

## WALTER RAVELL

I will take no notice of what critics' may say or what fault they may find with the contents of these articles. I will not write to please anyone in particular. What my conscience endorses, that only will I pen!

My first recollection of living on the farm as a boy are sketchy but I do remember first of all the cold winter of 1929 when I was wrapped in a blanket and placed in an armchair in front of the wood stove while mother built the fire. The water in the big tea kettle was frozen along with the water in the reservoir of the cook stove. I suffered a lot of ear-aches during that winter and the rest of my early childhood was affected every winter. There were a lot of happy times skating on the ponds at night and during school days a lot of sleigh rides behind the big sled and horses. We use to go to Warwick Village and skate on Bear Creek as far as the Salt Block Factory. There was also skating and hockey on the open air rink at Warwick Village.

It was in the late twenties when my dad had a ruptured appendix and was rushed to Petrolia Hospital, this was before penicillin and nobody lived when this happened, however because of the good quality of living, he survived. He was laid up all year and the neighbours done the farming.

As early as 1930, we bought a battery radio with ear phones and a big horn speaker from a Mr. Paisley from Thedford. I use to listen to Amos & Andy, Major Bowes, Gene Autry, Happy Gang, and Gangbusters. Some Sunday afternoons, mother used to get bored and dad would take her for a car ride around the block, approximately 4 miles, stopping at George Lesters for tea before coming home. Some Sundays we would venture as far as Birnham to Harvey Richardson for dinner. You couldn't please the women today with a little ride around the block! Also in the winter time would to go back to Lesters to visit with the old reliable blind, long set horse. He never let us down. My sister Amy, being thirteen years older than I was away at high school boarding in the town of Forest, Ontario and later attended teachers college in London. She boarded with an English couple. Mr. & Mrs. Ed Williams, Maintland St. London.

My sister Amys' boyfriend Ted Day, took my dad to Niagara Falls in the summer of 1936, they got lost and kept getting out of the car and listening for the loud roar of the falls that every one had talked about. They were parked right in front of the falls and it was a very foggy night. A policeman came along and dad asked him how far it was to the Falls. The officer arrested my dad for being drunk but Ted came along and saved the day. Dad had never had a drink in his life and taught temperance at the Warwick United Church.

We use to take Amy to London, thirty eight miles, with a 1925 Model "T" Ford. Round trip would take a full day. Sometimes Mrs. O'Neil would take the trip with us and dad would always try to get her to sit in the middle of the back seat to avoid flat tires. We always had at least two every trip. At Christmas time we use to pick and dress ducks, chicken and turkey to take to London to sell. We use to stay all night and come back the next day. I can't recall who milked the cows but it was done by the neighbours. The trip served two purposes, to take the poultry to market and bring my sister home for Christmas. Prices at the time were very low, a big 20 lb. turkey would go for \$1.00, ducks and chickens .35 and .50 each.

I remember one time taking chickens to the Forest Canning Factory with the old Ford car, they were alive with the legs tied, one chicken had a crooked breast so we were going to take it home. We stopped at Wellingtons gas station, after buying groceries, mother had \$1.00 left for gas. My dad gave him the money but the wind blew it away so dad gave him the chicken but it broke loose and flew away.

When we came home from London, we would have approximately twenty five dollars from the sale of the poultry. The old car would go to London and back for about .40 in gas. Gas was .25 a gallon. Dad use to say that he had to siphon gas out after coming home. It was really something when you think about it, a big square car, 7 feet high catching all the wind. The motor weighed 1/2 ton and would get 35 to 45 miles to the gallon. There is not an engineer today that could build one like it. The only thing they have improved on is the heaters, windshield wipers, and gas tanks. The carburetor would starve for gas and you would have to back up any steep hills. My brother in law, Gerald Boyne backed up all the steep hills from Bigger, Sask. to Forest, Ont. when he first came east. The first heaters were home made, a piece of metal over the manifold reaching back as far as the dash, which worked quite well on Model A Fords

I was driving to Petrolia to a farm forum meeting, Clarence Wilkinson was with me. I had filled the radiator with

fuel oil to save money on antifreeze. The fuel leaked on to the radiator fan spraying our dress clothes, I saved a bit of money there.

In the thirties, the prices for cattle and hogs, was 2 cts/lb, I remember my Dad trading a big fat cow, 1200 lbs, for a small jersey heifer in calf and it wasn't till 1938 that hogs and cattle reached 8 cts/lb and people then started to have a few luxuries. The hydro came down the 2nd of Warwick and the Janes, O'Neil's and McCormicks bought new cars.

That year, my parents bought a 1929 Model A Ford from Ed Mathews Ford Dealer in Forest, it was Billy Hicks old car from Plympton township just like new, also Jack Kervil from Warwick Village brick layer built us a two hole outhouse of solid brick for \$24.00. We threw out the Eaton and Simpson catalogue and bought toilet paper, and as the wind could not blow up your... things got easier.

About that time the Dr Hutton house in Forest was torn down. It is the site of the dentist office now. Dad purchased the hard wood floors from the house and laid them in the front rooms in thick walnut and cherry and when sanded down and varnished was just like a mirror. Thirty two years later, I sanded and refinished them for my son, Wayne's wedding present. The farm then belonged to George McCormick. Laverne Goodhill owns it now. Two French doors out of the same house separated our living room from the parlour which was only opened and heated by a wood heater on Sundays, Christmas and when company came.

We lived in one room in the winter. The stove pipes went up through two bedrooms and were quite warm, if the fire didn't go out. When Amy came home on the weekends, dad had to sleep in the west bedroom and one winter night he froze his nose while sleeping there.

It always seemed that we could not wait for the first of April when we could move into the back kitchen and pantry, just like cattle on new grass running and kicking for freedom after the long winter.

It was one of those springs that the kitchen was jacked up with the help of neighbours and a basement dug with an old two handle scraper and pulled by two horses from under the house. A drain was put out to the south road ditch which filled up with water and if the plug was not in place, the basement would flood with five feet of water which could make quite a mess if the coal was stored there. Dad also built a water tank in the basement and run a pipe from the windmill. We then pumped it into the pantry sink which had a drain to the east side of the house so by 1940 we were quite modern. Murray Elliotte of Forest wired the house for hydro for one hundred dollars. I was sweeping floors and lighting the furnace at the school for a price of thirty dollars for the year and I gave it to dad so we could have the barn wired. The next year I bought a pump jack and electric motor and dad built a little cement tank in the barn and another at the pump with a long narrow trough in front of the cows with everything on the same level made gravity feed so now we were really modern. The big tank in the barn also served as a milk cooler for the milk cans.

We also kept sheep in the drive shed, where the car was kept in the winter, on blocks. In the spring when we took the car to town, there was bird shit down the back and sheep wool stuck in the fender and bumper. Dad use to say "Elsie, when we get to town, I will let you and Walt out and you can pretend you don't know me". Until we got the Model "A" we never parked on Front Street in Forest.

I use to sit on dad's knee and steer the car at age five, and I could drive it well at age ten. One fall when I was eleven, mom and dad went to the London Fair with Mr. & Mrs. Joe Stewart. I got the old car out, and when I came home from school and was driving around the field west of the barn, I seen their car, a thirty two Plymouth coming down nine sideroad, I got excited and headed for the shed and hit the side of the door and knocked myself out. Dad said, "Don't worry son, the door is alright."

Friends that I grew up with, will remember the old swimming hole on the end of Warwick, between twelve and fifteen sideroad by Hugh Clarks, later Jack Tanton's (the old Dolan tile yard). After threshing or haying, there was always a gang of men down their washing, swimming and diving off the top of the bridge. No bathing suits allowed. That is where I learn to swim when I was nine years old. (Sam McCormick taught me).

In the thirties, I had all the childhood diseases except, diphtheria, scarlet fever and polio. For measles and mumps, we were guaranteed for six weeks and I had them all in one summer. A great big red sign put up by the Health Minister. They treated you like you had aids [AIDS] or scurvy! Ralph Stewardson contracted polio, I use to play

with him but was lucky enough not to get it.

Once every year the trustees of the school would hold a meeting during the Christmas holidays to discuss business. Here the teachers let contracts out for cleaning school and lighting the fires. It was at least seventy five dollars to clean the school and light the fires for the year. Mr. Ken Janes would bid me to \$ 30.00 for the whole year. I was sure stupid. I should have let him do it himself. He was a millionaire, and needed the money!  
Don't anybody say that unions are no good or they will have the biggest argument they ever had in their life!

In the fall of the year, we use to attend school fairs and the old car was used as a truck. Dad and I would take four calves and two sheep inside the car and then go back for another load, mother and Mrs. O'Neil. I use to take a lot of first and second prizes with the calves as dad was noted as a good cattle feeder. I also use to take prizes with public speaking, having help from my sister school teacher and coaching from my well educated dad. My dad use to say that it was a waste of time to send me to school as I knew too much already. He use to ask me where I was in 1914 in the battle fields in France when he really needed my advice?

In 1938, at the school fare a German pilot was giving rides for a \$1.00. I stood in line but my mother pulled me away. Gerry Stewart got a packet of cigarettes for .10 and John Shepherd and myself and a couple of the village boys smoked them all. On those small planes, the passenger sat in the front, I remember Chap Smith saying, look Ben Dann is going to drive her. I also remember Ira Falloon sowing fall wheat with two white horses which were scared by the plane and ran away. Ira falling off the back!

For a number of years, I worked for Joe McCormick at maple sugar time. At six in the morning I was feeding cattle and horses and milking the cows, then after breakfast, Mrs. McCormick would have lunch ready for Joe, and I would harness Old Maggy and bring her up with the buggy and Joe would take off like he was going to a fire. I cleaned stables and fed the chickens, hens and pigs then harness Old Prince and Mack and head for the bush to collect sap and then drive up to the house for noon chores and dinner which I use to look forward to. Mrs. McCormick was the best cook on the road, perhaps the best in the county with home made bread, pies, cakes and roast beef every day. My favorite was butterscotch maple syrup with pure whipped cream on top, two pieces every time. She would buy 600 chicks every spring with 600 layers and that kept everyone busy along with cutting wood for the furnace. Joe use to keep a pile of wood by the back door so if you were 5 minutes early for dinner you would have to split the wood.

That spring, the hired men joined the army, and Joe was left with three hundred acres to farm himself, six horses and a 10-20 International Tractor. His son Jack joined the Air Force, son Sam had died of ruptured appendix. Soon after his son George came home to work the farm and I worked for him part time. With the money I bought a new bicycle from Glen Kernohan, also skates and boots and clothes.

My dad had three horses, one blind, one old and one stupid. We use to hook old Longset blind to the cutter, he was blind as a bat but could do better in a snow storm at night than any other horse that could see. Charlie and Mack were different as night and day. Charlie was dependable but Mack did not like to be hooked single. A boyfriend of Amys' tried to hook him in the cutter and kicked everything all to hell, nothing left except the shafts.

I also had a pony, pretty well everyone had a pony. Arvilla and Gerald Stewart had a small red and white Shetland pony named Tory. He ran away to his house from our house and Gerry and Arvilla had to pull the cart home themselves. The Stewarts were quite worried, until they seen them come in the yard. We always had pony and cart races.

I remember one Halloween, putting the milk pails up in the hay mow at this persons place, and my dad had to go down to borrow a wagon, when we went in the barn, the farmer was milking big holstein cows in those big narrow sap buckets and not enjoying himself a bit. Dad said "Walter, I think you know something about this" so I had to go up in the mow and bring them down. I had help putting them up there but it sure was no fun bringing them down.

When I was about ten, dad sold the old Model "T" Ford to an insurance salesman for \$11.25, first year payment on a \$500.00 life insurance. The next day, O'Neils hired man bought it and that night run it into the old swimming hole on the 2'nd Warwick. When the policy matured it was worth \$500.00, the car was worth \$1,000.00 as an antique (so much for life insurance) now it would be worth \$20,000.00.

The summer before I was sixteen, I was preparing to buy a car of my own. Harold McKay and I cut weeds for the county and townships. I also worked at the Canadian Cannery and Howard Huctwith. The next summer I had three

hundred chicks that I raised for meat and with the sale of chicken and wages, I paid for the 1935 Chev Coupe that I had bought, for three hundred dollars, from Harold McKay six months before, no interest charges. He had the same deal with Wallace Lowery [Lowrie], for a '36 Ford Coupe. You can't buy anything like that now!

That same year, Ron Ellerker, Ed Vanderberg, Jim Vivian, Wilfred Goodhand and John Shepherd went west to work on threshing outfits. I was working nights at the canning factory from 7 pm. to 7 am. On the way home I would bring the cows up to milk from the back pasture, then go to bed for three hours, help dad draw grain and hay, help Herb Ellerker because his boy was out west and I would go from there to the Cannery. I am not complaining, as both Herb and my dad paid me well.

I was going with Doreen at the time, and use to meet her at Lim Lees Restaurant during my dinner hour 12-1 am. On Saturday nights we use to go to Ipperwash Beach to the old times dances and on Sunday morning, dad had to shake me to see if I was alive. He said I looked like a dead man. Thank God for Sundays! Although when I was smaller, I had to go to church three times plus Sunday school at Warwick Village United Church Bethel on 15 sideroad of Warwick. About 1938, the members of the church collected for a car for the Rev. Elston, 1935 Tereaplane, I remember mother being upset especially when they wanted money for a new church. That was the last straw, dad had to buy the '29 Ford Model "A" car.

Dad and I helped to dig most of the foundation instead of donating money which we did not have after buying the car and when the church was opened a poster was put at back of the church of those people that donated money, no mention of our work.

Then at the opening I was refused entry to the supper at the entrance to basement that we had dug by one of the elders, because I had mud on my boots. That turned me completely of church as far as I was concerned. My Dad and Bill King were the only Christians at the church. It was quite a few years before I realized that there were a few more, but not many.

In the thirties, there were a lot of people looking for work. This brings to mind of a couple of well known gentleman of the road, Jim Smith and Billie McGallie [Lagallie].

Jim who was known as Jack Knife. Jim would trade anything from geese to goats and bicycles but would mostly try to weasel anything he could for nothing. It is said that he traded his wife for a goose. The boys at the Warwick Village Pool Room would give him a 10 cent piece to sing "Dark and Stormy Night". He used to carry an old sack on his back mostly for road kill. It was well known that he had \$7,000 in the bank in Watford and would walk eight miles every day to the bank, draw it all out, count it and deposit it again. After a year or so of this, they got a court order to stop him.

Every year Mrs. Charlie Stewart would cook him Christmas dinner. One particular Christmas Jim was walking back and forth in front of their house waiting for dinner. Charlie took it out to him. He sat right down in the snow and ate the whole basket full. One duck with the trimming, two pumpkin pies and cookies and cake.

They didn't see Jim for a few days because he has went home deathly sick and could not move as he was not used to so much rich food. He used to sleep in his shack with no heat, a pail over his head to keep the rats away and a couple of goats to keep him warm. In the summer when driving through Watford you would meet Jim with a wheel barrel full of grass off the side of the road for his goats. He used to sing "Nanny Goat go away at night, Billy Goat come home in the morning". He used to come to our place with his bag for scraps of the table. Wayne and Phyllis were small and we would give him cold pabulum and bits of fried eggs that they had thrown on the floor. I cooked him up a big slop pail of potato peelings and dumped the whole thing in a big sack and he went away happy. He used to stand in front of the General Store and beg for stale bread and meat off the delivery trucks. One day the butcher dropped a steak and Jim took a lunge for it but a big dog beat him to it. He chased that dog all morning but never got it.

When the first old age pension came in I think it was 1940. You had forms to fill out and sent a \$1.00. Zeb Janes was running for member of parliament. So Jim wanted Zeb to send for the pension and Jim would vote for him. Zeb said yes and sent it away for him when the check came. Jim was walking back and forth in front of the post office trying to get some one to pick it up for him. Zeb had sent the forms C.O.D. Jim liked canned tomatoes and this is about all he would buy. Finally one of his cousins or sisters were sent the cheque and they bought his groceries and clothes for him. He always had brand new bib overalls and new rubber boots summer and winter. The first pension cheque was \$40.00 per month.

Billy McGallie [Lagallie] was a different person but he had his own silly ways. He would sell shoe laces and if you didn't buy any he would go up the road cursing and chewing his fingers. One time I was at Stewarts, when Billie came, nobody was home but us kids. We started teasing him to hear him cuss, he got mad and chased us around the wagon with a pitchfork. After that the poor fellow went down the road chewing his fingers.

One winter Ron Ellerker was working for Roly Thompson at sugar making time, he use to take Roly's car to town for chopped grain. That night he took the car to a dance. The next morning Roly let Ron sleep in until breakfast. And as Roly tells it, Mrs. Thompson went to wake Ron up, when she spied a pair of woman's snowshoes. She closed the door quickly and said, "my goodness, he has a woman in their". But Ron came out carrying a pair of his sisters boots that she had left in the car the night before.

Jack Kersy [Kersey], a fine gentleman, liked by everyone was our mailman. He drove a 1925 Ford Coupe. There was a post office at the Warwick General Store owned by L. S. Cook. A phone call to the store and anything you wanted would be delivered when he brought the mail. There was also a grocery truck that came once a week, we traded eggs for groceries. I always got a all day sucker from Frank Dolan (the driver) every time. When my sister Amy was teaching school at Brigden, she boarded at a farm home with people by the name of Miller. If she sent a letter to us on Monday, we would get it at R.R. 2 Watford the next day. Now 60 years later it takes 5 days, how's that for progress! These computer people don't know which end of the gate to open, budget, or boil an egg. If their computer broke, they are like a blind cow in a snowstorm.

In the winter, when the roads were closed, Mr Kersy, the mailman would hire us kids to deliver the mail with a horse and cutter. I also remember a snowstorm on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 3 feet of light snow, the sheep were in the back pasture trapped in bunches. We had to take the horses and big sleighs and bring them to the barn four or five at a time. At this time we had to take Amy back to Brigden to teach, so with horses on front of the Model T Ford, we pulled the car 2 miles to Warwick Village and left the horses in the United Church Shed and drove the old car to Brigden, we ran out of snow at Reeces' Corners, about 15 miles west of Warwick Village. Then on the way back we picked up the horses and pulled the car home. There was always a big snow bank in front of our place and this one gentleman from Watford, who visited a bootlegger would always get stuck there. Dad use to keep the horses harnessed every day so he could pull the man out. He said he only wanted to get stuck in front of our place because no-one else would pull him out.

In the winter time at school, the teacher of the day introduced hot lunches. If baked potato was the menu, everybody brought their own potato, if it was soup, someone would bring the milk and someone else brought the tomatoes. Same thing for scalloped potatoes and wieners and beans. The teacher would pair us up, one boy and one girl to cook and wash the dishes for a week, taking turns with others until your turn came up again. The boys being grateful little brats didn't like the idea at all as it would cut into the skating time, because we would grab a sandwich and run for the pond and never come back until the bell rang. We ate most of our lunch at the morning break.

The old oil stove, three burner, smoked a lot and caught on fire one day, someone yelled fire and the boys being real helpful picked up the stove and food and threw it down the big steps at the no.1 school house. Well, anyway we did not get a pat on the back for that one, but it did do away with hot lunches that winter. Luck was not with us, the trustees put hydro in the school and hot lunches were back for the next winter. Miss Hall, our teacher, would sometimes go home for dinner and we would have square dances and tap dance on her desk. Until she came back one noon time, the brakes froze on her car and she got us boys to pump water, heat it on the hot plate to thaw out the breaks. We had a good system going until we got caught, one boy pumping water and two boys carrying water to heat and one boy throwing cold water on the brakes! This went on all afternoon until she got a farmer with horses to pull her. However, we did pay dearly for our pranks in the next few weeks doing all the hot lunches and dishes.

Everybody at the school had chores to do in the barn and house before going to school and after and work all weekends. A couple of summers, I cut the grass for Mrs. McCormick with a push mower (no motor). John Shepherd also worked for the McCormicks and stayed there while going to school.

Wilbert King, a neighbor to the west of us broke his leg. I was doing chores for him and he had this special feed for pigs he called shorts. He had just got two bags and they were sitting in the ally way one night, the collie dogs did a good job of tearing them apart. In the morning, his daughter Mryta said we had to clean this up before daddy finds out. We had it all cleaned and chaff and straw sprinkled around so it was not noticeable. That day he came down to the barn on crutches and if you did not know how to swear, you sure could learn all the good words in no time. The poor dog got the worst of it!

Every farm boy or girl worked on the farm to do his share, mostly for Saturday night in town, wintertime skating and dancing and when we were ten years old, it was water fights with different school sections and the odd fist fight behind the grand stands in Forest.

Sometimes in the summer we would go to Earl and Joe Vanderberg's at Uttoxeter to box, punch ourselves silly and drive five miles home on our bikes. Quite a few summers we rode our bikes to Ipperwash Beach, round trip 36 miles. This was every Sunday until we old enough to drive cars. We had lots of energy then. Also I worked for old Govnlock [Govenlock] (Govy) picking apples in the fall. I could pick eighty bushels a day but Bill King could pick a hundred, which I don't think anybody could beat. Clarence Goodhill also worked for Govy while living at the farm with his wife Mildred. I remember when Lavern was born, I asked Clarence how many more they were going to have, "well, he said when young Mike was born it cost us four hundred dollars, that's enough to knock the hell out of anybody" considering that you could buy a new car with another two hundred dollars. That time it was a considerable amount.

During the forties, at harvest time, the Canadian Government sent prisoners of war out to help. I remember threshing at O'Neil's, there was always a big milk pail of water at the machine so when you came with a load of grain you could get a drink. Well this dog took a liking to the pail like a fire hydrant. This big six foot Japanese was drinking out of this and the rest of the men were laughing about it. When the prisoner found out about, he said "I fix". So the next place we were at, he used the pail as a fire hydrant and let them know about it at suppertime. No more tricks after that.

Did anyone write a story about their life? Well I keep jumping from the twenties and thirties and back again as different things come to mind.

In 1939, my dad's Uncle Kew, died in England and left him a considerable amount of money and property. But to get it, he had to go back to England and live or the money was to go to the church in Billingham. Well, it was out of the question as there was a war on. Dad had spent 4 years in the trenches in W.W. I and wanted no part of it. I visited the property while in England in 1977 and again in 1992. We all would have had a bit more than we have now but, "so what!"

My dad always grew canning peas. This was a hard job; we were all up at three in the morning trying to load peas to take to the factory at Warwick Village. Cutting with a hay mower and pulling them back with a pitch fork. Some seasons when it was wet, we had to pull them by hand. In later years, we had attachments for the mower and we loaded wagons and trucks with a push type hay loader. Of course, then we could grow more so we were just as busy. Harvest time was July 1-July 15. Wheat was also ready and we were putting up hay and milking cows by hand at the same time. Twenty acres of peas (good crop) after cost would buy you a brand new Chev car. Try to do that now with twenty acres?

When old Longset died (blind horse), my dad bought another odd ball horse from Mr. Herbert on the Egremont Road for sixty dollars. He was a grey color and stood six feet high at the withers and he was three longer than any horse I have ever seen, had feet on him like snowshoes and could walk twice as fast as any horse. When we were sowing grain I would harrow with three sections, before and after, while dad was sowing grain and be done at the same time. Duke was a very gentle and quiet horse and would work anywhere. When I got tired walking behind him, I would ride on his back and it made no difference to him. But the years took their toll on poor Duke and a few mornings in the winter, he would get down in his stall and wouldn't get up. We use to pull him up with ropes and pullies and he finally died. On our farm, the horses never went to the meat market but were buried with love on the land that they worked.

In the early forties, my dad built a sheep dipping page station in the building east of the barn. The neighbors use to bring their sheep in the spring to run them through the trough, approximately six feet deep with sloping ends. This got rid of the ticks which were about the size of a cockroach. I know they sure could bite, if you got them in your underwear!

Another Model "T" Ford story just came to mind. Dad and I took mother to Oscar Lester's place one cold January night for a Woman's Institute meeting. Dad kept going outside to start up the old Ford every half hour. At one in the morning, when it was time to go, the old car was the only one that left for home. The rest were all froze. They never

made any more fun of our old car.

Do you know who is responsible for extra packaging on your groceries and causing extra land fill sites?

Back when the Women's Institute started, they were a good group with the intentions of making home a better place and to help the people. The bakeries that delivered bread in the rural areas and city would drive their horses very hard. I remember a baker from Watford coming in our yard, check the horse's collar and crooper, wipe the sweat away from the horse's butt, then pick up two loaves of unwrapped bread and bring them to the house. The Women's Institute brought about package bread, which was a very healthy idea as far as horse sweat went, but over the years got carried away causing lots of unhealthy dump sites to live close too.

At the back of our farm to the east was a gentleman by the name of Bob Harper. Bob was a bachelor and lived alone but in later years, Sam, his brother and sister in law and two children, Joe and Helen, which are presently living at Warwick Village, came to live with him. Bob used to drive a team of horses to Warwick Village for a plug of tobacco most every day. One night he had to go to the Village for oil for the lamp and gas for the gas lanterns. As Bob tells it, when he was half way there, he discovered he had only one can and didn't know which one it was, so he lit a match and he said "as far he knows, the can is still going". One day my dad was at the back of the farm when the old Ford quit. We were working on it when Bob came along and started to tell us how when he had one, he could take it apart and put it back together again better than it was when it was new. Dad said "Bob, please work on this one" and Bob said "no Dan I have forgotten every thing I knew about them."

Bob had two Holstein cows, which the cream cheque supplied him with his groceries. For the life of me I don't know how, must of ate a lot of potatoes, apple sauce and eggs. But as he use to say, the manager of the Forest Creamery (Hogarth) told him the cows gave pure cream and he may as well throw his cream separator away. When I was real small, I remember his father living there, and dad and I would go in for a cup of tea. The tea pot sat on the hot stove at all times and was as thick as syrup. We had sheep at the back of the farm by them, and they supplied us with water. They were good people and good neighbours. In later days, my dad built a cement water tank on the line fence which is still there with our initials on and the date.

In the late thirties, Ron Ellerker, Don McHenery and myself had air guns. We were up in McHenery's barn one Sunday shooting one another in the butt. One of the boys got a real stirir(?) shot, fearing the worst I ran upstairs and looked down a feed hole and got shot in the eye. Blood was flying and we were all scared, Ron and Don ran to Joe McCormicks to phone for a doctor. Nobody was home, so they decided to knock down the door with a fence post. Just as they charged the door, the hired man opened it and in they went post and all. The doctor came out from Watford and laid me on the table (no freezing) and poked around and pulled the pellet out from behind the eyeball. It damaged the eyeball and has never gotten any better. I can only see objects if they are up close. For the life of me, I don't know how I got in the army! I guess that's why they put me in the tank car, couldn't see where we were going anyway.

When I was fourteen, I bought an old Fordson tractor. It couldn't pull as much as old Duke. One night I was working real late and mother came back to tell me the neighbours were complaining about the noise. Well, I didn't see her until she was right in front of the hind wheel. Lucky for me I stopped in time, but it sure scared the pants off me.

One other time I was coming up the laneway with the tractor, it could go real fast in high gear. I came around the corner of the barn towards the house, when I lifted my foot to put the clutch down, a hole in my pants prevented that and I ran right through the back wall of the hen house. Finally one day, while working some ground, it caught fire and burned (end of tractor) Poor old Duke had to work again.

I forgot to mention Ron's old dog Bowser. Bowser was a real old yellow dog who liked to pull a sled in the winter. Bowser hated cats and I remember he was giving Ron and I a ride when he chased a cat right up over the house step with Ron and I right behind. Ron use to ride the sled to school and Bowser would take it back home (what a dog).

My mother was also a good cook and she could make pork pies, English Yorkshire pudding, English trifle, apple pies and deep custard pies made of milk eggs, cornstarch and sugar. She could cook almost anything but those were the best on the road. When I was plowing with the walking plow and horses in the fall of the year, at supertime I ate meat and potatoes, then mother would cut the apple pie in half, dad and mother would eat one half and I would eat the other half with cream and cheese. I only weighed 110 lbs. soaking wet with all my clothes on.

She also decorated all the wedding cakes in the township. I think she decorated most of the Attwood girls' cakes. I remember when she decorated Ivadell's cake, she was the oldest of the Attwood girls, and Jack Attwood came in the old touring Ford car to pick it up. I never seen so many girls in one family in my life. At that time I suppose I was four years old but can remember it just like it was today. Today I think I went to Kincardine but I am not sure.

A little history about the plank road from Oil Springs to Sarnia: Constructed in 1858 to accommodate the first oil discovery in North America. It was built by private investors and the city of Sarnia at a cost of \$40,000.00. In 1886, it was known as the busiest road on the continent. The 30 km. road was made of white oak planks 10 feet long and six inches thick. This was a toll road until 1926. The road was transferred from private ownership to municipal ownership. The toll was as follows, 13 cents for horse and buggy and 25 cents for team and wagon. In the year 1886 it collected 5,874.00 in tolls from more than 40,000 vehicles. In 1875 the planks were removed and gravel put down and 45 years it was left that way until it was paved in the thirties.

I remember when the last piece from the Petrolia road to Sarnia was paved. Before it was done, we travelled up the road many times looking for schools for Amy to teach. There were sections that the planks were still there under the gravel, and there were sections that still had just the planks.

Soon after hydro was installed in school section No. 1 Warwick, a committee of people decided to have school dances. Every other Friday was dance night and they came from Uttoxeter, Plympton and Bosanquet sections. The school was jumping off the foundation. Ernie Butt, Forest, played the banjo, Joe Wix, Warwick, played the violin, Mrs Joe Stewart played the piano and George Matthews called off the square dances. There was a group that always done the highland fling. Two people that I know that could really go was Joe Stewart and Mrs. Elwood Jones. The ladies would serve lunch after the grand march. These dances were held only in the winter with lots of horses and sleighs. Some of my school mates will remember what the horses contributed to our every day life, especially at school, and there was no taxes to be paid on it either.

There was an old house on nine sideroad, close to Joe Stewart, where some Indians lived, Joe Wix, Mrs. Antone and Noha Antone. In the summer they would go down South to work at the tobacco. Gerald Stewart, Arvilla Stewart and myself took it upon ourselves to explore the house. We went though it alright because their half brother Clarence Goodhill, owned it. We found tobacco leaves upstairs and rolled cigars out of newspaper. I went home straight to bed sick. About six o'clock that night I heard Joe downstairs asking dad if I was alright. Arvilla and Gerry were awful sick and he knew why. Oh well, 60 years later I stopped smoking and believe it or not that old house is still standing and is owned by Laverne Goodhill, Clarence's son.

Noha Antone went to our school and on Saturdays Ralph Stewardson and myself would go fishing on the creek on No. 9 sideroad across from the United Church Cemetery back in quite a ways just back where Wilf Marriott lives. We always caught fish if Noha was with us.

During the war, there was a lot of Polish men coming to Canada. The deal was they had to work a year for a farmer and then they could work where ever they wanted to. Most went to Sarnia to Holmes Foundry. This one particular person by the name of Tony worked for Franklin Auld and Jim Brandon. One day when they were silo filling with corn, Tony came across a nice black and white pussy cat and went running after it calling kitty, kitty, kitty. The next day I asked Tony what happened, he said "kitty peed on me." He sure smelt like it. In later years when I seen him in Sarnia I always ask him if he remembers. Yes he said, "kitty pissed on me."

When I was small, before school days, my sister Amy would take piano lessons from Mrs. O'Neil, who could really play the piano. They were always trying to con me into it but I was a slippery lad and always got out of it. An old white rooster finally became my saviour. When mother sent me to O'Neil's, he would meet me half way and chase me back home. Sounds far fetched but it was true. I used to play a lot with Doug and George O'Neil but usually ended up pulling weeds out of the big garden they had, or George would have us hooked up like a team of horses pulling the lawnmower.

When we were older and didn't have our own cars, we would be able to have our parents' cars usually once a week. There were five of us that travelled together. That way we were out most every night to Forest or Ipperwash to the dances. For two dollars you had a big night, theatre in Forest, dance at the town hall and lunch at Mac Bests Restaurant, gas in the car and a drive to the beach. And that was for two people!



We always threshed grain out of the barn in the fall of the year. One year at our place, Delbert Minielly threw a soft egg at me. I got up in the opposite mow with some eggs to throw at the men working. Delbert had found a nest of rotten eggs, they grabbed me and bathed me in these eggs into my face and clothes until I stunk like a dead cow that had been laying in the sun for weeks. I ran to the house and mother made me go to the water trogh and wash up. I also got a good licking.

In 1937, when I was eleven years old, our friends from London, Blanch Parnel and Penn Potter, took mother and I up to Boat Lake by Wiarton for a fishing trip. I have pictures of that time. There was only one cabin and an ice house, a big kitchen and three bedrooms on each side with a big screen in the porch. We got up at three a.m. and went fishing until ten a.m., cooked a big breakfast of fish, then went out again at four p.m. until ten p.m. The fish were biting all the time, always perch and sun bass and lots of bass and pike pickeral. The lake is fished out now, you couldn't catch a minnow now. It use to take ten hours to drive from our place to there on 21 highway, gravel all the way. Now it is a three hour drive.

In 1939, when they paved 21 highway by Forest from London Road to Forest 9 mile, we use to ride our cycles through the wet cement to Forest upsetting the road crew. I believe it was 1953 before they paved past Tiverton to Wiarton and highway 6. In 1937, my aunt Louise came from England to visit. The Potters took us and aunt Louise to Niagara Falls for two days which I also have pictures.

Aunt Louise was quite a snob and could not understand why we would have dirty working men in our living room to eat. My dad introduced her as the Queen of England which brought a laugh. He told her after that while he was in Canada he was going to live like a Canadian. She didn't like our old car with wool on the fenders and bird shit on the roof, but she got use to it before she left.

In 1930 the Queen and George VI came to Canada for a visit and travelled by train through Ontario. Most school children went by bus to see them. We got up at two a.m., milked the cows and drove the old ford to London to see them. At that time it was a bigger event than going to a game at the dome in Toronto.

I use to enjoy going to the square dances at Warwick Village at the town hall. I would walk both ways and most of the time with Joe Stewart. He would sing all the way home and do a little skip now and then. These dances were held in the wintertime so it was easier to walk two miles then to be bothered with the horses or old cars. It cost 25 cents to get in, kids for free and something to eat.

Herb Ellerker, Ron's father, loved horse races and always went to Strathroy on the first of July. A neighbour living on the sixth line, Arthur Tomlinson, like to go to Strathroy for the big ball games also. When the fair was on they had ball games and horse races. I remember this one particular time when we drove down there in an old 28 Chev and it rained cats and dogs. The four of us got rained out, tickets and the races were postponed six times. We went every time until the seventh when we finally had a nice day and seen the races and the ball games (believe it or not). Ask Ron. I use to go to town in the wintertime with the Ellerkers mostly on Saturday night. Dad had no money to put gas in the car and besides it was real hard to start the car when it was cold and you run the risk of spending the night stuck somewhere. Most of our groceries were bought at Warwick Village, but then you got along for weeks with onions, potatoes, milk and eggs from the farm and the odd wormy apple. We made ice cream if we had any sugar and vanilla. Dad use to kill the odd sick chicken for Sunday dinner and any sheep too old or lame would be our lamb dinner. The hunters that hunted on our farm always left us a rabbit to eat, so if you were not fancy, you could get enough to eat. Other people were not as lucky, no money for food, fuel or clothes and if they managed to get a little food from the township they were called bums and no good for nothing. I was in the house of such a family that had one loaf of bread, no milk and nothing else. I was ten years old and went home stole an old hen. We use to store our potatoes in the barn so I stole a pail of potatoes also, and carried them one mile down nine sideroad to these people. They were so grateful, all they could do was cry. I stole a few more pails of potatoes before the winter of 1936 was over. There were a lot of families in that same situation and the government didn't give a shit and three years later the government had money to make bombs to blow to hell. Most of those same families lost sons overseas in Europe so those (Conservatives and Liberals) could live to create the hard times now that we have in the nineties. Any rich people in the area had no sons for the army but stayed home themselves and cashed in on the high farm prices. And it is those kinds of people who complain the most about people who are hard up for jobs.

On our farm in the thirties, the taxes for the year were approximately fifty dollars. That would be the price of two big fat steers. It only takes one now to pay the taxes on LOT 25, CONS BT 1995. Dad had a mortgage of 7,000.00 at 7 per cent interest from 1926, and when the farm was sold in 1947, there was still two thousand dollars owing.

Seven per cent would be like paying seventy per cent now, comparing the times. So if you think times are tough now, you should have been around then! Over the past hundred years it was only the forties and fifties that were any good for farmers.

As we got older we would go spear fishing for suckers in the spring. Sometimes there was a net and the pike and bass got caught. One particular night, when we were in our early teens, Ron Ellerker and Jim Vivian owned an old touring car and we all riding in it down to Doc Jay Hill on 21 highway when Lavine Kernohan fell off the side of it with a fish spear and a lit lantern ass over head. He was stiff for a few days but grew out of it. That old Ford could really go. I had to drive our Model A 55 m.p.h to pass it.

On Sundays it was filled up with one gallon of gas to get it running and then filled up with fuel oil. We would drive the Ipperwash Beach all day and never shut her down because it would never start. One particular night we stopped in front of Mac Best Restaurant. Jim forgot and shut the car off. Immediately he tried to start and it was still hot and it started with a loud bang and a cloud of smoke went up Main Street in Forest. You could smell fuel the next day.

We use to play a lot of baseball against other school sections. We always done pretty well as we had Joe Harper as a no/man [?]. He could hit a home run, was a top back fielder and an excellent pitcher and catcher.

I was about eleven years old when the Rexall Drug Store had a contest. Anyone who wanted to enter could. People who bought merchandise could give their points to anyone they wanted too. \$1.00 - 100 points \$2.00 - 200 points etc. First prize was a carpenter workbench with all the tools. At that time it would well be worth \$100.00. I travelled the roads in Warwick, Plympton and Bosanquet asking people if they donate their points to me. Just like politicians asking people for votes only I was on a cycle. Ted Rawlings father and mother owned the Blue Moon Restaurant and had a lot more pull than I did leaving me to win the second prize of a set of boxing gloves. Over the years we had a lot of fun with those gloves including having my head punched in but I also had the pleasure of punching in a few.

We also looked forward to school picnics. They were held different places every year, Brights Grove, Gustins Grove and Hillsborow. Hillsborow, just north of Forest was the favorite with a nice beach. My dad always had to back up the hill with the old Ford and in later years left it at the top of the hill. They always had a ball game and foot races for the kids. There was also a dance hall their where we use to go dancing in our teens. The place is now privately owned by private people.

On Forest Fair Days, all schools in the area would take part in the parade, competing for the prizes. I remember the pony races, Keith Watson had a Shetland pony that would run like the wind. Jim Vivian had an Indian pony and Wellington had a saddle horse. Keith would give them a 100 yard start and he would beat them every time. The pony was half the size of the other horses. There was always entertainment for the grandstand and horse, cattle, sheep and swine judging in later years. They had demolition car races and I guess they still do the day after the fair. It was always a good day for good friend Major Bowles in the car wrecking business.

In the thirties, the Janes use to drive their cattle to Forest to ship. It was eight miles and took most of the day. Don McHenry and myself use to help drive them, walking all the way in and out of the ditches. Don says to this day that he never got paid for any of it. But we did get a ride home. To the Janes, that would count.

Well, now it's the forties again and I am working for Huctwith in Forest, living at Gordon Lesters and later boarding with Jim Vivian at Wallace Forbes. It was wintertime and the roads were usually closed when it was time for work. The next winter I boarded with Bill and Betty Dew. That winter Warwick Village had a big fire and the hotel, house and garage burnt down. I came out from Forest on the fire engine and it took six hours to get there. We tried to down Egremont Road but upset the fire engine in the ditch by Wallace Lowries, so then went around by the London Road. The buildings were all gone to ashes. It was the 24<sup>th</sup> of March with strong winds and seventeen below that morning. Some stories about the fire can tell what happens when you panic. The owner of the garage went to the back of the garage and carried a three hundred pound piece of steel out and right beside the door was a welding machine on wheels that could have been pulled out by hand. The boys at the pool room in the hotel took the big pool table apart, made of slate, and carried it out. Right beside the table was a brand new cycle left to burn and in one bedroom a new suit of clothes with a hundred dollars cash in the pocket burnt.

The next winter I bought and sold poultry and in June 1944, Doreen and I were married. The following spring I joined the army and in August 1946 I was discharged. We went out west to see her mother and step dad. I went to

work with an old gentleman south of Biggar stooking grain (Jack Point). He was cutting forty acres of barely [barley] with three horses and a seven foot grain binder.

He had a bottle of water tied to the binder and I had to run and untie it, have a drink, and tie it up again. Then he would stop on the other side of the field and rest the horses. After three days of this, you know where I told him to shove the job.

The next day in Biggar, I met two chaps from Arkona, Ontario. Russ Hall, Curly Marshall and I went to Lloydminster, Sask., where I got a job stocking grain for an English couple, three weeks of that then I threshed for them. They were more civilized than the old man from Biggar and treated me well.

When I left there, I drove Doreens' step-dads' old Ford to Calgary. One day it was so cold I had to jack up the hind end before I could crank it. I also had to pour hot water on the manifold before it would start, and I was always cleaning the timer.

At Edmonton, there was a convention in town and we had to take a room over a Chinese Restaurant. There was five of us, quite crowded but warm. When we finally made it to Calgary, I was standing in line at the unemployment office, when a farmer came along and took me to Olds, Alberta to thresh. I worked there until Doreens' mother and step father were ready to go back to Biggar. Her stepdad (Ben) had bought a old 1935 fancy car. Did I get to drive it? Hell, no. He got Doreens' brother Bill to drive it, who couldn't even drive flies off of his you know what!

Anyway, I took a job at Doddsland, close to Biggar and worked for the Hartleys Threshing Company. We slept in an old bunk house that was a wagon pulled by horses but we were fortunate enough to get our meals where we worked. Quite an experience! The chap who looked after the machine always had two milk cans full of water, one for the tractor and one for drinking water. The cans got switched and there was bowel movement from Alberta to Manitoba!

While we worked around Doddsland, I noticed a name on a fence, DOLAN. At supper, they asked me if I'd ever heard of Warwick Village. They had come from the old tile yard on the second of Warwick. Hugh Clarke and Jack Tantons lived there in later years. The old gentleman was seventy five and had just bought a new 1946 Chev car, and every night he would get me to drive him into the pub and talk about Warwick and when he was a boy there. I sure was tired the three weeks that I worked there. You had a team of horse and wagon to load and unload by yourself, driving up on both sides of the machine to thresh. Every morning, we were up at four to feed and harness the horses, then go for breakfast, mashed potatoes, roast beef and pie. The first morning I thought they were nuts but after a couple of days I was eating all I could. I noticed that every morning when I went to harness the horse, there was one team already to go. Come to find out, he never took the harness off at night! So I fixed him, every night just before I went to sleep, I would go out and unharness his team. That made him late getting in the field and he soon smartened up.

By this time it was the middle of November and awfully cold. In the morning we had to break the ice to water the horses. And every day, I would think it was time to go back east. We threshed in snowstorms, shaking the snow off the sheaves before loading.

Finally, Doreen, Wayne and I made it to Toronto on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of November. The grass was green and a warm rain was falling. We went back to Forest to live in her brother's house that we had rented for twenty five dollars a month. Mrs. Catt (Reg's mother) lived in the other half. This was the house that Phyllis was born in on the same night the Forest Foundry Burnt, January 31, 1947. There had been a big snow and ice storm and could not get to Petrolia Hospital. I walked up town twice to get old Doc Calder but he was in no hurry, just kept giving me shit for having a baby in January.

When Wayne was about to be born, I was in Stratford, with a load of chickens. When I got the message by phone, I drove the old 1936 truck home as fast as I could. There was no heater in the cab but I had an old barn oil lantern between my legs to keep me warm.

We lived on the blind line of Warwick, in the Brodie house. Orville Dailey had his car ready to take her. We just got up the road and it quit. So we ended up going to Petrolia in the old truck. Other things that happened are too numerous to mention.

That was a very rough winter for us, no money and no job, so I went to London to work for Canada Packers. One of the neighbours turned me in because I was on farm deferment from the army. I either had to go home or join the

army. There was not enough money at home for two families in the winter so I beat those bastards that turned me in and joined the army, so they could stay home and hide and make nothing but money. Doreen and Wayne stayed with mom and dad and spent some time with my sister at Mooretown.

When we arrived from the west, I went out to Norm McKinleys, to help build turkey pens. Keith Manning worked with me. I had no car, and walked up the railway track night and morning to work. I also worked at the Cannery and the last job of the spring of 1947 was at the stave mill for Bill Stuart, piling staves on a stave boat from the saw to the yard outside.

The mill was on Broadway, beside the rail track. One day the train whistle scared the old white horse and she took off. Staves were littered from the mill to uptown. Jack Evans worked there also. One day, he had his finger cut off and I drove him to the Strathroy Hospital in dad's Model A.

I remember that winter they had a liquor and beer outlet vote. It was a very stormy day, and everybody thought the wet would win. But the bootleggers, all twenty five of them, drove all day to the polls. They gave rides to people on crutches, in wheelchairs and on stretchers. People that had never been outside in the winter for ages.

That year, I bought dad's farm and we stayed there until 1953 and then to Sarnia. We had a lot of bad luck and when things got tough, I went out to work. I had a lot of debt but it could have caught up easily in one year. But the V.L.A. had an agreement that you had to stay on the farm and not work out. So, there was absolutely no way to stay so we threw it to the vultures.

A far cry from now, when I bought the farm in the Bruce through the V. L. A. One of the requirements now is that you have an off the farm job. So I am happy to say that the vultures will not get this one!

Back in fifties, I heard it said that my drinking habits caused the problem then. However I have sure drank a lot since then and have managed to get by. I guess, once you find out who the vultures are, you watch out for them. No god-damn conservative will ever screw me again and get away with it! Or any other politician!

I know a lot of conservatives that I like very much, but they never done anything for anyone unless they were going to benefit. Of course, that goes for all the political parties, some of the time. I really believe that a conservative doesn't know the meaning of Christianity! They also run down union. So narrow minded, that they don't realize that there standard of living has been improved a hundred times over. Even farmers today, blame unions for their troubles. I guess those that have to, work for minimum wage, can pay and spend more for food than a union worker. Also, buy and build new houses and drive big cars. (Some peoples minds are dead!)

And while I am in the mood, don't anybody say to me, that this country is in trouble! The profits from the three major banks would pay off the deficit. If all the accounts that have not been closed or claimed over the years, at all major banks in the country, were taken, there would be enough to pay all the debt off! And like in the thirties, as soon as the war started, you never heard another word about debt.

So, if you want to buy all that garbage about the country debt, go ahead but not this turkey! When a person is braindead, it can't be helped. But when a person is brainwashed by the government there is no excuse for him and no hope either!

I have worked hard and long hours in my lifetime to raise a large family – most of the time, holding down two jobs besides farming. I am not complaining. I am thankful that I had the health to do so. Doreen and I have had a lot of good trips, to England, Hawaii, California, Texas, Florida and Newfoundland. We have travelled across Canada seven times, by air, car and train. I have worked in every plant in the Chemical Valley in Sarnia. One place, Cabot Carbon, I spent ten years, seven of them was shift work. The rest of them was construction including seven years at Douglas Point, Bruce County. We have lived in Bruce Township, on lot 25, con S for the past twenty five years, and enjoyed it.

I have many things to write about: my nine years on Council, Director of Bruce Telephone, my union positions, and my foreman positions that I held on different jobs, the buying of properties, my problems farming in Bruce, problems of growing old, problems with car and machinery dealers. Oh yes, lots of stories to tell of my Painting Business over the years.

All of this will have to be wrote in a different book. If my critics don't like what I have written, let them tell me

what they could have done better with their life under the same circumstances!!!

page 43:

## CHAPTER TWO (1947-1968)

In 1947, when I bought the farm in Warwick Township, my father bought a five acre place from Wilfred Smith, across from Ron Ellerker. During that time, my mother took a stroke and after a stay in hospital, he brought her home and took care of her.

My uncle Walter visited us at that time and stayed for two months before going home to Australia. He was President of the Australian Steamship Lines from 1924-1952. He was a Major in the first World War and wounded while in active service in France. His elbow was smashed and he carried a cane on his arm while walking, and it wasn't noticeable.

My mother had a second stroke and was confined to bed for five years, Dad taking care of her at all times. He only left the place once in those years to have a tooth pulled. A neighbour, Mrs. Cousins, looked after her for that day.

A neighbour, Sill Mathews was very helpful, along with the Ellerkers, bringing things from town for him. After mother died, Bill was quite a neighbour. Keeping an eye on dad and working with him cutting wood and chores.

After Doreen and I moved there, Bill was always handy, especially with the kids. They were always over there playing or helping Bill sometimes bothering him. Bill told me about them tying two cows' tails together and turning them out of the barn. They were always riding his calves and pigs.

A few times I went over there with the girls and we would turn out the cows. Bill would turn the radio up and we would have a square dance in the cow barn. They were great times for us!

In 1966, I was painting barns, houses, hotels anything that stood still. I sent all the family out west to Biggar by train except the two boys. They stayed at their Aunt Vera's for a period of time before coming home.

In 1968, I took the month of January and went to Vancouver Island to visit Harold Wood. The train fare around trip and boat fare to the Island was \$105.00 and back to Watford Ontario. Dan, my son, while going to high school, looked after the cattle for me. Which I was very grateful.

The next summer, Dan was working with me at Cabot on construction painting. One morning we were a little late. Dan got picked up by radar aeroplane. When getting closer to Sarnia, there was a big sign saying fly now, pay later. Dan didn't think it was funny but I thought it was rather amusing. Anyway, it was his car so I guess he could drive it as fast as he liked.

Bill Mathews went with me, in the fall of 1969, up to the Bruce Peninsula. I put an ad in the Port Elgin paper for a farm wanted. As I knew I would eventually be working at Douglas Point. It was December first and the snow was unbelievable. Bill said who would want to live here, you would have to be crazy and gave a little giggle.

I believe it was 1986, that Bill went with me to Newfoundland to visit Dan and family. We went by train and Bill had a ball. He had never been any further than Tobermory in his life.

Bill also worked with me, painting and roofing. In those years we were his neighbours. He later to the Bruce Township to visit different summers to babysit the farm while Doreen and I were away on holidays with our English cousins, travelling the North and U.S.A.

We also had a fruit stand on 21 highway. A couple of summers the kids made a bit of spending money out of it. They also got a trip to Montreal out of it to visit their Aunt Margerat. I didn't make any money out of it. Oh well, win some, lose some!

The next summer I was very busy painting the Petrolia Theatre, which was getting ready to open. When I gave them the bill, they had no money. I had started a hotel in Dutton, painting the inside of all the rooms. What an experience. It was the only hotel left in the country closing at 6 and opening at 8 p.m. There was a liquor store in town and they would drink till eight and then come in for the opening. Wild as bore pigs!

Well, it turned out that the same people that had the Petrolia Theatre, owned the hotel. The manager, who I knew

from Sarnia Construction (Rod Hanoln) said, "Walter, I will pay you every night out of the till at midnight" which he did. In the meantime, Doreen was going over to Petrolia and collected from the till at show time until the job was paid for. When they closed the hotel, the manager loaded up all the TV's to sell for his wages. What a group of people. I never want to see the town of Dutton again.

In the early years on the farm in Warwick, we worked hard and grew canning peas as well as regular crops and milked cows. Bill Harper, who was changing work with me, had a house fire. There was no insurance and the community bought and old house and moved them. I was changing work with Bill anyway, so he cut hay and peas and helped Ed Kernohan remodel the old house for three weeks. Ed was a real good carpenter and tradesman. He taught me a lot, of which I have used over the years on my own properties. I remember that Harpers had bought a car, the first one they had ever owned. I think the year was 1948, and they bought a '35 Ford. A real clean car with low mileage. That thing would go a hundred miles an hour.

One day at noon, Ed said he needed more material from the lumber yard in Watford to use right after dinner. Bruce took that car to Watford, got lumber tied on top of the car, and he was back in fifteen minutes. Sixteen miles round trip. Bill was quite upset and told Bruce that the lumber had dented the top of the car. Bruce said "that's alright dad, I'll take the axe and pound it out from inside." What a carry on, Bruce was always teasing Bill. They had three boys and they are all gone now.

I remember another escapade with the Harpers. When Joe came home from overseas, I was in the army in London and I met Joe at the station. Norm Turner and his wife and Joe's mother were there also. I decided to come home with them. There was seven of us in the old model T ford. Harpers were living at the George Thompson place at that time. We drove down that long laneway, lots of snow, Bruce was standing on the side (east) step. Norm headed straight for him, and couldn't stop and knocked the step right out from under Bruce. I went home with Joe, to the blind line Warwick, and then walked back to our house through the fields.

The next morning, I drove dad's car back to London. That was the last time I seen Gerald Stewart. He had rode with me to Warwick Village to help me shovel snow and pushed the old Ford model A. The next weekend that I had come home, he had just had the accident. The ambulance was there when I went past, not knowing what had happened until the next day. Two weeks later his sister Freda died, and I got a leave of absence from the army to do chores for Joe. (his dad).

At the time of my mother's first stroke, Wayne and Phyllis were living at dad's and going to school at Warwick. Ron and Irene Ellerker took them for the balance of the year. And for that we were very grateful.

Harold Auld and Howard Woods were doing custom work with tractor and grain binders. I worked for them stooking grain and threshing in return for cutting my grain. I was at Howard Woods place at Warwick threshing, when I noticed my old car was missing. Then finally I found out what was going on. Their hired men were taking turns to drive, as they had just come from Poland, I think all the Polocks in the country learned to drive with my old car.

For most winters before I went in the army, I would work out in Forest. And the first year I worked in Sarnia, Delbert Minielly (Buck) rode with me. He was on construction at Imperial Oil. When we would come home, there would be no lights in the house. All the kids were in bed, five boys and three girls, 6 p.m. every night. One morning Buck says, jeeze, I'm mad. He had woke up and thought it was morning, got the wood fire going, had his breakfast and looked at the clock, it was 12 midnight.

When Buck got laid off, he was laughing. He was getting baby bonus, unemployment insurance and the old age pension, milked a few cows, had a few hens and pigs and a big garden (a real country squire). Buck was never too friendly with the Janes'. At Warner Miniellys' thrashing bee, the oldest boy was throwing stones at Zeb. Zeb started to chase the boy (Morris) when Buck came along and made Zeb get off the grain job and go to the field. Then Buck took his job. The boy was cursing and still throwing stones at Zeb in the field. Poor Zeb.

Anyway, at dinnertime, we were all sitting at the east veranda at Warners. When Web King made some remark to Buck about the stone throwing incident, everybody laughed. Well, I had never seen Buck mad before or since, but did he ever tell everybody off! He said, give ten square feet of ground and I'll wip every Janes in the country. And everybody that wants to help them included. He was right on the grass, drawing lines in the dirt. Everybody got real quiet and didn't crack a smile. Finally the Janes' went to the barn and everybody stole quietly away. By evening, Buck was smiling again.

Doreen and I were fixing fence along the sideroad. Zeb was out hoeing wild carrot on the side of the road. To start with, the only way you could kill wild carrot in those days, was to pull it out by the roots. But Zeb was too lazy to bend over. He always got his brother Ken to do the work. He made some remark about being time I fixed the fence. I gave him a tongue lashing; he dropped the hoe, climbed the fence and went home.

Our cattle got out and ate one row of sweet corn out of his garden. You would have thought they were in his conservative bank account to hear him rant and rave! Three weeks later, his cattle, twenty or thirty of his big steers, broke through his fence, into a fifteen acre field of our corn. And ruined five acres of mature corn, but that was different. The following year, his hound dog ruined a flock of three hundred chickens ready to lay, killing most, but that was alright! But a dozen cobs of sweet corn, worth fifty cents, the world was coming to an end. What did I tell you about those conservatives? Well, anyway it serves me right, I done his chores in the barn while he was running for MPP. I should have been whipped with a big black snake! As time went on, Zeb and I became friends, at least on talking terms.

John Brandon was selling feed grain. And one winter we couldn't get it in the lane for snow. And I was drawing it in with horse and sleigh, when the old horse harness went to pieces. I knew Zeb had a good set of harness that he wasn't using, as they were tractor men by this time. I asked Zeb how much? He said I don't know. I would sooner give them to you than charge too much." I was desperate so I took them and told him I would pay for them when he made his mind up. I knew at that time, harnesses were going for ten or twenty dollars at sales. But I didn't figure he would have enough nerve to ask anymore than twenty five dollars. It went on for about two months and one night, at a farm forum meeting, right out of the blue during the meeting, he asked me how the harness was? I said, fine Zeb. He said that will be thirty five dollars. Before that, he kept giving me the old shit about giving them to me rather than charge too much. And the old minister at the United Church wanted me to go back to church, so I could become a Christian like my neighbour Zeb Janes. As you get older, you mellow, but this still rattles me when I think about it.

Lloyd Jones lived in Plympton Township, a very good friend of ours. We were always playing tricks on each other. I done some work in his house one time and he paid me with a cheque, and I didn't know how he had spelled my name until the bank cashier started to laugh. He had made it out to Walter Pea Ravell. Pea was my knick-name at that time. I had a bull rented from him at the time. I paid him in the fall. I wrote it out to Lloyd Jones, for pleasure fees. He was quite a card; we had a lot of fun over the years.

One year while driving out west with his wife they stopped at a Chinese restaurant for breakfast. When Deloras went to the powder room, Lloyd ordered. He told the China-man that his wife was really funny and that she wanted one egg boiled and one egg fried. When breakfast was served, you can imagine the commotion by his wife. (poor China-man)

One year Keith Watson and myself drove trucks out west with Lloyd. At dinner one day, while I was in the washroom, Lloyd poured beer in my coffee. I took a drink and went straight to the kitchen. The Chinaman took a drink of it and spit it out. Of course we all laughed until he came out of the kitchen and chased us out with a butcher knife. Unknown to me, it was the same restaurant Lloyd and his wife was in the year before.

One time we were taking a load of horses over to Bud Wellingtons at Coruna. We stopped at the restaurant that Bud Rose of Watford, had taken over. Bud says to Lloyd, "what have you got on, boar pigs?" Lloyd said yes, how were the ones I dropped off yesterday?

Another time were hauling fertilizer home from Chatham. We stopped at a roadhouse. Tied to the rail in front was a beautiful saddle horse. While Lloyd and I were admiring the horse, a young fellow came out and asked if he could ride the horse. Lloyd said sure but be careful, he's pretty fast. After he left, the owner came out and said "where's my horse?" Lloyd said when we came out we seen a young fellow take off with it. We didn't stay around to see the young fellow explain!

One time Lloyd said to my wife, "If you are so smart, why aren't you rich?" She said "Walter holds me back!"

I remember one day, Keith Watson, Gerry Spencer and myself went to Sarnia to look for work. On the way home we bought a sixty cent bottle of wine. Gerry Spencer was only about fifteen and started to holler, "why, you cheap pair of so and so's, I can drink a bottle myself". Keith went in and got another bottle, we drank one and he drank the

other. Dolly, Keith's wife, was at our place. When we got home Gerry was out stiff. Dolly would not ride home with Keith because we had gotten her little brother drunk. She walked the whole five miles home!

My neighbour, Ken Mansfield and I, exchanged work. He was doing some tiling so I was drawing some tile off the side of the road for a municipal drain that was going through his farm. And you guessed it, Ken and Zeb Janes farm. Well, I stepped off the wagon and sprained my ankle. We were in haying and harvesting grain. I had to hire one of the Moore boys from Watford to work for me. One hundred for the month of busy July. A councilor from the sixth of Warwick heard about it and came to see me. He said that the Township had insurance for that and not to worry. Well, the conservatives were at it again, Zeb Janes was the clerk at the time. He told the insurance company that I was not hired properly and that I was just helping Mansfield for a couple of hours.

We were giving a going away party for John Neilson, who was going to Sarnia. He had sold all his cows but one; you could hear it bawling all night. I went out to see what the trouble was. It had nothing to drink so I put a rope on her to lead her outside. She ran dragging me behind to a water pond by the house. She drank until she bloated. You couldn't pull her away. However, a chap came out of the house, grabbed the rope and before I knew it, had her in the house. In that condition, she relieved herself and a couple of people got busy with the mops.

I had a few old cars in my time and one in particular; a thirty Pontiac had no brakes, starter or bumper. I had to go to V.L.A Hospital. The old car stalled on Dundas and Richmond corner (very busy) I had to crank it, stick on the gas peddle, hold the crank with one hand, turn with the other. When the car started, it vibrated so bad that the stick holding the gas peddle, would jump off and the car would stop. I was running back and forth crank to gas- peddle. Horns were honking on all corners. The lights must have changed a few times, when a cop came along and cranked it for me, and told me to get the hell out of London and never come back! I had also gotten a parking ticket that day and forgot my driver's license. I parked in a big parking lot, walked three blocks to the station, paid the ticket, then I got out of London as fast as I could.

During the years that we lived at the five acres place of my dads, I done a lot of painting with a sprayer that I had bought. I went to Bothwell this one particular summer to paint barns for Alex Balasity. After a week, there was the biggest hail storm I had ever witnessed. Tobacco, wheat, corn beans that were ready to harvest, put to the size of match sticks. There were droves of cars continuously driving through the farms from one end to another sight seeing. A week later there was still ice in the ditches, when I left.

There was an O.P.P. working out of Forest, living across from us. He had a nice family but he was a dork. He used to brag to me about how much over time he was making on a case as a detective. He said we already know who to arrest but we have to get more overtime out of this one.

One time Gary McLeish's car caught on fire at our place. There was lots of yelling and noise going on. This detective across the road called for reinforcements from the Forest detachment. They came out, four cops and two cars.

One day, Ken Anderson came over and when he turned in the laneway, he slipped off the side of the road. You guessed it, along comes 'know it all'. Anyway, when I pulled it out with the tractor, he told Ken not to move the car until he investigated it. After a while, Ken took my car to go home. Mr Dork chased him around the block three times. Finally Ken took off into Plympton and Mr. Hot Dod got lost.

Another time coming home from work, my car lost a front wheel on 21 highway, right at the head of my road. I walked home to get my tractor to take it home. In the meantime, the wing-ding of a cop had it towed into to Forest, broad daylight 5:30 p.m. He couldn't track an elephant in ten feet of snow. Anyway, he got himself killed Hamilton, with his nose in someone else's business.

I was buying a lot of paint from the co-operative, about five hundred dollars a week. While working at a place on the shore road, painting a barn, the farmer asked me for a price on a white board fence. I said, time and material. Paint at my cost. When I gave him the bill, he said, "I can buy the paint cheaper than that at the co-op." Boy, did I get my ass into town just a roaring! They had all this paint (white), stacked up by the window for 50 cents a gallon cheaper than they were selling it to me at a discount. I bought the whole damn works, and when I paid them, I deducted another 20% discount also. They never tried to cheat me again but I had to watch them at all times.

While I was at dad's place, I was trying to build a herd of cattle. I bought one cow from Ron Ellerker, an old cow,



but she raised me the foundation stock. I bought black and white faced heifers at twelve and fifteen dollars per head. Raised them and bred them. They pastured at Cyril Matthews in the summer and we wintered them at home. The last winter Bill Matthews wintered them and I took them up to Bruce Township in the spring of 1970. When Wayne came up to work at Douglas Point, he looked after some of the morning chores, while he was on shift work. There was one hundred and fifty head around to feed and it took a lot of time. After I came home from work and weekends, we were always busy cleaning pens. Spring was just as busy, ninety five cows having their calves.

While we were on the five acre places. I mentioned about having the fruit stand. Well, I was driving down to Chatham area buying vegetables and fruit, looking after some painting and going to twice a week to London 2 a.m. to the farmers market. One night at the fruit stand, I left the wife and kids to close up and went home to do chores. I had ten sows in the barn with little pigs. Buck Woods came along and wanted to go to Watford. I said O.K., but we will go up and tell the wife first. He turned at the gateway towards Watford and never stopped until we got to his brothers place in Toronto. We were walking around Toronto Exhibition, me with a pair of rubber boots and smelling of pig shit! I was going to catch a train home but the trains were on strike. Buck and his brother stayed playing cards after they got to the brothers place. I poured whiskey into them until passed out, dragged Buck into the car and took off.

Halfway home, I stopped at a gas station, had the oil checked, three quarts, new breather on the carburetor, filled with gas, all with his money that I took from his wallet. I home by 6 a.m. When Buck woke up, was he ever mad when found out he was home. "What did you do?", he asked. "Drive the shit out of my car?" I said yes, I tried to make her fly. Buck thought that I had no money and he was in control but I happen to have a couple hundred that he didn't know about!!!

### **Chapter Three**

I mentioned in chapter one about people talking about my drinking. I will make no excuses for that but will try to enlighten you on some of the problems.

As you are aware, there were no government hospitals or drug plans, only private plans that were costly to a young person, who thought that it was only the old people that went to the hospital. With a young family, coming on at the rate of one a year, a few doctor bills here and there, and hospitals sucking the life blood out of you, you get in an awful bind.

I went to work in Sarnia to catch up on these bills but before I could get any of them paid off, they would garnishee my wages. In those days, they never left you anything to live on or to take groceries home. The pay days that I came home drunk, the other chaps were doing the buying for booze and sometimes they gave me money to buy groceries. One hospital in Sarnia, refused to let me take home one of the children that was born, until I paid them. I said fine, keep the both of them. The dirty vultures let them come home after that.

There were other people had the same problem and I think Pauline Vanderburgh knew some of them also. These problems plus the V.L.A. declaring a no-no for working off the farm put the skids under me. Like I said, it would have taken one year to pay off the debts by working out in Sarnia, no more than two!

Oh well, I am now in Sarnia still with garnishee and getting no where. We were living in an old house on the London Road. Doreen was in the hospital giving birth to Beverley. I was working as a painter with lots of work. We were eating our supper when a cop came to the door and said "I have the bailiff at the road and I have come to take you to jail for not paying a court order from the Catholic Hospital." Well, I said there is no-one here to look after the children, but if the Bailiff Louheed wants to baby-sit, I will go to jail. The cop went back to see him but I guess he wasn't interested and wanted them to arrest me. They refused, so he went back to Forest whipped!

I was getting desperate. Finally a friend of mine introduced me to a Liberal M.P., who was a lawyer. He said, "Walter, we will fix this." It seems that at that time there was a law that could not put you in a spot like that, if you filed for a consolidation through the courts. Not bankruptcy, or consolidation of debts by borrowing money. But a real print out of what you owed and what you were making. We filed and the judge (Shanessey) granted a court order of everything for \$25.00 per month until everybody was paid the actual money owing no extra charges, no court charges and no interest. The lawyer M.P. M. McCracken would take no money for his work.

Well, I tell you. We had just come through a rough winter living on employment insurance of \$25.00 per week.

Eight mouths to feed, telephone cut off and if it wasn't for the people on the other side of the house, the hydro would have been cut too. And to those of you that smoke tailor-mades, I managed a twenty five cent package of makings out of the twenty five dollars. We ate a lot of rabbits that winter!

Before I go on, I have to say I was very disappointed in the Forest lawyer, Don Livingston, at that time. He told me there was no other way but to declare bankruptcy. But in due time, everybody got their money. All of it! There was one gentleman that wouldn't take the \$40.00 that I owed him. He said "Walter, you have had enough trouble, forget it." That gentleman was Wilfred Marriott, a real Christian. You can't go through that procedure now; the conservative government changed that after one of their elections. I think it was Davis, or the other idiot before him.

Anyway, after it was very tough sledding, but at least we had the vultures off our backs and at least we could see a small light at the end of a very long tunnel. We had a lot of old cars (wrecks), but I had to have them to get to work

I got a job at Cabot Carbon and things got better financially, but life itself wasn't much better. Working for a company with no union made it awful rough. The manager and foreman were out for themselves. And they controlled your whole life, night and day, whether you were working or not! There was a saying in the plant by most workers that went like this. "I wish they were only paying a dollar a day so I would have an excuse to quit."

They paid a dollar an hour more than Imperial Oil and Polysar just to keep the union out, so they would control your life. A lot of people that read this now will maybe not believe this. But how could they when they never worked there? Some will say that Imperial Oil had no union but the parent company in B.C. has. And they, like Cabot of Sarnia, paid well to keep the union out. Cabot plants in the rest of the world had union also, at that time.

Mr. Harold Wood got fired one night at a safety meeting. The Company was feeding us booze and telling us what a good company they were. Harold told him that he was in dire need of a dose of salts! And was fired immediately, that instant. We were not getting paid for being there, just the booze and something to eat.

After that, his wife got very sick and being pregnant lost her child. Harold was an ex-serviceman, Air force officer and flew missions during the Second World War. A top notch tradesman and director of the Credit Union at Cabot. It was hard getting a job as he was being black balled. He applied for a job at Guelph as an instrument technician at a tobacco company. His brother Ernie and myself went with him for the interview. He told them of his problems and what happened. They told him that it couldn't happen here as this plant is unionized. After a couple of hours, he came out of their office very happy and started for home. He had a week to get moved before he went to work. Within three days, he had a Dear John letter. Black Balled again!!!

After that, he got a job in Chalk River, at the Nuclear Plant. Things were going well for him when Doreen and I visited him but he said a neighbour told him that a Mountie had been asking questions about him. (Black balled again)

So finally, the union got him a job in Vancouver Island at a pulp mill as an instrument mechanic. I visited him out there in 1968 and again in 1983. Things were doing well for him and he never had to look back. He died in 1993, had a good life but I can't help thinking that he should have had another twenty years. He deserved better than he got from Cabot in Sarnia, after serving in the air force during the war, for their safety. People are cruel, and those kind of people call themselves Christians.

I forgot to mention that there was a number of us trying to bring the union in and I guess the company thought that if they got rid of the leader, it would scare us off. But it had the opposite effect, and after visiting a few families and kissing a few babies, we were successful. After a couple of tries, we were certified.

After the company got their wings clipped, things changed. We worked, we got paid. Nobody owed anything to the company, and they owed nothing to us. We had our life back!

The first safety banquet, after the union got in, I set out to prove a point, and it almost cost me my job. I told the manager pretty well the same thing and then went to work drunk at midnight. I tied the foreman's shoes, Ed Conelly and Vic, the top operator, together in knots in the dressing room. I was sent home. Before he sent me home, he said "I'll fire you". I said, "You just do what you think you should." I went home about 2 a.m. and Doreen said, "Just like Harold, you got yourself fired anyway." I went to work the next night and nothing was said. Come pay day, paid for the night off. My point was proved, that it wouldn't happen with a union. But I paid for that little escapade

in different ways. But I still stayed and made good money until I wanted to leave. In 1963, I gave two weeks notice, and left. A going away party by the men and some foremen and Cabot was history. Oh, I have been back on construction a couple of times and to visit a few times. A great bunch of fellows to work with and play with. I still keep in contact with a few of them.

In 1995, in June, I visited Jim Haggerty, who now lives in Grand Forks, B.C. I hadn't seen him all those years. We talked about old times. I said I still have nightmares about Cabot. He said, "So do I and I thought it was only me," said James.

When I first went to work at Cabot, I lived in Wyoming but moved to a farm house in Enniskillen, and worked part time to pay for the house rent. This also helped to catch up on things that we had done without for years. But after a while, they got a little like Cabot, figured they owned us. So we left and moved to Water Street in Sarnia. After a couple of years we bought a house on Elgin Street.

I was working shift work and it was awful hard for me to sleep when I worked the night shift. The kids coming home for dinner would wake me up and my stomach was bothering me bad. After seven years of this, I took a day job at a lot less money and moved back out to Warwick Township. I then left Cabot and went back painting in 1963 for more money.

I started building up a herd of cows and calves in 1970, which I took with me to Bruce Township. Twenty years later, after the escapades with the Doctors and Hospitals, we were back on the farm.

I have to mention, while I was on shift work, some of my days off were spent with family camping. Doreen and I had a few trips also. We done quite a few things that we were not able to do before. I enjoyed every bit of it.

When we moved out to the farm again, we rented the house on Elgin Street to a family. The man worked on the Great Lakes. He was to put the rent money in my account at the Bank. After three months the bank said there was no money in my account. I went to visit the family, and they had been gone for two months. The neighbours said that they had gone to Montreal. When we found out he was in Vancouver, B.C., we had a trace put on him. He was working on the high seas and at that time, you could not sue anybody on the high seas. So, that was a kick in the ass. We sold the place and after the mortgage was paid, we had two thousand dollars left. Doreen bought a car and I put a small down payment (one thousand dollars) on a farm in Bruce Township and went to work for Ontario Hydro in Sarnia and then Ethyl Plant for six months, going to the farm on weekends.

In the spring of 1971, I went to work for Lumas Construction at Douglas Point. I was there for three months and called to Ontario Hydro to work. This job was not without its ups and downs. It takes all kinds and I have seen most of them. It was something like Cabot, but we did have a union, so there was no fear of losing your job as long as there was work. After about four years, I was put on shift work. So, here we go again, but it was only a four to twelve shift, five days a week. It got to be an awful drag in the winter. It was suppose to be for six months then another crew would take over but after six months, my foreman said "guess what, they want us to work another six months." I quit and went to work for Lucas again. At London Paint Company at Douglas Point for twelve months as painter foreman. I had two foreman under me and twenty men on two shifts. I think that was the best job I ever had, more money more fun. Good men, every one of them. When the job finished, I went back to Lumas at Douglas Point and worked with some of my old friend, from the first time that I worked there.

I asked for a leave of absence in 1977 to take a trip to England. No problem. I seen all my cousins that were living, my grandfathers' farms, school and places where my father had lived and worked.

When I got back, I worked until June and asked for another leave of absence to go to Alberta to visit Sherry, our youngest daughter. They told me if I wanted to go out west, I would have to quit. As far as I know my ladder and paint pails are still hanging there. I was out of there before 10 a.m. They wondered where I was until someone told them they seen me going out the gate heading for home. We packed our things and went to the Oil Sands at Fort McMurray. I had a week's holidays and got bored and took a job with a Paint Company, by the name of Four Seasons. No union, and boy, was the company one son-of-a-bitch of a company? Well, I was in no mood for this nonsense but knowing I was only staying for three weeks, I went along with the fun. You wouldn't believe what the German, straight from Germany, was doing. He would hire men from Newfoundland, pay there way out, give them a trailer to live in, charge them double rent and work the hell out of them. Then he would threaten every day to fire them and kick them out of their homes.

Well, I will tell you, I started to work on this German, just to get him off the Newfoundlanders' backs. I succeeded.

We were painting a big row of doors on a big garage. He was going to show me how fast he could do this. He was on one door and I was on another. Both sides, one with outdoor paint and the other side indoor. When were done, he had beat me by two minutes. Real proud of himself. "See", he said. "I told you I would beat you". I said, "I know, you beat me because you didn't change paint. You used the same paint for both sides." "Why didn't you tell me", he said. I just laughed and told him that he was the expert and laughed at him. I also told him that I quit and wanted my money and if he didn't get off his employees back, I would report him to the employment office.

Well, did that German ever kiss my backside. He had my money right quick and pleaded with me not to report him. I felt real good over that one. I got three weeks pay which paid for my holidays.

We arrived home the first of August and I went to work in Sarnia again, on construction. Coming home on weekends. I had a good job again with the union, painter foreman. Things were looking good again,

The next year I wanted to make things easier with the cattle so we had a sale of machinery and put cattle on all the pasture on both farms, and went to work in Sarnia again. That year we bought a three bedroom cottage at Kettle Point. I stayed there through the week and went up north to Bruce Township on the weekends.

In the fall of the year, I sold cattle for 70 cents pound for which I paid \$1.05 per pound in the spring losing \$ 25,000.00. One beast got struck with lightning, and received a hundred dollars insurance, more than I had paid for it. Interest rates went to 25% so here we go again. Another attack by the vultures.

In the spring of 1980, the vultures phoned me to come to the bank to get my operating money. I said that I didn't need it and they could shove it, the whole one hundred and one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. They asked me how I was going pay back the money. \$25,000.00. Not with cattle, I put a mortgage on one farm, rented the farm and went back to Sarnia to work, and paid the damn loan off!

I was working on construction at the Sun Oil Plant as paint foreman, getting along well until there was a rash of fires, starting with people getting burned and at the last, saw electric switch rack blow up. There had been twenty five people working there but they had all gone for dinner. There was something terribly wrong at that place, I could feel it. So I left and went painting for myself. Tim Bobier came with me that spring. We started a business, worked hard, done well and enjoyed every bit of it. We had four men working for us, all good men.

In the fall of 1985, I turned the business over to Tim. He bought a boom truck and I retired. I sold the cottage at Kettle Point and went home. That year I became interested in township politics and ran for council. I lost by thirty votes but six month later, a councilor moved out of the township. So, I was in!

The Telephone Bruce Municipal was in trouble (not financially). They had too much money due to Ontario Hydro, and the subscribers wanted their money. However after ten years of courts, meetings, courts and meetings, Justice McGomery handed the Telephone Company back to the Township of Bruce, because all of the subscribers could not be identified. So, automatically the councilors were the trustees.

The next term I was elected by acclamation and had a very interesting three years. In 1989 I was elected by acclamation again. In November, 1994, I was elected by one vote. After a re-count I was in by two votes. Getting elected by just two votes should tell you something. It was time to think about the rocking chair. I had made up my mind, I would finish my term and leave.

However, a law was in the making, that all municipal councilors had to be audited and also your spouse. Well, I will tell you, not this boy! I had worked hard for all these people, accomplished and contributed all I could, so did the rest of the councilors and reeve. In fact, a lot more than any other council in the last thirty years. I filled out and paid taxes all my life, have been audited by the income tax department so I wasn't about to be audited again, especially by some of the people that were making things as tough as they could and were insanely jealous, nothing else.

The law was to come into effect on the fifteenth of April, but it didn't happen. I quit three days before. Oh, well, win some lose some! I had exactly nine years on the council and enjoyed every minute of it.

The telephone was a very interesting company, very competitive and regulated by government. We were handling millions of dollars. Buying equipment and building a new telephone office, two and one half million dollars building. Equipment for the new technology that we had the leading edge on. Some people had no idea what things

cost and what you had to do to acquire such equipment. These people became jealous and began crying foul. We had to make many trips to Toronto, Miami, California, and Edmonton, to buy this equipment. We also belonged to the North American Telephone Association and had many conventions in different provinces. One that raised some eyebrows was the convention in Hawaii. This did not cost the telephone company or taxpayers one damn cent. The Directors paid for their wives expenses and for the extra time stayed. We were the first company to buy this equipment from a firm in the U.S.A, and I am not at liberty to tell you the deal we got! I will tell you that we saved the township and the company millions. For competitive reasons and for the good of Bruce Township taxpayers, my lips are sealed! The government regulators know all and have stopped a legal inquiry, demanded by about ten jealous rate payers. A petition of a hundred, but most people will sign a petition!

All I can say is, if they don't like it they can go back to the tin can and string. We have the lowest rates in the country, three times less than Bell. So what the hell? Give me a break. We have all the bells and whistles that Bell has, so what more do you want?

We also had a reeve that did more for the Bruce Township than any other person in the last hundred years, people are cruel but that's life! Ron Andrews worked night and day for every resident in the Bruce Township. He put his heart and soul into it, and was ousted. But he can hold his head high, knowing he did his best. I will have to say that I was very disappointed when the judge handed down his decision and so were seven hundred other subscribers, but it's history and we, as trustees, did what we could to keep to keep the company a part of Bruce Township. Selling to other municipalities in the surrounding areas, Bruce Township included, we are now all partners in this with Bruce Township as the trustees for the next twenty years. This was all approved by the telephone regulators and the Bruce Telephone Company is in business and going ahead in leaps and bounds. I am proud to have been a part of this endeavour. And I can say this with all sincerity that all of this would not have happened if it had not been for the reeve of Bruce Township, Ron Andrews. It was all his idea, just helped him the best we could.

This whole endeavor with the telephone company took more time than municipal affairs of the township, three times as much. And the jealous so and so's said we were paid too much. In one deal we saved enough money to pay all our wages for nine years.

In chapter one, I neglected to tell you about buying the farm on lot 25, Con 5, Bruce Township. When I took my half of the money from the sale of the house in Sarnia. One thousand dollars for rent. The deal was, if the money came through from the V.L.A., it was to be used for a down payment. Well, it came through, but the Queen Council, a lawyer from Port Elgin said that I would have to get the land surveyed at a cost of \$1500.00. I didn't have 15 cents. I had paid for the winter's hay for the cattle. I wasn't working and I couldn't borrow money. I was like a cornered rate. (the vultures are back again). Well, I drove an old Pontiac with no lights or brakes through the worst snowstorm that winter, right straight to Bay Street, Toronto, to the head office. The gas tank was half full and I had five dollars. And mad as hell I stomped around the office like a bull in a China Shop. The manager said that if any man could drive through a storm like that, there has to be something wrong. He did some inquiring into the matter and said that we didn't ask for the survey, and the Queens Council has the mortgage money in his account to pay the owner of the farm. He said go on home and don't worry about it. I said no, you phone the son of a bitch up now and tell him while I am here because I am not going home if I have to go to jail. I have no money for food anyway. So, he phoned him up and told him to release the money. He also told him that I was standing right there. The manager took me out to dinner and I went home. I drove in the dark the last hour, but missed all the cops. I slept for two days after that and the union hall called and said that I had a job at Douglas Point. That's what you can do if you know you are right and get mad enough.

A few weeks later I found out that the son of a bitch in the Queen's Council had a brother in the survey business. Well, the next time that I seen the pot licker, he got a tongue lashing. I called him all the mother so and so's I could think off and added a few more. He said he would sue me. I said, "Go ahead and I will go straight to the press." He knew I meant it. Not one minute trouble from the bastard after that.

Buying the farm on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, I was renting it from Arda and had ten years to buy it and the rent money would go as a down payment. Well, I tell you the vultures were at it again. Jealous people thought that I had to good a deal and tried to derail me. Well, I borrowed the money from the bank, a bridge loan for two months, bought the farm and sold some cattle and paid off the bank.

So after a few months, the previous owner came to me asked if he could get some money. I thought Arda (government) had paid him because I had paid them three months earlier. Well the vultures were out again. Come to

out, another Queen's Councillor in Hanover, had the money. I rattled a few more chains and the farmer got his money.

What a bunch. Come to think of it, the Queens Council in Forest had screwed me twenty years earlier. So that made three of them on three properties. Maybe I should stay clear of those bastards. With all of this screwing, it's about time to get kissed!

In the seventies, I worked hard on the job. I worked long hours planting grain till five in the morning, doing chores in three barns and going to work by eight to Douglas Point. There was even overtime on the job. I could not have done this without my wife Doreen and help from my family on weekends.

Ralph and Louise lived on the other farm and they worked very hard. Everyone worked together and for that I am grateful. I am very proud of my family and that is why the barn reads Walter Ravell and Family.

Well, there is a lot more to tell but there are some things better not told. My family knows all and that's the important thing to me. If I live a few more years, perhaps I can write some more. I have a scrapbook filled with all the details of the council meetings over the nine years, if anyone wants to see them. And like I said, before you criticize, think about your own life, before you open your mouth. I hope you don't have to deal with some of those bastards that I had to.

### **Holidays and Business Trips (1966-1995)**

My trip to Vancouver Island in January 1966 was quite interesting. I met so many types of interesting people from different walks of life. It had been over twenty years since I had been there and of course, having to work on the harvest at the time, things were a lot different. Tickets from Port Albernia, Vancouver Island to Watford, Ontario and boat trip was \$105.00 I took two hundred dollars with me and arrived home with six dollars. (three weeks holidays)

The next holiday we had was to visit Rod Ingliss in 1972, at Englehart, Northern Ontario for one week.

In 1974, Ruth Crabb, first cousin, visited us from England. We travelled north and south Ontario with her.

In Jan. 1977, I visited England for three weeks, visiting my cousins at Farmsfield, Amy and Alex Benton, Connie Benton and cousin Gordon at Billingham. Master of the fox hunt. Also cousin Will Ravell who owned a feed and seed mill at Billingham and my grandfather's old farm.

The same year, Doreen and I drove west, visiting Wes and Lilla at Biggar, Tiny and her husband at Peace River and we also visited our daughter at Fort McMurray for three weeks. I worked for a painting company out there, I mentioned earlier. We arrived home in August and I went to work Construction in Sarnia, and farm in Bruce Township.

That year we also bought a cottage at Kettle Point. We all had a lot of fun there but it was a lot of work also.

In 1979, Doreen and I went to Florida for two weeks, visited Disneyland. The next summer Alex and Amy Benton from England, visited us for a month and we travelled Michigan, U.S.A. and Ontario for three weeks with them. We also spent some time at the cottage at Kettle Point.

The next fall, after we got caught up on the painting, Tim Bobier and I made a trip to Vancouver Island with a camper trailer and truck for three weeks. We visited Harold Wood, Wes and Lila and Vera Thomas in Biggar, Sask.

The following summer, Doreen and Anita went west with Diana and Garry McLeish in car and camper visiting Biggar, Sask,

In summer of ?? I visited Newfoundland with Bill Mathews, by train and then bus to Dan's house.

Somewhere in between all this travelling, I was working on the farm and also construction. Also, I managed two other trips to Newfoundland and Doreen out to Fort McMurray a couple of times when the grandchildren were born. In April 1984, Dan and family moved to Ontario to find work. Dan helped fix the barn roof in May, 1984 and in

June of 1984, he went to work on the Bluewater Bridge in Sarnia. They moved to the cottage at Kettle Point and lived there until Dan returned back to Newfoundland in September 1985.

In 1985, after Dan left, we sold the cottage at Kettle Point. I ran for councillor and lost by 30 votes. Anita was married in December of that year.

In 1986, in council August 6, Doreen in University Hospital, London November 24. Had new roof installed on the house (\$7,500.00)

1987, a very good year in council but a very good friend, Bill Mathews, died on June 15.

1988, another busy year with council. Sherry visited from Fort McMurray, Doreen started insulin needles May 4<sup>th</sup>. Got in contact with the Ravells in the United States and started the Ravell history book. We bought a new '88 Ford Escort car.

In 1988, a school reunion at S.S. No. 1, Warwick, was held in the Forest Arena August 21<sup>st</sup>. One hundred and four people attended. We all visited in the afternoon and had a picnic supper. Thelma Wilson done a wonderful job of organizing. George McCormick, Master of Ceremonies, and I done a lot of running around helping, where we could. Doreen and Phyllis left for Newfoundland that day and I went back home to township business and the farm.

1989, we visited George and Dick Ravell at Howard City, Michigan, U.S.A. Sheila Stafford and her family, from Manchester, England, visited for three weeks. A very busy year with council. I helped organize and paint the new Tiverton Arena. (One hundred and twenty hours donated) At this time we were working hard to get the five cemeteries presentable. That spring, Bruce Roppel resigned and Garry Mc Gilvarey took his place. In September, we spent a week at John Marriott's Cottage at Coldwater, Ontario.

In 1990, our good neighbour, Sim Linknow, died in January. We started spending \$27.50 per month to world vision adopt a child program. His name Tchabologo Goatshabe in Botswana. We are still doing this and hope to until he is sixteen. It helps his family survive. We visited Dick and George Ravell in May and went to Cleveland House at Lake Rosseau, Northern Ontario in June.

I went to London, to Ralph Stewardson's retirement party and then went to John Marriott's cottage at Coldwater in July.

Tom Ravell visited from Texas and we had a family get together. Doreen and I went to a telephone convention at Thunder Bay 19-21 September. Dick and Mary-Lou Ravell from Michigan, visited in November.

In 1991, we visited George Ravell and family in Howard City Michigan in May and also went to Marriott's cottage in May.

In June we went to Renfrew and visited an old neighbour, Bruce Harper, from Warwick Township. Then to the telephone Convention in Ottawa June 13-20. Left and went west to Biggar, Edmonton, and Banff 28 August to September 20<sup>th</sup>. Election year, a very busy year with telephone convention at the Edmonton Mall.

In 1992, took a trip to England and Scotland July 30. In June I went to a convention in Alliston and in September to Kenora, Ontario for a telephone convention. We also visited Wes and Lila in Biggar at that time.

We went to Hawaii for a telephone convention, seven days. We stayed ten days and it was without a doubt the best vacation of our lives.

In 1993, I went to the Good Roads Convention in Toronto the last of February. Also had a small plane ride in May on council business in Toronto through thunder storms both ways. The plane was as old as me and not in as good a shape. Doreen and I went to Haliburton for a telephone convention that same year for four days. Diana and Garry McLeish celebrated their twenty fifth anniversary at our farm in July. On the eighteenth of August that year, BMTS, the telephone was converted to a utility.

In September Doreen and I went to Newfoundland with John and Karen Marriott and visited Dan and his family for thanksgiving and travelled the Cabot Trail. Had the Port Bruce Cemetery ploughed and fence removed on December 20<sup>th</sup>.

In 1994 another busy year, Sheila Stafford and family from Manchester, England, visited on July 15 for a week then flew to Edmonton, rented a motor home and travelled the west for ten days. Doreen and I went to the telephone convention in Sarnia. I also went to the Good Roads Convention in Toronto and then flew to Dallas, Texas to visit Tom Ravell.

In October I went on Telephone and Council business in Miami for four days. In January 1994, we went to a telephone convention in Palm Springs, California, during the earthquake. A good shaking time was had by all.

We celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1994 at the Township Community Centre. All the township residents were invited and many old friends. Our son Dan and his family came from Newfoundland and all the family was there.

In April, 1995, I resigned from council and in the month of June, we travelled as far as Vancouver Island, visiting friends and relatives across the country. Then we travelled to Newfoundland, and spent a few days with Dan's family there and then went to Prince Edward Island and came home by way of New Brunswick and the U.S.A. We stayed in New Brunswick a couple of days because Dan was working there at the time, so we visited with him for a while. We travelled across the country in a 1993 Tempo. Had one flat tire and a little problem with brakes in Newfoundland.

We visited John Marriott at Coldwater in October, had Thanksgiving with them. John had the misfortune of being hit with a tree while cutting it down. A piece twenty feet long broke off and hit him in the head. The tough old bugger came out of it in a couple of weeks, an ordinary person would have been dead!

Doreen and I moved to 1133 Queen St, Kincardine on November 28, 1995 and came home on April 1, 1996, to the farm.

Twenty five years ago, one weekend in April, Norm Lines and myself were up here from Sarnia. Over two hundred geese were on the ponds and road in front of the house. Well Norm was excited, "Get the guns. Get the guns", he hollered. Well the geese scattered and never came back that close for many years, with all the dogs around, also helped scare them away. About fifteen years ago, I started feeding them and finally six geese (three pairs) kept coming back every year, arriving between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of March. They now have many offspring, approx. one hundred. Only about thirty five are tame enough to feed, which is plenty for the pocket book. This year, 1995, over five hundred were flying in at night, staying on the field, north of the barn. A real sight to watch them flying in at dusk, most of them leave for the grain fields in the morning. If I could afford to feed them, none would leave.

Lake Erie, at Kingsville, Southern Ontario, many thousands are fed at Jack Miners Sanctuary by the Government. I have contacted different people, Ducks Unlimited, a government body, are interested but only if I leave them the deed to the farm. I would be interested in leaving them a small acreage, say one acre for feeding purposes. The one and two acre that the township bought along twenty five sideroad for creek would be ideal. One year I made the mistake of feeding them in the fall and they came close to staying the winter so I don't feed them much after June 1<sup>st</sup>, depending on the year. They generally hatch their young in May or June and take off for better shelter away from livestock.

There is no hunting allowed on the front fifty acres, but in hunting season, I let a few friends and neighbours hunt on the back fifty acres near the bush.

It is hoped that the next owner of the farm will take an interest in the geese feeding project after I am gone to dust. Maybe my family descendants could interest the owners of the day, or influence some government at the time. About fifteen hundred pounds of grain would keep them coming every year, and someone would have to feed them for about half an hour every other day.

At this time my wife, Doreen is in the hospital for the fortieth time in twenty years, however she is doing fine and hopes to be home next week.

KEEP ONE EYE ON THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE OTHER ONE ON THE VULTURES.

I wish you all a long and healthy productive life,  
Walter E. Ravell [should the middle letter be P?]