

Thoughts and Memories

BY

Margaret V Deaves

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The Early Years

What is the earliest age in your life that you remember? I certainly cannot remember my baby years even though I have seen photographs.

My thoughts go back to the years when I was about five years old. I remember that I always had an afternoon nap and when I awoke my mother always put a pretty dress on me because this was the time that we always went to the streetcar stop to meet my daddy – if I had been good there was an ice cream cone later – a double scoop, one side vanilla and the other side chocolate for five cents. I can still recall the excitement and the taste!

My thoughts go back to the small rented house we lived in; four rooms with my mom and dad, my two brothers and me. The property was so big that my dad made a four hole golf course for the boys. My brothers used to go caddying at the local golf course. Old soup cans were used for the golf holes and my mother made the flags. The yard also had three swings, a sandbox, ten fruit trees, a large vegetable garden and many flower beds. My dad was a great gardener, but as we got older, we all learned to realize what a lot of grass there was to cut.

In the winter we went sleighing, skiing and of course, skating. At Christmas we would go into the bush and cut down our own Christmas tree. We even had real candles on the tree as well as cookies and oranges – homemade decorations! My dad used to light the candles on the tree, we would all stay and watch the candles for about two minutes and then we would put them out. We always had a star on the top of the tree. In the later years, it was quite exciting to get electric lights, not to mention, electricity in the house instead of gas lanterns. When we first got our radio, each evening we would all sit around it and listen – it was fascinating! We never missed the hockey games on Saturday nights. My brothers loved hockey and each winter my dad would make an ice rink in our garden. Needless to say, my brothers were very popular, we had a lot of company.

In the kitchen, we had a large Quebec stove which heated most of the house. In the evening we would take one of the burners off and put bread on a fork and toast it. It would taste so good with homemade jam on it, butter or drippings. Every night my dad would make a large pot of porridge for the next day's breakfast. It would stay on the back of the stove all night long, Good! Good! The stove also had a warming closet. Each night we undressed for bed and put on warm cozy slippers. Every night, my mom would read to us a chapter of a story. She was a great reader and she also loved poetry. My mom was a good cook and baker. She also did all the sewing in the house. She would buy dresses from the rummage sales, take them apart and re-make them for me. She could knit, crochet, embroider and quilt – she was very talented.

I really had a happy childhood – very loving parents and family. Materially we had very little, but we made our own fun and games. My dad used to cut our hair, repair and sole our shoes, we did not have much but we were happy.

My Parents

My dad, James Parry, was born in England in 1884, one of four children; his three sisters were triplets and their names were Rose, Daisy and Lily. He died in 1960. His family were poor, struggling to live on a very small income. After my father finished school, and joined the British Army. He was only 14 years old when he joined up and this was the time when the British Empire was very strong; he served in Burma in the start of his term, guarding the Khyber Pass etc. My dad loved the army. A few years later, when my dad returned home to England, he went to visit his family. When he went to his old family home, he discovered that his family had moved and left no new address. No trace of them was ever found by my dad! With no radios, no phones, no internet, a very poor postal service (it sometimes took months for a letter to be received) and no income tax records, it was almost impossible to trace people back then. Various neighbours remembered them but no one had any idea of where they went or an idea of where they could be found. My dad was now left with no one! My Dad spent 15 years in the regular British army; he was a captain when he was discharged.

When his tour of duty ended, my dad returned to England. He met my mother Fanny Burwood. Fanny was one of 13 children, only seven of which survived, five girls and two boys. In those times, the infant mortality rate was very high. My mother's family was very poor but she still had a happy childhood. My mom and dad were married and decided life looked better in "the colonies", namely Canada. The year was now 1913 and my parents now set their sights on immigrating to Canada. My dad was allowed to come to Canada; he had secured a job working on the building of the first Welland Canal in Ontario. (My mother would followed him later, once he settled in. He was in Canada for one week when the Great War broke out in 1914, WW1. He was immediately recalled to service by his regiment and told to return to England as soon as possible. He returned to England on the same boat that he arrived on!

During the Great War, my dad was wounded three times! In the great battle of Somme my dad was seriously wounded in the head. He was lucky to survive and he spent many months in the hospital. When he first went to Somme, he went to the village store and purchased a silver brooch with "Somme" on it – a gift for my mother. When dad arrived back in England, this brooch was still in the breast pocket of his uniform, I still have this brooch, 90 years later.

During the war, my mother gave birth to a son, James. James lived for only two months. After James, Albert and David, my brothers were born.

In 1919, my mom, dad, Albert and David came back to Canada. My dad spent 15 years in the regular army and five years in the war time army and hospital. He received the sum of \$17 a month on a veteran's pension. In Canada, my family rented a house in Willowdale, Ontario just north of Toronto, costing \$15.00 per month. My dad would always say "At least we have a roof over our heads". Jobs were difficult to get with the depression and my dad was not able to get a full time job.

My mother gave birth to one more child, a daughter, me, Margaret. When I was just one month old, my mom took me for a walk in the baby carriage with each of my brother holding on to one of the side of the carriage. Mother was crossing Yonge Street (very few cars on the road) when my brother David let go of the carriage, ran across the road and was hit by a car. The driver of course was not at fault but he was very upset. The driver happened to be the President of Tip Top Tailors, a large men's wear company. David had a number of bruises and a broken leg as a result of the accident. When the driver of the car came to our house and saw our circumstances, he returned to our home later that night with his wife loaded up with food, clothes and toys for us. My brothers received their first baseball bat, ball and gloves. At that time there was no health plan, but through the kindness of the driver, he picked up all of the medical expenses.

Our minister at St. George's Church heard of the accident and came to call and found out my dad wasn't working. He only prayed for us and helped my dad find temporary job within two days. Within two weeks he was working for full time at the Canadian Pacific Railroad. He worked for the railroad for 35 years until he retired. My mother and father never forgot what the church did for them; they had great faith and continued to support the church all of their lives.

My mother and father had a happy life together. As their children grew up, we were all doing different things. They never owned a car but took many trips on the train.

My brother Albert graduated from high school and got a job at Redpath Sugar factory on the Lakeshore in downtown Toronto. He left Canada to live in England in 1938. He joined the RAF; there was no Canadian Air Force at that time, when WW2 broke out.

My brother David joined the Army. He served in Italy and the truck he was driving was blown up and he was injured. When he returned to Canada after the war his health was poor; he died at 45 from a massive heart attack.

The house we rented in Willowdale for so many years was sold. We then moved to Toronto, in the Dufferin and St. Clair district.

Margaret Grows Up

I did well at high school and graduated. I was a brownie, a Girl Guide and eventually a Ranger. I was very, very interested in their organization. I did a lot of camping with them. I had a boyfriend, Ross, who was in my class at school. He walked me home each night. He joined the RCAF during the war and became a fighter pilot. His plane was shot down and he was killed. I also had a dear friend, Herb, who kept in touch with us for years. He had his own boat and we surfed together.

My last two years of high school was spent at York Memorial High School. My best friend was Eileen. She married a RCAF pilot during the war, he came safely through it.

I wanted to be a bed nurse but the money was not available for my training. I applied for work at the Dominion Bank, which is now called TD Bank. I was hired as a junior for \$15 per week. I gave my mom \$10 for board and kept \$5 for myself. I walked to work to save the streetcar fare. After several months I became the Secretary to the Bank Manager and worked on the savings and current accounts. All books were entered by hand, although there was an old adding machine. My salary remained the same for a year.

My mother had arthritis, quite severe, in her hips, knees and hands; as a result I had to help out at home with the heavy work, floors and ironing. Eventually my mom had operations on both her knees and hips. In those days this was quite radical, a new procedure. She was in hospital about six month's total, but it was a success!!

On Saturday morning, May 3rd, 1941, I had just finished cleaning when the doorbell rang. It was George in hi RAF uniform. He came for a visit. George's aunt and my aunt were next door neighbours. He had been posted to Canada with the Air Force training scheme.

A year before the war my mom and I took a trip by ship to England. She hadn't been back since 1919. At that time I meet all of my relatives, as we had no relatives in Canada. A young man was visiting his aunt next door; this was when I first met George. I became very friendly with his cousin Doreen and we became pen pals. I sent her a picture of me in my Girl Guide uniform and she put the picture in her photo album, you can see it was fate that George and I should fall in love and marry!

Doreen joined the WACS, met and made many lifetime friends. She was an actress and connected to theatre groups all her life.

The first weekend George visited, we went to the movie and the next day we went to Niagara Falls. George and I loved the movies. The tickets cost two to 25 cents – double feature at that. I really liked him and I hoped he would come again. He wrote me a letter which I answered. He started to write me every day. In the second letter that he wrote he said that we would be married someday. He assumed that I was 17 or 18 years old, I never told him anything different. We fell in love and we were engaged Christmas 1941. Life was so uncertain at that time, it was wartime, we didn't know where he would be posted or if we would ever see each other again and we were so much in love! We were married in May of 1942. We had a quiet wedding, my two brothers were overseas, but it was still a wonderful day. I will never forget the telegram

that George sent to his mother, it must have been a great surprize – “Margie and I were married today, very happy, George”.

The War Years

Six months later, George was posted back in England and I was left in Canada still working at the bank. Four months after this, I was at the bank and in the afternoon at 3:00 PM I received a phone call, "Be at Union Station at 10:00 PM. Train for Canadian war brides was leaving at 11:00 PM. Be packed and ready to leave."

We spend several days on the train and one night in a hotel in Halifax. What a rush and such excitement, but it was sadness for my mom and dad. I traveled with 11 other war brides. We saw dozens and dozens of ships in the harbour. We were pointed out our ship and we were rowed out to it. We had to climb up the ladder (which they threw down to us); I could not believe that we were expected to climb this ladder. We were all very nervous, but a 72 year old woman, who was returning to England, stepped up and said, "I will go first" – my nerves calmed. I went up the ladder second with a great sense of relief!!

The Admiral of the fleet was on our ship that meant we had to stay in the large convoy which was very reassuring to me. I took 21 days to reach England, going in zigzag directions across the ocean. We were not allowed to shut any doors to our cabins, bathrooms, sleeping or changing quarters. They were all open with open on the door handles to keep them from closing. This was in case we were torpedoed and the doors might become jammed, blocking any escape routes.

At breakfast, several days later, I kept hearing this loud rumbling noise that seemed to shake the ship. I asked the Admiral, "What in the world is that noise?" He answered, "That's only depth charges, there are German subs around", and he calmly finished eating his breakfast.

The convoy was attacked and 20 ships were lost. One of the ships had a number of nurses on board – they were in the water screaming for help, but in their panic swan too near to the propellers and they were cut into pieces. It was such a sad scene – I will never forget it, but as the sailors stated, this was war – this is what happens.

One of the war brides was married to a high ranking officer. She was a snob, a real piece of work! Not too nice. She was on deck one day when it was a little rough and she became very seasick. She lost her false teeth over the side of the ship and for the rest of the voyage she stayed in her cabin. Only one man (and he was in the know) knew when the ship was coming in and met it – her husband! She was the first one off of the ship and the other brides had a good laugh!

After landing in London, I took a train to Birmingham and was met by Vera, George's sister. The next morning she dashed out to the shops, the green grocer had oranges in and she was allowed to purchase four after waiting in line for an hour. Everyone was so excited; they had not seen oranges since the war had started. It made me feel so ashamed since we were eating so well in Canada.

When the war first broke out, everyone who owned a car had to surrender their distributors from the engine to the police and all of the street signs had been removed. This was in case of an invasion. Since I was new to the city, I found it difficult to get around. I had to remember locations based on landmark only. It made it hard to find your way home.

Vera's husband, Don, was in the R.A.F. and stationed in India. I lived with Vera and George's mom during this time in Vera's home. Vera and Don were married just before war was declared. Vera was expecting her first baby and no longer worked, but she had been called up and had to work on a farm for the war effort, essential work.

When George was originally posted back to England at the start of the war, he had travelled back on the Queen Mary which had been converted into a troop ship. At first he was billeted in a private home. I met his landlady and she said what a nice quiet gentleman he was, but very fussy! George later told me why she had said this, after eating his evening meal, his landlady would put his plate on the floor for their very large dog to lick and then when she picked it up she would look at it and say it looks clean to me and put it back in the cupboard. When it was dinnertime again, George would run hot water over all of his dishes before putting food on them....fussy man!!

Shortly after this, George managed to get living quarters for us together; George pushed the two single beds together for us. We lived there together for four months and then George was posted again to Accra, Africa on the equator. The place was called at that time the "White man's Grave. While George was in Africa, he was confirmed in the Anglican Church by the Bishop of Accra. The Bishop came out from England many years before this and caught leprosy causing him to lose the use of one of his hands. He recovered from the leprosy.

I was expecting my first child when George was in Africa, so I went back to again live with Vera. Vera was ready to have her baby; she was having it at home being attended to by the family doctor and his nurse who was a midwife. When Vera went into labour, the nurse was with her and her doctor, who lived two blocks away, came to see how she was progressing. The doctor stated that she wasn't ready yet so he was going home to have his Sunday dinner – Vera exploded and as the doctor opened the bedroom door to leave. A pair of slippers came sailing through the air at him! Did he ever laugh! I am sure that he laughed all the way home!

Memories of the bombing return to me often – but during this time great and lasting friendships were made. Everyone helped one another. No one was downhearted, we were sure victory would be ours and would come soon. My grandmother and my grandfather (who I only met once) were bombed out of their home. They were dug out of the rubble, taken to hospital but died within a week. They were 84 and 85 years old. This is war, not only soldiers die but also the people, war affected the young and the old, the soldiers and the civilians. This was war – this is what happens.

I was getting close to delivering my baby. During the war, 98% of babies were delivered at home in England. In wartime the hospitals were for the wounded. I had an 8 lb son, David George. After listening to the Doctor say "pay no attention to what my in-laws say...old wives tales...", I listened to him and I had no trouble. In those days you stayed in bed for 12 -14 days after you had a baby. Vera had a neighbour who was a terrific gardener, flowers were his

speciality. His wife was not allowed to pick any of his flowers, but on this occasion, this kind man picked a huge bouquet of flowers and brought them to me because I was Canadian and far away from home.

My first day up after having David was so exciting and happy. Germany had surrendered and it was "victory day". Large parties were held in the streets with dancing and much singing. What the British people, the soldiers, sailors and airmen went through, no one who had not lived through it could ever realize. In the evening there was a gigantic fire in the village square. David was only two weeks old and I took him to the party in his pram.

Vera and I loved the movies and we went once a week. Grandma babysat the two children. We were in walking distance of the theatre. We always went to the theatre with our hot water bottles since the theatre had no heat. On the way to the theatre we had to pass by the Italian Prisoner of War Camp – they would always be outside shouting and waving at us but we would just ignore them.

We did a lot of knitting Vera and I; we would take old sweaters and mittens apart and remake into toys or new sweaters. My favorite striped sweater had about 12 different colours in it. We decided one Christmas not to give any gifts – we could not afford it on our R.A.F. allowances. Vera stayed up night after night after I had gone to bed to surprise me with this wonderful gift that she was making for me. It was such a wonderful surprise and I wore this sweater for years after this, my sweater of many colours, my favorite sweater!

The government inspector arrived at Vera's home one day and informed us that we had to take in two male lodgers on essential business. It was certainly a challenge to feed them – but they were very nice and they always gave their chocolate ration to the children. We became quite proficient in making powdered egg dishes! Babies and children were allowed one fresh egg per week and orange juice. In England during the war, we never had white bread, our bread was nearly black! Everything was rationed - food and clothing with coupons.

George's Auntie May opened a second hand clothing cash store (no ration coupons). She made a living at his, she was a great gal! She asked me one day to do her a favour; would I give this letter to the man at the corner of the street selling newspapers on my way to the shops. This I did several times for her until George told me that I was placing horse racing bets for her, did I ever feel stupid!

George's sister, Vera was restless; she needed money and a challenge so she decided to start a business. She only had 100 Pound Sterling. She found an old shop in Endington, empty and dirty with an old man living in the back. His wife had died and he was alone. Vera talked him into renting her the shop. Her mom helped fixed it up and cleaned the old man's living quarters – he eventually wanted to marry her. She was a very pretty lady! But of course she never did. George's mom never found out if her husband was alive or dead. He left her when Vera was two years old and George was two months old. He just walked out one day and never came back....of course this was his loss!

Vera was quite a business lady. She painted, cleaned, had shelves and cupboards put in...all with her 100 Pounds. She opened up her shop; her stock only covered one shelf, knitting books,

knitting needles, wool and baby clothes. She started small but soon learned the ropes and became very successful. I looked after the children, Susan and David, while she worked in the shop with her mom's help. Soon she was able to open a second shop selling ladies wear. She did very well! When Don, her husband came home after the war ended, he expected her to be the good little woman and hand over everything. Vera was not about to do this, she was a very successful liberated woman. They soon divorced and she married again, a businessman named Tony. Vera and Tony had a son, Christopher. After a few years, they too divorced. Vera lived out the rest of her life with Jim, a man she met on a cruise and eventually they did marry.

The great day arrives, Japan has been defeated! Finally, the war is all over! The men would be coming home soon. When George came home he was wearing a dreadful looking suit. After serving for seven years, that was all he had in clothes – I guess everyone was in the same boat. This was when George saw his son, David, for the first time; he was 14 months old and walking. George was given the opportunity of going to Germany with the special forces for a few years (with his family of course) to work with the army and the R.A.F. and displaced persons and prisoners of war; he was fluent in German which was a contributing factor to the offer. He gave this a great deal of thought, but decided that seven years of service for his country was enough for him and it was now time to think about his future, family and a career. We decided that it would be better to live in Canada since there were more opportunities. We booked our flight to Canada; we flew back on Pan- American Airways to New York then took the train to Toronto. We waited a month for our flight.

Our Life After The War

I was expecting our second child when we travelled back to Canada. It was late fall when we arrived in Toronto and we found everything so different, even the food, the white bread was like eating cake, this was not like the very dark bread in England that we were used to. Pancakes in Canada had maple syrup and butter on them not lemon juice and sugar.

Within the first week of being in Canada, George had a job in his line of work at a pen company. Brian, our second child, made his way into the world on a very icy day, maybe that is why he loves the sunshine so much. My parents never had a car, so when my labour pains began early in the evening, we phoned a taxi service but no one would come out in the icy weather. We decided we had to go and wait for a street car. We were waiting and waiting, no street car came. An automobile came by and they could see that we were in trouble, they turned out to be the kindest couple you could ever meet, even though the roads were so dangerous, they drove us right to the hospital door. Brian weighed in at 10 lbs 2 oz. Seven days before Christmas. He was an extremely happy and good baby!

After a year, George got another job at Orenda Engines (airplane factory). We started to look for a home of our own. We put a deposit on a new house and the builder absconded with our money plus 100 other buyers. The builder was apprehended and arrested but he had spent all of the money. As a result of this situation, the government passed a new law so this would not happen to others. But we were out of luck with the return of our money, we had no money returned and unfortunately some of the money for this down payment had been borrowed from my parents. They could not afford to lose this money since they did not have much of their own. I had to go back to work at the bank and we had to rent a house until we could save again. We rented a wartime house in Malton, Ontario. I had to take the two children on the bus at 6:00am each morning to my mom's home in Toronto to babysit and then to the other side of town to work. In the evening, it was the same routine in reverse. We were able to pay my parent back this way.

At this time, the government wanted to get rid of the wartime houses and so they offered them for sale. We bought ours for \$300 down payment. A few years later we were able to buy a new larger home in Rexdale.

Sharon, our 3rd child was born when we were living in the wartime house in Malton – another rush delivery, this time the police escorted our taxi to the hospital just in time. George was at home looking after our two sons.

When we were living in Malton, we bought our first TV set. Only two families on the street had a TV. Dinnertime was hectic with our kids and the neighbour's kids watching "Howdy Doody". We had a lot of company on Friday nights for the boxing matches. We also bought our first car when we lived in Malton. We had to put 1/3 down, \$1500, for a new Chev costing \$4500. The car was delivered right to our door. George did not have a licence yet, he soon got his license and then I got mine when we lived in Rexdale. Another exciting item that we bought when we lived in our wartime home was an electric refrigerator made by Westinghouse. After years of

making supplies for the war, companies were able to return to their original business and many new products became available. Before this fridge purchase, we had an icebox and had to empty the water every night.

Soon after our move, Richard our fourth child was born. He was another good baby, my children were never any trouble and I love them dearly.

George's mother and Vera's daughter Susan came to Canada on a visit one summer. We have happy memories of those days. We rented a cottage at the lake, Richard was just a young lad then.

A number of years later, George and I had a visit back to England. Vera, who was always like a dear sister to me, gave us a huge welcome home party. All of our relatives were there as well as Vera's first husband Don (who we knew) and her second husband Tony (who we had never meet) as well as Jim, her current partner and who became husband #3. That was one for the books, George was so very embarrassed.

Here we go again, we moved again to Celestine Drive in Etobicoke where we lived for over 20 years. I really loved that home, We had a large recreation room downstairs and a beautiful wood burning fireplace in the living room. Thinking back I often wonder how we ever managed with 7 people in the house and only one bathroom.

Stephen our fifth and final child was born when we were living in the Celestine house. Imagine, our oldest son, David was 17 years old when Stephen was born. Stephen growing up loved soccer like his dad. He was such a good player, George was so proud and he never missed a game. George thought that soccer would never take on in Canada, he was wrong and happy to be. Growing up, Stephen loved his electric trains and he had a room set up for them.

George and I were very active in the church, St Philips. George was Sunday School superintendent, church warden, treasurer and the head of the advisory council in his time. I taught Sunday school, church warden, head of the ACW, Deanery Director and Diocesan VP of the ACW. We had a very busy and happy time making many good friends.

Empty Nest

Sharon our only daughter was the first to leave home and marry. She had two lovely children, Michael and Shari-Anne and now has two grandsons, Jackson and Cooper. Sharon had great courage and determination to be a success in her business life. Every day she would take the children to daycare, work in the daytime, pick them up in the evening and study at night to pass her accounting courses and obtain her degree. She was successful in her business life, George and I were so proud of her, she became the VP of Finance for Ticketmaster and the CFO for ReserveAmerica. Michael, Sharon's son is a successful businessman working in the sales field. He is not married as yet, but loves to spend time with his two nephews when he is not playing or watching sports such as hockey or golf. Sharon's daughter, Shari-Anne became a dedicated school teacher and married another school teacher Ryan. She has two amazing sons who are growing up in the family tradition of being a lover of sports!

When we moved to Celestine, George decided that he wanted to complete his accounting degree. He worked and studied nightly and earned his C.G.A. and A.C.I.S. degrees. He worked at the Ministry of Health until he retired then back again as a consultant. He was a Financial Consultant for them and was one of the men responsible for putting the Health Plan in Ontario, (OHIP). As well as his church work, George was a Mason, Shriner and member of the Eastern Star and Order of the Amaranth.

Brian was the second one to leave home. He went to the University of Toronto and received his B.Sc. degree, He then went on to become a chartered accountant. He was an honour scholar and was very successful in his chosen career and became a partner at Deloitte through his hard work. He has three children, Samantha and Adam and then later on Spencer was born to him and his second wife, Brenda. Sam and Adam have two children each, Alexandra and Carter and Riley and Erin. Spencer is studying at CAL ARTS. We are so proud of everyone.

David was the next to leave; he left home to live in his own apartment. He eventually married and had two children Jimmy and Jenny. Jenny is married with a daughter named Olive and shortly, in July 2014, she will have another. Jim has had health issues over the years and never married. David has his C.G.A. degree and for many years he was the City Manager of Etobicoke. Before it was a city on its own, it is now part of Toronto. He did a good job for the people of Etobicoke; he had his own TV show. David is also an amazing bridge player. He is a life master and he competes in bridge tournaments (duplicate bridge) all over Canada and the world. He is another son who gives me great pride.

Richard, 4th child, third son, attended the University of Toronto School. This was a boy's private high school (it is now co-ed). You had to write entry exams to this school and qualify to attend. He was an Ontario scholar and after high school attended the University of Toronto. He received his BA, then his MA and then his PhD. He took a year off during his studies to travel in Europe. After receiving his PhD, he obtained a teaching, professor, position at McMaster University in Hamilton. He married and had one son, Andre.

You will all smile at this ...when Richard wrote his first book; he dedicated it to his dad and me. I was so excited thinking it was going to be a mystery or something like this, of course it was a textbook, I was so proud!

Our youngest child Stephen, after graduating from high school, obtained a job with Rogers Cable TV for the summer and after they asked him to stay on full time. He has worked for several companies over the years and is currently with SLH, Sears Long Haul. He had one daughter, Stephanie after he married Mariam. Stephen has two grown-up step children as well, Hank and Diane. Stephen has many talents, plumbing, electrician, painter, and carpenter, to name a few. He can do so much!

In his younger days, David was interested in baseball, golf, bridge and cubs. Now that he is retired these interests can be continued to be pursued, except cubs of course. Brian as a youngster was also a cub scott. He enjoys reading, golf, music, the theatre and travel. He is semi-retired. When he was very young, he loved "Hop A-Long Cassidy" and his western gun set. He loved to play "Cowboys and Indians".

Sharon still loves to read, movies, the theatre and travel. She recently took her grandson Jackson to England where he was able to meet his relatives. Sharon is also semi-retired; she still does consulting and teaches College part-time.

Richard enjoys reading as well as writing books (text books) in addition to love of the theatre, baseball and tennis. He does long distance running. He also has a love of traveling and often is the visiting Professor in some exotic place! Stephen is active in his church; he is currently the Deputy Warden. He plays a lot of golf and enjoys soccer and hockey. He is an avid coin and stamp collector. Stephen recently finished a jigsaw puzzle which is one of his hobbies. This puzzle had 18,000 pieces, can you believe it! It takes up one entire wall in his dining room, most incredible, well done.

I am so proud of all of my children and what they have done!

All of my children have been extremely good to George and I over the years, and especially to me when George died.

I have had a busy life, wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother, not to mention Church Warden, President of the ACW, Deanery Director, Eastern Star member, Lady Shriner and Order of the Amaranth.

I would be remiss if I did not also talk about the happy memories with my daughter-in-laws current and in the past. There is Maria, the talented girl with the beautiful singing voice. She has shown much kindness to me. She works very hard for the seniors in her care. Unfortunately, I do not see her as much as I would like since she lives so far away with my son David. Marie was always very affectionate and loving to George and me. We had many happy time together, dinners, the theatre etc. as well as the trip to Florida. I will always think of her as family.

Brenda is a most generous, loving and caring person. She has done so much for George and I, trips, gifts, meals etc. especially the 60 frozen dinner that she made for me after my heart surgery, and of course the special bed when I arrived home. The parties and holidays that we have had together, as well as so much more, very thoughtful.

And to Miriam, last but not least. Thanks you for all of the love and welcome that you have extended to George and me. Thank you for the camping trips, holidays together, gifts and other things – and staying with me for hours after surgery; she is so kind and loving.

To all my daughters-in-law, I am so lucky, I love you all dearly, Thanks you!

Sadness and Joy

Life is full of sadness and joys. We did have a serious illness in the family. When David was 12 years old when he had to have some minor surgery; after this he was rushed to the hospital since his kidneys had shut down and he had acute nephritis. He was taken to the Sick Children's Hospital. He was in very serious condition. After two more operations, his kidney started working again, he was fine, an answer to prayer.

It was very sad when George was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and then when he had his stroke. He had to go into a nursing home. He was such a good man, never complained but I know that it must have been dreadful for him in that home. To be in a wheelchair and lose his sense of dignity. George was such a gentle man, I was so blessed to have met him, fallen in love, married him and spent my life with him. George was born on August 17th, 1916 and died May 13th, 2001. We were married on May 9th, 1942 for 59 years.

During the years, my father and mother both died as well as George's mother. I also had my two brothers and two sisters-in-law die, one of which was Vera, sister of my heart.

After George died, I had open heart surgery, a valve replacement and a double bypass. I recovered well, the results were excellent as well as the family support.

Something I failed to mention - our pets. We had 3 beautiful yorkshire terriers. Our first one was "Golden Floss", the second "Marvellous Mickey", and the third "No-Way Hosai". These pets brought us so much joy and love into our lives.

George and I had many happy holidays and the memories are still very clear in my mind. We used to camp in tents when the children were young in Picton, Ottawa and Kingston. We rented cottages in Parry Sounds and took train trips. We took the family to Virginia Beach and to Expo. We went to Florida with Richard and Marie and also went back to England after many years to see family.

Since George died, I have had my own trailer which I kept in Fergus Ontario. I have also had many happy times in Stephen's trailer. I have gone to Ottawa, Kingston, 1000 Islands, PEI, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Myrtle Beach and Northern Ontario... and many other places, with them in the trailer. The trip to Salmon Arms BC to visit Samantha was great, and seeing the mountains was memorable. Brian and Brenda, I cannot begin to say thank you, you made my dream come true when you took me on the Alaskan Cruise, it was thrilling, not to mention the visit to your home in South Carolina and the trip to England by the seaside, my heart is full.

And then there are my grandchildren and my great grandchildren and I do have a lot of them! What a lot of love they have brought into my life. Michael, my first grandchild, the eldest grandchild has always shown me such love, kindness and respect. My second grandchild, his sister, Shari-Anne has done the same. She is such a hard worker and such a good mother to two of my great grandchildren, Jackson and Cooper. Sam always has a happy smile on her face and enjoys life and works hard in addition to having fun with her two children, my great

grandchildren, Alex and Carter. Adam, Sam's brother, is a little more serious. He is a clever and very caring person, always willing to help you. He is a great dad to his two daughters Riley and Erin. Jenny is a very quiet girl and serious with a wonderful sense of humour. She is a great mom to her daughter, my great grandchild Olive. Jenny will be blessed with her second child in the summer of this year, she has chosen to be surprised rather than know if she will have a son or another daughter. Her brother, Jim, my grandson, was diagnosed with Autism when he was very young. It has been such a challenge for him and my son over the years and I am very proud of what he has accomplished. Jim lives in his own house with the assistance of his dedicated cared workers.

Hank is working very steadily to finish his education in Vancouver. He has always been very caring and good to me. His sister, Diane, has always been working very hard to finish her studies. She has a great sense of humour and is lots of fun. She has recently graduated and will soon be heading to Jasper for her first job in the hospitality industry.

All of these grandchildren have lives of their own now; I pray that they will continue to be healthy, successful and happy.

And then there are my three youngest grandchildren who have also brought much joy and happiness into my life. Spenser is 19 years old and currently attending the California School of the Arts. I wish for him success in his chosen field. What great Halloween parties he would give, they were unforgettable, and the girls like him. Andre is 18 and going to the Robert Land Military Academy. He is currently in his last year there. He is a very good looking lad with a great deal of confidence about his future. He has been accepted at three universities, and by the way, he looks so handsome in his uniform. He is such a nice young man and I wish for him every success.

And of course, Stephanie 18 with her bubbling personality has graduated from high school and has been accepted to the Police preparation program at Humber College. Her goal is to be a police officer. Stephanie is very creative and does arts and crafts, some of which she has won awards for. She loves to read as well as watch movies and play sports. She was a soccer star with numerous awards. Her face shines with love!

My claim to fame

When I was in England during the war, they held a country fair in the local park. Running races were on the program. I was a runner so I decided to enter one of the races. I sailed through, hands down, coming first. A young lady was sitting on the grass crying, a gentleman came over to me and asked me if I was interested in joining the "Birchfield Warriors, the largest track and field club in England because I had just beaten their star runner. I said I was sorry; I could not do this because I was four months pregnant. The girl stopped crying and became hysterical; she had been beaten by a pregnant woman!

Remember, we are all products of our own experiences and the experiences of those that have come before us – our own mortality. You know the old saying, you can't choose your relatives but you can choose your friends, but as for me, I will keep my family!!!

And thanks all for the memories..... **Love MOM**