Idaho, and Montana. That was the end of a memorable trip.





JUST MARRIED

Cars were a big part of my life. I wondered why a man in Kindersley, Cecil Gough, drove a new car every year. I was told he was a salesman. He sold Fuller Brushes. When I heard he had been promoted to manager and the Kindersley territory was available, I thought I should try and get the job. I drove down to Moose Jaw to see him about it and Diana and her grandmother came along. I got the job. He gave me about thirty minutes of training in his hotel room, sold me a sample case, and I was on my way.

I had never sold anything in my life before, but I thought I would give it a try. The first door I knocked on, I hoped there was no one home, but there was. To my surprise, she bought something. The rest, as they say, is history.

I would eventually work for The Fuller Brush company for seven years and become a branch manager, but that's getting ahead of my story. Just before Christmas ’59, I asked Diana to marry me. She agreed. We bought a very small house on the back of Mrs. Hopes lot, about one-half block from Diana’s home. We paid $2,000 for it and had to pay ten dollars a month rent for the lot. It was 18x20 with a small porch and had three rooms with a very small bathroom—no tub or shower. We had to go to her mom and dad’s for a bath. Of course, we didn't live there till we were married, which was July 2nd, 1960. I lived in it alone until then.

That was a busy year for me. I had the opportunity to buy the building moving business and run it myself. I took over on May 1st, 1960. I always loved trucks and found moving buildings challenging. The license plates expired on April 30th, and I only had enough money to buy a plate for one truck, so we towed the block truck to the first job in May and bought the other one when the job was done. I was only 22 years old when I took over. Sometimes, I had a hard time getting customers to believe I was the boss.

As I said before, Diana and I were married on July 2nd that year. Diana had just turned 18 in May, and I was 22. We were married in the Alliance church In Kindersley. Rev. John Bell married us. The reception was in the United Church Hall, and Miles Haugen was the M.C.



HONEYMOON

We borrowed my brother Lloyd's Volkswagen for our honeymoon. We went on a short cruise that evening and took a ferry ride across the South Saskatchewan River to the little town of Septer. In those days, it was the custom to follow the newlyweds to their hotel. The most logical place would have been Rosetown, the next town east of Kindersley, so we thought no one would think we would go south. The Hotel in Septer was new and quite nice, but the only bathroom was down the hall. Our original plan was to go to Lake of the Woods, east of Winnipeg, and visit some of my relatives in Manitoba to

show off my new bride. We made it to Regina the next night, driving through mud all the way there. We washed the car the next morning, as we would be on pavement the rest of the trip.

On our third day, disaster struck. The car broke down just outside of Brandon. I phoned Aunt Cassie, who lived with Uncle Elmore in Brandon. She picked us up and took us to their place. We stayed there for several days until the car was fixed. From there, we went to Aunt Addie's place on my Beswitherick grandparents' old farm. Uncle Ern had since passed away. We stayed there for several days visiting a few other relatives in the Arizona district. We even went to the cemetery to visit those who had gone on before. We had lost so much time over the car repair that Diana and I decided to return home. We were anxious to move into our home and begin our lives together.

I was very busy over the next few months with the building moving company. Diana got a job as a telephone operator in Kindersley. We were quite happy in our little home. Also, we were active in the Alliance church, where I served as a deacon. Work in the moving business was very slow in the winter, so I sold Fuller Brushes during that time.

I will tell you one story that is quite funny to look back on, but it wasn't funny at the time. I looked at a moving job near Compere, Alberta, right on the border. The building owner didn't have time to look at it with me. He just gave me directions to where it was. He said he was too busy in his "office," the local tavern. I looked at the building, and we agreed on a price.

About a month later, the foundation was ready, so we brought the equipment there to do the job. He was

still busy at his "office," so we loaded it up and moved it to his farm. But there was a problem—it didn't fit the foundation. So, I got his wife to call him, and he came back with some of his buddies. As soon as he got out of the car, he began to laugh. He said, “That's not my building!” I had got the directions wrong and moved the wrong building. It was similar than his, and they were both on vacant farms. Of course, we had to take it back and move the right one. I didn't make any money on that job. The owner of the wrong building, who was with him when he came back to the farm, thought it was funny at the time. I guess, when he sobered up, he wanted money for damages. There were none, so nothing came of it.



EARLY ‘60s

Another building-moving story: I had a job to move a small building to Tagasky, about 200 miles away. We had to cross the South Saskatchewan River at Saskatchewan Landing. We got partway across the bridge to the covered part but found the building was too high, so I had to back off. We had the pickup along, as well. We had some long U bolts with us, so we removed the back axel from the lowboy and attached it on top of the frame with the U bolts, unhooked the fifth wheel and lowered the front end, suspended with the winch line. We tried it again and it just fit under the bridge. We put everything back and went on our way. Lenard Nash was

driving the pickup. On the way home, I stayed at Diana's Aunt Dorothy and Uncle Dick's since the lowboy had no lights and it was getting dark.

The biggest building that we moved was 40x60. The lowboy was only 36 feet long and 9 feet wide. It took a little ingenuity, but we did it. I had two good men working at the time, Don Deering and Arnold Mar. The building was an old refinery boiler house with no floor. It was corrugated metal with 8x8 posts for a frame every 20 feet. We opened up the front wall and backed the goose neck in about eight feet, added a 10-foot extension at the back, then chained 40-foot timbers to four of the posts, crossways. The system worked. We just had to move it two miles across a field.

On November 22nd, 1961, an exciting event took place in our lives. Our first child, little Jimmy, was born in the Kindersley hospital. Dr. Richie was the doctor. We named him James Russell. We were very happy about the event. We brought him home to our tiny house. George Staples built him a crib because a purchased one would not fit in our house.











HINTON (1963-1965)

The building moving business was not doing well. Not enough work and very seasonal, so we decided to get rid of it and try something new. I had sold Fuller Brushes for a while early on and done quite well. We wanted to make a fresh start, so we thought we would move to Alberta.

In 1963, there was very little work in Saskatchewan in the winter. We heard Alberta was the place to go. We phoned the Fuller Brush Company in Edmonton about a territory. The Branch Manager, Ray Garener, told me there was one open in Hinton and Jasper. We had never been to Hinton before. I think we even had to look it up on a map. We loaded up the necessities in our pickup, a 1961 Dodge, and set off for

Edmonton. I stopped at the office to sign up and pick up my sales kit. We stayed over in Edmonton and headed west to Hinton the next day. It was kind of an adventure, going to a place we had never been to live. I remember saying we were like Abraham going to a place God would show him.

We arrived at Hinton around noon. Of course, we knew no one. We inquired about a place to rent and, before the day was over, we had found a townhouse and moved our few belongings in. Jimmy liked to travel and liked our new house. I immediately went to work. The sales went very well. On our first Sunday, we attended a Baptist church we had seen while driving around. Everyone was very friendly, and we soon had a few new friends.

There, we met a young man who had just moved there from Belfast, Ireland. He was working in the pulp mill and was waiting for his wife and family to come from Ireland. He was very lonely. We became good friends he spent a lot of time at our place. In October, his wife, May, and two boys, Graham and Colin, got there. We have been lifelong friends with Roy and May Harbinson and the boys.







Picnic with the Harbinsons near Brule

MY CARS

Cars always seemed to be a big part of my life. I bought my first one in 1954 when I was sixteen. I was working for a farmer near Waterous, Saskatchewan, at the time. I bought it from the Ford dealer in Waterous and paid fifty dollars for it—a 1930 model A Ford Sedan. The dealer had a coupe with a rumble seat which I would have sooner had, but it was eighty-five dollars, and I only had fifty. The car used a lot of oil. My boss told me it needed new rings and said I could use his tools if I wanted to overhaul it. I had never worked on a car before, only bicycles, but I went ahead and did it anyway. Engines were much simpler to work on, then. I drove it

home to Carlea that fall. I still didn't have a driver's license—no one seemed to worry about that then. I couldn't take it for a test as the brakes weren't good enough, so I parked it for the winter. The next summer, Lloyd and I took it to Saskatoon to look for work. It had seven flat tires on that trip of 200 miles. It took us two days. That was the last time I drove it. After that, I gave it to a friend of Lloyd's to make a trailer out of it.

Here is a list of all the cars and trucks I have owned, not necessarily in this order: 1930 Ford Model A, 1948 Dodge, 1951 Henry J, 1952 Ford , 1953 Dodge, 1955 Ford , 1956 Ford pickup, 1957 Meteor, 1957 Ford pickup, 1958 Dodge pickup, 1959 Zephyr, 1959 Dodge Station Wagon, 1959 Pontiac, 1961 Dodge pickup (new), 1962 Austin Healy, 1963 Plymouth, 1963 Dodge Station Wagon (work), 1964 Volkswagen Beetle, 1965 Chrysler Winsor, 1966 Dodge Station Wagon, 1967 Dodge Monaco (new), 1968 Dodge Cornet, 1969 Plymouth (my last new car), 1970 Dodge Station Wagon, 1973 Chrysler Newport, 1975 Renault, 1976 Chrysler Newport, 1977 Córdoba, 1982 Ford pickup, 1983 Mercury, 1987 Lincoln, 1991 Chevrolet one-ton Duly, 1997 Lincoln Town Car, 1998 Chevrolet 3/4 ton diesel pickup, 2003 Dodge one-ton diesel, 2004 Lincoln Town Car, 2015 Ford F150. That's 37 altogether.

Big trucks: 1979 Ford 800 dump truck gas, 1980 Ford LT 9000 tractor, 1981 Ford CL 9000 tractor, 1993 Mack CH600 tractor.

Before we leave Hinton, I want to mention the vehicles we had while there. We came with the 1961 Dodge half-ton, but it wasn't very good for selling as trucks had only two doors and one bench seat in those days. One of my customers had a car he wanted to trade

for a truck, so we made a deal. I also got some money, to boot. It was a 1959 Pontiac. It was a pretty good car, although I never liked it. A customer who was also a Volkswagen dealer convinced me to buy a Volkswagen Beatle. It was much better on gas, but it gave me lots of trouble. It was kind of fun to drive. When I stopped selling, I sold it and bought a 1955 Ford. We made a trip to Kindersley with the Harbinson family for Christmas. It was a very cold trip, but we made it okay. It was their first Christmas in Canada. Later, I traded that car for a 1959 Dodge Station Wagon.



'48 Dodge



'52 Ford Panel Truck



'51 Henry J



'52 Ford



'53 Dodge



'58 Dodge Station Wagon



‘59 Metropolitan



‘59 Pontiac



‘59 Zephyr



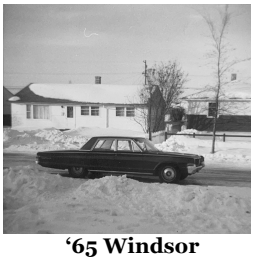
‘61 Dodge Truck



’62 Austin Healy



‘64 Beetle



‘65 Windsor



’66 Dodge Station Wagon



‘67 Monaco



‘69 Cornet



‘69 Plymouth



‘73 Newport



‘76 Newport



‘77 Cordoba



‘81 F-150



‘83 Mercury



‘91 Chevy Truck



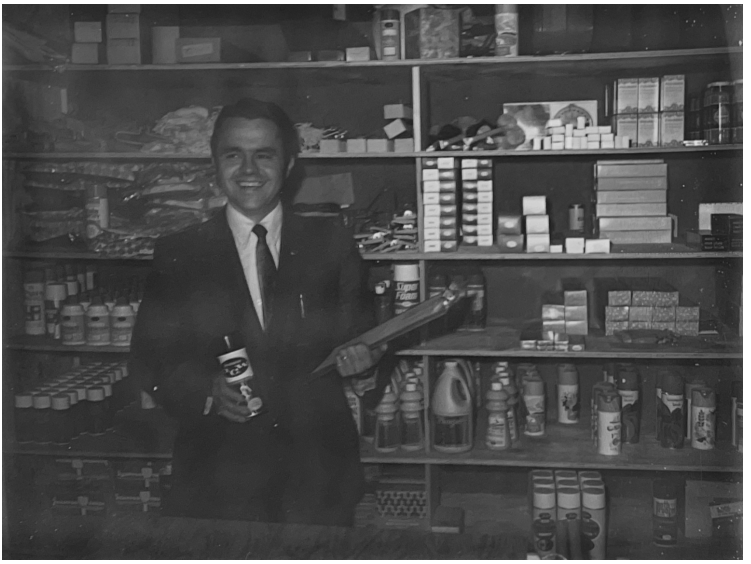
‘97 Lincoln



‘04 Lincoln



’15 Ford



FULLER BRUSH COMPANY

I spent about seven years altogether with the Fuller Brush Company, so I'll use this chapter to write about it. The company was founded in 1906 by Alfred Fuller, a Canadian from Nova Scotia. He had moved to Hartford, Connecticut, and he began selling brushes for another company. Then, he started making his own brushes in his basement in the evening and selling them during the day.

By the time I was selling them, it was a large company with thousands of dealers across North America. As I said before, I knew a man in Kindersley

who bought a new car every year. I found out he was a Fuller Brush man and was now a manager. At the time, the Kindersley territory was available. I drove down to Moose Jaw to see him about the job and got it. Diana and her grandmother came with me. I had never sold anything before and was a little nervous. When I knocked on my first door, I hoped no one was home. But a woman was, and to my surprise, she bought something. I was hooked and did quite well. I remember how impressed I was with the quality of the products when my first order came. At the first sales meeting I went to, I found out I was 13th in sales in Canada out of 500 dealers.

After a few months, I had an opportunity to buy the building moving business. I couldn't resist that opportunity, but when things didn't go well three years later, I decided to move to Alberta and try selling again. As I said, we moved to Hinton about 200 miles west of Edmonton, right near Jasper. I had Hinton and Jasper as my territory, and I did very well for the first year. I especially enjoyed the rural areas around Hinton. There were a couple of small villages in the foothills: Entrance and Brule. The people were quite isolated, and the roads were very poor. I used to go out around family allowance time. They were very good customers.

I will stop this story to tell a side sorry about Brule. A man named Dennis Johnston came to the Baptist church. He was encouraging people to reach out to areas that had no church. Roy Harbinson was interested in ministry at that time, so we talked about what we could do. I suggested we start a Sunday School at Brule. We made a trip out there one evening and visited all the homes, only about a dozen or so. I knew all of them from Fuller, so they all invited us in. They all said they would

send their children to the Sunday School. Some had quite large families. We also went to see the schoolteacher she said we could use the school.

So, the next Sunday, Roy, May, Diana, and I went to Brule to hold our first Sunday School. We decided we would each teach a class. The road was so bad that we bought an old Ford Sedan Delivery so we wouldn't wreck our cars. When we got there, we rang the school bell. We didn't know if anyone would come at first. Then, we saw movement. Suddenly, from all over the village, kids started to arrive. The school was on a hill, so we could see all the houses. Over 30 kids came out that first Sunday, and they continued to come. We moved away after a while, but Roy and May kept the Sunday School going for a year or so. We really don't know what the lasting results were, but Roy told me the schoolteacher accepted the Lord as a result of the Sunday school.

Things went well in the first year we were in Hinton. On June 11th, 1964, we welcomed our second child: a little girl, Angela June. It was very happy and exciting time for us. People said we had the perfect family. But of course, we weren't done yet. Jimmy was happy to have a baby sister.

I think every door-to-door salesman has some amusing stories to tell, so I'll give you a couple. I was calling on a customer in Jasper one day when we had a new product to sell. I would carry a sample and demonstrate it. This time, it was a floor wax stripper. In those days, everyone waxed their floors, and quite often the wax would build up and be hard to remove. This new stripper worked very well, so I asked the lady if she had any build-up that was hard to get off. She said, “Yes, in the corner under the table.”

The rooms were quite small in the Jasper houses, so the table was pushed into the corner. That meant I had to crawl under the table on my hands and knees. I applied the stripper and told her it was working well. She said, “Oh, I want to see!” so she crawled under the table on her hands and knees. Then she started to laugh and said, "I wonder what my husband would say if he came home right now!”

The next story was later when I was a sales manager. We were living in St. Paul, Alberta. I was looking for a dealer in Vermilion, so I put an ad in the local paper, and it was answered by a Jehovah’s Witness missionary. I thought he would make a good salesman as he was used to knocking on doors. So, I hired him. When I hired a new dealer, I would give him some field training. What I would do is have him go with me to knock on doors. I made a few calls so he could see how it was done, then I handed him the sample case and told him to make the next few calls and I would watch him. The first house he called on, the lady came to the door and said, "Are you Jehovah’s Witness?” He began to stammer then said, "Well, actually, I am, but not today." She just laughed and let us in.

After we had been in Hinton for over a year, the field manager, King Townsend, wanted to get more out of the territory. He thought if he had two dealers instead of one, the total sales would be higher. So, he cut me back to just Hinton. I found I just couldn't make enough, so I got a job in the pulp mill instead.

I was actually paid quite well at the pulp mill. It was a union job, the only time I ever belonged to a union. In a union job, you have to start at the bottom. That job was clean-up. I had just bought new work clothes, and

my first job was to clean up under the barkers. It was very dirty, and I came home filthy. I said I was not going back since I was used to being dressed up for work, but I did. It wasn't too bad. I was training on all the machines in the bleach plant, but when that was done, it was very boring, and it was shift work. I had trouble sleeping during the day when on night shift.

Something else happened soon after I started. I was working in the wood yard using a picaroon—it was like a short-handled axe, only a sharp point instead of an axe head. I accidentally drove it into my shin. I had to be carried into the first aide room and went into shock. The safety supervisor came in all upset. He didn't even ask how I was, only, "Is this going to be a lost timer accident?" I guess I spoiled their safety record. I was off work for two weeks and spent one day in the hospital. Anyway, I hated that job, so when Miles Haugen told me about a furnace installing job in Grand Prairie, I jumped at it. So, a little after two years, we moved to Grand Prairie.



GRAND PRAIRIE & DAWSON CREEK (1965-1966)

I rented a U-Haul trailer, and we loaded down the station wagon with the boat on top. We bought the boat in Hinton since we did a lot of fishing there. The back of the station wagon was so full that Jimmy had to ride on top of some furniture with Angela in the front. We also had a foster baby, Wendy, so we were pretty full. We had to make a second trip using the boat trailer.

Housing in Grand Prairie was hard to find. We rented a large house that was owned by a doctor, but it was very dirty and full of bugs, so we found a smaller house that was okay.

We had been in Grand Prairie only five weeks when Cigas, a propane company, wanted me the move to Dawson Creek, B.C. They paid for our move. I enjoyed my work there. They had a van on a truck for my shop and I got to set it all up. The people in Dawson Creek were very friendly. Our next-door neighbour invited us for supper the day we moved in. We attended the Alliance church there. They were also very friendly. We made friends with several people. One family was the Holtslanders, who we stayed friends with for many years. Dawson Creek was a kind of an isolated frontier town, and I thought that's why it was so friendly.

We got Wendy as a newborn in Hinton. They let us take her when we moved as they were short of foster parents at that time. She was a little younger than Angela, so we had two very young children to look after. We were told we would never be able to adopt her because her mother was Roman Catholic, and we were not. She lived with us for over two years.

I was hired to install furnaces, but when there was none to do, I learned to do service calls, sales, and drove the propane delivery truck when the regular driver was on holidays. This made the job more enjoyable.

The one problem was that I wasn't earning enough money at my job, so I started to sell Fuller Brushes again. Garth Holtslanders was selling part-time and told me about it. I was doing quite well, so at a sales meeting, I met the reginal manager, Lorn Dutka. He persuaded both Garth and me to go full-time again, and I would be a sales manager. My territory would be east of Edmonton. So, we moved to Cold Lake.



COLD LAKE (1966-67)

Rental property was hard to find, so we rented a small cabin right on the beach with the promise of a larger one next door in five weeks. Jimmy spent the whole summer in his bathing suit and really enjoyed it. It was so close to the lake that we could hear the waves while lying in bed at night, which was very relaxing. We had lots of company that summer. We moved into the other house that fall. It was on about three acres overlooking the lake. It was a boathouse and had a dock right on the lakeshore. We attended the Alliance church in Grand Centre.

The Harbinsons, meanwhile, had moved back to Ireland, but Roy couldn't find work there, so he came back to Canada alone. We met him at the airport in

Edmonton, and he came back with us. Roy got work near Regina, and May and the boys came over again later.

Roy always wanted to be a minister. He got a chance in a small church near Thunder Bay, Ontario, and he pastored several churches both in Canada and the US. He ended up in Entwhistle, Alberta, where he ended his ministry. The Harbinsons used to visit us every summer from wherever they lived, or we lived. They retired in Edmonton, where Roy passed away in 2008. I miss him very much. He was a good friend.

We really enjoyed living in Cold Lake. Diana was pregnant with Bill that summer. Also, we still had Wendy. We were always told we couldn't adopt her because we were not catholic, so we asked the social worker to find an adoptive home for her. They had found one, but when he came to get her, he said the laws had changed and we could adopt her. Because we thought we could never adopt her, I guess we tried not to get too attached to her and with Diana being pregnant with Bill... We felt that since they had found a good home for her, it was best for her to be adopted.





ST PAUL (1967-68)

The regional manager, Lorn Dutka, wanted me to move to a larger, more central town in my territory. We decided to move to St Paul. We found a house to rent there and moved ourselves with a small trailer and the car that I just bought, a new 1967 Dodge Polara. Even though Diana was seven months pregnant, we did it all ourselves. Jim started school in St Paul. It was a French Catholic town, so the Catholic school was the public school, and the Protestant school was the separate school. We were attending a small Sunday School mission church. The pastor, Orval Janze, offered to drive Jim to school on the other side of town as he was also a school bus driver. He thought Jim should go to the Protestant school.

Canada's centennial year was 1967. St Paul was supposed to have the most centennial projects in Canada for a town of its size. They even built a spaceship landing pad. It's still there as a tourist attraction. We had our own centennial project. On August 5th, we welcomed into the world our third child, William George. He had blond curly hair like my little brother, Robin.

Jimmy started school that fall, and that summer, he gave his heart to the Lord and has served him ever since. We moved to a second house in St. Paul the next spring. We made friends in the little Sunday School mission church with one family, Roy and Rony McNeill. We were friends with them until they both passed away, even though we both moved quite often. They were about ten years older than us.

I was given a promotion to branch manager in Regina, Saskatchewan, in the fall of 1968. I should mention, I traded the Dodge station wagon in Dawson Creek for a 1963 Plymouth Fury, two-door hardtop. Later, in Cold Lake, I traded it for a new 1967 Dodge Monaco.

Next stop: Regina.







Neighbours in St. Paul



REGINA AND EDMONTON (1968-1973)

I went ahead to Regina to find a house to rent and met with Cicel Gough, the regional manager for Saskatchewan. He was the manager who hired me in the first place in Kindersley. He had been promoted to regional manager for Saskatchewan. My territory was the east half of Saskatchewan and the south half from border to border. It excluded Regina and Moose Jaw because they had hired a female manager for those cities. In those days, they thought a women shouldn't have to travel that much.

Lloyd and Tina lived in Osage, just south of Regina. He was teaching there, so we saw them quite a bit. Their son, Kevin, was born while we were there. We also had my folks' 40th anniversary at our place that year. Time sure flies—at this writing, we are celebrating our 58th year.

The job went quite well, although I put on a lot of miles from the US border to north of Nipawin, and from the Manitoba border to the Alberta border in the south. During that time, we attended an Alliance Church, but never got to know anyone as I was away so much. Also, I traded the 1967 Dodge for a 1968 Dodge Cornet 500, two-door hardtop. A very sporty car.

By the next spring, I had a chance to go back to Alberta as branch manager in the Edmonton area. Our move was paid again by the Fuller Brush Company. Incidentally, our move to Regina from St. Paul was also paid. The mover happened to be an Austring. I found out I had gone to school with two of his brothers.

We then moved into a house in Edmonton at 9503 70 Ave. We lived there for about five years. That year, I earned the most during my time with the Fuller Brush Company. We found a small Alliance church near us: Richmond Park Alliance. I taught a youth Sunday school class there. My territory was part of Edmonton and some rural area. Around that time, things started to go downhill for the Fuller Brush Company. Up to that time, it had been owned by the Fuller family. The son of the founder was the president. The son sold the company to a large corporation. At the last meeting of managers that I attended in Calgary, I met with the Canadian General sales manager. He promised me the next regional manners job that came available. That job could pay as

much as $100,000 a year, which was a lot of money in 1970. But it wasn't to be. Soon after that, the company began to fall apart, and I had to find another job. That was the end of my time with the Fuller Brush Company.

Here, I will update our cars. When we got to Edmonton, I traded the Dodge Cornet for a new 1969 Plymouth two-door h t fury 11. It was the last new car I ever bought. I traded it for a 1970 Dodge Station Wagon, nine-passenger. It had a third seat that faced backwards. We made a trip to Saskatoon with it, so each kid had their own seat. We had a very quiet trip.












JAN • 71



GUARDIAN ANGELS

I want to tell you about two stories that I will leave up to you to decide if angles were there to help us. We were living in Regina at the time, in 1968, so Jim would have been seven. He was on his way home from school one day in the winter. He stopped at a park near our house to play. There was a ditch in the park full of water that was not yet frozen. He was trying to catch some tadpoles when he fell in. The water was over his head, and he couldn't get out. Just then, two men appeared on a snowmobile and pulled him out of the ditch. They took him home, which was close by. Diana let Jim in, and he told her what had happened. She quickly when out to

thank the men, but when she opened door, there was no one there…

The next story happened when I was trucking. One winter, soon after I had bought my first truck—the 1980 Ford LT 9000—work was very scarce. So, I took a job hauling prefab buildings to gas plants, usually in remote areas. This trip took me to a forestry trunk road near Nordegg, west of Rocky Mountain House. The road was not very well-travelled with a lot of snow on it. The directions I was given to the gas plant were not very good, so I missed the turnoff. I soon began to realize I had gone too far, but there was nowhere to turn around.

I kept going until I came to a river, then went down a long hill and up on the other side, still looking for a place to turn around. There were several sharp curves on the hill up, and it was quite icy. I finally spun out. I should have been carrying tire chains, but I couldn't afford them. What happened next, I don't think I can explain.

There was no traffic on the road and no way of calling anyone for help, so I began to back the semi-trailer down the hill and around the curves. I knew if I couldn't maneuver the curves, I wouldn't be able to go ahead again. Well, I made it to the bottom of the hill, where there was a campground with several feet of snow in the driveway. I managed to back in and turn around, then go up the hill on the other side, all with no tire chains. It should have been impossible.

WORLD BOOK (1970-71)

I had a salesman named John Compton working for me. His father was the branch manager for World Book Encyclopedia. He offered me a job. I could start as a sales manager, but part of my income came from my own sales. It was very different selling a much larger item than I was used to. They paid for Diana and me to go to Chicago for a big sales conference. One of the speakers was the astronaut, John Glenn. I still have his autograph.

It went well for a while. I had bought a 1963 Dodge Station Wagon to deliver Fuller Brush products. Ken Jackson used it for deliveries, so when I didn't need it anymore, I sold it and bought a 1962 Austin Healy 3000.

It was a fun car to drive. It was an open top and had three carburetors and wire wheels. I ended up selling it after a few months. I bought it for $750 and sold it for $950. If I still had it today, it would be worth about $80 thousand.

Walter Southorn was the branch manager for Monarch Life insurance company. He offered me a job selling life insurance. I had to go to Winnipeg for a week's course and had to pass a government exam. The first year, you got paid a salary plus commission. The second year, you got no salary but renewals from your first-year sales. Everything went well until I got several lapses in one month. That meant no income. We couldn't survive on that, so I had to find other work.

For the next couple of years, I tried other sales jobs—one for a printing company and one selling new cars for a Chrysler dealership. While working for Friesen printer, I had to moonlight to earn enough to live on. My moonlighting job driving a truck was paying more than my day job, so I decided to work at it full time.



SHERWOOD PARK (1973-85)

In 1973, we moved to Sherwood Park. We had begun to attend the Sherwood Park Baptist Church. Owen Isaacson was the pastor. We had known him from Hinton. We had heard he was pastoring a new church in Sherwood Park, so we started to attend, and moved to Sherwood Park later that year. I had not driven a truck for many years, but the last few years, when I was in sales and I would see a truck on the road, I started to think I would sooner be driving a truck instead of selling for a living. Our neighbour's parents owned a small trucking company and suggested I work for them part-time to earn extra money. I only had a B license at that time. They had changed to Class 1 to drive a tractor-trailer. I had experience, so I went to motor vehicles. They just

stamped my license with Class 1 and said to get a medical before my next birthday.

We got to know Dave Carlson, who was driving for Boychuck transport, so I got a job with them. It was highway work. I would make a round-trip to Calgary and back every night for five nights a week. There were no logbooks in those days, so dispatchers often asked you to make trips long after you should have been driving. I had gone to Calgary one Monday night, thinking I would be home the next morning. Instead, they kept me running out of Calgary all week. It was Jim's birthday that Saturday, and I promised him I would be home for it. Then, on Friday night, they wanted me to go on another trip. I said I didn't want to. I was told I had no choice, so I left their truck in Calgary and took the bus home.

I worked at Installing furnaces again for a while in new houses in Sherwood Park. It was piecework, and I couldn't earn enough. Again, through Dave Carlson, I took another trucking job for a company called Vagabond Transport, hauling gravel to cement plants and other places. We hauled all the gravel that went into the new Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton.

I should write a little more about the Sherwood Park Baptist Church. We ended up being members there for ten years. We were quite active in that church. I taught adult Sunday school class, served on the board as a deacon, and had a home bible study. Diana played the piano and was involved on the music committee. We were the first members after the charter membership. At first, they had church in a school. Then we built a church building. All the men helped with the building. I installed the three furnaces.

We made many friends in that church, some we are still in contact with. A number of people we got to know have since passed away.

The year 1974 was another milestone in our lives. We welcomed our fourth child into our family, Robert Paul, born November 7th. We had always wanted four children, so now we had them. His was the only birth I was able to watch. It was quite an experience. Rob and Jim are almost thirteen years apart. In a whole different generation. At that time, our kids had their disagreements. We thought they would never be friends when they grew up, but that is far from the case. They all have very good relationships with each other. We are very fortunate.

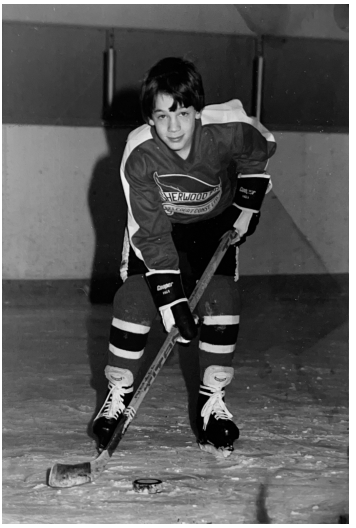
On the Sunday that Rob was dedicated, we got to know a family at the Baptist church: Martyn and Irene Hough and family. Irene asked if we were related to Erle Lintott. He had been their pastor at Mullingar, a little church north of North Battleford, Saskatchewan. Martyn had an antique car parts business near Sherwood Park. We became good friends. We lived in three different houses in Sherwood Park: first on Raven Drive, second on Crane Street, then Circlewood Drive. All our kids went to Brentwood Elementary School. We had kids going to that school from 1973 to 1985. Jim, Ang, and Bill also went to Haythorn Sherwood Heights, and they all attended Salisbury High School.

Martin's business ended around 1980, and I was looking for something else, so we both decided to go into trucking on our own. It was to be my last occupation until my retirement, thirty-seven years later. My first truck was a 1979 Ford gravel truck. I worked for several

companies with it for the County of Strathcona for two summers, then I hauled snow in the winter.

The trucking business had many ups and downs. In about 1981, the gravel business was not very good, so I had to do something different. In 1981, I bought my second truck, a 1980 Ford 9000 tractor. I worked for Howell transport, a pool car company delivering freight with their trailers, mainly in Edmonton, but some highway work. Over the next few years, I worked for several companies with my truck. I even made one trip to Winnipeg.

In 1985, we celebrated our 25th anniversary by buying a house on an acreage about 13 miles east of Sherwood Park—after renting for all those years.







PARENT FINDERS (1982 - 1990s)

The first time I met Diana, long before we were going together, she told me she was adopted and wanted to find her birth mother. I didn't think much of it at the time, but when we decided to get married a few years later, she said she would like to find her birth mother and invite her to our wedding. In those days, adoptees had a hard time searching for their birth families since records were sealed. She knew she was born in Saskatoon in Bethany, a home for unwed mothers, so we naively went there to get information. We were told the records had been lost in either a flood or a fire. We would later learn that story was told to many searchers. They referred Diana to a social worker, who told her it was better not to

search as it would upset her adoptive parents. She didn't search anymore for many years, but now and then, she would bring it up. I was always interested in my family tree and had traced some ancestors back to the 1600s. She would say, "You can trace your ancestors back that far, and I don't even know who my mother was!"

In 1982, I gave Diana a book about a woman who had searched and found her birth family. The book was called *Who is My Mother?* by Clare Markus. We heard about an organization called Parent Finders in Edmonton. We decided to go to a meeting. I remember Diana was very nervous about going. Then she met some other ladies who were searching. They helped her, and after much detective work, she found her birth mother living in Saskatoon.

Her name was Lillian Scarf. Diana also found out she had a brother, Howard Spears, living in Seamans, Saskatchewan. He was married and had three children. At last, she found family that she looked like and children that looked like our children. She had a very good reunion with all of them, and her adopted mother was very supportive. Her search and reunion had such a positive effect on her that we decided to help others search through the organization. We worked with Parent Finders for the next fifteen years. I served as president for twelve years, but Diana contributed the most being head search consultant. It became almost a full-time, unpaid job. During those years, she personally helped about 500 people with reunions. The whole organization helped over 1,400 families during that time. It was a very rewarding experience. Even though it wasn't a Christian organization, we considered it our ministry. We also

made some very good lifelong friends, who I will talk about later.

Some things that happened during our time with Parent Finders… The membership grew from less than 200 to over 800. We established a reunion registry and had monthly meetings where people could learn about searching and get support. Many interesting reunion stories were told at those meetings. We also lobbied the Alberta government for open records so that anyone over 18 years old could get all their adoptive information so they could easily find their birth family. Our mission statement was, “Reuniting families separated by adoption or fostering.” At one time, we collected over eleven thousand signatures for open records and presented them to the legislature by an interested MLA who invited us as guests at the presenting. I even have my name in Hansard.

Alberta finally did open adoption records for those over eighteen years old in 2004. I’d like to think it was due to the results of all our work.



One Adoptee's Search
By Diana Lintott (1983)

The February 1983-edition of Family Life Today had several articles on adoption, all of which were very good. One area, however, was not covered: adoptees searching for birth relatives. I am adoptee -- I've searched and found my birth mother.

Here is my story:

I was adopted when I was just six weeks old. My parents told me the truth from the start: they said my birth mother had been unmarried, and 16 or 17 years old when I was born. They said that although she didn't want to give me up, she had no choice.

So I was brought up with the word "adoption" as part of my vocabulary.

I remember caning bane all excited one day because we'd taken the word in school and I was the only one who knew what it meant!

I believe my parents were wise in letting me know about my background.

At the same time, from when I was very young I had a desire to know my birth mother. Whom did I look like? Did I have brothers or sisters? Did my birth parents marry? That desire to find my birth parents hovered constantly in the back of my mind.

Paul, my husband, has reminded me that on our first date I told him that someday I was going to find my birth mother. I didn't want to replace my adopted parents; I loved them very much. But I had another set of parents — roots. Who and where were they?

Before our marriage, Paul and I went to the hospital where I was born to inquire about my birth records. I wanted to invite my birth mother to our wedding. The hospital authorities said they were unable to help, and suggested I try the social services department of the government. By the time social services got back to me, Paul and I were already married! The social services people did give me information, all right, but it was no us2 in helping me trace my family — details like my parents' nationality, colouring and age. The government people advised me not to search. That was 1960.

For the next 17 years I did search, however. I searched faces. I knew my mother's surname, and even though there was a good chance she'd married, every time

I met someone with that name I wondered if we could be related. If a stranger looked at me, I wondered if perhaps he or she suspected who I was. There had to be someone somewhere who looked like me!

My dad passed away, and Paul and I had four children. Their looks and mannerisms could be compared only to Paul's side of the family. But couldn't they look like mine, too?

Then, too, Paul's family could be traced back to the eighteenth century.

I didn't even know my own mother!

In 1977, I again tried to find my birth mother, but didn't know how to go about it, and soon gave up trying.

Then at Christmas 1981, Paul gave me a book that made me start searching all over again: Who Is My Mother, by Clare Marcus. This time, however, I joined Parent Finders, a Canadian organization that helps adoptees search for birth parents. After the events of the past year, I can certainly recommend anyone searching for birth parents do so through an association like this.

Parent Finders, and similar groups in the United States, help adoptees search in a way that will not hurt birth parents or adopted parents. My group has a social worker who advises our members.

While I can't speak for all adoptees, I do know that some feel rejected, with a low feeling of self-worth. While trends are changing, sane adopted parents do not tell their children they are adopted until late in life. Other adoptees find out by accident and may be left bitter and

disappointed because something so important has been kept from them.

Parent Finders also helps us understand feelings our birth mothers may have experienced. Many birth mothers gave up their babies under extreme pressure from social workers or parents anxious to protect the family reputation. It's also true that many birth mothers were extremely young. Some carry guilty feelings for the rest of their lives. In searching, therefore, it's important to proceed in a way that won't hurt birth parents if they've kept the child's birth a secret. No adoptee wants to disrupt the life of his or her birth parents!

A search for birth parents can create problems for adopted parents as well. Sane adoptees do not tell their parents of their search. In past years, many adopted couples were assured their children would never be able to trace their birth parents. The adopted parents may fear they will be

rejected if the "real" parents are located. 'Thankfully, this happens rarely, if ever. In all the reunions I'm aware of, it's never happened. One person said, "If a parent can love more than one child, surely a child can love two sets of parents." My own mother said that if she had been adopted, she'd want to find her roots, and encouraged me in my search.

Husbands and wives of adoptees also benefit from groups like Parent Finders. "Spouses need to know many of the things the adoptee learns during a search," my husband says. Spouses are encouraged to

attend Parent Finders meetings along with adoptees.

With all these emotions at stake, what happens when adoptees and birth parents finally meet? I'd like to be able to say that everyone lives happily ever after, but it's not always true. Parent Finders tells us that 80 to 90 per cent of reunions are successful — but success can be defined in different ways.

The success of a reunion depends on what the adoptee is looking for. Some meet birth relatives once and find they have all the answers they need — no further contact is made. Others find the reunion is the start of a relationship they want to continue, and one in which they can grow. One adoptee found her birth parents, who had lost contact, and as a result of getting re-acquainted, the birth parents are now planning to marry!

Many adoptees find their birth parents in less happy circumstances. Some are dead. Others have kept the child's birth a secret and find the sudden appearance of the child awkward and disruptive. One young woman I know found her mother in a mental hospital. Often, however, just finding a parent is satisfaction enough.

How, exactly, does a person go about locating birth parents? We start with whatever information we have — sometimes it’s as little as a mother’s surname and the town or city of birth. Church records sometimes have information we can use. Libraries are a wealth of information: back issues of newspapers, telephone

directories, voters' lists and directories which list residents by occupation.

A surprising number of adoptees know sane tidbit about the family — the occupation of one of its members, a baptismal certificate, whatever.

In most cases, then, it's a matter of writing letters, scanning newspapers or history books for familiar names, and hoping that one day you'll get the reply you're waiting for. Adoptees sometimes run ads in newspapers on Mother's Day or their birthdays. Nearly everyone I know who's searched for family feels like giving up at one time or another — that's when a group like Parent Finders can be especially helpful.

In my own search, I knew my mother’s surname, the hospital where I was born, and some information about my mother's family — her father's occupation, the number of brothers and sisters she had, and the fact that one brother was in the military.

The telephone book in the city where I was born listed ten families with my mother’s surname. I wrote to all of them saying I was trying to trace my family. The good news was that all ten families replied — but the bad news was that none were the family I sought!

I wrote to another fifteen families living in small communities near the city, and finally received a letter from a member of a family that seemed to fit the description of my birth mother's family.

On Thursday November 4, 1982, I mailed a letter to the lady I felt certain

must be my mother's. The following Tuesday she telephoned. I had found her at last! There are no words to describe my feelings at that moment. The following weekend, November 13, we made the 240-mile trip to the city where she lives.

In some ways the reunion was like a dream. My mother had asked me to bring along baby photos of myself. The first thing she did was compare them with the photo of me she had carried for 40 years. This seemed to satisfy her that I was her daughter. Throughout our conversation she kept referring to me as "she" instead of "you" — a sign, perhaps that it took time to realize I was the baby she gave up so long ago!

Most important, my birth mother answered the questions that had haunted me for so long. She said she had screamed when she had to sign the papers releasing me for adoption, and that the social worker had to tear me from her arms. But, being 17 years old, she had little choice.

She had married, although she didn't marry my birth father, and her husband died several years ago. They had no children.

I don't look like my birth mother, but I see resemblance to my grandmother. As of yet, I haven't been able to meet her, but I will. I understand that my grandmother has often wondered about me.

Before the weekend was out, my birth mother met my adopted mother. I think that satisfied something in all our lives.

The weekend was incredible in itself, but it led to still one more startling discovery: I have a half-brother!

It happened this way: My birth mother lost contact with my birth father, but did give me his name and the town where he lived. I learned he had died several years ago, but had one son. While I was disappointed that it was too late to meet my father, I still wanted to know about him.

Then came the dilemma: Should I write to the son, my half-brother? Would it disrupt his life? Would he want to know about me? I drafted letter after letter, trying to cane up with one that sounded right. Still unsure whether to send it at all, I finally let my longing for a brother over my hesitation. With Paul's help I chose the best letter and mailed it before I could change my mind. That was a Sunday.

Friday morning my half-brother, whose name was Howard, phoned! My letter had shocked him, but he believed me. We were both terribly nervous and could hardly think of a thing to say, and we laughed a lot. Saturday morning, Howard phoned back. He had talked to his mother and she confirmed my birth. She added that my father had often wondered where I was.

Howard sounded elated. "It isn't every day you find out you have a sister! This is just the best news," he said over and over.

We're about two years apart. When I asked Howard about his father, be replied, "He's our father.'' I knew then I was going to like having a brother.

My reunion with my m other was successful, and there's every reason to believe the reunion with my brother will

be, too. But it's a story that's just starting. The end of my search has made my life more complete.

I have roots, just like everyone else!





THE UNCAS STORY (1985 - 2014)

Our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary was in 1985. Except for our first tiny house in Kindersley, we had lived in rented houses our whole marriage. We were tired of paying someone else's mortgage. Also, for the last two houses, we had to move either because the house was for sale, or the owner wanted to move back in. We had lived in the house on Circlewood Drive for over seven years. We said, "Should we go on a trip to celebrate our anniversary, or buy a house?" We decided it was time to buy a house.

It was a buyer's market at the time. We looked at houses in Sherwood Park, then our real estate agent showed us a house on an acreage. We fell in love with it. The price was right, and the financial arrangements were doable. It was a nice big bi-level house, Tudor style, on three acres. One drawback that we didn't really notice when we looked at it was how close it was to the CNR railroad mainline. On the first of September, I borrowed a trailer from the company I was leased on with Howell Transport to move us. I will never forget the feeling I had as I turned the truck into the subdivision, Farrell Properties, with all our belongings. At last, we were moving to our own house! We were to live there for almost thirty years, the longest we had lived in one place. It turned out to be the best financial decision we had ever made.

We very much enjoyed acreage living. We had a big garden and lots of lawn to cut. I bought a John Deere lawn tractor to cut the lawn in the summer and to plow the driveway in the winter. I always enjoyed cutting grass. It was very relaxing after a day of driving the truck in Edmonton traffic.

Rob was the only one in our family who was still going to school. He had to ride the bus to Ardrossan Jr. High School. The other three were working. When we first moved in, the basement wasn't finished. Jim, who was working as a carpenter, finished two bedrooms. With the three upstairs, we now had five bedrooms. Everyone had their own room, I believe, for the first time. But Jim was only to live there for a short time as he decided to move to Winnipeg. That's where Heather Bergstresser lived, a girl he had met while she was going to bible school in Edmonton. A year or so later, Heather became

part of our family when she and Jim were married in October of 1986. Heather has been like another daughter in our family all these years. At the time, Jim worked in Winnipeg as a carpenter. Later, they bought a house there. Work in Winnipeg was very slow, so after a couple of years, they moved back to Alberta.

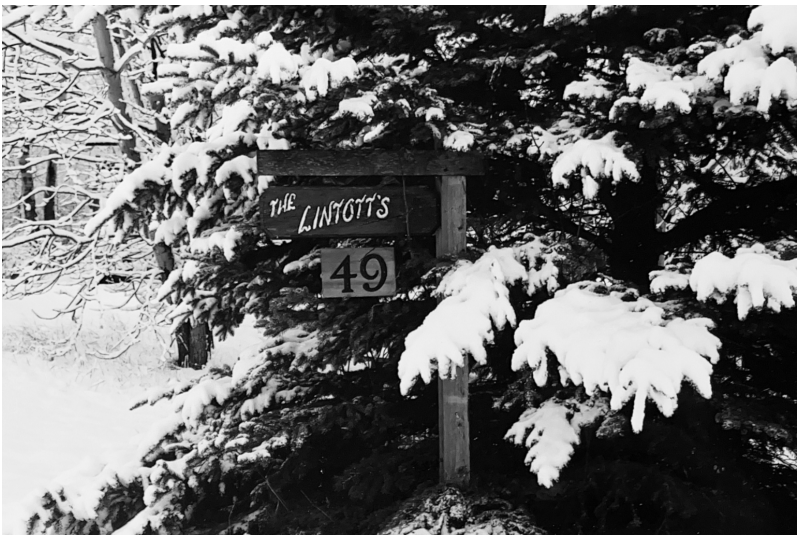
Cars were always important to me, and I had many of them, so I guess it's no surprise our kids liked cars as well. Jim first bought a 1967 Mercury convertible. It needed lots of work, including a new top. I always enjoyed helping the boys and Angela with their cars. Jim later had a 1978 Ford van he used for delivering paper bundles for paperboys to deliver. He traded that for a 1975 Trans Am with a big engine and four speeds. He was only eighteen at the time. I don't think his mother was very pleased about the deal.

Bill's first car was a 1969 Chrysler he bought from Graham Harbinson. Other cars he had were a Ford Torino A Challenger and a 1970 Dodge Charger, but the best was the brand new 1970 Camaro that he won. He had entered a contest on the radio to win a key that could open a lock that would win the car. When his name was called, his key fit, so he won the car. Quite a nice prize for an eighteen-year-old boy.

Angela's first car was a 1968 Ford Comet. It was a great car—a two-door hardtop with a V8 motor. She later had Chrysler Córdoba and a new Dodge Shadow. Rob's first car was a '78 Buick he bought from Jim. He also had a 1986 Hundi, a Mazda RX-7 and a couple of Thunderbirds, but his favourite was his new 2000 Jeep Wrangler T J.

I continued in the trucking business all the time we lived on the acreage. First, I had the 1979 Ford LT

9000. It was a dump truck. I worked for Strathcona County with it, and other companies, but the gravel business was very slow, so I worked for Howell Transport hauling their trailers mostly in Edmonton. Later, I bought a Ford CL 9000 cab over, then a 1993 Mack, which I kept until I retired in 2014. After Howell, I worked for the CPR, hauling containers from the railway until retirement. I worked at OCTS, a container transport company, for the last nine years. I then hauled out of both CP and CN yards.







Truck we used to move



FRIENDS

Over the years that Diana and I have been married, we have made many friends. Some for only a short time, while others were lifelong friends. Our married life began in Kindersley, Saskatchewan. We attended the Alliance church, where we were married. As I mentioned before, I came to Kindersley because my school friends, Russell and Johnny Dell, were there. They are lifelong friends. There was also Jack and Bev Robertson, who were part of our wedding party. Also, Barry and Don Benjaminson and Diana's friend Lynne Harris. Also, Allen and Myrtle Crocker. We were to live in the same town, Sherwood Park, as their daughter and family, Coleen and Trever Roper.

Hinton was the next place we lived. We attended the Baptist church there. We were young then and made friends easily. The only ones who became lifelong were Roy and May Harbinson and their two sons, Graham and Collin. Angela and Jim are still friends with Collin and Graham. Collin actually married Heather's cousin, Alison.

Roy had just come to Hinton from Belfast, Ireland. He was very lonely as May and the boys didn't come for several months, so we kind of adopted him. He spent a lot of time at our place. When the rest of his family arrived, we became very good friends. Later, they adopted two girls: Allison and Rochelle. We both moved around a lot over the next several years, but we managed to visit at least every year. They finally settled in the Edmonton area, so we were able to renew our friendship. Sadly, as I mentioned, Roy passed away a couple of years ago. We are still in contact with May and the rest of the family.

Dawson Creek was the next place we made friends. We Attended the Alliance Church there. We were only there a short time, less than a year, but we got to know Garth and Angie Holtslander. Then, we both ended up in Sherwood Park and renewed our friendship there. Now, both Garth and Angie are gone.

The next place we made friends was St. Paul, Alberta. We attended a small Sunday School Mission Church there. They held services in the Anglican Church. Orval Janz was the pastor. There, we made several friends, including Roy and Ronnie MacNeil. Later, we both ended up in Edmonton. They moved several times after that, but we kept in contact. They finally moved to

Westlock, where we often visited back and forth. Sadly, both Roy and Ronnie are gone.

We lived in the county of Strathcona for the next forty years. We attended Sherwood Park Baptist Church for about ten years and made many friends. I will list some: Irv and Roda Tiede, Blain and Linda Campbell, Owen and Annett Isaacson, the pastor, Gus and Berle Henny, Ken and Marlene Odenback, and Martyn and Irene Hough. There were more, as well. Quite a few of them have since passed away. Martyn and Irene are the only ones we are still in contact with as they live in Abbotsford.

In about 2009, we began to attend the Trinity Baptist Church in Sherwood Park. Ang and Graham were also attending there, and we were looking for a smaller church. We had been attending the Sherwood Park Alliance for about 20 years. It was just too big. About 2000 people went there. Wayne Larson was the pastor, and we really liked him. I began to teach a home bible study, and we got to know a few people—the Godwells, Dicksons, and Boychucks, to name a few.

I started to go to breakfast meetings with an organization called Transport for Christ. They had a chapel in a semi-trailer at the truck stop in Sherwood Park. It was a ministry for truckers who were on the road away from their families. I got to know the lead Chaplin, Charles Clow. They were asking for a volunteer part-time Chaplin, so I volunteered and took the training. I served one evening a week, 6 to 10 PM, as I was still working full-time. We are still in contact with Charles and his wife, Irmgard. We had become good friends.

We had made several friends while we were with Parent Finders. The couple we got to know the best was

John and Jackie Schmidt. Diana had helped Jackie find her birth mother and family, and John was serving as treasure for Parent Finders. They lived on an acreage near us, so we used to pick them up to go to meetings. We had become very good friends. We often went out to restaurants with them.

Sadly, John and Jackie's marriage ended in divorce, but something good happened to John. He gave his life to the Lord.

I have never seen a new believer grow as fast as John. He started coming to a bible study at our house every Wednesday. At first, it was just the three of us. Later, another new believer came as well. John started to go to church with us, also at Trinity Baptist. He would read many good Christian books I lent him.

A couple of years later, after his divorce was finalized, John met a nice Christian widow at the church named Faye, who he fell in love with and married. Since we moved to Chilliwack, they have been out to visit us every year. They are now members of a Baptist church in Fort Saskatchewan, where John serves as an elder. John and Faye are two of our best friends.



John and Faye



John Dell's family



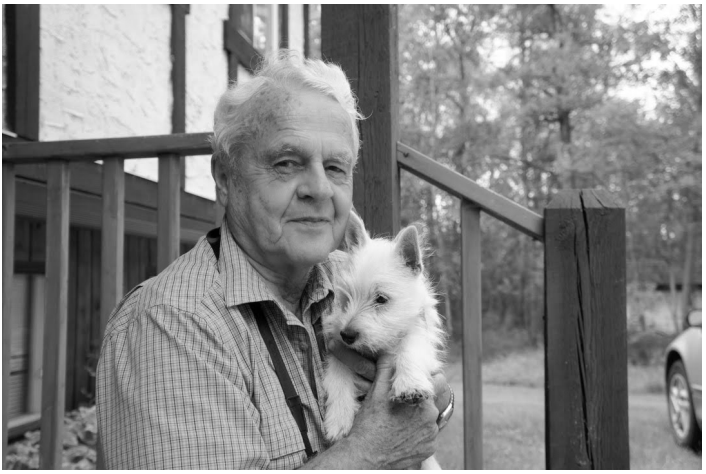
Russell Dell's family



Corey and Gilbert



Howes



DOGS

Dogs were always part of our lives. I had several dogs growing up. My favourite was a little part cocker spaniel. Diana had a little black terrier when I first met her. Our first dog after we were married was a black cocker spaniel and lab cross. We got him while we were still in Kindersley. He just loved the water. One time, when we were out in the boat, he tried to follow us and swam across a small lake. Another time, we were packing up the car to go on a trip. When we were almost ready to go, we couldn't find Blacky—that was his name. We finally found him on top of the luggage in the trunk of the car. He wasn't going to be left behind.

Our second dog was a pure-bred scotch collie named Lassie. We bought her from a farmer near St. Paul while we lived in Edmonton. She had two litters of pups. We gave one to the owner of the pup's father to pay for the stud fee. He showed her and did quite well. I kept a pup from the second litter, who we named Belle, and I showed her. She won a ribbon. We had to sell them both because we were renting and couldn't have dogs.

When we bought our own house on the acreage, we had collies again. Our next dog was a rescue dog, a bichon. We bought a beautiful male tri collie when we moved to the acreage, who we named Traveler. A good name since he was always running away, but he always came back. Then, we bought a sable female—that was Belle. We bred them, and she had a couple of litters. We had no trouble selling the pups. Belle and Traveler both died while we were on the acreage. They are buried there.

Next, we bought a Lhasa apso, Sue Mae. She had a litter of pups and we kept one, Mae Ling. We also had kept another female for a while, then we bought a pure-bred male for a stud, so all three females, Sue Mae, Mae Ling, and the other female had pups within a week. So, we had 21 pups all at once. We loaded them all into our camper and took them to the vet for their shots. We had no trouble selling all the pups. Tashy was the one we kept. All three died of old age.

That brings us to Kenzie, our present dog. She is a white purebred west highland terrier. She is the most interesting and smartest of all our dogs. We bought her as a pup and paid $1000 for her, the most we paid for a dog. She is 11 years old now and in good health. I hope to have her for many more years.



Blacky



Belle and Traveler



Sue Mae, Mae Ling, and Tashy



OUR EXTENDED FAMILY

JIM

Jim married Heather Bergstresser on October 11th, 1987. They have two sons: Jefferey James Erle, born September 27th,1992, and Bradley Paul, born March 17th, 1995. They were married in Winnipeg. Jim did carpentry there, and Heather worked in childcare. They bought a house there. Work in Winnipeg was not very plentiful, so they decided to move back to the Edmonton area. Jim was hoping to renew his friendship with Collin Harbinson, but Collin and Alison were moving to Manitoba at the same time. He even used the same moving truck Jim had used to move to Edmonton. Jim and Heather stayed with us for a little while until they

found their own place to live. Jim began to work at the building trade in Edmonton. He even built several complete houses, two of which they lived in themselves. He also got involved with installing kitchens.

In 1997, he had an opportunity to manage a chicken farm in the Thornhill area, north of Edmonton. He did that for about a year, but decided it was not for him, so they moved back to Sherwood Park, where they bought a house on Pine Street. He began to work at installing kitchens again and later operated his own business, but he found that wasn't going to work out. So, in about 2004, they decided to move to Chilliwack, BC, where he continued in the house renovation business. He now runs his own construction company called JRL Kitchen Design. His oldest son, Jeff, now works with him.

Heather had worked several office jobs in the Edmonton area. Now, she works in accounting for Insight for Living (Chuck Swindell's ministry) in Abbotsford. She also works part-time for Back to the Bible and does the books for Jim's business. Brad, their other son, is working as an apprentice in a body shop. Brad married Mila in August of 2017. She was born in Russia and came to Canada when she was a teenager. Recently, she has graduated college to become a teacher's assistant. She has become a part of our family.

ANGELA

Angela was a little older than Jim when she got married. She met Graeme Clark at the Alliance church in Sherwood Park at a young adult's group. Graeme came to Canada with his parents from Aberdeen, Scotland, when he was a teenager. He had just completed his plumbing apprenticeship when she met him. Angela had

completed a course in secretarial work at the time. She and her friend, Brenda, were renting a mobile home on an acreage near Sherwood Park.

One time, when Diana and I were having a meal in a restaurant with Ang and Graeme, Graeme asked us if he could ask our daughter to marry him. We knew Graeme to be a good man and a committed Christian. So, we said we would be happy to have him as a son-in-law.

They were married on April 30th, 1994. They lived in Edmonton for a while. Ang worked as a secretary and Graeme in the plumbing trade. Their first son, Christopher, was born on April 1st, 1997. Soon after, they decided to move to Victoria, BC, where Graeme worked as a plumber. They only stayed there for a short time as Graeme's work was not going too well. Also, housing costs were very high in Victoria.

They moved back to Sherwood Park, where they both found employment. They were able to buy their first house, a duplex in Sherwood Park. Their second son, Daniel, was born on August 20th, 2000.

Later, they bought a bigger house, also in Sherwood Park, where they now live. Graeme now works as a building inspector for the city of Edmonton. Angela works as an office manager for a small manufacturing company. In Sherwood Park, both boys graduated from high school. Christopher is currently taking a video production course at NAIT in Edmonton, and Daniel is working in a restaurant in Sherwood Park.

BILL

Bill married Neana Ibzagh on November 11th, 1995. They both worked for a company called Colourfast in Edmonton. Bill worked at touching up photographs for

Colourfast. They first lived in an apartment in Edmonton, then decided to move to Victoria, where Bill still worked at photo touch-up. While they were there, their daughter, Hannah, was born on October 14th, 1998. Soon after that, they moved back to Sherwood Park. Jim and I went out with my one-ton truck and a large rented trailer to move them back to Sherwood Park.

Their son, Isaac, was born on January 29th, 2001. They moved several times in Sherwood Park, then bought a house on Lilac Crescent. Bill had always been interested in commercial art and began to work as a graphic designer. A few years later, Neana eventually got a job working for the RCMP in Sherwood Park.

Sadly, their marriage ended in divorce. Bill and the kids lived with us for a while after that. It was nice for us because we got to know Hannah and Isaac quite well. Bill then moved to Fort Saskatchewan, where the kids went to school. Hannah was always a good student and graduated with honours in Fort Saskatchewan. She eventually graduated from university with a communications degree and is going to study her Master's in Scotland. Isaac took his last two years of high school at Salisbury in Sherwood Park, where he graduated. He is currently studying agriculture at Olds College. Bill moved back to Sherwood Park to live with Sandy Hall a widow who he had gone to school with. They have been together for about ten years.

ROB

Rob, our youngest, was only ten when we moved to the acreage. He was the only one who was still going to school. He took his grade six in Foultenvale, of course going on the bus, then seven to ten in Ardrossan. He

wanted to take commercial art, so he went to Salisbury for eleven and twelve. He, like all our kids, was very good at art. Jim started the tradition in Salisbury, where he was at the top of his art class. So, after that, if your last name was Lintott, you had no trouble getting into the art course.

Rob stayed at home for a couple of years after high school. He worked at several different jobs and the longest at IPEX, where he worked in shipping and receiving. I used to deliver loads to them when he was working there. Rob later got into graphic arts, where he was working when he met Jalene De Groot. They were engaged to be married when disaster struck in September of 2010. Rob had a stroke. He was rushed to the University Hospital by ambulance with bleeding on the brain, where they had to perform emergency surgery to save his life. We are thankful to God that he survived. After that, he had months of therapy.

He and Jalene had their wedding date planned for two months from when he had his stroke. It was to be on a Caribbean cruise ship. Most of the family had booked to go on the cruise. They decided to postpone their wedding, so they were married on January 26th, 2011. Sadly, a year and a half later, their marriage ended in divorce.

Rob had a long road of rehabilitation. He was left with right-hand paralysis and his right foot with a muscle not working right. He lived with us until we moved to Chilliwack in 2014.

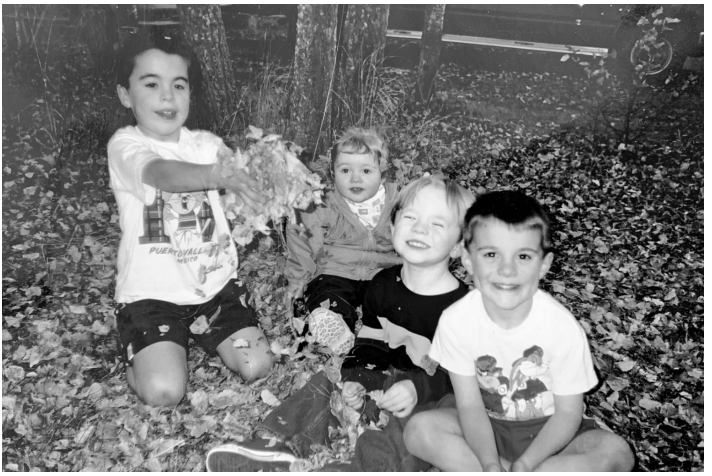
Rob also moved to Chilliwack with us a few months later. He found a temporary job working in graphic design. He lived in a small apartment in the house of one of his friends, but he still didn't have steady

work or a driver's license. He had let it lapse after his stroke. They made it very difficult for him to get it back because of his handicap. But with much determination, he succeeded in getting it.

In the meantime, he met Lauryn Knight. She was living in Gibsons at the time, and was a widow with three children: Makenna, Hayden, and Rilyn. They moved to a large house about six miles east of Chilliwack. He now works for KMS Tools. He is determined not to let his handicap affect his job or his life.








Dennys




20/06/2005
SCOTLAND













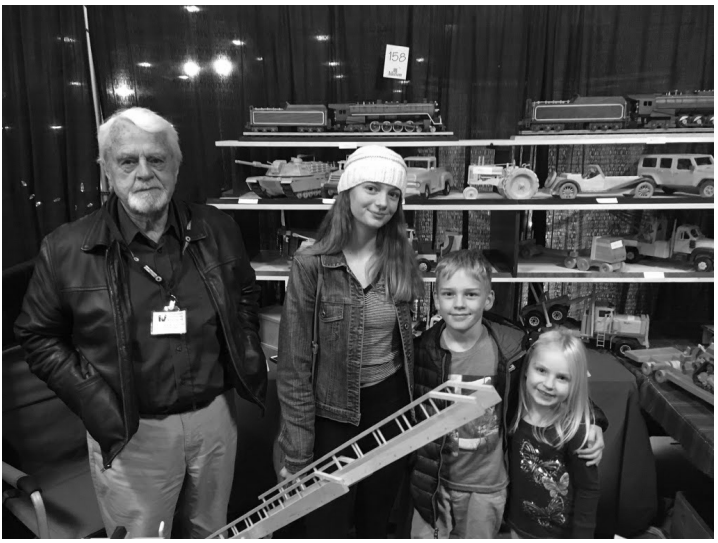
ANOTHER MOVE (2014 – present)

In June of 2014, I was having a lot of stomach trouble. The stress of my job was getting to me, so we decided to take a two-week holiday. We took our truck and fifth wheel trailer to visit Jim and Heather in Chilliwack. I was almost 77 years old then and wanted to retire soon, but we didn't know how I could afford to. We had been praying about it for a while. Every time we would go out to visit Jim and Heather, they would try to get us to move to Chilliwack, but Diana always said she would never live on the west side of the mountains.

While we were visiting, Jim and I were driving around looking at property for sale, and we happened to drive into Country Park Village. We saw some houses for

sale and looked at the price. I realized we could afford it if we sold our house. Anyway, we convinced Diana to look at some houses there. She eventually decided she could live there, which was a miracle. So, we decided to put an offer on house #86 and put a deposit on it. Then we went back to Uncas and put our house up for sale. We hadn't yet told Bill and Ang that we were intending to move. It seemed to be God's leading. We were soon to find out it was. I went over to tell our next-door neighbour that we were putting our house up for sale. He was shocked because he said only a few days before, his sister and brother-in-law said if our house ever went up for sale, they would be interested in buying it as he would like to live next door to his sister.

To make a long story short, they bought our house for the price we asked. That meant, of course, no real estate fees. We rented a large trailer and, with a lot of help from our family, we moved to Chilliwack on October 15th, 2014. Rob also moved here in August when we came on our first moving trip.



Rob and Lauryn's kids



Brad and his wife Mila



OUR LIFE IN CHILLIWACK

This part of my story does not have a happy ending. Diana's health had not been good, even before we moved. One reason she liked the house we bought was that it was all one level with no stairs, even at the entry. She was having trouble walking, and with other health problems such as high blood pressure. The doctor in Sherwood Park also told her she had kidney problems.

Anyway, we were quite happy here, for about five years. We liked the warm winters—the first time in our lives that we had very little winter. We had our friends

from back home come to visit every summer: John and Faye, Corrie and Gilbert, and Ken and Laraine. I had a good shop in our garage and was able to pursue my woodworking hobby. Rob was much better from his stroke, and he got his license back. He now has a good job working at KMS tools in Abbotsford. He is engaged to Lauryn and is great with her three kids: Makenna, 17, Hayden, 13, and Rilyn, 10. We love them the same as all our grandchildren.

About two years ago, Diana and I got a new family doctor, Dr. Ta. We like him very much. About that time, Diana's kidneys began to fail. She had to go on dialysis, first at home, then she had to go to Abbotsford hospital to do it. At one time, she was admitted to the hospital for three months. I was able to go and visit her almost every day. I usually brought her some food as the hospital food was pretty bad. I would bring her hospital meal home for our dog, Kenzie. Sometimes she would eat it.

Diana was also diagnosed with Lymphoma. She had one chemo treatment but seemed to be okay. On July 2nd, 2020, we celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary. We had it out at Rob's place. Our whole family was there: 20 of us altogether. We also renewed our wedding vows and played a recording of our original wedding.

Diana's health began to deteriorate more. She spent more time in the hospital in Abbotsford. Then, with Covid rules, I had to fight with the nurses the be able to visit her. July 2nd was our 61st anniversary. I had planned to bring up a meal that we could have together, but they wouldn't let me come up.

We finally had to move a hospital bed into our bedroom, and Diana needed home care twice a day. She had developed sores on her legs that were very painful.

She had to be on very strong painkillers. She was going for dialysis four times a week, now in a stretcher.

On August 18th, they had to take her to the Chilliwack hospital. That day, at about 11:30pm, she went to be with the Lord.

Diana had a good Christian testimony in the hospital. The nurses all used to say she was their favourite patient because, even with all she was going through, she was always pleasant and never complained. I got a card from the nurses at the dialysis unit. They all wrote a note telling how much they thought of Diana. I really appreciated it.

Even though I miss her a great deal, I don't wish her back in the condition she was in. I know I will see her again someday.





LIFE LESSONS

I have written my life story mostly for my children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren, to read. But everything in my life hasn't always gone the way I had hoped or planed they would go. So, I want to tell you of some of my struggles and how I overcame them. When everything in your life doesn't go as planned—and sometimes it won't—maybe you can learn from some of my experiences.

When I was done with school, my main ambition was to earn enough money to buy a decent car. I got a job that summer on a farm and made enough to buy my 1951 Henry J—the worst car I ever owned. That winter, I worked up north and made enough to buy my 1948 Dodge. It was a little better car than the Henry J. That's the car I first arrived in Kindersley with.
It was also the first one Diana rode in.

That summer, I worked for a building mover. I really liked the job because I got to drive a big truck. I went up north to work the next winter and the summer of 1960. I had a chance to take over the business and run it myself, which I did. I thought this would be a chance to own a successful business, but it wasn't meant to be. One of the reasons it didn't work out was that I was too young—only 22 when I took it over. When I saw our sons and grandsons at 22, I couldn't see them doing that at that age.

We moved to Hinton in 1963 to start a new life. I had sold Fuller brushes one winter in Kindersley, so I phoned the Fuller Brush manager in Edmonton to see about a territory in Alberta. He said there was one open in Hinton. I didn't even know where Hinton was at the time but decided I would go anyway. We packed some of our belongings in my 1961 Dodge truck and headed for Hinton. We stopped in Edmonton to sign up and get my sales kit, stayed overnight, then went out to Hinton. We arrived around noon and inquired about a place to rent. By the end of the day, we had found a two-bedroom townhouse to rent and moved in. My territory would be Hinton and Jasper. I just loved the trip from Hinton to Jasper. I drove it each day for two weeks each time as it was too expensive to stay in Jasper overnight.

Our life in Hinton was good. We had found a Baptist church to attend and soon made many friends. It's easy for a young couple in their twenties with one young child to make new friends. I found out many years later that it's not so easy when you're old and on your own.

I was making a decent living selling Fuller and, in 1964, Angela was born. About that time, the company

thought they could get more sales out of the territory if they had me just do Hinton and someone else in Jasper. I tried it for a while, but I couldn't make enough with just Hinton. They never did get someone for just Jasper.

Hinton is a pulp mill town. Most people living there worked in the mill. I thought it would be better to have a regular paycheck instead of depending on sales, so I got a job there. It was a union job that paid $2.09 an hour—pretty good pay in 1964. But it was shift work, and I hated it. It was also very boring. I only lasted a year until I had a chance at a job in Grande Prairie doing furnace work, and again later in Dawson Creek. I liked the company called Cigas a Propane Company. Miles Haugan also worked for them in Grande Prairie. By that time, we had two children, I wasn't earning enough, and I was away overnight quite a bit, which Diana didn't like.

The Alliance Church in Dawson Creek was very friendly. We got to know Garth and Angie Holtslaner. Garth was a mailman. I also sold Fuller Brushes part time. When I sold in Hinton, you had to be full-time, but they now had new management and allowed part-time. So, Garth thought I should try it part-time, so I did. Sales in Dawson Creek went quite well, and it helped my income quite a lot.

Then, one day the new regional manager, Lorne Dutka came to Dawson Creek from Edmonton to have a sales meeting. He offered Garth and me a job as sales managers if we would quit our jobs and move. I had never thought of sales any more than earning a living, but he talked about making it a career and earning more money than I had thought possible. Once, while selling in Hinton, I went to a sales meeting in Edmonton with my field manager King Townsend. He drove past the

then-Edmonton branch manager's house in west Edmonton. It was a huge house, and King said he paid $80,000 for it. A modest house in Hinton in 1963 would be about $10,000, so I was very impressed. Anyway, Lorne Dutka convinced me to take him up on his offer. That decision would affect the next several years of our lives. My territory was northeast of Edmonton, which took in the towns of St. Paul, Bonnyville, Vermillion, and Cold Lake. Cold Lake was the only place we could find a place to rent, so we moved there. Later, we would move to St. Paul, where Bill was born.

For the next few years, my main ambition was to advance in management and be successful. My Christian life and church were still very important to me. We found good churches wherever we lived. I thought a good Christian could be successful in business as well. One weekend, Lorne Dutka invited us to visit him at his home in Edmonton. He had bought a real nice house in west Edmonton with a swimming pool in the backyard. He paid $40,000 for it—still a lot to pay for a house in 1966. We drove around the area before we went home to look at some of the "mansions." I said to Diana, "We are going to live here someday." I really meant it.

In 1968, I was promoted to branch manager. First, it was supposed to be Victoria, BC, but that fell through, and I ended up in Regina. But it didn't matter. I was on my way up. A branch manager didn't have to sell to earn a living. Instead, I was paid a commission on what was sold in my territory, which was the whole east side of Saskatchewan from the U.S. border north, and south of Regina to the Alberta border, excluding the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw. I put 50,000 miles on a car that year.

I was later given an opportunity to move back to Edmonton. By then, Alberta was one region. I was doing very well I was the top branch manager in the area. One day, I got a phone call for Diana and I to meet with the Canadian general sales manager, Harold Baxter. They were going to divide Alberta back to two regions and I was being considered for the job. In 1969, a regional manager could make more money than I ever thought was possible to earn. I was pretty excited. It was down to two of us—me and a man from Ontario. He got the job.

I was disappointed but continued to work hard. Then, they called a sales meeting in Calgary. The head sales manager was there, George Elliott. He called some of us up to his suite. After the meeting, he told me the next regional manager job available would be mine.

By that time, a large corporation had bought the Fuller Brush company. It had been owned by the Fuller family up until then. My big promotion was not meant to be. The company fell apart in less than a year.

I think that was a low point in my life. My big dream was no more. But I thought, "I'm still a good salesman. I'll succeed at something."

I had a young salesman working for me, John Compton, whose father was the Edmonton branch manager for World Book encyclopedia. He offered me a job as a sales manager. I thought that would be my answer, but it only lasted for a year or so. It was a much different kind of sales, so I tried selling life insurance, but that only lasted a year. It was going quite well, but the second year, I had a few lapses. That means people I had sold life insurance to stopped paying. I had three in one month, so I got no check that month. With three children and a wife to take care of, I had to find something else. I

even sold new cars for a while. By that time, my self-confidence was gone. We had just started going to a small Baptist church in Sherwood Park. The pastor was Owen Isaacson. I spent a long time talking to him and telling him what I had been through. He helped me understand that God was working in my life. During the next few years, I grew more in my Christian life than I ever had before. I came to a place where I was thankful that what I thought I wanted in life was second best to what God had planned.

I got to know Martyn Hough at the church. He had also been through a hard time losing his dream, so we decided to go into trucking. I had always liked driving a truck, so we both bought trucks, and I kept on as an owner-operator for the next 34 years. I didn't get rich, but we were able to buy our dream house on an acreage east of Sherwood Park. Martyn didn't stay trucking, but he moved back to BC and did very well in the jobs he took. We are still friends. They live in Abbotsford.

Even though not everything I did turned out the way I wanted it to, I have very few regrets looking back on my life. God has been faithful.



AFTER DIANA

I was doing woodwork back on the acreage, building toys for the grandkids when they were young. I had a good shop in the basement, there. When we moved here, I had the garage for a shop. Now, being retired, I have more time for my hobby. With Rob working at KMS Tools and several gift certificates from the family, I have been able to get more tools, so now I have a well-equipped shop.

I had a booth at the Chilliwack craft sale for two years, where I was able to sell some of my models. I also got some special orders for models to make.

Now, I have my models on display at KMS Tools stores in Chilliwack and Abbotsford. A man who owns a ready-mix company saw my models and asked me if I

could make a mixer truck. So, I made him one, and he liked it so much that he wanted three more. He paid me very well for them. He wanted to give them to long-time employees who were retiring.

One good thing happened out of that. At the Chilliwack store, a man named Ian White saw my models and was interested in making some, himself. So, he contacted me, and we met up and started building them together. I don't believe this was a chance meeting as we became good friends.

A bit after we met, Ian told me about the church he was attending. Because of the Covid restrictions, I hadn't gone to church for over a year. I was also looking for a smaller church where I could get to know people. Since we moved to Chilliwack, Diana hadn't been well enough to go to church. Their church was in a tent on a farm, so they were able to be open before other churches. I began to attend and liked it very much. The people were very friendly, even though they were mostly much younger than me.

One day, Ian brought his wife, Connie, over to visit Diana. They hit it off right away. She is a very companionate person and asked Diana if she would like the pastor to visit. Diana said she would. The pastor, Jeremy Cagle, came to visit when she was in the hospital bed in our bedroom. She liked him very much and afterward said that if she went to be with the Lord, she would like him to do her funeral. Little did we know how soon that would happen.

Our children and grandchildren planned the whole service, and Jeremy officiated. It was very good. Connie said, afterward, it was the nicest funeral she had

ever been to. The kids did a great job, which I really appreciated.

Now, Diana has been gone for over three months, and I miss her very much, but life goes on. I know that it was in God's plan for me to meet Ian and Connie and introduce me to Grace Fellowship Church. I am now planning to become a member. I guess God knew I would need the support of a good church at this difficult time in my life.

As I write this last part of my story, I am 84 years old and in reasonably good health. When I look back on my life, I realize I have so much to be thankful for. First, I have my faith, which sees me through hard times and good times. I had 61 years with the love of my life. I have four children who love me and each other, their spouses, ten grandchildren, and a great-grandchild on the way.

What more could a man want?





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