Lifenotes

Frank J. Moretti

September, 2005

A work in progress

Part One .. Basic Facts

My name is Frank Joseph Moretti.

I am beginning these memoir notes on a beautiful sunny Spring day, April 16, 2005, in Victoria BC Canada, where I now live with my wife, Arden, who has been my love, soul-mate and companion for nearly 50 years.

I was born in London Ontario Canada on May 2, 1933, to Peter and Elizabeth (nee Senese) Moretti, two Italian immigrants who met in Canada. More about them later. I was the eldest of five children. Following me were Peter Anthony born June 30, 1936, Anne Rose (actually Anna Rosa) born July 25, 1937, Joanne Antonette born October 29, 1938, and Mary Grace born May 29, 1941. Assigning names to us was done basically in the traditional Italian way. The first-born son is named after the paternal grandfather, the second-born son is named after the maternal grandfather, the first-born daughter is named after the paternal grandmother, and the second-born daughter is named after the maternal grandmother. I'm not sure how it goes from there.

I was christened Frank, and Joseph was the name I took at Confirmation. Which tells you that I was raised a Roman Catholic, though I am now Anglican, having moved to the Episcopal Church with my family in Houston in 1975. At some point in my early adult years, I developed the notion that "Frank" was just my nickname, and my parents' intention must have been that I be called "Francis" (As in St. Francis, etc). So I began to use "Francis" for anything formal or "official". But hadn't checked it out with my parents. So, sometime later, probably when I was applying for my first passport, I discovered that I had indeed been christened "Frank" and began the procedures to have it legally changed to "Francis". I innocently mentioned this to my father in a letter, and was taken aback at the forcefulness of his reply, along the lines of "What's this 'Francis' stuff ? You were christened 'Frank' and that's your name". So I dropped the issue. But the confusion lingers. My undergraduate records all show "Frank", and yet my Social Insurance number shows "Francis", and I doubt if I acquired that before I entered University. And strangely enough, my International Immunization booklet, which was issued in 1979 at Exxon Production Research, shows "Francis"!

My Canadian Social Insurance Number is , and my US Social Security Number is . I am a dual citizen of Canada and the US, having become a naturalized US citizen in 1991, while still living in Houston TX.

At this writing, I am about 5'11' tall, weigh about 155lbs, have brown eyes and lots of gray hair, wear trifocal glasses (far-sighted), and am right-handed. I have a pleasant, not-too-deep voice that is getting a mite raspy, and I like to sing.

I speak English very fluently --- and I still work hard at doing so --- as well as Spanish, French, and Italian in order of decreasing fluency. This order of fluency is ironic inasmuch as I grew up in an Italian-speaking household and extended family, and took 5 years of French in high school plus a reading-proficiency exam in scientific French in

university, and only first became exposed to Spanish at about age 47. The difference is that I learned Spanish intensively, at Berlitz, at Company expense, in order to communicate with my Venezuelan and Colombian colleagues at that time and to have functional fluency for travel to those countries. At that time I was supervising reservoir geology projects for Exxon Production Research Co. in Houston, and several of them were in South America. So it was basically *functional* Spanish, with the emphasis on conversation. The French was intensive too, spread out over several years, but was heavily weighted toward grammar and literature, with little need or opportunity to use it in real life until many years later when I spent a summer with the Canadian Officer Training Corps (COTC – the Canadian equivalent of ROTC) in Quebec City, and much later than that when we lived in Montreal and I was teaching at McGill University. But it was a fairly limited conversational experience. Italian I was always exposed to, but like so many pig-headed children of immigrants, I steadfastly refused to speak it as a child, when I could have learned it effortlessly. As I became older, I realized that I could speak more polished English than my parents could speak Italian, so it seemed retrograde to learn it from them. By the time I woke up from this dumb attitude I was no longer living at home, and so had lost the opportunity of constant exposure.

I attended St. Martin's Catholic Elementary School in London from 1938 to 1945 (began at age 5 and skipped Grade 4), then De La Salle High School -- a boys' school run by the Christian Brothers -- from 1945 to 1950 (Grades 9 thru 13 in those days), was Valedictorian of my graduating class, attended the U. of Western Ontario (London) in 1954, graduating with a BSc in Geology, and the Gold Medal, was awarded a 3-year Research Fellowship by Imperial Oil, so entered the U. of Wisconsin in September 1954, earned a MS in Geology in January 1956 and a PhD in Geology with a Minor in Soil Science in May 1958. At that point I had just turned 25. Lots more details about my schools later.

I married Arden Audrie Simkins McNeil Wells on September 10, 1955 at the charming, picturesque Mt. St. Louis Roman Catholic church in the country not far from where her parents lived at the "Owl Pen" in Medonte Township, about 10 miles west of Orillia, Ontario.

We raised three children, all born in Calgary in spite of the fact that we moved about a great deal during our child-bearing/child-rearing years. John Peter was born on December 4, 1958; Lauren Elizabeth was born on December 17, 1960; and Lisa Alexandra Wells was born on December 20, 1965. Which explains why one of my and Arden's favourite lines from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is "Beware the Ides of March!"

There are five grandchildren, all boys. John is the father of Jacob, born April 8, 1991, and Keenan Paul, February 17, 1995. Lauren is the mother of Christopher, born February 26, 1991, Jeremy, born April 15, 1993, and Alexander, born March 25, 1998.

Part Two .. Family Ancestry

My father was born Pietro Antonio Moretti in Modugno, a small town near the Adriatic seaport of Bari, Italy, on May 3, 1898. His parents were Francesco, born in 1853, and Anna Rosa (nee Brancali), born in ..... Dad was the fourth of seven children, named, in order of birth, Nicolo, Giuseppe, Veneranda, Pietro, Grazia, Michele, and Teresa.

I never met my paternal grandparents. Grandad died before I was born, and Grandma died in 1939 when I was 6 or 7. I recall Dad coming into my bedroom one morning in tears, with a letter in his hand (no telephone or email back then!) and when I asked what was the matter he said that the letter was to inform him that his mother had died. I remember trying to comfort him. It didn't mean a lot to me at the time because she was so sort of theoretical.

My father emigrated to Canada in 1912 or 1913 as a boy of 14, to join his older brother Giuseppe – our Uncle Joe, who was living in Toronto. This process, called "wicking", was very common in the immigrant Italian community (and perhaps also among other European immigrants). As a kid, I got to know Uncle Joe and his wife Artenza during their many visits to London either specifically to see us or as a "drop-by" on their way through by train to visit family in Buffalo, or on visits to Toronto with my Dad and sometimes my brother Peter. Uncle Joe was quite a character, and a prodigious smoker. He actually lined up hand-rolled cigarettes on his night table before he went to sleep so he could smoke from time to time during the night! I can still remember his chronic cough. Is it a surprise that he died of emphysema? By the way, Dad's brother Nicolo apparently emigrated to Winnipeg and died there in 1921, having lived there a relatively short time.

Before I go any farther, I'll warn you that as I write about my uncles and aunts, I will use "Zio and Zia" – and "Aunt and Uncle" as well as their Italian and English-equivalent names interchangeably, and with no apparent rhyme or reason. That's because there isn't any. My sibs and I, and even Mom and Dad, used both interchangeably, and although there were certain ones who tended to be referred to more often in Italian and others more often in English, there were no "rules".

I came to know Uncle Michael Moretti (Zio Michele), and his wife Teresina very well because their entire family emigrated to London while I was in high school and the first year or so of University. It was a classic example of "wicking". First my cousin and namesake Frank came to live with us. He was a few years older than I. After a year or so of working and saving his money, he "called" his younger brother Vic. After another year or so of saving, they "called" their father, at which point all three moved into a small apartment in our neighbourhood. And after another year or so, they "called" Zia Terasina and the girls, Anna, Mary, and Grace. Having Uncle Mike in my life, which began when I was in University, was the first time I realized what an opportunity I had missed by not really working at learning Italian as I grew up. He was a wonderful conversationalist -- articulate, passionate, and well-read, and I would have given anything to have been able to engage him on my level. Instead, we limped along very unsuccessfully in conversation.

I never met my other uncles and aunts on my father's side, and have never visited his birthplace. Unfortunately the older I get the more I regret that I didn't take advantage of an opportunity to visit my dad's birthplace with him when he made his second and last visit there in September 1971. He had been back only once before, in 1930, but was so upset by what he saw of the Mussolini regime that he vowed he would never go back. But he relented, and his 1971 trip was a dream come true as he was able to see once more his remaining family in Modugno and revisit his boyhood haunts. How I wish I had been smart enough to arrange to go back with him!! It's a curious thing that although he left Modugno at about age 14 he carried so many happy memories of his growing up there and talked about it a lot. My Mom, on the other hand, was an adult when she left Italy, hardly ever talked about it, and made only one trip back not long after she had emigrated.

My mother was born Elisabetta Senese in Curinga, a very small town in rugged Calabria, in the south of Italy, on December 14, 1898. Curinga is so small that it doesn't even appear on my National Geographic map of Italy, but thanks to Google I was able to locate it precisely. It's about 5 km north-northeast of Filadelfia, a larger center that appears on most good maps. I understand that it is hilly country, sloping down to the coast to the west, probably within sight of northern Sicily.

Her parents were Pietro Senese and Giovanna (Joanna) Desando. Pietro was born in 1856, Joanna on April 17, 1859. Mom was the 2nd of eight children born to Pietro and Joanna, but there was also a stepsister Clementina, older than the eight siblings, born in 1879. Common wisdom among my siblings was that Clementina was a daughter from Grandad Senese's first marriage, but just a few years ago we learned that in fact she was Grandma Senese's illegitimate daughter by a doctor from a nearby village. I'll come back to this later. The eight siblings were named, in birth order, Anna, Tomasso (?), Pietro, Andrea (Andrew), Lucia, Elisabetta, Angela, Maria. The question about Tomasso (Thomas) signifies that I'm uncertain about his position in the lineage. I know only that he was the "first son" but don't know if he came before or after Aunt Anne. He emigrated to Canada as a young man and simply disappeared.

I never met my maternal grandparents either. Grandad Senese died in 1918 or 1919 in his early 60's. I am told that he left the lunch table feeling unwell after a long morning of cutting firewood, lay down and never arose. According to my sister Anne, Grandma Senese died in 1942. She and sister Joanne remember the letter arriving. I have no recollection of the news, and I don't know if I was inattentive, or if it simply wasn't discussed. This is in sharp contrast to my recollection of Grandma Moretti's death. Though I didn't ever know Grandpa and Grandma Senese, I did come to know several of my uncles and aunts on my mother's side, and the story here is much more complex than for Dad's line.

My Aunt Anne, the eldest of the eight, and Aunt Clementina, the stepsister, emigrated to Canada sometime before 1920 to marry Nick Bernardo and Frank Artemont respectively. In 1920 they "called" Mom as well as a couple of other relatives. She lived with both Anne and Clementina at various times.

Within a year or two, Uncle Nick and Aunt Anne decided to return to Italy "for good" but later changed their minds, and returned to Canada in 1923, bringing Uncle Peter and Aunt Mary with them. So at that point Mom had two sisters and a step-sister in London nearby.

Judging from a few photos, Mom made a very decent living at whatever she was doing at the time, well enough to buy some very nice and fashionable clothes, as well as building up her savings, as we shall see. In 1929 she returned to Italy for a visit, then returned to London.

Uncle Nick Bernardo and Aunt Anne had four sons (Victor, Peter, Albert, Freddie) who were enough older than we were that we didn't really interact with them. But Uncle Angelo Adili, a good-hearted but hot-blooded Sicilian who married Aunt Mary, had seven children (Bill, Peter, Rosalie, Joanne, Joey, Michael, and Albert), and we interacted with them a lot! They lived in London, always in the same neighbourhood as we did, and because the eldest five were pretty much our contemporaries, we spent a lot of time at their house and they at ours. Tragically, Joey drowned along with about 30 others in a terrible recreational boating disaster on Lake Erie in the summer of 1944. He was between me and my brother Peter in age, and just great fun to be with. We missed him terribly. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Even though it's also a look-ahead, I'll mention here briefly that during the 50's Zio Vito and Zia Lucia Michienzi and their five children, named Frank, Peter, Concettina (Connie), Joanne, and Mary, emigrated to London, as did Uncle Frank and Aunt Angela Giampa and their four children named Frank, Peter, Sandy, and Joanne. So when that happened, my sibs and I had five first cousins on Dad's side and twenty-five first cousins on Mom's side, all in London! There were also second cousins etc. At this point in time, 2005, with all these cousins' children having had families and their children now having families, the web of kin relationships boggles the mind!

Now let's go back and pick up Dad's story from the time he emigrated as a boy of 14. Apparently he worked in Toronto at a variety of unskilled jobs, because neither he nor my mother had any formal education at all. Zero. He became a naturalized Canadian citizen on June 12, 1923. And as we only discovered by sorting through family documents after my mother died, he married Theresa Mangialardo in Toronto on June 9, 1927. It was apparently a tragic and troubled union, and she died under somewhat mysterious circumstances on December 10, 1929. There was some sketchy evidence that there had been a child, but we've never been able to definitely conclude that there was or wasn't. In any case, shortly after Theresa died, Dad went back to Italy for a visit, then returned to London and settled.

So at that point Dad and Mom were both living in London, but unknown to one another. Dad got a pick-and-shovel job as a labourer with the Public Utilities Commission, installing and repairing water and sewer lines. Among his fellow labourers were Uncle Peter Senese, Uncle Angelo Adili, and an Italian named Tony Melloni (rolls right off the tongue, doesn't it?). Mom worked at a laundry where my Aunt Mary Adili also worked.

Like Dad, she had no formal education. When the second Adili boy, Peter, was christened, both Mom and Dad were invited. That's where they met, and as they say, the rest is history.

They were married June 8, 1932, in London. The wedding pictures show a swarthy, handsome young man with a moustache, and a beautiful, gentle young woman. That Fall he quit his job with the PUC and they bought a grocery store. We think that it was financed largely with Mom's savings. At the time they were living with Angelo and Mary Adili. For reasons unknown they sold that store and bought another, and moved into quarters in the back of the store. For a time, Dad even had a broken-down delivery truck that, as he described to us, was pretty much held together with baling wire. This was at the height of the Depression, and I have been told that the store was on a corner where there was already at least one, and perhaps two, groceries. Not a great business plan! For whatever reason it was a disaster, and they went broke, having lost all of Mom's savings. In fact, while Mom was in the hospital having me, the store closed. My siblings learned later that the loss amounted to thousands of dollars, representing all of Mom's hard-earned savings from her single working years, so it was truly a financial catastrophe. I think she never recovered completely from the shock of that loss.

Part Three .. Growing Up in London.

A. Pre-elementary and Elementary School years.

As noted, Mom and Dad were married June 8,1932, and I was born May 2, 1933, so they didn't have much time to get their feet on the ground before plunging headlong into parenthood. Their first few years together were really tough. Think about it. Mom is having me at the hospital, and the store closes, which presumably meant that they lost their very modest habitation in the back of the store. After a few months' convalescence with relatives, they (and I) made the first of several moves from one rundown place to another. We were in one such place during a winter that brought temperatures as low as –34 F, and all there was for heat was a stove (wood or coal, presumably), which they took turns tending day and night.

Strangely enough, the fragmentary memories that I have of those years are all positive. I can almost hear my father holding me and saying "Cielito mio" ... "my little angel" .. and I can remember sitting on the front steps of a house somewhere happily stuffing the stubs of some pencils between the cracks of the stair treads. Weird, huh?

Finally we moved into a house on Duchess Ave. across from St. Martin's Church in 1936, when I was three, just before my brother Peter was born. Things seemed to settle down a bit, as Dad was finally able to get work with the PUC again. However, things soon began to fall apart again. Within a year or two, Dad contracted bronchitis/pneumonia as a result of having to work outdoors in all kinds of weather, and went to the hospital. I think this was the beginning of what became a chronic condition, which eventually prevented him

from ever working at manual labour again. I don't know how long he was gone that first time, but I do remember the day he came home. I was across the road playing in the schoolyard, and someone called to me that Dad was home. I took off like a rabbit to cross the road, looking neither left nor right, and just before I reached the curb, one of my shoes came off, which brought me to a screeching halt, just as a car sped past. I am told that it was a miracle that I didn't run out into the path of the car.

So, Peter was born on June 30, 1936, soon after we'd moved into the Duchess St. house, Anne was born on July 25, 1937, and Joanne on October 25, 1938. And Dad was in failing health!! By 1939 Dad was out of work, and since we couldn't pay the rent, the landlady evicted us early that summer, and we went to live in a house on Hill St. This was the only time our family was ever out of the general neighbourhood of St. Martin's Parish. Peter and I particularly remember that house because it was about a block away from the rail crossing of the London and Port Stanley Railway. They had very colourful engines and cars, so we dubbed it the "Paint Train". The house had a wonderful large front verandah, and we enjoyed being out there on many summer mornings with something to drink, waiting for the whistle, and then the appearance, of that magic train. I was six and he was three.

I've mentioned that Dad's bronchial condition eventually precluded his working at manual labour. As best I can remember this happened while we were in our Duchess St. house. And since he had no education or training of any kind, he basically became unemployable, and spent his time at home, sharing household duties with Mom. There was a temporary moment of elation when he was hired a few years later to be the assistant custodian at St. Martin's. I remember clearly the joy and enthusiasm with which he hustled off to his job that first day, carrying his lunch pail. But alas, it lasted only a few days before he fell ill again, and it was clear that he would probably never hold a job again. It was only when I reached adulthood and had a family of my own that I realized what a crushing blow this was for Dad, to be unable to provide for his ample family. I'll come back to this later because I believe that it profoundly affected his attitude towards education.

Since we had been evicted from the Duchess Ave house because we couldn't pay the rent, you may wonder how we managed to move into the Grey St. house. The reason is that our bachelor Uncle Peter Senese came to live with us, and paid at least some of the rent in return for having all his housekeeping needs taken care of. He had been living with his step-sister Clementina, but she developed some emotional problems and wanted him out. So he came to live with us, and if it hadn't been for that, I really don't know what would have happened. Uncle Peter still worked at the PUC at that time and continued to do so for many years. He was our "live-in landlord" from that day forward. In August of that same summer, 1939, we moved to another rented house at 62 Tecumseh St., which returned us to the area of St. Martin's Parish, and although we moved three more times within the next nine years, all the houses were within a kilometre of St. Martin's Church and School. Apparently the rent for that house was $25/month, of which Uncle Peter paid $8, and the rest was covered by welfare and Mom's "Mother's Allowance" payments from the federal government. My sister Mary was born in that house, on May 29, 1939,

and that rounded out our family. I remember that day very well, though I can't say I understood what was happening. I recall it as a somewhat rainy day, and we were all required to play outdoors or in the small garage on the property. Since we were just around the corner from the Adili's, no doubt there were some cousins in our company. We were not allowed to go into the house, of course, which deepened our sense of curiosity. Other than that I have little recollection of the house, except that it must have been large enough to squeeze in our family of seven, with a private room for Uncle Peter. And speaking of being "squeezed", it goes without saying that with five children, and eventually the addition of various cousins and uncles, in cramped quarters, none of us ever had our own room, and most of the time we didn't even have our own bed! And that continued until I graduated from university and moved away to graduate school.

In about August 1940 we moved again to a small rental house at 21 Garfield Ave. – the farthest point in our wanderings from St. Martin's church. We lived there for a couple of years, and I remember a lot of things about those years. First of all, I learned to ride a bike there, and still remember the day I was allowed to take my first solo ride, clockwise all around the block. It was a very successful ride until I came back into the yard. I ended the ride by colliding head-on with the pear tree on the east side of the house, and seriously bent the large carrier mounted on the front.

I also remember that house was so cold in the winter that we couldn't use the front room; bottles of milk left in it froze. Apparently it was a pretty shoddy building. On the day that we moved out, Dad and brother Peter and I went back there for some last items, and as Peter and I played outside, we could hear Dad tearing a strip off the landlord -- a Mr. Martin -- about what a shoddy house it was and what a so-and-so he was for not making it more habitable. Oh my, he was in a rage ... it's a wonder that he didn't beat him up.

My time on Garfield Ave provided my first encounter with a handicapped person. Roy Bottoms was probably in his 20's, but was still a child in his speech and behaviour, and he ran with a flat-bottomed gait that seems to be characteristic of some handicapped people. He lived in a large and mysterious house at the end of our block, on the corner of Garfield and Ridout. It was "mysterious" because there was a lot of high shrubbery, and because I (along with most of the kids my age) slightly demonized him, and that made everything about him mysterious. Actually I'm sure he was a gentle, harmless fellow. We occasionally saw him out on the street, but my recollection is that when we approached too closely (to the extent that we ever did), he ran to the safety of his property. Of course on Halloween night when we went trick-or-treating, we *never* went to Roy's house. It reminds me so much of the incident recalled in "*A Child's Christmas in Wales*", read by Dylan Thomas, in which he describes how he and his merry band bravely went right up to the door of the "haunted house" in their neighbourhood to sing Christmas carols. They struck up "Good King Wenceslaus", and they were stunned to hear a "thin dry voice" joining them from the other side of the door. The next line was something like "We didn't stop running until we reached Tom's house"

The Garfield house was also the site of my and Peter's disgrace with the hot peppers. There was a bushel of them in the "utility room" at the back of the house. We must have

been told to leave them alone, so being mischievous little devils, one day after lunch as we went out to school we decided to filch one. We each bit off a good hunk as we walked and by the time we got to school we were in agony with mouths and throats on fire. That's when we realized why we had been told to leave them alone! We were allowed by the teachers to return tearfully home to face the music.

Those were war years, and one of the things people did was collect newspapers for recycling. Apparently Dad was able to supplement our meagre income that way, so as often as possible I went around the neighbourhood with my wagon and collected. How Dad got them to the collection station I can't recall. Anyway, one day a school chum or neighbourhood friend was helping me and we hit the jackpot at someone's house who had been stockpiling them for some time. We trundled wagonload after wagonload to the house and completely filled the back shed. Dad was so ecstatic that he gave us a whole quarter to spend --- and that was a LOT of money!)

The other thing I collected was horse manure for the garden. I wasn't too enthusiastic about that, but it had to be done. So out I went on regular patrols, with my trusty wagon and a shovel, to collect the ample manure that was left on the roads by all the horses that pulled the milk wagons, and the bread wagons, and whatever.

In winter we normally got a lot of snow. After a couple of months of people shovelling their sidewalks onto the narrow strip between the sidewalk and the road, there would be a range of "snow mountains" that would run the entire length of city blocks. We ran the crest of this snow range to and from school, and it was a blast.

Speaking of "blast", each Victoria Day (May 24) we were allowed to have firecrackers. Nothing fancy, just plain old noisy firecrackers. But they came in a variety of sizes, and the game was to have a (mostly friendly) firecracker fight with the kids over on the next block. In the heat of battle one time, someone threw a "blockbuster" at me – the largest category of explosive we could acquire. It landed a few feet away, so did I prudently stand back and wait for it to explode? Heck no! I ran over and picked it up, smouldering and spitting, and threw it back. Fortunately for me, it didn't blow up until it was a few feet from my face, so I wasn't hurt, but I can still hear the noise. My ears rang for quite a while. Now that I think about it, perhaps that was the beginning of the high-frequency loss in my hearing, in my right ear especially, further exacerbated later by many sessions on the rifle range during my military training, and made still worse many years later by flying in helicopters as a geologist doing field work. Of course, no protective equipment of any kind was available either on the rifle range or in the helicopter. Sure wouldn't get away with anything like that in 2005!

The Garfield Ave area was a nice neighbourhood even if the house was the pits. I remember nice older neighbours, and fruit trees, and a pleasant and interesting walk to school, with lots of diversions on the way.

Sometime in 1942, Uncle Peter bought a house at 117 Tecumseh Ave, just a block from where we had been before, so we were off again, to a familiar neighbourhood. For the first time we had the security of a safe place to live, without fear of eviction. That summer I entered the labour market, working at the Etherington family's truck farm on the city's outskirts about a mile from home. They grew a wide variety of vegetables that were sold each Saturday at the Farmers' Market in downtown London. I weeded carrots and beets and radishes and whatever for the astonishing wage of ten cents per day. It was a great experience, and a really healthy way to spend the summers. My cousin Peter Adili also worked there, and perhaps his younger brother Joey as well. Sometimes on Friday they needed extra help to get the produce ready for market and we'd be asked to stay late.In return we would get a bountiful farm dinner with the family, which was always wonderful. They were a great family to work for. The son Jim taught me the basic rudiments of driving, in their 1938 Nash. I also got to drive their small Ford tractor and I can remember more than one occasion when I was allowed to drive it home for lunch. Wasn't I the cool one, tooling down the streets of London South! (For some reason it was known as "London South" and never as "South London".

While working at Etherington's I had an innocent experience that mysteriously pointed years ahead to my professional life, but of course I had no inkling of that portent at the time. The soils in the London area are developed from glacial till, the sheet of debris that was smeared over the landscape by the southward movement of the continental glaciers of the Pleistocene Era. That debris includes material from every kind of rock terrain over which the glacier flowed and scraped, and what glacial scouring didn't accomplish, further weathering under the influence of time and weather did. So it happened that quite commonly we would find at or near the surface of the soil, beautiful fossil brachiopods of the genus *Spirifer* that had weathered out of their limestone habitats. They looked to our young and naïve minds like a sort of butterfly. So we decided that these things were fossil butterflies. I remember being fascinated with them, but for what particular reason I cannot now remember. Fast-forward now to the Royal BC Museum, circa 2000. I am familiarizing myself with the Museum's fossil collection, having been asked to transfer my volunteer effort from the ore-and-mineral collection to fossils. So I am systematically going through the cabinets, perusing. At one point, I carefully unwrap some fossils in now-brown newsprint of an obviously ancient age. Inside are a group of beautiful specimens of *Spirifer sp.* with a note that these were collected in the London area by Dr. so-and-so sometime in the late 1800's. They were **exactly** like the ones I had found as a boy on Etherington's farm. I stood transfixed, my mind reaching back nearly sixty years to remember kneeling in the dirt looking at my "fossil butterflies".

We were at 117 Tecumseh for six years, from 1942 to 1948. That covers my ages nine to fifteen, so the memories are bountiful and increasingly sharper. During that interval, I learned the joys and heartaches of having a dog, began violin lessons and became involved in music in a big way, made the transition from Elementary School to High School, upgraded my work experience, and lost my cousin Joey Adili, to name just a few key experiences.

The house itself was a spacious two-storey yellow-brick house (like so many of that vintage in London). I can't recall much of a porch or verandah at the front, but there was one at the back, raised up above the back yard, because the main floor was somewhat higher than grade to allow for a full basement. There was also a detached garage or shed, and a large tree of some kind next to it, with a swing attached. I remember the swing particularly well because I was hot-dogging on it when it became detached and I fell straight down on my back onto some loose bricks. Obviously we weren't the poster boys of family safety. I think there might have been a cherry tree close to the back porch as well. And as always there was a vegetable garden. Dad and Uncle Peter spaded up as much as possible of any backyard we had so that they could grow lots of tomatoes, pole beans, squash, peppers, carrots, radishes, cabbages, potatoes, etc., etc. The tomatoes were especially important because Mom and Dad put down dozens of bottles of tomato sauce each year.

That gets me thinking about food on our table, so I may as well digress here to talk about it. We always ate very well, even though we were as poor as church mice. It was good honest peasant food, with lots of spaghetti and meatballs and other pasta dishes blessed with Mom's heavenly tomato sauce. For many years Mom actually made her own pasta, called *cavatelli*. They were made from little squares of pasta smeared into a sort of half-cylinder with a twist of the thumb, and they were heavenly. There was a variety of soups and stews, and *minestra*, which is a much heartier and thicker version of *minestrone*, and *polenta* with bits of salt pork, and risotto, and lots of vegetables including chick peas, roasted green peppers, spinach, cauliflower, cabbage, eggplant (Mom did an eggplant parmesan that was to die for, and spectacular stuffed green peppers), and *chicoria* which translates as "chicory", but in our case was mainly the common dandelion from which the young leaves were harvested. We also grew a proper *chicoria* from seeds that relatives brought from Italy, but dandelion greens were available and free. Both were used either as salad or as a cooked green. And who could forget the heavenly *focaccia*, and at festive seasons the *brasciole*, which were finger-shaped sticks of deep-fried spicy potato dough, or the *zipole*, which were deep-fried and doughnut-shaped but thinner, and the *biscottini*, our version of bagels, flavoured with fennel seed. Desserts were generally simple – fruit, puddings, or, when company came, a simple lemon pound cake, or some oatmeal raisin cookies.

If there was meat, it was mostly chicken. Mom preferred to buy her chickens alive from the Farmers' Market downtown. I often went with her on the bus to shop there, and I was allowed to carry the chicken in a paper shopping bag, with its head poking out. Of course buying a live chicken meant having to slaughter it. This was done at the kitchen sink, and we children were allowed to watch or participate, or not, as we pleased. I do remember participating by holding the chicken while Mom despatched it with a sharp knife, neatly cutting the jugular vein and allowing it to bleed to death into the sink. It sounds pretty gruesome from our present antiseptic point of view, but it was honest and to the point, and left no doubt as to where our meat came from. We also ate some beef, mainly in the ground state, and rabbits when they were available from the Market. Since we were Roman Catholic, every Friday was meatless, but it seems to me that fish was not a significant component of our diet. There were exceptions, such as the seasonal treat of

fried smelt at Easter, which I simply adored, and Dad's beloved *bacala*, which is salt cod, baked in tomato sauce. I think I was the only one of the siblings who could tolerate it, but I quite liked it in spite of the fact that it could be tough and stringy. Dad had another passion, that being *campasciole*, a kind of wild onion. They were hard to get as they were a specialty import, but occasionally he managed to do so. They required cooking for a long time, had a totally unique flavour, and were exquisitely bitter. I loved them, but again I think it was only Dad and I who enjoyed them. Everyone else pretty well despised them. Many years later, when I lived in Houston I think, I found some somewhere and was able to recreate a fond childhood memory.

About a mile from home, along the CNR tracks, was a warehouse where one could buy cracked eggs for very little. Many times I walked there to make a purchase. Of course nowadays a cracked egg must be discarded for fear of salmonella contamination, but that was unheard-of then (or perhaps just not recognized). And we also consumed raw eggs. It was a bit heroic somehow to be given a fresh egg, punch a large hole in one end, and a small hole in the other, then suck the entire content of the egg out of the larger of the two holes. Did that countless times. Don't know how widespread the practice was, but it was common for me. And speaking of eggs, I recall that there was a grade of very small chicken eggs called "pullets" that we used to buy. Webster says that pullets are "a hen of the common fowl, less than a year old". From that I surmise that these were eggs laid by young hens and perhaps for that reason they were extra small. In any case they were undersize, hence perhaps really cheap, and that's why we bought them.

I also walked many times to the butcher shop on Wharncliffe Road to buy a big beef joint bone – big enough to make soup for our family. Naturally they were known as "soup bones", and they cost a dime!

I remember at least two dogs, both mongrels, but can't remember what we called them. The first one was a sort of beagle cross, and as I recall, I discovered it dead in its little house in the back yard one morning after a night of severe electrical storms. I have no idea whether that had anything to do with it. Soon after we acquired another dog, more of a terrier cross. It disappeared mysteriously after the neighbours across the street complained about it. After we moved from that house, I can remember no other dogs. There must have been a cat or two along the way, but since I'm not a cat person, I really don't have much recollection of them. Oh yes, there was "Chippie" the budgie, who was allowed to fly freely about the house, even at our meal times, and would happily perch on someone's shoulder and gently pinch their ear lobe. Actually I think this is a little out of time sequence, because I associate Chippie with our next house, on Bruce St.

Perhaps this is a good time to talk about St. Martin's Church, and St. Martin's School. First, the church. Our family became part of the St. Martin's parish family when we moved to the house on Duchess Ave right across from the church and school in 1936, and never left. Mom, Dad and Uncle Peter were all buried from St. Martin's. It was a very central part of our life as Dad, Mom, and Uncle Peter were all very devout. I became an altar boy probably around the age of 7, and continued in that role at least into my high school years. The two priests who were there for most of my growing-up years were

Father Phelan the pastor, and Fr. McCowell, the assistant. I liked them both, and enjoyed being part of parish life. Father Phelan especially was a big bear of a man, with the gentlest heart in the world. One Sunday each year was "First Communion Sunday" on which day all the children who had reached the age and taken the instruction received Communion for the first time. They were all dressed completely in white, so it was quite an impressive and tender ceremony. Father Phelan always gave the sermon that day, addressed directly to the children, and he was never able to complete the task without shedding tears.

While I was in Elementary School I was selected to be part of the "School of Christ", a radio broadcast aired every Sunday afternoon, in which a certain Father Flannery taught us from the Bible, and we "students" -- about ten of us -- asked questions. The students were selected from all the Separate Schools (i.e. Roman Catholic) in the city. It was a scripted show in the sense that the questions we asked were all typed out beforehand, but it was "live" in the sense that we each had come up with our own questions at the rehearsal held during the week prior to the broadcast.

The program continued for many years after I grew out of it, so it came to be that when I was in University many years later, Father Flannery recruited me to read the "news" (of interest to Catholics) that preceded the broadcast, and to be the announcer for the broadcast itself.

But I digress. As I said earlier, Church was BIG in our family life. Of course Sunday Mass (compulsory) was the core activity, but there were a host of other services and devotions that were a normal part of our lives, such as Confession on Saturday before Sunday Mass, Benediction on Sunday evening, special Masses on Saints' days or special liturgical occasions, the Stations of the Cross every Friday evening during Lent, daily Mass whenever possible, and special events such as Missions, Retreats, etc etc. At home I recall that as soon as I was able to read, Dad would have me read the Sunday lesson from the Bible aloud to him each Sunday, and for a while at least, I was expected to provide him with a synopsis of the sermon that was given at Sunday Mass. Then there were family devotions like the Rosary, which for years our entire family said together on our knees each evening before beginning our homework or whatever. It sounds like a lot, but I never thought of it as onerous. Also, it was so integrated with our family life and school life that it all seemed perfectly normal. For example, at least once a week the entire school (i.e. St. Martin's School, next door to the church) went in a body to the church for a special Mass. It was simply part of the way things were.

One of my earliest recollections of church is being with my Dad, just the two of us, and needing to cough. I couldn't have been more than four or five years old. I recall pulling on his sleeve and asking in a whisper if it would be ok if I coughed! I guess what that recollection tells me is that from the earliest age we were trained and expected to be respectful and reverent in church. Perhaps there was too much emphasis on it, but I must say that when I see the freedom that is allowed young children in church now, and their seemingly total disregard for what is happening at the altar, I wonder if the pendulum has swung too far the other way. Actually this doesn't apply just to young children ... I am

just as puzzled by the behaviour and lack of awareness of many teens and some young adults. Makes me want to ask them "Do you have any *idea* what is going on here?"

Our church was always packed, not only at special times like Christmas and Easter, but every Sunday. And being an altar boy, I can recall doing the Stations of The Cross in procession around the church on Friday evenings during Lent, and being aware that every nook and cranny was jammed full of people.

In addition to being an altar boy, I also sang in the choir for a while --- "a while" probably being a year or two. I'm having trouble remembering what age I was but I do remember that I enjoyed it. It may have been senior elementary, or perhaps early high school.

As I've already implied, it's difficult to speak of St. Martin's Church without talking about St. Martin's School at the same time, because they were so linked. And to repeat another interesting fact, although we moved about London South during my elementary school years, we never moved outside the boundaries of St. Martins', except for the summer on Hill St., where we were physically within the boundaries of St. John's School, but never went there because we were only in the neighbourhood during the summer months.

In those days, elementary schools taught Grades 1 to 8 inclusive, and high schools taught Grades 9 to 13. That was it. No Kindergarten, no Junior High, no Middle School. Very simple. I had just turned five when I began Grade 1. At that time we were living right across from the school, and I distinguished myself by often being late for school and late coming getting home after school as well! It was a sort of "hare and tortoise" syndrome.

I enjoyed learning things, I guess, so I always looked forward to going each day and beginning a new year each Fall. I must have moved right along because in addition to starting Grade 1 at age 5, I skipped Grade 4. This resulted in my very first panic attack. It was during the first couple of days in Grade 5 when the class was asked to do something that everyone else had learned in Grade 4, but that I knew nothing about because I had never been there. Something like long division, perhaps. I can't remember how it was resolved, but in any case I got over the panic, and kept whizzing along, completing Grade 8 at age 12.

We were taught by nuns --- the Sisters of St. Joseph. I have happy memories of them, some more than others, but overall it was a happy time. I did manage to get into trouble right off the bat in Grade 1. The school had hot water heating, so there were radiators along the walls in each classroom. As I recall, at some point, instead of doing whatever I was supposed to be doing, I crawled stealthily on my hands and knees along the side of the room to the radiator, where I entertained myself by melting crayons against its hot surface. The teacher was not amused.

Throughout elementary school all the children walked home for lunch each day. Now that I think about it, it was simply assumed that there was a "Mom" at home to prepare that lunch! I think the lunch break and the walk to and from home associated with it

made the day go by more quickly somehow, as I never had the feeling the school day was too long, even though we were there from 9 until 4.

A special treat was the periodic visit from Miss Lindenfield, a lay teacher who taught Art at several of the Catholic Schools on a rotating schedule. I thought she was the most wonderful person in the world, and her classes were pure fun.

Almost all of my years at St. Martin's were war years, and so there were many activities involved with the War Effort. We collected toothpaste tubes (which in those days were made of a sort of heavy lead foil), and rags, and newspaper, and goodness knows what else, all to support The War Effort, as it was called.

And that reminds me of the day early in the war that I was sent to the store to buy a pound of butter. I was refused because I didn't have a "ration booklet", and I returned home quite distraught, to tell my father. To my astonishment, instead of being angry or upset he was very relieved, and explained to me that there were starting to be serious shortages of certain foodstuffs in the stores because some people were hoarding. He was very pleased that rationing had been imposed, because we would be assured of getting our share of items that were in short supply. Of course things like chocolate bars etc completely disappeared for several years.

Somewhere along the line I entered a debating competition. It doesn't seem likely that I was still in elementary school at the time, yet my fellow debater and I were coached by Father McCowell, the Assistant at St. Martin's, and I don't think that would have been the case unless we were still pupils at St. Martin's. I don't recall the competition, but I do recall that my debating partner was Jim Kennedy, and we weren't very successful.

The word "Recess" brings back lots and lots of memories. St. Martin's had a large school yard (or so it seemed to us), and we spent all the time we could playing all kinds of "guy" games. There didn't seem to be much concern for safety, so it's a wonder we didn't kill one another. A favourite game had the strange name of "Pom-Pom-Pullaway". There might be a dozen or twenty of us playing. One side of the playing area was set by a long line drawn in the dirt; the other was set by the chain-link fence along the back of the school yard. Everyone lined up along the "line" except for one or two fellows whom I'll call "taggers", selected by some process that I have forgotten. They stood out in the play area about halfway between the two lines. The goal was for all the "runners" lined up on the "line" to run back and forth, from one boundary of the play area to the other without being tagged by one of the "taggers" in the middle. Anyone who was tagged joined the "taggers". With time, the number of "taggers" grew and the number of "runners" declined, so that it was increasingly difficult to make the journey from one side to the other. The last remaining "runner" was the winner. It was sometimes a very rough game, depending on the vigour with which the "taggers" did their job.

A more gentle game was marbles. One simply gouged out a roundish hole in a more or less smooth patch of ground with the heel of the shoe, and the game was on. Everyone had a bag of marbles of some kind.

Another was "Peggy in the Hole". This was modelled after cricket, apparently. The "playing field" consisted of two holes made with the heel of the shoe perhaps 20 feet apart. A batter was stationed at each hole. The bats were sticks about 3 feet long and perhaps an inch in diameter, garnered from whatever source was available. The "peg" was a piece of stick two or three inches long, and about an inch in diameter. A pitcher pitched the peg at one of the batters, who tried to smack it into the next county. If he hit it, the two runners would run back and forth between the two "holes" as many times as possible while the "fielders" retrieved the peg, each time making sure to touch the hole with the bat on each "run".

We also did dumb things too, mainly during the summer when there was nobody around to tell us just how dumb we were. One of the dumbest was to take two bolts and one nut, thread the nut onto one bolt just enough for it to hold. This created a well in the centre of the nut into which we put the severed head of a match (the part that ignites when you strike it). Next we carefully screwed the other bolt into the nut, squeezing the match head between the two bolts. Then we would throw this little number against the brick wall at the back of the school, and guess what! It would explode! And we almost never found the component parts, which gives you some idea of the force of the blast.

We also had mock battles with sticks and shields, or just stout sticks, as in Kung Fu. Sometimes they would get pretty heated, and blood would flow. But nobody seemed to mind. Actually there seemed to be so much less preoccupation with safety compared with nowadays, especially as far as kids' play habits were concerned. Perhaps it was because there was a war on, so a few scrapes and bumps seemed pretty trivial in the overall scheme of things.

Of course there was always "cops and robbers", or baseball in the summer and road hockey in the winter. "Cops and Robbers" was played all over the neighbourhood with almost total disregard for property boundaries. The very occasional house-under-construction was the most prized site of all for a game of C & R, but it could only be played there after work hours or on the weekend, obviously. And speaking of winter reminds me of another exciting but very dumb game that we played as we got into our teen years. It snowed a lot in London, and because automobile traffic was very light, there was little incentive to spend the money salting or sanding the roads. Eventually the snow packed into a very solid layer and it was just slippery enough that we could hang on to the back bumpers of the city buses that ran through the neighbourhood, and "ski" for blocks, usually until the bus turned a corner and we didn't.

Because there was no such thing as Little League, organized sports at the Elementary School level was unheard of. Every sports activity was strictly ad hoc, with whomever was available at the time, with whatever equipment was handy or could be invented. However I do remember that in the Spring each year St. Martin's School held a "Field Day" at nearby Thames Park, with races and broad jumping etc. One year I was in a fierce competition with Ron Van Horne for the "Field Day Championship". We battled through several events, him winning some and me winning others. Finally he out-jumped

me in the running broad jump by ¼", and with that, claimed the title of Champion. (*"For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, for want of a horse the battle was lost ... ... ")*

We spent a lot of time at Thames Park over the years because there was a swimming pool as well as a baseball field, basketball hoops, and tennis courts. We never had swimming lessons so we invented our own rules. As soon as we were able to splash along like lizards in shallow water, "walking" on our hands, we were "swimming"! Swimming makes me think of summers that were so hot that the asphalt pavement got very soft and gooey, and as we walked barefoot a lot, we had to be very careful not to step into those fiery hot areas. It was like walking on lava flows! Correspondingly, winters seemed to have been exceptionally snowy, and I have wonderful memories of walking through chest-deep snow with great glee, pretending that we were Arctic explorers.

The main thing about being a kid in that long-ago era was that we had all sorts of ways to entertain ourselves without much of anything in the way of equipment or facilities. All it took was a few kids, a ball and bat, some roller skates, some marbles, a home-made bow and arrow, -- whatever -- and away we went. It did help that we were able to go pretty much wherever we wanted with no concerns about molestation, or kidnapping, or any of the other kinds of scary things that have become too familiar these days.

I had a medical adventure while we were living at 117 Tecumseh. I don't remember just how old I was but I'm thinking it was the summer of 1943 or 1944, before I got to high school. Basically, the story is that when I woke up one morning my back was so stiff I couldn't get out of bed. The doctor was summoned and soon I was despatched to Victoria hospital in an ambulance and put into a quarantined room. I clearly remember being carried out of the house amid consternation on the part of the rest of the family. Whether they thought I had polio or meningitis or what I don't remember. It didn't turn out to be anything serious after all, and I don't think I was hospitalized very long. I do remember that they did a spinal tap, which I didn't enjoy one little bit, and further that quarantine rules were so strict that anything I dropped on the floor was not returned to me, and nobody could come into my room to visit. I recall clearly that one day my father came to see me and could only talk to me through the open window. It was a very hot summer's day and he stayed there for a long time, in the blazing sun. Little did I know at the time that he had walked a long distance to get there after having been to the dentist to have some serious dental work, and by the time he finally reached home he had bled so much that he was on the verge of fainting.

Now I want to say some things about music. Looking back, I realize how much my father loved music, although he didn't play an instrument (until he bought an old guitar when he was in his 60's and plucked away at it gamely and rather unsuccessfully), and he couldn't carry a tune. But he loved music, especially opera. It was so common to hear him singing snatches of some of his favourite Italian folk songs, or bits of an operatic opera or whatever, mostly out of tune, but coming from his heart. When I was about 10 years old, I somehow got the idea that I'd like to play the violin. I remember pleading with Dad to be allowed to take lessons. Perhaps I had picked up the idea at school. Of

course I had little idea that the family could ill afford lessons. In any case, Dad agreed but I had to promise that I would practice faithfully. And so a violin was bought, and I was enrolled in the music school at the Sacred Heart Convent. My teacher throughout my entire musical career was Sister Immaculata. The convent was across town, so I travelled to and from by bus. I guess I was a quick learner and had some substantial talent, because the Conservatory of Music at the University awarded me a silver medal at the Grade IV level in 1944, when I was eleven, and another silver medal for Grade VI in 1945, when I was twelve. In addition, I became the conductor of the "Sacred Heart Junior Orchestra" and played 2nd Violin in the Sacred Heart Senior Orchestra. Both of these aggregations were under the tutelage of Sister Immaculata as well. In those days, whenever a play was performed or any kind of pageant or concert or "variety show" was staged, an orchestra was engaged to provide music before the event, at intermission, and at the end. It was located at the front of the hall right in front of the stage in the "orchestra pit". That's especially what my Junior Orchestra did, and most of the events were at the "Catholic Cultural Center" that had a large auditorium for all sorts of cultural activities. I can still clearly recall the procedure: "my" orchestra would go ahead and get into place, and at the appropriate moment, I would enter the hall from the back and walk down the aisle to take my place in front of the orchestra, and bow to the clapping audience. Then I would turn to the orchestra, we'd have a brief "tuning" period, my baton would be raised, a moment of hushed silence, and away we'd go! Probably sounded quite dreadful by today's standards, but at the time it was much appreciated by our audiences.

Eventually I traded music for basketball and girls, probably about the time I entered high school in 1945, but I know that those years with Sister Immaculata were extremely important in giving me an appreciation of music that I couldn't possibly have had any other way. This is true especially of my conducting experience and playing in the senior orchestra. I didn't appreciate just how formative it had been until many years later, when I realized that not everyone can hear and follow the individual instrument groups in a symphonic piece, or hear the "conversation" between and among the members of a quartet or quintet. It certainly has made it a joy to listen to music throughout my adult life, and I have been able to increase Arden's enjoyment and appreciation of music greatly just by sharing with her what I am hearing when we listen to music together.

But I must not leave the impression that I always stuck to my promise to Dad to "practice faithfully". There were always lots of conflicts between practice time and playtime. At one point he was so frustrated with me that he smacked me over the head with my violin, causing considerable damage (to the violin). And there was another "dark side" to my violinist years. Dad was so proud of my playing that he frequently committed me to play at weddings and other special events within the Italian community. I HATED it when he did that, and we had more than one row about it. Of course I always capitulated, but often with much resentment. I do understand now how important it was to him to have that vicarious success and prestige, but it sure did rankle me at the time.

It seems that once I became involved in music, Mom and Dad made the decision to make music lessons available to all of my siblings, even though Mom seemed to have no inclination towards music, and money was scarce. So, Peter took up the clarinet, and

eventually played in "Martin Boundy's Boys' Band", Anne studied violin, and both Joanne and Mary studied piano. Mary eventually branched out into organ and for many years while she was a schoolteacher in London she was also the organist at St. Martin's.

In addition to the violin, I had brief encounters with a bugle and snare drum when I was a member of the Army Cadet marching band, and I have very specific memories of marching a number of times through downtown London blowing my little lungs out and/or hammering that drum as part of some organized military parade or other.

Earlier I mentioned that I first entered the labour market in a serious way when I began to work on the Etherington truck farm during the summer of 1942. I don't remember how many summers I did that, but eventually I graduated to being a shoe-shine boy at one of the several establishments for this purpose in downtown London. They typically were located in a shoe-repair shop. The one I worked at, called the Capitol Shoe Repair, was owned by a Greek family named Agnos. There was a shoe repair on one side of the shop, and a bank of several elevated chairs along the other side with room, enough for about six people to have their shoes shined at one time. There was also a pool room behind the shoe repair, run by another Greek family that also had a bowling alley upstairs in the same block. And there was yet a third Greek family that owned a restaurant next door. The pool hall/bowling alley environment may sound like an unsavoury setting for a little kid, but it was all run by Greek families who were responsible and hard-working. I think I made the move to shoe shining because my cousin Peter Adili was already working there or at a similar shop up the street (the London Shoe Repair!), and perhaps I was lured by the draw of earning lots of tips. I think I worked there six days a week during the summer, and on Saturdays during the school year. The work was hard, but the tips were good. Some Saturdays I worked from 8am till midnight, and collected ten or twelve dollars, which was an awful lot of money at the time. During the school year, when things were slow, I did homework at the shop. And when things were really slow in the poolroom, the manager would let us fool around with a cue and some balls. I can't remember when I started and when I ended my shoe-shine career, but I was definitely there during 1945 because I was right in the middle of the wild V-J Day (August 14) celebration at the end of the Japanese phase of WWII. I was downtown when the news erupted and almost instantly the streets were packed with celebrating servicemen and women, along with everyone else. It was memorable. V-E Day had been celebrated on May 8 that year, but I was probably in school rather than at the shop, so I don't have the same recollection of it as V-J Day.

I've mentioned playing the bugle and/or snare drum in an Army Cadet marching band. My recollections of the army cadet connection are very hazy, but I'm assuming that it was during the war, so it had to be while I was still in Elementary School. I do recall going to the Armouries in downtown London regularly for some period of time to be given some kind of introductory military training, and I recall at least one short stay at an Army base not far from London one summer. When I reflect on it now it seems bizarre that I was being taught the arts of war at the tender age of 10 or 11.

B. High School Years, 1945 to 1950.

My high school was De La Salle High School, commonly known about town as "Del". It was a boys' school, the one and only Roman Catholic boys' high school in the city, run by the Christian Brothers. It was located just outside the downtown core on Richmond St, at the NW corner of the St. Peter's Cathedral property, and conveniently adjacent to our large very nice downtown park, called Victoria Park I began there in Grade 9 in September 1945, having just turned 12 the previous May (!), and completed Grade 13 in May 1950 just after my 17th birthday. It was a small school, with a total enrolment of about 150 at any one time, and usually about 1/3 of those were freshmen, with the numbers systematically diminishing through Grade 13. My Grade 13 class had about a dozen guys in it. As high schools go, it was pretty basic in terms of facilities. Besides the five classrooms for the five grades, there was a small amphitheatre classroom in the basement for demonstration physics and chemistry classes, a well-equipped shop, an auditorium that doubled as the gym, and a large room in the basement that had been turned into a "club" called the "Drumbar" where we had parties and dances with the girls from our counterpart Catholic girls' school, St. Agnes High School. I was "Business Manager" of the Drumbar for a year at some point, which meant mainly that I collected admissions. So we had no library, no hands-on lab facilities, no locker rooms, no cafeteria, no playing field. But it was a great school for the spirit, the teachers, and the coach.

That's where I discovered basketball, and learned to play in our auditorium/gym, where the floor slanted and the balcony overhung the court, so that we learned to shoot low-trajectory long shots from two of the corners. Perhaps that kind of adversity contributed to the success of the junior and senior basketball and football teams in our small-school league. I was co-captain of the junior team when we won the WOSSA-B championship (**W**estern **O**ntario **S**ec. **S**chool **A**ssoc., and the **B** denoted 2nd-tier schools. . Our coach was the only layman on staff at that time. His name was Fred Kennedy, and he coached all the competitive sports that we had i.e. basketball, football, track. He was knowledgeable and tough and insisted on the basics. I can't think of a single classmate who didn't respect Fred. He was hard on us .. never mean .. but hard, especially when he thought we weren't doing our best.

One curious thing about my basketball career is that my parents never saw me play, not even any of the tournament games played in London when we won the championship. I can't remember even thinking about it at the time, but it certainly seems strange these days when current custom calls for parents and grandparents to be loyal (and willing) attendees at children's sports events of all kinds.

De La Salle also excelled in football. I never played, instead opting to be a cheerleader, and that was fun. And I was also into Track and Field, mainly the 100 yard dash, hurdles, and relays. I even had a pair of real track shoes --- feather-light, with spikes. That was good training and good fun but I didn't excel. In fact I learned the hard way about hurdles when I went to a regional meet at the University, and found myself competing in the 110-yard low hurdles against black guys from big schools in places like Windsor. I

recall that after about the third hurdle these guys went past me as if I were lying down. That was the end of that.

I've said that the facilities in the high school were pretty basic. The curriculum was also pretty straightforward but very classic and demanding. I had five years of French grammar and literature and four years of Latin. Algebra, Plane Geometry and Trigonometry were very big, plus different course levels in English Literature, History, Physics and Chemistry. There was no Biology, and I don't remember Religion as a course but there may have been one. And the teachers were memorable. Brother Malachy was my freshman teacher, a cheerful, ruddy-faced, very Irish man who frequently broke into Irish folk song. Brother Edwin was our Shop teacher, and everyone absolutely adored him. Always cheering us on, encouraging, but completely in control in the Shop, as he had to be with the likes of us. I loved Shop, as I think everyone did, because we actually made stuff and ran equipment. Brother Romuald had one glass eye, but we never figured out which one it was, so he was able to hold the attention of the entire classroom at one time because he seemed to have Cinemascopic vision and focus. Brother Stanislaus had the habit of walking silently up behind some miscreant and taking him by the short hair of the nape of the neck and so lifting him onto his feet for a "discussion". Brother William was our "speak-softly-but-carry-a-big-stick" very cerebral History and English Lit teacher, a bit humourless but a great teacher. Brother Raymond, our math teacher, was a cool guy, and acted as assistant coach. Brother Thaddeus, our Latin teacher, stifled his exasperation with us as long as he could, and when he could no longer, he would literally fling his large Latin text at someone's head. He also taught us music .. or tried to. And so on. They all had their idiosyncracies, but they were good and dedicated teachers who prepared us for college in particular and for life in general.

We were on a five-year college-entrance program, with Province-wide university-entrance exams to be completed at the end of Grade 13, so the good Brothers kept our noses to the grindstone. But we didn't lack for fun, either in school or out of it. London was a great place to be a teenager (if indeed it's "great" to be a teenager anywhere!) for the same reason that it had been great to be a kid .. we had the freedom to go pretty much wherever we pleased without concern for our safety.

Miscellaneous memories of high school years keep popping into my head as I type. Like the bakery down the street from the high school where my buddies and I went at lunch time whenever we could afford it to buy little blueberry pies – about four inches in diameter --- that were just to die for. And the Jumbo Ice Cream Store downtown where we bought huge double dip ice cream cones for just a nickel! Only three flavours though – vanilla, chocolate and strawberry.

For several years I belonged to the Key Club, which was a high-school arm of Kiwanis International. I can't remember that we did much, but we did have meetings, and somehow I was chosen to go to an international convention in Washington D.C. all expenses paid. It was pretty heady stuff, and I remember it well. Another student and I were driven by a local Kiwanis member and his wife, and they were so kind and gracious. Even got to visit the House of Representatives while it was in session, and to visit the

office of Senator Kefauver from Tennessee (although I don't remember why him .. probably because we were shirt-tailing on the connections of some of the American delegates that we had gotten to know).

I finished off my high school years by being elected valedictorian for graduation. I wish I had kept my speech. It would be fascinating to read now what wisdom I dispensed on that hallowed occasion!

So those were great years. I gradually lost my music involvement, but gained basketball, and girls, and a kind of male fellowship that I hadn't known before. Because I moved away from London after college, I lost track of most of my high school peers, except for a few, and those I have maintained to this day. There has been only one reunion since I graduated. That occurred in May 2002 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the closing of the school when it and St. Agnes' girls' school were merged into the coed Catholic Central High. I went to that reunion, and am very glad that I did, because it was great fun to see and talk to so many guys that I hadn't seen for 52 years.

High school was where I decided that I didn't want to own – or even ride – a motorcycle. The reason is that Desmond O'Donovan had a motorcycle. Des was at Del but a grade or two ahead of me,. He was a bit of a wildass, and one night he somehow managed to collide with an automobile at high speed and went through its windshield, with rather ugly consequences. He survived, but was in a coma for many days, during which he kept trying to tear out some of the 100-or-so stitches in his face and head. A group of us from Del volunteered to "keep watch" with him on a rotating schedule during the coma to ensure that he wouldn't do further damage to his face. It was not a pretty sight. I've never forgotten.

Along with my advancement to high school came a career change from shoe-shine boy to the exalted role of stock-boy at the Metropolitan Store in downtown London, which was a kind of Zeller's or Fred Myers department store. It was the flagship store of a good department store chain with Head Office right upstairs. That lasted a few years, probably working Saturdays during the school year and full-time during the summer. It was a fun job with nice people. I unpacked new merchandise and put it away in the large downstairs stockroom and filled re-stocking orders from the several Departments. We stockmen also acted as janitors, so after the store closed we swept the floors of the store itself. I also got to polish all the brass plates and other hardware on the several front doors (summer and winter!), and from time to time my colleagues and I stayed after the store was closed to swab all the floors on the main floor with some kind of preservative oil. There was a cafeteria in the store, and that's where I discovered the joy of a ham sandwich on toast -- a radical departure from anything we'd have at home.

Then by about Grade 11, I left Metropolitan Stores. I think that school work and basketball were too demanding to allow a part time job, so I worked only during the summers. The first of those summer jobs was with a roofing company. We installed and repaired tar-and-gravel roofs on many buildings around the city. By interesting coincidence, one of the buildings we worked on was the new Athletic Building at the

University of Western Ontario, where I would enrol a few years later. There were many adventures during that roofing summer, some of which nearly got me killed, but that's another story. It was really hard work under a broiling sun, but I really enjoyed both the work and my fellow workers, and by the end of the summer, I was so tanned that my own mother hardly recognized me.

The last two high-school summers I worked for the London and Petrolia Barrel Company. They made a variety of barrels, especially high-end oak barrels for whiskey and bourbon distillers. I think their main trade was with US distillers, but I'm not sure. The first of the two summers there I operated their on-site coffee shop/ lunch room where the men came for their breaks and to eat their lunches. The second summer I worked in the yard, sometimes helping to unload the freight cars of barrel staves that arrived in an endless procession on the railroad siding that came into the property, but mainly I drove the little tractor that hauled loads of staves into the plant and the completed barrels out. The process of manufacturing barrels, and of refurbishing barrels, all by hand, was completely fascinating, but that's another story too!

As I recall, getting a job those days was pretty easy, but it did take some effort. I can't remember how I got my "leads" about possible job openings, but I do remember making many "cold calls" to stores or factories, asking to speak to the manager about job opportunities. Of course during the war there was an acute shortage of employable men, but that was over by the time I was 12, yet the job market continued to be quite buoyant for some years afterwards.

This is a good place to return to the point made much earlier that chronic illness precluded Dad working at manual labour beginning sometime in the late 1930's, and lack of education or training precluded his getting any other kind of work. I am pretty sure that when Mom and Dad realized what a fix they were in because of Dad's condition, they made a brave decision to put their children's education first. The reason it was a "brave" decision was that during the latter years of the war and for a while afterwards, when the job market was so good, certain relatives and acquaintances in the Italian community whose children were a few years older than we allowed (even encouraged) their children to drop out of school as soon as possible to take lucrative jobs that were readily available. They tried to persuade Dad and Mom that this was the logical thing to do, but they would have none of it, and for this they took a lot of abuse and criticism. As it turned out, the guys who left school early to take advantage of jobs ended up being on the short end of the stick because eventually as servicemen came back into the labour force, those easy, lucrative jobs were no longer available. At that point these early dropouts couldn't go back to school, and so ended up in a variety of mediocre jobs for the rest of their lives. Considering how difficult and expensive it is now to educate children, I think it's remarkable that with our meagre resources our family managed to get all five children into post-secondary education of some kind .. Peter and I to University, Anne and Jo to Nursing School, and Mary eventually through University as well.

During the summer of 1948, when I was 15, our family made what turned out to be the final move within London, to 125 Bruce St. One of the jobs that had to be done before

we moved in was to remove the wallpaper in the dining and living rooms, to prepare for painting, I guess. There were layers and layers of it. Anyway, the job fell to Peter and me, and I remember it so well because as we were peeling the last of it, standing ankle deep in paper and other debris, I realized that somehow during the work my new De La Salle Merit ring had come off my finger and was lost in that sea of stuff. It was a sad moment, but of course there was no hope of ever finding it so we didn't even try.

Soon after we moved into the Bruce St. house, the family applied for a telephone (our first). It had to be in my name, so as not to violate the terms of the meagre "welfare" support that my parents received. The new telephone was installed but not connected for some time, so it sat on a shelf in the living room, silent, but filled with promise. One evening we were all gathered in the living room, each doing his or her thing, and to our utter astonishment the telephone rang! That had never happened in our house before, ever, and we all looked at one another as if a Martian had landed in our midst. Finally someone said "Answer it!", which I did, to hear the operator say that the phone was now connected, and we were free to begin using it. I really can't remember whether that first phone had a rotary dial for direct dialing, or whether we still depended on telephone operators. It's hard to believe now, but before the rotary dial one simply lifted the receiver, and a moment later a real live operator asked "Number please".

The following summer, 1949, my namesake cousin Frank arrived from Italy to live with us, as the first step in the "wicking" process that I described earlier by which his entire family would eventually come to London. Frank was much shorter than I, so immediately became identified as "Little Frank". He added a lot of liveliness and much mischief to our family. He also arrived in time to help with a major engineering project in the basement of the Bruce St. house. When we move in there was only a half-basement, i.e. the entire front of the house had only a crawl space, even though windows had been installed in the crawl space as well as in the "full" half-basement. Dad and Uncle Peter decided that with five men in the household we could dig out at least half of the crawl space to make room for a new furnace, storage cupboards, etc. Because of his diminutive size, Little Frank was designated to begin the operation, which meant that he had to crawl through the crawl space to the window, open it and begin the digging process, basically on his hands and knees until he had made a large enough space to stand. And so it went, on and on, one shovelful of dirt out of the window at a time into the driveway, where some fellow who had been hired to haul it away shovelled it onto his truck. All of us except Dad had full-time jobs, so it was mainly an after-work-and-Saturday-project. But we did it, and very successfully too.

From that point on, our household continued to grow. Sometime in 1951 Frank's younger brother Vito arrived and moved in with us. Also during that time our Uncle Frank Giampa, who was married to Mom's sister Angela, also arrived (the first step in his family emigration), and moved in as well. At that point we were bulging .. seven of us, Uncle Peter, Little Frank, Vito and Uncle Frank. And that brings us to my university years.

C. University of Western Ontario, 1950 to 1954

There are many ways of choosing a course of studies at a university. Some people follow in the footsteps of a parent or older sibling or some other member of the extended family. Others grasp a vision of what they want to be and pursue it after due reflection. My choice of Geology was much simpler and uncomplicated. One day, probably late in my Grade 12 year, a group of four of us somehow got onto the subject of what we were going to take in university. None of us had a clue. As we talked, one of the four mentioned that he knew a guy down the street who had studied something called Geology, and he did all sorts of cool stuff like working in mines, and doing field work in the bush looking for ore deposits and so forth. So we said to one another .. well that sounds cool, let's all be geologists. Sure, we said, let's Do it! And that was my career-planning seminar. The problem was, none of the other three successfully completed their University-entrance exams, so I was left high and dry with our group "career decision". I decided to go through with it, and the rest, as they say, is history. Now, with the hindsight perspective of 55 years, I know that I could easily have chosen and successfully pursued any number of other disciplines, especially medicine.

So, I enrolled at "Western" as it was (and is) known, in September 1950. I should mention that there was no thought of going anywhere but Western, not because I had any intrinsic loyalty to that school but because the only way I could hope to go was to live at home and pay my way by working. Granted, tuitions and other costs were proportionately much more tolerable then than now, but it was still expensive for any family with few or no resources. For our family it was the crowning moment in the strategy that Dad and Mom had decided on many years before i.e. that no matter how poor we were, all five of the children were to get as much education as we were capable of absorbing, so that we would never be in the position of my Dad, who, once he became physically disabled, was completely unable to earn a living to support the family.

In those days the enrolment at Western was between 1500 and 2000 students. (Now it's about 25000). The campus was laid out in an exceptionally beautiful park-like setting, the buildings all constructed of cut stone, and only a 20-minute bus ride or so from home. I was excited and eager about going, but also scared to death. For one thing, it was co-ed, and I had just spent five years in a boys' school, so I suddenly had a completely different gender dynamic to deal with. Secondly I knew virtually no one there. Thirdly, I knew that I was stepping into a social and demographic culture with which I was completely unfamiliar, and to which I did not feel entirely entitled. I felt like a complete hick, so much so that on the first day of classes I was too timid to go into the cafeteria to eat my lunch for fear that I would stand out as an unsophisticated lout, so I went out onto the grounds and ate my lunch under a tree by myself.

But of course things quickly fell into place, and I got to feel as much at home as I had at De La Salle. It was a great University, and I really loved every minute of it. All of the science majors, including Medicine and Dentistry, did the first year together, designated "Junior Group I". It was a great and varied bunch, and I made friends quickly.

However, the transition from a boys' school of 150 to a co-ed campus of 1500 plus a quantum jump in the maturity of the student population made the transition challenging. I had just turned 17, and quite green in the business of life, so I nearly didn't make it. I somehow hooked up with a group of guys who were lots of fun but didn't have particularly good study habits, and my grades really suffered. From being valedictorian of my high school, I went into a skid through that first year, ending up with rather dismal grades, including a failure in Physics, and a near-failing grade in Geology, for pete's sake! And here I was, planning to *major* in Geology. Things looked a mite bleak. Fortunately, as was the practice then, I was allowed to write a "Supplemental Exam" in Physics during the following summer. That was the good news. The bad news was that it was my first summer in the Canadian Officer Training Corps (COTC, equivalent to ROTC), taking my Infantry Basic Training, the goal being to earn a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Supplementary Reserve of the Canadian army. And we were based in Quebec City, a beautiful, cosmopolitan French-Canadian city perched high on the bluffs overlooking the St. Lawrence River. So while my COTC buddies were partying and enjoying Quebec City, I was studying. I passed the supplementary exam, and so I was allowed to continue, formally entering the Geology program in my second year. I think that was my wake-up point, when I realized that given the financial condition of my family and the sacrifices they had made to allow me to continue going to school instead of requiring me to drop out and help to support them, this was the only chance I would get, and I'd better get my butt in gear.

My sophomore year was better but for a while I had a terrible time with Physical Chemistry, and it was mainly an attitude problem. I really didn't like the way the prof lectured, and thought him a complete oaf. Then miraculously I met and began dating a girl who was living with that Chemistry prof's family. At first I was shocked at the prospect of having to deal with him outside the classroom, but it turned out to be a godsend, because when I got to know him socially I learned that he was really a very nice man, in spite of his not being a particularly good lecturer. So I began to cut him some slack and pretty soon I was enjoying Chemistry and pulling good grades.

From then on it was smooth sailing academically, although I can say with no hesitation that they were four gruelling years. But it all ended well, as I went from failing Physics in my freshman year to getting straight A's in my senior year (in 12 courses!) plus the Gold Medal in Geology, plus the 3-year Research Fellowship which I elected to do at the U. of Wisconsin.

I mentioned that in my freshman year I was part of "Junior Group I" that included aspiring majors in all the sciences plus medicine and dentistry. Of all those people, only four of us elected Geology as a major, and we made our way together from our sophomore year through to graduation. I had never before, nor would I ever again, experience that kind of teacher/student ratio!

. By the time I entered Western, our family was deeply into the "wicking" process that I've described, with three cousins and an uncle living with us from time to time in addition to the seven in our core family plus my Uncle Peter who had his own room. By

the time I graduated from Western, Peter was a freshman there, and Anne, Jo and Mary were in high school, so throughout those years there was an awful lot of homework and assignments being done in our house. To this day I marvel that each of us found the peace and quiet at home to do what we had to do. I had one unconventional study habit that I employed before finals during each of my university years. Each Spring, at the end of the class year and before exams began, we were given a "Study Week". It was a completely free week reserved for serious cramming. Although we students really counted on that week to get ready for finals, it was a special challenge to really bear down on the books then because it came about the first week of May, and the weather in London at that time of year was inevitably lovely, with gentle, sunny, warm days, trees coming into leaf, and good smells from the awakening earth. It would have been much more fun to play tennis or whatever. So, partly to avoid that distraction, and partly to get as much quiet time as possible in our busy household, I developed the strategy of inverting my schedule completely. I'd begin studying in the late evening, continuing through the night when the house was quiet, and then I'd sleep during the morning and early afternoon. Often I'd take a break and go for a walk during the night, and I always had a walk in the morning before having breakfast and going to sleep. It didn't seem to bother me to switch back and forth so abruptly, and it must have worked because my marks were always good (once I'd gotten over my freshman year debacle).

I played no sports in University, because there wasn't time, but I did get involved in a number of extracurricular activities. One was the Arts and Science Council, and my crowning achievement was to successfully organize and host the Arts and Science Ball, that was one of Western's major social events of the year. There was also Science Club, and a fraternity, Beta Theta Pi (bet you didn't know I had been a frat rat!). It was one of the least frivolous frats, having sprung from a single-chapter exclusively-Science fraternity that became a chapter of Beta Theta Pi, an American international fraternity. And I became a member of the COTC i.e. the Canadian Officer Training Corps, as I alluded to earlier. That meant a certain number of hours of training per week during the academic year, plus two summers of Infantry Basic Training.

The fraternity seemed important to me at Western, and I really liked my fraternity brothers and the social life of the Chapter, but it was amazing to me how quickly I left that part of my life behind when I moved on to Wisconsin, and even more so when I moved out into the professional world. Some people hold on to their fraternity links for their entire lives. I dropped mine like a rock, and I can't really explain why.

My University summers were completely different from anything I had experienced before. My COTC obligations meant that the first two summers were spent at military camps, getting Infantry Basic Training. Remember, this was 1951, just 6 years after the end of WWII, so there was still a strong military mindset and atmosphere in most Western countries, and a policy of training up additional officers for the Supplementary Reserve who could step in quickly in the case of any further global conflict, as well as to staff the various peace-keeping operations that were under way. So we were *seriously* trained by battle-hardened men who had survived the war.

The first COTC summer (1951) began at Valcartier Camp in the heavily wooded countryside about 15 miles northwest of Quebec City, but we were quickly moved right into the city to a place called The Citadel, because the facilities at Valcartier were needed for the Canadian 27th Brigade that was returning from duty in Europe. Although the war was over, Allied troops still occupied much of Europe, during reconstruction The Citadel was the home of the officers and Commandant of the Royal 22nd Brigade – a French-Canadian brigade that had served with distinction during the war. But it was more than that. The Citadel itself was a massive fort built by the French in the 17th century as part of the defences of the colony of New France. Adjacent to the fort were the "Plains of Abraham", stretching along the bluffs overlooking the St. Lawrence River. The culmination of the Seven Years War between Britain and France was a battle in September 1759 on the Plains of Abraham during which the British Forces under General Wolfe defeated the French forces under General Champlain, and New France came under British rule. That was a turning point in the history of Canada. The modern quarters and parade ground were built within the old fort, and that's where we lived and studied and trained. It was then and is now a famous historic site, visited by thousands of people each year. So that was an exciting and mind-opening experience, somewhat blighted by the fact that I had to spend a lot of time studying Physics to write my Supplementary Exam, as I've recounted earlier.

The second military summer (1952) was spent at Camp Borden, in Ontario, not far from Ken and Lucy Wells' "Owl Pen" (which did not exist on my radar at the time). That was a really gruelling summer, but I can say that when I was through I was in superb physical condition – probably the best of my entire life. There was nothing pretty about Camp Borden. It had been a major training facility during the entire war, and covered a vast area, including a lot of private property that had been bought or expropriated for the purpose. As a result there were farm houses, churches, barns, etc that were all shot and shelled to hell as a result of real-life training exercises, that we used for the same purpose. We had mock exercises with tanks and artillery, some with live ammo and some with blanks. It was the real thing, with lots of rifle, machine-gun and mortar practice, grenade throwing, etc.

By my third summer (1953) I was far enough along in Geology that I could legitimately look for summer work in my field. So I hired on with Imperial Oil, to work on a seismic crew in Alberta. Pretty heady stuff! I was becoming *professional!* As it turned out, classmates Bob Fraleigh and Jim Tanner also got summer jobs in the oil patch in Alberta, so we travelled together. And what a trip that was. Bob arranged to pick up a new car in Detroit to deliver it to the buyer in Portland Oregon (that was quite common in those days, to save the buyer the shipping charges). It was a 4-door 1953 Pontiac Catalina, and to me, coming from a family that had never owned a car, it seemed like the most beautiful car in the world! Strange though it may seem, I am not sure that I had a driver's license at the time. I had driven Army vehicles quite a bit during the previous two summers, and very occasionally a friend's car, but I can't remember the process of actually getting an Ontario license. The first license that I *know* I got was an Alberta license in Edmonton that I was required to have before I began my summer work with Imperial. In any case, our trip across the US was memorable. And in addition, after

successfully delivering the car to the ecstatic owner, a dentist, we flew from Portland to Vancouver so that we could catch a train back to Calgary. That was my very first plane trip, and my first overnight train experience. A strange thing by today's standards is that I'm sure I was completely out of touch with my parents from the time I left London until I finally got to Calgary and wrote them a letter! Imagine a child being out of touch with family for that long these days.

The work experience itself that summer was interesting, working on a seismic crew throughout Central Alberta, because it was my first contact with the real world of oil and gas exploration. But it was interesting for lots of other reasons, especially in terms of the people I met in the my "home base" town of Ponoka, on the main highway between Edmonton and Calgary, and in the many small towns our crew visited in the course of our work. I stayed in a rooming house in Ponoka run by an absolutely wonderful woman named Marie. She was a great cook, and a real "Mom" to the fascinating assortment of rough-cut men and women who were my fellow borders that summer. Occasionally, though, our seismic crew was billeted with farm families when we had a small project to do a long way from home base, and that was always a special experience. That was where I saw first-hand how precarious farming could be, when a vicious hailstorm wiped out many crops in the region, and many families had to make life-changing decisions because, for example, suddenly the money that had been set aside to send a child to University was needed to keep the family afloat.

So I returned to London for my senior year with my first "professional" experience under my belt. That senior year was a bruiser in terms of course work and assignments, but it all went well. And sometime during that year, another life-changing experience! I met Arden, my future life's companion. In the cafeteria, of all places, introduced to me by a fellow geologist who was a year behind me. I remember the incident very well, especially her sparkling eyes, although I certainly didn't understand at the time how life-changing it would prove to be. I can't remember the exact sequence of events from then on, but I do know that we started dating soon after, and by the following summer we had grown very close.

That brings us to May 1954, when I graduated, and accepted what was intended to be a permanent position with Imperial Oil that would locate me somewhere in Western Canada. Arden, meanwhile, had another year to go at Western, so it looked as if we were going to be separated for some time. However, she was able to arrange a summer job in Edmonton, of all places, through a classmate of hers. Not only did she work at the family business, an auto dealership, but she also lived with the family. By wonderful coincidence, I was posted to Edmonton to work with the geologists there who were responsible for the very active drilling program in the Leduc area south of Edmonton. So instead of being separated by thousands of miles, we saw a lot of one another that summer and had a great time. My work was much more interesting and relevant than the previous summer's had been, and I began to understand a few things about how oil and gas exploration and development were carried out, as well as having on-site experiences at the rigs, pulling core, supervising logging operations, examining well cuttings to guide the drilling program etc. Then in the middle of the summer, another life-changing

experience! During my senior year I had applied for a 3-year Imperial Oil Research Fellowship at the urging of the Department Head, and along with it had tentatively applied for graduate school at U. of Wisconsin. To my great astonishment, I won the Fellowship, so instead of continuing my fledgling career with Imperial, I was off to graduate school. Arden and I were doomed to temporary separation after all. There was necessarily a flurry of preparations to make it all possible, but one way or another, it got done, and in September I was off to begin another completely new chapter of my life.

An interesting aside, though, about my life in Edmonton, before we go off to grad school. I was based in Edmonton that summer although I spent a lot of time in the oilfields out of town. I lived in a large rooming house that was adequate but fairly joyless, quite unlike the one I had stayed at in Ponoka the previous summer. I had a roommate whose name I still remember -- Joachim Czypionka . He was a really nice guy, and though I don't remember what exactly what he was working at, we were both struggling fledgling professionals. I always thought I was pretty responsible with my limited resources, and so was Joachim, but for some reason we simultaneously went through a period of cash shortfall, and one day arrived home from work to find a note from the joyless landlady notifying us both that if we couldn't come up with the rent by the next evening, we would be out on the street. Somehow the matter was resolved, and we kept our room. It was the closest I've ever come to being homeless.

At the end of that summer, Arden returned to Western for her senior year, and I went home to pack for grad school.

Part 4 .. Graduate School, U. of Wisconsin, 1954 to 1958.

So how did I choose Wisconsin? It didn't take much thought, actually, just like it hadn't taken much thought to choose Geology as a career. Since I really didn't expect to get the research fellowship (the only way I could manage to go to grad school) I didn't overwork the problem. As it happened, several Geology grads from Western had gone to Wisconsin for graduate studies in previous years, so it was a well-known and respected school. That made it easy to decide to go there, although I had no idea what kind of study program or research I wanted to do.

When the time came, I boarded a train to Chicago where I was to transfer to another station for the train to Madison. The connecting-taxi ride was included in the ticket, and was with a taxi company called "Parmalee Taxi". The experience filled me with something between awe and terror, as I swear the driver actually went up onto the sidewalk at times to get through the traffic! In spite of him we made it to the *Chicago and Northwestern Railroad* station, I arrived in Madison in one piece, and was launched on my grad school career.

Compared with Western, U Wis was GIGANTIC, like 12000 students compared with 2000. Madison is the State Capital, attractive, not very large, and is squeezed between three lakes. The U Wis campus stretches along the largest and most attractive of these,

named Lake Mendota. It was (and is?) a beautiful campus, not in the same bucolic sense that Western was, but much more dramatic.

I guess I had matured a lot since my timid and apprehensive beginnings at Western four years earlier, because I hit the floor running at U Wis. As it turned out I arrived just in the nick of time to begin classes, so it seemed that in the twinkling of an eye, I found a tiny room in a nearby rooming house (with breakfast included), was assigned office space, became a Teaching Assistant, enrolled in my course work, and was plunged into the social dynamics of a large and varied VERY bright bunch of fellow grad students from all over the country. And most important, I felt as if I *belonged!* Everything was in giant scale for me. There were 12 full professors in Geology and Geophysics, many of them recognized leaders in their specialties, and about 100 graduate students! We occupied most of fortress-like Science Hall, with 3-foot thick walls and ancient casement windows. It was exciting stuff. And another life-changing experience! Somehow between the time I was notified of winning the Fellowship during my summer with Imperial Oil and the time I left to go to U Wis, I had developed the idea of doing my grad studies in Geophysics. However, Prof. Woollard, the man who would have been my major prof in Geophysics, was very involved at the time with a high-profile international program that kept him travelling a great deal. I would arrange to meet with him on a Tuesday, say, and when I went in the secretary would tell me that he had returned from Istanbul the day before but had already left again for Santiago, but could I come back on Friday .... which I would, only to find that he had come back from Santiago on Thursday afternoon but had left for Moscow on Thursday night etc etc. So, by default, I gravitated to Prof. Lewis Cline, whose specialties lay entirely within those disciplines related to Petroleum Geology. Thus, by the time Prof. Woollard settled down from his furious pace, I was no longer interested in Geophysics.

I loved grad school. It was hard, but I really felt as if I were learning the things that would equip me to pursue my profession. I also really enjoyed the teaching, and collaborated with three colleagues to write and publish (with the University's permission) *A Practical Supplement To Physical Geology.* As described, it was a supplement to the class text for the "Geology 101" course, with emphasis on some of the lab exercises. It became a standard item in the Department, and I still have a copy on the textbook shelf in my home office. The condition of publication was that all proceeds went to the Geology Club to be used as Honoraria for invited guest speakers from hither and yon.

Although the camaraderie was terrific, I did suffer some bouts of loneliness in my dingy (but perfectly adequate) little room. Fortunately I was much too busy to spend much time feeling sorry for myself. By then Arden and I were engaged, and beginning to make some plans for our wedding. She came to Madison to visit once during that year, and that was such a welcome event. It also gave her a bit of a preview of what life might be like there.

I think that two of the most memorable experiences from that first year were field trips. One was a rock-collecting trip to Central Iowa with my major professor to gather samples for what was to be my Master's thesis research. It was special because it was my first

attempt at a (very small) piece of original work. The other one was a class field trip during Spring Break 1959 to the Florida Keys, with stops at some very interesting outcrop areas in Alabama and Georgia. It was an eye-opener in many respects, not just geological, though that part was wonderful. When we reached the Florida Panhandle coast near Panama City, it was dark, and being dirt-poor grad students, we slept on the floor of picnic shelters on the beach. I could hear the ocean but couldn't see it because there was no moon. But next morning, when I awoke, there, stretched out before me, was the beautiful Gulf of Mexico. Although I must have had some glimpses of the ocean a few summers earlier when my buddies and I flew from Portland to Vancouver, this was the first time that it was right at my feet, and it made a profound impression. In the way of new sociological experiences, I saw the rural poor black back-country of Alabama for the first time, saw chain gangs (all black) working along the road in rural Florida, drove along the eye-popping Miami Beach "strip", and cruised slack-jawed through the Spring Break partying crowd of college students in Fort Lauderdale. My world of experience was virtually *exploding!*

Armed with my first year of grad school, I headed back to Alberta for a summer's work with Imperial Oil. This time I was with a large Field Party (8-10) working out of camps in the Pine River area of Northeastern BC. Our mission was to do geological mapping over a huge area, using a helicopter for transportation and aerial reconnaissance. It was a great experience, although as I've mentioned already, the time spent in that helicopter without any ear protection was probably a significant factor in the high-frequency hearing loss I have today. It was also the summer that I grew a beard, but more about that later. Of more significance was the fact that my family (including my wife-to-be to whom I was to be married at the end of that summer) got an awful scare part way during the summer when the news flashed across the country that an Imperial Oil aircraft of some kind had crashed in the bush of northern Alberta/BC with no survivors. I don't recall just how we heard about it in the camp, or how we got the word out to our families that we were ok, but for a while there were a lot of worried people.

One unforgettable experience that summer had nothing to do with Geology. It had to do with a fawn so young that she still had her spots. Our camp and "heliport" were on the banks of the Pine River, on a rancher's land, and one day he came to camp with the fawn wrapped in a blanket and bleeding badly. She had tried to jump a barbed-wire fence and hadn't cleared it properly with the result that her belly was badly ripped. One of the guys on the crew was farm-raised and had sufficient smarts and confidence to suggest a bold plan to stitch her up and nurse her back to health. It was either that or shoot her. So we stretched her out on our picnic table, and while a few of us took turns holding her and calming her, Lloyd went to work, carefully repositioning various parts of her innards that were hanging out of the nasty gash, and closing the wound. I still have slides of the operation, with that beautiful, docile little animal lying there with eyes as big as saucers, somehow knowing that she could trust us. After the operation, we made a pen, and for the rest of the summer we took care of her. The wonderful thing was that she survived, and became the ranch pet after our Party disbanded at the end of the summer. We learned that a year or two later, while she was still confined within a large pen on the ranch, a

buck jumped the fence and mated with her, and she successfully gave birth. I think that's a miracle.

And another unique experience also had nothing to do with Geology. The ranch was set in some pretty rough country, with lots of incised streams and brush that made it difficult at roundup time. So, late that summer, our Party Chief offered to let the helicopter pilot participate in the roundup. The ranch hands spread out on horseback in a designated area, and the pilot searched out cattle that were hidden in the brush or in hard-to-see gullies etc, and then guided the horsemen to them. I went up with the pilot on one trip, and it was a blast!

At the end of the summer, I headed back to Ontario to marry Arden and to return to grad school with her. I had grown a pretty decent beard (although it looked much more Arabic than Nordic), and decided to wear it home. In Calgary, where my flight home originated, nobody much paid much attention because lots of geologists came out of the bush with beards. In Winnipeg, where we stopped enroute, a few people stared. In Toronto, Arden met me, took one look, and said "Uh Uh!, that's got to come off!". I did get to keep it until I got to London to show my family, and long enough for my sisters to wrap a towel around my head to simulate an Arab headscarf, and take my picture. I have to admit, I do look mighty Arabic in the picture. From the time I deplaned in Toronto to the time I shaved it off in London, people stared wherever I went.

The wedding was great fun for all concerned. The ceremony itself was held on a beautiful September day in picturesque Mt. St. Louis Catholic Church in the countryside not many miles from Owl Pen, and the reception dinner was in the Honey House at Owl Pen. Fr. Wemple, who was Dean of Christ the King College at Western at that time, and who had been Arden's mentor and friend when she was at college, conducted the ceremony and presided at the dinner with much merriment and grace. My parents and all my siblings were there, plus a goodly scattering of cousins. Everyone got along very well, and they sent us off in fine style at the end of the day.

Because we needed to get back to Wisconsin in a hurry for the beginning of the Fall term, there wasn't time for a honeymoon. We spent our wedding night at a very nice country lodge/hotel, but the next day had to begin making our way to Madison to begin our life together.

At this point, the story necessarily changes from *my* story to *our* story, and I'm not sure just how to tackle it. And since this is as far as I am going to get before we go to our 50th Anniversary family get-together, I'll have a little time to figure out a strategy before I continue. I plan to distribute copies of what I've written so far to each of the children.

..... to be continued.