



Early Memories of Lac Bernard

During the summer of 2005, Sue wrote a book of her memories of Lac Bernard. As you probably know, Sue was a very talented person but what you may not have known is that she was a prolific writer. She wrote journals for many years, cookbooks that she shared with family, a book about her early childhood years and hundreds (if not thousands) of letters to old and new friends. In many cases, her letters were to people that needed help in their lives.

She dedicated this book to her mother who, in fact, was the source of those many memories since Sue had not been born when some of the events took place.

Not wanting to change the style or edit the contents, I simply scanned the pages. I only added this forward and 2 pictures.

I hope that you enjoy this trip back in time.

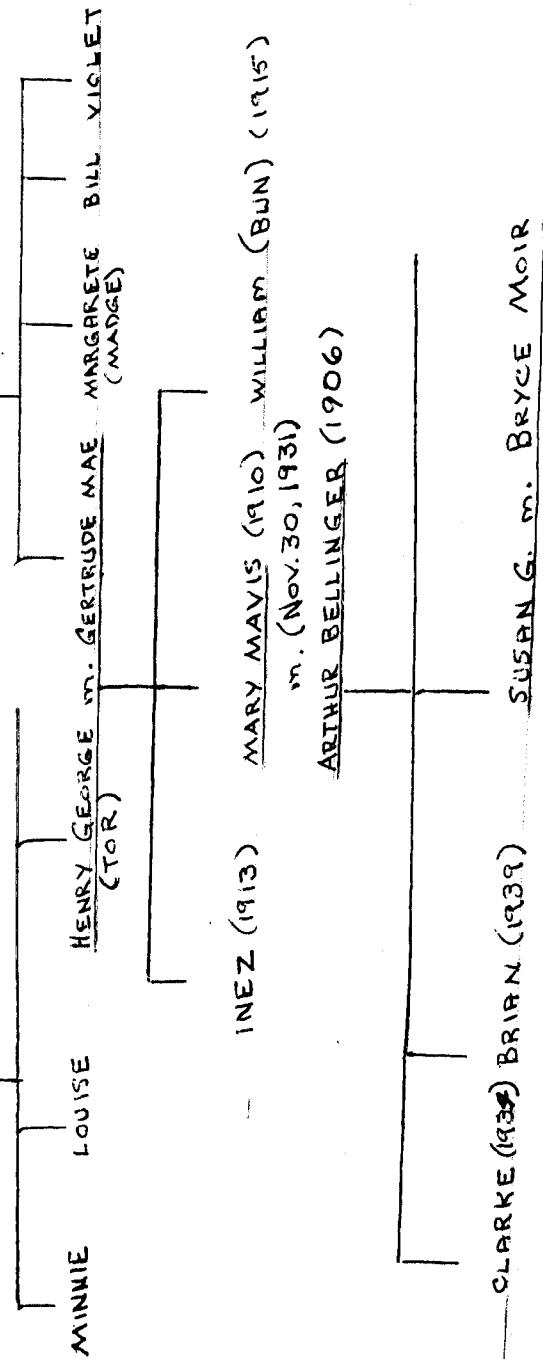
Bryce

This book is dedicated to
the memory of
my Mother

Mary Davis Clarke

Nov. 3, 1910 -
July 6, 2005

H. G. CLARKE m. Mary Amelia Mac Donald
John Hyland m. Mary Jane (Jennie) Butler



Lac Bernard, Quebec, 2005

Should have been around the beginning of the last century that my grandfather discovered his life-long love of the Gatineau.

As a young man, George Clarke boarded the old steam train in Hull, riding it up the Gatineau, fishing pole & tackle box in hand. He would hop off where & when his mood would take him, walking there back roads, finding the many small lakes then teeming with fish & eel.

On one of these jaunts, he left the train at Glebe where he found the local postmaster waiting with his buckboard to collect the mail from the train. George hitched a ride with him back to the post office at Lanielles. (This was originally in the building that later became the general store & remains as such, now called "The Outpost".)

From there he would walk in to the different little lakes & eventually come to Hitchcock's farm & Deep Lake. He became friends with

old William Hitchel & his wife & so the charming remote little lake on their farm became his frequent destination.

During the summer of 1915, the Hitchels built a new farmhouse directly across the road from their original one. They offered to rent the old house to my grandfather & his young wife & family for the summer season of 1916.

And so the following summer the whole family loaded all they could carry to get them through two months in the back onto the steam train & left the city. William met them in Blaine with his horse & buggy & they climbed aboard to bump & jolt their way the seven miles to the farm, where they paid \$3⁵⁰/we-

Gerga (Tor) was a civil servant with an office in the Parliament buildings, so I imagine he must have commuted or just been at the farm on weekends.

That first summer trip must have been quite a shock for my grandmother. Tor was a city girl & here she was, deposited in this

tiny, isolated wooded area, populated then by all manner of Canadian wildlife — in abundance! — & only a few humans who were strangers to her.

She arrived that day with her three small children, Thavis (my mom) who was still 5, Lorey 3 and Bea who would be one year that July. Thavis remembered him, that first summer, crawling across the dirt road to Mrs. Hitchel. Anyways, that first day my grandmother just sank down on the porch steps, sat with her face in her hands & cried her heart out. Low time, though, she came to love the area at least as much & maybe more than Tor did.

Mother had wonderful, happy memories of her childhood years at Hitchel's farm. During the winter, Tor would begin to fill quart sealers with sugar, flour, cereals & all the food she could pack into the fine large wicker hamper that would sit waiting in the back of

Their big old-fashioned dining room at 324 D'goode St. in Sandy Hill. Everything would be loaded onto the Gatineau train to Blonac where William Hitchel would meet them with an 'express wagon' pulled by two big slow mack horses, Queenie & Rowdie. It would be dark by the time they reached the farm.

Over the course of the summer, as she emptied those quart sealers, Bert would refill them with raspberries & blackberries for the winter. She loved picking berries & would later tell my mother that they often shared the berry patch with a black bear. She would quietly steer her children in an opposite direction & never felt she was in danger.

They There were good berry bushes growing along the shores of Mud Lake, hanging over the water, & she would take planks of wood down there, lay them across the quick sand, lie on her stomach on the planks & pick berries.

She would return to the city with at least \$5

quarts of berries canned for the winter.

They kept an old row boat on Deep Lake & my grandmother loved to fish. Couldn't swim & the lake is "bottomless," but she'd fish for hours. The lake was full of black water snakes & they'd follow the boat. Mom told me, too, that her Dad was sitting on the big flat rock beside that lake one day, with his line in the water & his catch on the rock beside him when an eel streaked out of the lake & stole one of his fish!

My Grandmother sat in her boat one day & watched as a mother bear brought her two cubs down to the lake to teach them to swim. She would toss one cub into the water & as he came spluttering back to shore & escaped, bawling, into the bush, she'd throw the second one in, turn & chase down the first cub & repeat the whole process. Mom said she often thought of that story years later when she herself was teaching my brothers to swim. She said they reacted exactly as the cub

had done: one nursing screaming as soon as she turned her attention to the other.

Mother & Honey & Ben learned to swim in Hoffet's Bay at Lake Bernard — they were never allowed to swim in Deep Lake.

They always described Mrs. Hitchel as a "dear old lady" & she loved her. I think they really came to feel like family over the years. The old farmhouse was never used by anyone else & my grandparents left their belongings there over the winter — it must have felt like their own.

Mrs. Hitchel baked big cookies for the kids & they would smell them cooking & cross the road, careful to avoid the one crock & vicious goose who (my Mother swore!) would lie in wait for them to appear.

That goose would chase them & corner them & hold them terrorized!

The farm was a wonderful summer playground for three little kids, feeding calves & chickens, riding on the hay wagon

& all three kids climbing onto old Rambey's back & riding him to the pasture as William led him there each night.

The Hitchel's collie was always thrilled to see the dog-loving Clarke family arrive. The farmers had no use for an animal except for the work or profit or food it could provide & they couldn't imagine why one would give affection to a dog.

All the same, the very patient Mrs. Hitchel never said a word of complaint as she went to fetch water & frequently found 'pet' turtles & frogs in her rain barrel!

Tor's parents used to rent from the Chilcott's (another farm — one of those now owned by Sprouts) for their holiday but I don't know how often or for how long they did this.

Aunt's sister, Madge, & her husband O.B. were frequent visitors so the Clarke kids

grew up with a close relationship with their Villeneuve cousins.

At some point during this time, Bert's widowed mother, Mary Jane (Jennie) Hyland came to live with them as well. She was a mean-spirited old thing & Tom did not have happy memories of her, where she adored her Grannie Clarke. That's what leads me to believe the senior Clarke's weren't summering here too much: Tom never had summer lake stories about them.

One of my favourite stories (as a child) was a tale Mother told of Ira Shood's bull & how he wandered onto Hitchel land & ventured too close to Thad Lake. It was evening when he began to bawl, mired in quick sand & unable to escape, just beyond the rail fence at the bottom of the pasture where the old house sat. William & Ira were not on good terms for some reason & so he refused to either help the bull or go down

the road to Thad's farm & tell him. Tom said they listened to that bull bawl all night. Shortly after they got up the next morning, the bawling stopped. He must have managed to find a solid rock with his feet because he came surging up out of the mud, looking like a great clay bear. He came raging across the lower pasture shaking his great mud-covered head & roaring. His mother & her family watched from their window, he reached the rail fence, threw head & shoulders under the rail & flung the fence skyward "like match-sticks".

Tom said the night spent trapped in the quick-sand had left him raving mad.

William Hitchcock would sit on the porch in the evening & tell local ghost stories & then learned that skill well at the old felha's knee.

He, in turn, would sit enthralled as Father repeated his stories in hushed tones on dark summer evenings, candles & coboil casting an eerie glow on the faces of his audience.

A Child in Winter

There was a passage across the mountain behind the lower pasture, directly facing Hitchcock's house. This path was not easily seen, nor easily used. Over this crossing, on the far side of the mountain, a man and his wife owned a small farm. They had just one child: a little girl.

One fall the child became very ill, as so many did back then, and she died.

Devastated by grief, the man & his wife

carried their little girl's body across the mountain to be buried in the cemetery.

The poor mother mourned her child with broken heart, well into the cold winter months.

Weakened by grief and losing her will to live, she quickly fell ill herself & died of pneumonia.

Her husband once again made his sad journey across the mountain.

The snow was fresh-fallen & deep as he set out that evening, his wife wrapped in blankets & strapped to the toboggan.

The light was quickly failing. He was forced to harness himself to the sled, juggling a fat lantern whose meagre glow was his only companion.

Darkness had fallen as he reached the Hitchcock's farm. They took him in & gave him a warm place to sleep.

The following morning when he

Left the house, a stranger sight met his eyes.

There in the snow were the tracks of the tuggers and those of his own boots. Beside these tracks, all the way back across the mountain path, were the footprints of a small child.

William told a tale one night of a personal encounter, leaving his young listeners shivering in their boots:

It seems he was returning late one night from a trip along the Reupert road. Fog had gathered in the hollows as he approached the Reupert cemetery & heard a second set of hoof-beats fall in with those of his old horse. He waited for the horseman to approach & pass his buck-board thinking he would want to get beyond William's plodding pace.

Instead, the stranger continued to keep pace, riding along barely behind the wagon.

Becoming annoyed, the old man urged his tired horse forward & into a quick trot.

Again, the horseman kept pace.

As William slowed, the horseman slowed.

Truly angry now, William shouted into the fog " You can pass me, man, or

"tie your horse to my wagon & ride with me, but stop crowding me!"

With that, he turned to face the stranger & found himself staring at a headless spectre astride a great black & snorting horse.

As his story ended, his audience prepared to make their way home. Some of the young fellows who had gathered there that evening poking fun at the Rabbit lad who must ride his bike right past that same Rupert cemetery.

The boy laughed them off, climbed on his bike & set off showing more bravado than he felt.

Darkness was falling & a summer fog rising as the boy on his bike neared the graveyard. The old man's story echoed through his mind & he felt the hairs stand up on the back of his neck.

Gripping the handlebar with sweaty palms, he thought:

"I'll stand up & pedal fast & hard & get past it quick!"

And so he stood up on the pedals — and an unseen hand grabbed the back of his jacket & yanked him back down.

Truly frightened now, he pedalled as hard & fast as he could, not daring to turn & look behind.

Finally finding the courage to try again, desperate to move with more speed, he stood on the pedals a second time. Again, the hand grabbed & yanked & he found himself back on the seat.

As he neared the far side of the cemetery, trembling now & close to tears, he stood once more. And once more, the hand grabbed, the hand yanked & down he sat.

Too scared to try again, legs pumping

& breath coming short & quick, he finally saw the welcome lights of home approaching.

As he turned into his own lane, relaxing a bit with the feeling of safety that only "home" can give, he decided to try one more time. He was certain he must be alone now. Taking a deep breath, gritting his teeth & tightening his grip on the handlebars, he rose again to his feet.

And again — down he was pulled. This time, surprise overcame his fear & he turned to look behind.

There he saw the hands that had used him so cruelly: the back hem of his jacket was caught tight under the seat of his bike.

Purchase of Land - Lac Bernard

Jennie Butler Hyland had one son, my grandmother's only brother, Bill.

In November of 1926, Bill was working for the "Edison Electric Company" in Chicago, Illinois.

Having been assured the power was shut down, he was high on a ladder about to begin work on the lines when he touched a live wire. The resulting jolt knocked him from the ladder and he plummetted to the ground below.

He sustained a broken back & I don't know what other injuries. I told come back to Jennie Hyland that her son was dying in Chicago.

By now, Jennie & I was certainly living with Fred & Tor. They had a house, Tor's government salary, three kids & no extra money. Fred's sister, Thadge, had married the very wealthy O.B. Tellgemeier. Thadge was much like her hard-nosed mother & nothing at all like her gentle, big-hearted sister,

Hurst. When Grannie Hyland was widowed & needed a home, Thaddeus had refused to have her. Now, Thaddeus wanted desperately to be by her brother's side. She hated the thought of him being so far away & alone with death approaching. So she streaked herself & swallowed her pride & asked her sister to lend her money for the train fare to Chicago. Thaddeus turned her down, accusing her of "just looking for a free trip".

A few days later, a neighbour came to Hurst & handed her the train fare. While she was packing, a telegram arrived, informing them that Bill had died.

By the summer of 1927, Grannie Hyland had received a compensation cheque from the Edison Electric Co. With this money she bought herself a fur coat, a car (Chevrolet delux sedan) for Tom & Hurst for \$957.00 and 2 acres of lake-front land at Lake Bernard for \$125.00 an acre.

This had been farm land belonging to James McCallendar & this same farmer agreed to build their original log cottage for \$375.00.

Mother was 16 when Bill died. Tom couldn't drive a car because he had lost the vision in one eye to small pox a few years earlier. So Mother learned to drive & it was she who transported the family back up the Waterway in the summer of 1928, to bid farewell to Hitchcock's farm-house & begin their happy years here at The Lake.

They christened the land & cottage
"Lonesome Hurst."

Stopping out of chronological order
for a moment, this may be as good a place
as any to describe the other gains to our
family following Bill's death.

While in Chicago he had been fortunate
to find true friendship with a young
couple, Lindy & Artie Berg. Following his
death, Dent was in contact with these kind
friends who had been there for her brother
when she was unable to be. And so they
formed a bond in their mutual grief.

This bond grew into a close and
lasting friendship when the Berg's
travelled to Canada the following year to
visit Bill's grave & meet his family.
In the years to follow, Lindy & Artie made,
if not annual then certainly frequent, trips
to "Somewhere" where they became "family".

On one of these summer visits, they brought
their little niece with them. Berrie was 5 or
6 & Mom always remembered her as a cute
little thing with big eyes & curly hair.

After my grandparents had both passed away, Andy & Hartie continued their summer visits, staying with Thom & Dad. As a small child I thought of them as distant grandparents (I'd never known my own) & loved them very much. They were childless & had their niece Bernice & her family, but I think they thought of us as family, too. They kept coming here well into old age & even after Andy died, Hartie made the trip at least once.

Of course, by then something big had happened that really tied them to us & truly did make us family.

In the summer of 1959, Andy & Hartie decided to once again make their trip to Canada but not alone. They would be accompanied by Bernice, her husband George & their three girls. Now, the younger two were a little older & a little younger than I was so I would be expected to entertain & behavioral Janet & Fannie. The oldest

daughter was 4 years younger than Brian & at 20, he was instructed to entertain the 16 year old Judy & show her around Ottawa.

Meanwhile Dad scrambled around up here, figuring out where & how everyone was to sleep — (he turned the boathouse into a sleep cabin & built the little cabin at this time just for their visit!) Brian went around grumbling about Father's stupid friend's daughter!

Finally, his best friend Doug Legere said he'd take her out. However, when the family arrived from Chicago, Brian took one look at Judy — & she took a look back — & he was smitten.

The next few years were not without turmoil & break-ups, new loves & even an engagement but eventually they found their way back to each other (not without a wee bit of behind-the-scenes help from Thom & Hartie) and the rest, as they say, is history. Brian &

Judy were married on the 3rd of July, 1965
with her sister Janet as maid-of-honour &
Peri & I as bride maids.

As you see, Judy came to the family
as a new bride but had her own family
history of sorts here at Lake Bernard.

And so we returned to that fond summer of
1928.

As I have said, Mother was learning to
drive the new car. At that time this was
a long slow trip on gravel roads all the
way up from Null. Tom & Honey & Ben
were each allowed to bring a friend, too,
so that made 8 people & all their "stuff".
There was a sort of fold-out iron rack on one
running board for extra luggage.

On the first trip up in the new car,
they started up a long hill & suddenly
a terrible burning smell hit their noses,
smoke began to fill the air, & Tom
screamed "We're on fire!", the passengers
all jumped out & left Tom alone at
the wheel. He had unwittingly left the
emergency brake on!

For many years then, Tom brought Oga
Harris for the summer, Honey had Hazel
Cullen & Ben would bring Connie Meyers.
Tom always remembered one trip when there

wasn't going to be enough room for everyone & my grandmother called there. They said & asked if Connie could perhaps be put on the train & they would go back out & pick him up in Blaine. Mrs. Mayers replied, "If Connie isn't good enough to ride in the car with the rest of you, he can stay at home."

There was angry about that her whole life, saying Mrs. Mayers was just too cheap to pay the train fare & there was Connie getting a free 3 month vacation, & his mother never sending as much as a bottle of jam.

So the end, Mother drove the rest of them up to the lake then had to turn around, drive all the way back to Ottawa for Connie.

The Clarkes had the only cottage on this side of the lake and there were only a few others on the lake in total. You must picture this long ago place, then, as wild and unsettled as ever it was.

Just at the edge of the main road there was an iron gate opening into a fenced pasture. A dirt track ran across this field to another gate at the far side. (This pasture included the lot that is now Hartman's). Here the track continued, as the terrain dipped towards the lake shore, and ran through our land following the same path as our road does today.

Thinking that far property boundary, another fence ran up from the lake, circling a second pasture (Smiley's lot).

James Mc Clelland owned all the surrounding land. Some years after the Clarkes built, Mc Clelland decided to sell cottages lots out along the Point. There was

not a road around our mountains & out the pass at that time. He arrived at our boundary a day with many cars & trucks asking if they might drive across our road to picnic in the far pasture.

Alarm bells went off in Tor's mind as he tried to recall an obscure law. He believed the passage of so many vehicles would result in a public access road. Tor was afraid that giving his permission could open our road to all those new cottages. It certainly would have saved McClelland the difficult cut around the mountain.

So he said, "No . . ." they were welcome to park & walk through, but not drive.

The McClellands were furious. The next time they went to the city, Tor's oldest returned to find their cottage vandalized and the walls smeared with cow manure.

Hart said she felt like walking right back out & setting fire to the place.

There were bad feelings between the Chernes & the McClellands for many years afterwards, but we kept our private road. Mother always attributed that to her Dad's quick thinking all those years ago.

The McClellands had a large two-storey farmhouse, set back from the lake on a sloped lawn or pasture. They grandmother bought her milk & eggs from there. The McClelland baked goods as well. She was an enterprising woman, Mrs. McClelland, opening her big main room on Saturday nights as a gathering place for the area teens. They would meet there, dance & hang out & buy the things & goodies she would sell from a canteen-type booth set up for the purpose.

I seem to remember them mentioning a juke-box but I have no idea how it could have been powered. There was indeed an

old juke-box in that room when I was a teenager & friends with Terry, but many years had passed & we had electricity here by the 60's.

Anyway, Thom & Olga, Loney & Hazel would walk over to the Clelland farm house on Saturday nights.

On one of those evenings Hazel was missing from the group — I don't know why — when the other three set out. It was raining that night and my grandmother had managed to shane Grannie Hylan into lending them her rain cape. So off they went, with a lantern to see their way home.

Talking to the Clellands meant crossing "the field" & climbing a gate & Mother was always uneasy because William Thitchel's cattle roamed free & among them was a huge, cross, red bull with a curly white face. She had complained to Thitchel about him &

told him she was afraid of being chased & run down. Old Thitchel just brushed her off & advised her to grab him by the ring on his nose if he ran at her.

Now, I suppose it isn't difficult for any of us to imagine the reaction of a young girl to that advice — even a fiesty girl like Thainie.

So, that rainy Saturday night the girls confided their fear & unease to the young lads gathered at the Clellands'. For the most part, these were farm boys & being typical teenagers, they gleefully teased the girls about being afraid of the bull.

As the girls set out for home, they hadn't walked far along the dark, dirt road when they began to hear sounds behind them.

As they neared the field, Thom between Loney & Olga & wearing Grannie Hylan's rain cape, they heard a distinctive snorting

sound behind them, followed by a deep-throated moan....

"Don't look! Don't pay any attention... it's just those boys trying to scare us!" hissed my Mother.

They hurried along the wet, dark road & soon heard the sound again.

And again Mother warned the girls to ignore what they were hearing.

A few steps later, my Mother felt hot air on the back of her neck. Hot puff of air on the back of her neck.

lling
Slowly turning her head to look, she found herself nose-to-nose with the bull.

The three girls screamed & tore away towards the gate & safety, slipping in the wet, muddy mud. The bull close on their heels.

When they reached the gate, it took both Thom & Loney pushing & lifting & pulling

shoving to get the now hysterical Olga up & over the gate! Loney followed & finally Thom was over a safe. As her feet touched the ground, her knees buckled & she collapsed into a deep mud-puddle.

She couldn't get up. Her legs simply refused to hold her.

Loney & Olga — both hysterical & sobbing now — each grabbed an arm & pulled & tugged till they had her up & dragged her home.

The girls burst through the door of the cottage, sobbing & dripping & covered in mud. As they tearfully described their flight home, Grannie Nyland stood back looking them over from head to toe.

"And where" she asked, "is my rain cape?"

Silence fell as the girls & Tom & I all turned to look at Grannie. She stood there

wet & dishevelled and, indeed, without
the rain cap.

Dear old Grannie Ryland was all
set to send Mother right back to the puddle
by the gate to retrieve the chalk. They argued
mother prevailed, though, & there is
stayed till morning.

This was my favourite bed-time story
when I was a child.



Mother did not like Grannie Ryland.
She must have been a feisty old thing,
though, & lived it up here because she
would stay alone through the month of
September after the family returned to
Ottawa. She had a small, centre-door
log cabin behind the main cottage, just
at the edge of the woods.

The cane brier got some frightening
thunderstorms up ~~here~~ here, raging in
across the water. Grannie Ryland
was terrified of these summer storms.

At the first sound of thunder or streak
of lightning, she would have every-
one down on their knees, sprinkling
them with Holy water.

One day, Thom & Olga were to
drive in to Ottawa & Grannie told
them to go to the church & refill her empty
bottle with Holy water. The two girls
set off, had a good & busy day &
were just approaching Thatched's farm

on the return trip
when they realized they'd forgotten
Ginnie's Holy water.

They knew there would be no forgive-
ness waiting if they showed up empty-
handed & they sure couldn't drive back
to the city in water an hour like we
carried. So Thom happened out at
Whitchel's, ran over to their well, &
filled Ginnie's bottle with well-water.

Time passed & more-the-wiser.
And then a storm blew in.

Down on their knees they went & out
came the bottle & Ginnie began to
sprinkle.

Trying to keep their faces straight,
the girls felt the droplets hit & dissolved
into giggles.

Reeling back in horror, Ginnie
shouted at her daughter,

"Heathens! You're raising a bunch
of Heathens! Laughing at the Lord's
Holy water!"

Of course, the more she yelled the
harder they laughed & I suppose she
went to her grave thinking they were
heathens. They certainly couldn't
confess it was just Whitchel's
well-water.

Thom's grandmother spent hours
sitting out in the middle of the bay
in her row-boat, fishing.

Thom said she thought, in retro-
spect, that her mother may have just
been trying to escape six kids. She
said she rarely came home with fish.

She loved ghost stories & loved to
scare the kids. One night when
the girls had some boys visiting &
had been sitting on the big porch
telling ghost stories, she'd threw a white
sheet over herself & "floated" through
the black-dark trees. Thom said those

boys went straight off the porch — over the railing, never mind the stairs — down the hill to their boats as fast as their feet could carry them.

I never knew my grandmother, but Mother's stories about her & love for her allowed me to get to know her in a sense.

She was patient & "lots of fun", quick to laugh. She was kind & sympathetic & helped those less fortunate with a quiet grace & true acts of charity. She taught her family to give without seeking: that if you perform a good act here and seek praise or gratitude for it, then you have received your reward here, on earth. Do it quietly, keep it in your heart & you will be rewarded in Heaven.

Sometimes towards the end of that first summer of '27, as their new log cottage neared completion, Tom hired a young city neighbour to bring furniture up in his truck.

Ed Bellinger was a General Contractor in Ottawa & lived right across the street from Tom & Ethel. His 20 year old son, Ed, had now been out of school & working for his father for some time.

Perhaps he had been admiring my mother, Thavis, from afar — I don't know. I do know that he arrived at Lake Bernard with his truck - load of furniture & much flirting followed.

I don't think the initial attraction was mutual; not entirely. Mom thought he was scrawny & a little sickly looking & she already had a boyfriend.

So when he asked her out, she thought she was smart & would scare him off.

by replying, "You'll have to ask my father."

He immediately approached Tom who said, "Sure!"

So began their life-long romance, & Dad's presence here at the lake.

They were married four years later on Nov. 30, 1931, just weeks after Mother's 21st birthday, Dad having turned 25 that October.

During their first year of marriage they shared the cottage with Tom, Fred & the rest of the family.

late in the summer of 1934 my mother was very pregnant when she & Dad & Henry started home from the city. Their car was struck by a drunk driver, left the road & rolled, coming to a stop, upside-down, in a farmer's field. Dad & Henry were thrown clear. Then came to to the sound of Henry's voice calling her name. They ^{had} runned,

trapped, in the over-turned car. She told me years later that the only thing that saved her life was the newly plowed ~~and~~ trough in that farmer's field. Her head was lying in the ditch & would otherwise have been crushed by the weight of the car.

Her pregnancy was in jeopardy & bed-rest followed the accident. Her ear was nearly severed, too, & had to be re-attached.

Clarke was born Dec. 23 that year.

Thom always said they built this cottage "when Clarke was about 3". I think it was probably the summer of 1938. Clarke would have turned 4 that December & Brian was born in January (22) 1939.

Those early years of motherhood were not easy for my Mother as she watched her own Mother's health decline.

Dad had married at a time when birth control was really not available to "respectable" women, & of course was unacceptable by the Catholic Church.

Picking together what my Mother has told me, I think my Grandmother experienced pre-eclampsia during her pregnancies. Mom said too many pregnancies & miscarriages had ruined her kidneys & resulted in uncontrollable high blood pressure.

By the time Clarke was born she had suffered a series of strokes & was left fairly disabled. She adored her new baby grandson, though, & used to push him in his big, bouncy pram — it acted like a "walker" for her, really.

She had been a beautiful young woman but, as Mom told me, the stroke had turned her into "a little old lady well before her time".

My Grandmother died in 1938, just months before my brother Brian's birth that next January.

At that time, there was a new swing towards having a baby in hospital rather than at home. Having embraced the wisdom of this, doctors took it seriously indeed — keeping baby & mother in hospital seven to ten days!

When Brian was born, Dad took advantage of their hospital stay & painted the baby's room. The smell lingered, however, longer than Dad expected & so he was reluctant to have them come home to those fumes.

They decided to have Mom & the baby stay with Tom & Loney in their family home

on Chestnut Avenue until the scared smell was gone.

The first night with Brian in her颤颤的 home, Thom had him sleeping in a basket beside her bed when she awoke in the night. She saw a light moving about the room & eventually coming to hover over her sleeping child. With the light she experienced an overwhelming feeling of her Mother's presence. She told me she quite naturally found herself thinking, "Oh, Mother has come to see the baby".

Early the next morning, she recounted the experience to Loney as they sat together at the kitchen table. They agreed that they would not share this with Tor, who was still suffering the early grief of his loss.

Later, though, when their Father came down to the kitchen, this is what he said:

"You know, I had the strangest feeling that your Mother was in the

house last night. Remember how she used to grab my shoulder & shake to wake me up? Well, I was sure she shook me awake in the night."

Two years later, in 1940, Loney married Fred Leed and they moved in with Tor (& Bess) on Chestnut because they lived there, & Loney took care of her father, until Tor's death in 1948.

During those intervening years then, Tor would come up to the lake for the summers & stay in his own cottage with Loney, moving in here with Thom if Loney went home.

Brian & Clarke have wonderful memories of their grandfather, who swore like a trooper & played like a kid. He would babysit & make them ice-cream plates with strawberry cream soda, let them tie him up & color on his bald head. He spent good time with them up here — in the

bush & on the lake. They grew up, both of them, wanting very much to be the same kind of tramps & leave the same kind of memories as he did.

We'd been told by the doctor that he needed to quit drinking & they were determined to see him do that. So he would come up here with her & hide a bottle down here at Thom's. The daughters let it pass because they figured it was better he have a little nip in front of Thom than sneak off & drink more somewhere else.

The two girls would periodically mount a search, too, to round up any bottles he'd hidden around the property, often finding one in the wood pile.

During the war years, '43 - '45, while Ben was overseas, there would have been a great deal of stress. But Tod was always a heavy drinker, according to Thom. He just held it well & was a good-natured man.

Tod died on the 1st of September, 1948, two months before I was born.

Ben returned from the war & took his bride, Beryl, who he had married just before he shipped out, & moved to Halifax where he lived until his sudden death in October of 1958.

Although he came back to visit, of course, he never used his share of the land here at Lake Bernard & the little log cabin he had built at the back of the property stood empty & fell into ruin. It is still

there, as I write this; roof gone & fallen in, old steel bed rusting inside.

Bun & Beryl did not have children & when he died, she signed his shares over to my Mother. (of this land)

Bun was a tall, good-looking man, Mother's baby brother. She always thought of Loney & Bun as "hers." As the eldest child she had been made responsible for them at a very early age. She blamed the man for Burnie's death — all he had seen & been through. He had a massive heart attack, was recovering in hospital & had a second, fatal one the day he was to be released.

Mother, who loved baseball, was watching the world series when Beryl called to tell her that her brother had died.

She threw the telephone receiver away from her & stood screaming. She said later that she thought, "Why doesn't someone shut that woman up?" She never watched another game.

Bun's death had come on the heels of Loney's death just months before in February, 1958. The kids all loved Loney very much & suffered through those two years of her illness right alongside Mom & Dad. I have described our relationships & her death & suffering before this is not the place.

It is important to mention it here only because it had repercussions here at Lake Bernard.

Loney died at the age of 44, without a will. Her share here at the lake was, therefore, held in trust until the estate could be settled. This dragged on for many years, during which time we were not allowed to build or change things up here.

Brian had built his log cabin on the hill behind us years before (he started it the summer he was 12 & finished the year he was 16). So when he & Judy married in '65, they had the original cabin there to use.

(Originally, this cabin was what is now the living room). married in 1958 and

Clarke & Jud, however, were forced to make do with the little boathouse, 8' x 18' & were still using it when Margot was born. 6 or 7 children & two adults: it was just wall-to-wall beds.

The estate was eventually settled & Clarke was finally permitted to build, the summer Margot was a baby of 1 year +.

This A-frame cottage was built on the section of land that would have been the middle "lot" & Sam's share.

Bud Head had remarried nine years after Honey's death. His new wife certainly didn't want to come up here & in fairness, I imagine it would have been difficult for him — all the memories of Honey up here. He had never used the place after her death.

So in the early 70's when he offered to sell us that third, we bought it.

We spent the money on a mobile camper on

the way back to Ottawa.

The old log cottage, meanwhile, had stood empty for most of these years. (Bud did rent it for a few years just after Honey died, to a family from Varenne named Cossineau.)

It was, by the time we acquired it, in ruin & getting dangerous. A local fellow came along & offered to tear it down for the wood, but he just ended up leaving us with a mess & worse off than we had been, so eventually Brian & Joyce finished tearing it down.

The big back lawn where I have so many childhood memories has overgrown now, & all but disappeared.

There is no sign at all of the building, just a few backer where the old "Barbeque" stood & the ruin of Bonnie's cabin.

When I was a small child, Dad was building "custom" homes & would frequently find a client who wanted one just like our own. So Dad would sell him our house & build a new one for us instead. In consequence we moved often — more or less once a year till I was 10.

I think this contributed to the importance our cottage had in my young life. It was the constant: the one place that would always still be "there". It was home.

Soon after Christmas I would begin to count the months, & then the weeks & finally the days. The 24th of May weekend — the prize at the end of a long cold winter. Our first weekend stay of the season, our "open-up-the-cottage" weekend. Black-flies would be there to greet us, covering the car's windows as soon as we stopped on the road behind the cottage. They apparently looked like the

feast laid in front of the dying man. She'd run from the car to the cottage, & still we'd lose some flesh & blood before we were safe inside. I didn't care. I was home.

Through the month of June, while I was still in school, Mom would start packing for the lake early Friday morning.

By the time Dad got home from work grocery bags would be assembled, marching down the hall beside suitcases, carefully packed with extra old clothes & shoes.

She'd load the car & set off, the dog as excited as I. We'd know from the sight of the first suitcase & wait impatiently by the door all day. It was the one & only circumstance when we knew he'd stay put & not go for a run.

The old Gatineau highway was two lanes back then, winding like a snake, treacherous curves with steep hills & spectacular views. There were few places to pass another car safely so it could be a long, slow trip. The drive back to Ottawa was further hindered when we'd get stuck behind a logging truck, piled high with ten & twelve foot logs precariously held in place by a few thick chains. With every bump in the road, the entire stack would jump. You didn't dare follow too closely in case a log came tumbling out onto the road.

The highway between Wakefield & Illevoile was narrow, hemmed on one side by the Gatineau river & railroad tracks and on the other by a high, imposing wall of rock. The road had been "cut" many years earlier by dynamite blasting and on one section of the remaining wall, a rock had emerged in the shape of a face.

It could have been sculpted, it was so

flawless, the perfect image of an Indian chief. Complete with lowering brow, hawk-shaped nose, stern mouth & full head-dress, he was as large as a kitchen-table. A member of the road crew, with a creative eye, had embellished him with paint, accenting his features & halo of feathers. Each spring the road crew would refresh his paint as they did the road. I would watch eagerly for "my Indian" on every trip, never quite sure which crew would bring him into view, always afraid I'd miss him.

One spring we came to that crew only to discover that they had planted & widened the road. My Indian had disappeared.

Come the end of June, school would end & we would move to the Lake for July & August. I'd pack the station-wagon to the roof & off we'd go. No seat belts back then, the dog & I standing up in the back-seat so we could hang over Mom & Dad's shoulders. I was careful not to put anything small in my mouth because Brian got a pecary in his one trip. They hit a bumper & he swallowed the pecary.

Mom would be balancing plants on her lap or between her feet, having slipped them into the car at the last minute, sometime after Dad ~~would~~ protested that there wasn't room to add a toothpick.

No sooner had the car stopped behind the cottage than I would leap out and joyously become a wee wild thing, small creature of the bush, abandoning my shoes & hairbrush, embracing every creature that crossed my path.

My poor Mother would spend all summer trying in vain to put shoes on my feet. By September my little soles would be as thick & tough as old shoe leather, despite the frequent removal of splinters & thorns. Where I'd see Mom coming at me with a sewing needle, I'd shriek "Get Auntie home!"

Loney was in the old family cottage, down the road & up the hill. I'd run back & forth to visit & picnic, we'd play croquet on her big lawn & she had a gentle sure hand removing shivers. She thought she was a wonderful cook, too, because she'd make us Kraft dinner for lunch!

We didn't have electricity or running water in those days. Mom had a pail on a pulley-line that ran from the back porch down the hill & into the lake. She would haul it back up slushing clear, clear lake water. It was quite a day of celebration when Dad installed a hand-pump in the kitchen.

Mom cooked on a large wood-stove, heating the cottage to an unbearable degree on hot summer days. I remember her burning her eyebrows right off one year, too.

Brian and Clarke were given the responsibility of keeping the wood stacked and the ice-block replaced in the ice-box... a small wooden cabinet with two doors, one on top the other. The upper compartment held a large cake of ice, the bottom one our milk, eggs & other perishables. At the end of our road we had an ice-house that was filled each spring with sawdust & great blocks of ice. A large pair of

ice tonge was used to remove the pieces of ice & carry it drag it down the road. It was a slippery, messy job. The boys hated getting the ice & would insist there was still plenty left even if there was nothing bigger than a cube. I took my turn when I got big enough and can still feel the wet, sticky sanders clinging to my hands and clothes.

Those summer days were spent with free abandon: catching frogs, turtles, crayfish, minnows, goliwogs, feeding chipmunks, climbing trees & watching my fingers cling together and snap apart, coated with sticky pine gum.

I would fashion miniature canoes of discarded birch bark and set imaginary Indians to drift across the water.

I would roam the roads and bush, dog by my side, visiting Hitchel's farm, reveling in ^{the} solitude and unspoiled wilderness

of Deep Lake, collecting buttercups to hold under my chin where the sun would turn their petals to golden reflections against my skin, knowing I liked butter.

Horn & I would sit quietly in Hitchel's fields and carefully piece together long chains of daisies while our spaniel ran, leaping, through the tall grasses & wild flowers, chasing butterflies. The daisy necklace would tickle & itch around my throat and fill my shirt with tiny ants.

Red and yellow Indian-paintbrush fascinated me, but try as I did, they did not work at all well in paint!

We would pick buckets of berries . . . usually twice as they always seemed to end up spilled just as we'd finish picking. I'd be so disappointed when Horn used most of them in pie. But, oh, what a special treat to have those fresh-picked berries, warm from the sun,

sprinkled with sugar. I would pick through my bowl, eating the red raspberries first, carefully watching for the tiny, hard-shelled bugs competing for the fruit. The ones I missed would crunch between my teeth & fill my mouth with their strong, tell-tale flavor. I would leave my favorite blackberries till last, savouring them one at a time.

Brian may have wanted to trade me for a canol before I was born, but once I arrived he quickly became the kind of big brother every little girl should have. He never seemed to be too busy for me & always made me feel our hours together were as treasured by him as they were by me. He never treated me like a little girl but rather as a small but equally capable companion.

And so, by his side, I learned to fire a rifle and use a bow and arrow;

to creep through the woods without snapping twigs beneath my feet. He taught me to slide my paddle silently through the water, Indian-fashion, as our eyes scanned the shallows, seeking baby turtles.

Together we put worms on hooks to fish & captured crayfish, grabbing them in the second section, just behind the head, so their claws couldn't reach and pinch.

We had frog races by day & hunted tree toads and fire flies by night.

We built a "house" for the turtles we'd catch; one wooden, screen-bottomed tray that sat half in & half out of the water. It also had a lid to keep the racoons out at night.

When I was twelve I went away to camp for a week. I certainly wouldn't have had any interest in an ordinary summer camp. This was a western horse ranch where activity centred around horse-back riding but also

included archery, riflery and canoeing. Frontier Ranch had been around for some years, running as a boys' camp. That summer was the first when they allowed girls to attend for a few weeks in August.

Believe me, with all I had learned at my brother's side, I was the star of that show! As the other little girls struggled to pull back the bow, load the rifle & balance the canoe, I greeted all these activities like the old familiar friends they were.

One of my favorite memories goes back to a night when I was 10 or 11 & we were all sitting on the screen veranda. We began to hear a cry from the woods, a plaintive repetitive mewling / bawling sound.

"A baby bear!" said Brian, "A mother has tried it. Want to go see if we can find it?"

Well, sure, why not?

So off through the bush we tramped, Bee carrying a ~~red~~ "lantern" spot-like flash light & me, as always, barefoot.

As we searched the overhead branches with our light we eventually found a tree where, when we aimed the light, the crys would stop.

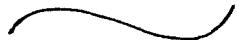
We became so absorbed in our quest to see the baby up there among the branches it took a moment to realize something was happening below, on the ground. Behind us. A great crashing & thrashing coming through the bush. Towards us.

"The mother!" Brian muttered, as he grabbed my hand & ordered "Run!" Slaved by my bare-feet, he soon scooped me up & ran stumbling through the trees, putting me down as we reached the road. In a panic, hearts racing, we ran to the screen-door, tried to yank it open — it was locked! Then had heard all the

commotion, too, & looked the door!

The damn bear pulled it off, hinges & all before she had it unlocked & let us safely in.

The bear, having run us off, never appeared from the bush, happy to return, I guess, to her little one.



Brian and Clarke rebelled against their swimming lessons when they were small, running from the lake screaming as soon as Mom would let go. (again, like my grandmother's mother bear & cub). Dad thought she was cruel to keep dragging them back in. She insisted that if he was going to build boats, she was going to make sure they could swim.

My Dad didn't swim. I'm not saying he couldn't swim; I think he could probably keep himself afloat but he didn't go in the water if he could avoid it. But he loved boats & built a few of them over the years.

I remember well the year I was 16 & Mother decided we needed & could afford a good second-hand fibre-glass "family" boat. A big comfortable boat to take guests on lake tours & use for water-skiing — Brian had taught me to ski. Well, she made the mistake of sending Dad & I out alone to answer an ad. The fellow with the boat for sale raised the garage door & my Dad & I just stood there with boat-lust in our eyes. A sporty little red & white hull. The "Flame Jewel".

Finally he turned to me & said "Do you like it?" "Oh yeah".

He arrived home, boat in tow, &

Thom was ready to kill us!)

Thom loved to swim & could float forever, gazing up at the sky. She taught me to swim by the time I was five and I loved the water. I soon learned to open my eyes under water and discovered a whole new world to explore. As long as there was no thunder or lightening, I would swim under during a rain, turning on my back to watch the raindrops dancing on the surface above me.

I still find great peace, an inner calm, when I am near to water. It soothes me.

Weather, of course, dominates at a cottage. Violent storms would sweep in, whipping the lake into white-capped waves that would rush to shore and retreat, leaving frothy, sudsy foam and weeds along the beach.

My Mother loved the storms. "We're going to get a blow!" she'd exclaim excitedly at the first sign of leaves twirling under in the wind. She'd take up her station by the big living-room window to watch the curtain of rain race across the lake towards us. She marveled at every clap of thunder & waited eagerly for each responding flash of light.

Those would be afternoons of snakes and ladders, or cards, or painting or sewing. Cozy inside, safe & content sharing time with family. Thom had to play cards & played to win!

I spent most of my childhood pretending to be an Indian ("Indians do not have blond hair & blue eyes" my Mother would tell me). I was fascinated by the history and lifestyle of these early people who lived so close to nature. I collected Indian figures, dressed in buckskin & beadwork. I painted on birchbark & prowled the woods, and paddled the lake.

Now I wasn't an Indian, there were always Mother's curtains. She seemed to have an endless supply in lace and florals... anything a little girl's imagination could need to dress-up & pretend.

Every Friday afternoon, as the work-week would draw to a close, we'd set out to make the long walk to Lavelle & meet Dad. He'd stop along the way to rest & have a drink or piece of fruit then continue on our way, swatting at horse flies as they persistantly circled our heads. He'd gather dust from each passing car, arriving at Lebreton's store hot and dirty, sunburned and tired.

The Lebretons were a funny pair, both horridly as sin. Henry had a great shock of black hair above a long, horsey face and a grin that exposed the biggest bucked-teeth I ever saw. His wife, Farger, was tall & bony and happy to brag to all who would listen that her short-cropped mousey hair was natural-curl.

He'd leave the store with Mother muttering "Natural-curl indeed! That's the worst home perm I've ever seen!" For years, any time Mom had a bad perm,

she'd exclaim in horror "Oh! I look just like Tharge Lebreton!"

Harvey & Tharge were childless but always had a female dalmation named Petunia. There were a number of Petunias over the years, I think.

Ther. Lebreton had a truck with a closed-in bed (like a van) and would drive in to the lake with milk, eggs, bread and anything else we'd order.

On Friday afternoon we'd sit on the steps in front of their store, eyes glued to the Alcome road for our first glimpse of Dad's car.

While we waited, I'd have my treat: usually a "mellow-hole" (a tilted-paper-like tube of ice-cream, pressed into a cone) and red licorice or Cracker Jacks or Mackintosh Taffy.

Thom would run in to the back of the big house next door (on the corner of the road to the lake) & check for mail

at Mrs. Hamilton's post office.

Eventually Dad's car would appear & I'd rush to flag him down as though he didn't know we'd be right there.

He didn't have a telephone, of course, so the drive back in to the lake would be a busy conversation as we shared any news of the last five days. He'd hurry ~~to~~ home with the promise of a quick plunge in the cool lake to wash away the dirt & grime, ease our sun-burned skin.

When the raspberries were ripe, we would often stop at the Hyndmans' little farm, just across from the Kakala road. The Hyndmans grew wonderful, big, plump, red berries & I'd beg to stop & buy a basket. In truth, it was the ride I enjoyed: sitting on Mac & Hugie's linoleum floor with a lap-full of the barn kittens Mac would always

gather for me. I always wanted a kitten but with Mother's cat phobia that was as close as I would come.

Thel & Hugh were very nice folks & Brian was very fond of them. As a young adult (& teen) he would drive up the St. Lawrence every Christmas to deliver a turkey & basket of goodies to Hugh & Thel as well as Gordon Hitchel.

As an elderly couple, they had two thugs break-in to their home, looking for money they didn't have. They beat the poor old pair very badly & left Hugh tied-up with piano wire. They beat Thel into unconsciousness & each time she'd come-to, they'd do it again. Finally she just lay on the floor & pretended to be out-cold. She heard one say,

"She'd better get out of here; I think we killed the old bitch."

They never really recovered & I think they sold, then, & moved to town. The wood-stove

in Brian's living room was a gift from Hughie & is from his farm house.

Gordon Hitchel never married & lived & toiled alone on his father's farm. He was a frequent visitor at our cottage, having known Thom all those years of childhood. He was red-haired, stout & florid-faced with bright-blue eyes and a perpetually crimson neck. He was proud to say he bathed once a year... and Thom would herd us all out onto the screen porch where he'd urinate. We'd all try to sit down vicinal of poor Gordon.

I was always welcome at Hitchel's farm & every spring I was allowed to choose a lamb to call my own for the summer.

He had many visitors over the summer months, some neighbouring cottagers like the Campbells and Brewsterheads (in Martineau & Smiley's cottages) Ken & Mary Thatcher who were good friends of Thom & Dad's. They

were in the first little cottage (built by Dad) on our road and had been city neighbours on Geneva Street.

Big Lena and Little Lena Davies were in the last cottage before Hitchel's farm on the main road. Actually, back then it was the only cottage along there. Mother D. was short & stout and daughter was tall, thin & very plain. As a child I could never quite sort out which was "big" and which "little".

Next door on our road Dad had also built a cottage for a Mrs. Dexter. I remember it, though, as it belonged to Kew and Marg Charron. Marg was a great friend to Mother, married to a doctor, had lived in Africa and was psychic. Her red-hair hinted at a Celtic ancestry and although she pretended to read cards and tea leaves, I think she really just read people. She would not tell my Mother's future & this always disturbed Mom.

Sundays were not our day ^{of} rest, but instead a flurry of cleaning both cottage and person. Mom would get up that morning reminding us that it was Sunday so "you never know who may drop by!" and drop by they did. City friends & relatives, out for a "Sunday drive" and making us their destination.

I remember one Sunday when there were an especially large number. Dinner time approached and none made any move to leave. For desperation, Mother decided she'd make a big pot of spaghetti. When the pasta was cooked, Dad headed for the sink to drain it, the lid slipped & the whole pot of noodles landed in the sink. That would have been bad enough but just to make things worse, the sink was coated with sawdust from the ice-house! Well, Mom was horrified but she had nothing else that would feed a crowd, so she rinsed it off, covered

it with sauce & served her guests.

Dishes were sometimes a problem, too, since we just had odds and ends & not always enough for a large group.

Mom used to tell of the evening when she again had to feed many and one fellow was quite proud of all the attention he was receiving from our spaniel.

"This dog really likes me!" he repeated happily, until little Clarke explained, "Oh, no, Mr. so-&-so. It's because you have his dish!"

Long, hot, balmy days would give way to sultry evenings with the promise of cool breezes off the lake. The sun would treat us with one last spectacular hurrah as it sank behind the hills past jellycake, splashing the sky with every hue of pink and purple and gold, and spilling its reflections onto the lake.

And night would fall gently. There is no night blacker ... in spite of the canopy of stars ... than the dark nights of my childhood at Lake Bernard.

Mother would light the coal oil lamps and candle and we would play cards or sit, content and relaxed, on the veranda, protected by the screen from all the wee, winged predators. Moths would beat their fragile wings against the barrier while the little blood-suckers tried in vain to reach our flesh.

Fireflies would dance through the trees like little woodland fairies. The quiet

was punctuated by the haunting call of the loon and the mournful cry of the tiny whip-poor-will. Bull-frogs & tree toads made up the chorus.

Mother would entertain us with stories of her childhood on the farm and at the lake. She'd share a ghost story or two before she'd send us off to bed, armed with a vigil light to fend off spectres lurking in dark corners.

I would burrow down in that soft, feathery bed, snug under Hudson Bay blankets. My nose, and shoulders pim-pinked with sunburn, eyelids heavy with fresh-air induced sleep, struggling to stay open, glued to the rafters for fear of a bat. One had flown out from the open space above the ceiling and that was hard to forget. Each unexpected noise or flickering

shadow cast ^{by} my candle would set my heart racing. - Was it a bear? Dad was always seeing bears, Mom insisting he'd imagined it.

Or was it a ghost? For, sure.... there were ghosts. A man with an axe had appeared at the foot of our grandfather's bed right here in this living room! ... one night when Clarke was sleeping with him. He never crawled into that bed again! Or there was the "lady" that Mom and I once had seen many times, standing quietly in the trees, always in the same place just between where the little cabin & outhouse are. And then there was the heartbreaking legend of the young Indian maiden whose light appeared hovering over the water, searching the shallows, night after night. She was said to be searching for her twin babies, drowned in the lake by her family because she was not wed.

with her, wait till she was ready at the door and turn on the flashlight so she could enjoy a good look at the little thieves. (sound familiar?). This time, when the light flashed on, she found herself nose-to-nose with a big black bear! Just the screen between them.

So those were the stories of the night and, more too soon, that night would end. The morning sun would flood my room, dappling wall and ceiling & with the reflection of leaves stirring on the trees outside my window. The sweet song of birds would welcome the day.

It was not unusual to awake & find one of Hitchel's cows standing on the road, peering right in the window. They pastured in the field and roamed our road at will.

On cold mornings, Mom would come in and tell me to snuggle down and stay warm while she lit the fire. She would take my clothes and hang them on the fire-

screen to warm. I'd hop out of bed and run quickly to the fire and dress in its warmth.

A new day would begin, filled with joy and adventure, exploration & discovery. Years and years and years ago, long before cell-phones and fear of global warming, this was how we spent our summers.

Learning to paddle a canoe like an Indian and to shoot a rifle at my brother's side. Collecting creatures of the wild and toying them to death.

Finding the value of sharing life with a loyal dog as constant companion. Laying him to rest here, in the place he too loved best, when his days were done.

Running free but always enveloped by the love & safety of family.

Absorbing into every cell the smells and sounds and sights of the place my soul calls "home".

And as summer ends, relishing the

crisp, sharp autumn air, the crunch of fallen leaves beneath my feet, the smell of wood-smoke in my hair. The indescribable beauty of a clear blue sky and coloured leaves mirrored in a lake as still as glass.

Knowing with sweet regret that we would soon abandon this idealic setting and return to the city. Winter would stretch before us but the memories collected and the promise of our spring return would remain tucked away in my heart.



