



JOE AYRE,
34-2150 CADBORO BAY ROAD,
VICTORIA, B.C. V8R-5G7,
CANADA

The (SOCIALIST) ...

1
It is two^{o'clock} in the morning on the 9th of March 1910.

sergeant

A working class mother is in labor having her fourth son. She has already had three daughters, and in 1912 she will have another daughter. The Midwife is in command, she is ^{like} a sergeant in command of a platoon, efficient and to the Midwife, the whole affair is quite routine. She gives orders for hot water, towels, and a good supply of tea.

My father with the help of my older sisters carry^{out} the Midwife's orders, they ^{have} to bring water from the taps in the back alley, there are only four taps and four WCs for ^{the} use of about one hundred of the tiny slum dwellings on Leydun St, it is cold and raining and the little fire in the grate of the kitchen is hardly adequate to heat the amount of water the Midwife requires.

The tiny dwelling has been cleaned and some disinfectant has been used and the smell of it pervades the air, but the bed bugs, cockroaches, and the fleas are still in evidence also mice and the odd rat or two. It is now four am and there is a cry from the tiny lamp lit bedroom, the Midwife cuts the umbilical cord wraps a seven ^{made} pound boy in a sheet after washing him and Joe Ayre has ^{made} his entry into the the world.

2

My father has gone to sleep on the sofa in the kitchen, there is a tap on the window and a voice shouts 'hey Ollie' the Rene DEL Pacifico is coming into the North Hornby, (this ship always docked in the North Hornby) and if we get down there we might get a days work. The Rene Del Pacifico was on a regular run and made a round trip to the eastern seaboard of the USA about once a month. THE hiring of the dockers to work the ships was a very degrading buisness, when my father and his pal arrive at the docks which are only a stones throw from Leydun St in Liverpool they proceed to the docks sheds and wait with hundreds of other dockers outside the huge doors of the sheds. there will only be enough work for four gangs forty - eight men in all, a gang consists of six men on board and six on the dock. When the ship is alongside and made fast, the Ganger will open the shed doors and select the men he needs and the rest of the men will walk away dejected knowing that without any work or very little there wont be much for their families to live on. The Landlord who owns the slum dwellings in the area adjacent to the docks lives in Princes Park miles away from the docks, and he does not know nor does he want to know how the dockers get the money to pay him his rent, he hires a rent collector so he wont have to go into such squalid parts of the city, and when he wants a tenant evicted he hires a Bailiff.

31
This autobiography will cover seven decades of the life of a working man, of his struggle to survive, his political life and his work in order to live, and his desperate efforts at times to find work, his efforts to help to organize his fellow man as a shop steward, all ^{the} time handicapped by very little formal education.

My earliest recollections are of my Mother as she lay in her coffin, as I was lifted up to see her before the lid was screwed down. She had died of consumption no doubt brought about by an inadequate diet. She denied herself sufficient food in order to feed her brood of kids. I remember going to the funeral in a horse drawn coach and the little black velvet suit I wore which I suppose had been bought at a second hand shop or a pawn shop for a couple ^{of} shillings, I never seen it after the funeral, it was no doubt pawned or sold as my father was often unemployed or on strike. My father insisted that the children of the family be brought up in the Protestant faith although my Mother was a Roman Catholic, she held steadfastly to her faith and attended mass and went to confession. Her name before marriage was Margaret Sattella, she was of Spanish-Irish origin and a very violent character, she had very little fear, the only person she feared was the priest, and she done many a penance.

4
The working class of the British Isles made great ~~many~~ sacrifices during the 1914-1918 war a war that did not start because of an assassination in Serbia or because Germany invaded Belgium. The Capitalists were in competition with each other ~~for~~ for markets and trade routes. AND although it was called the "the war to end war" we know now that this slogan was just another con-game that the Capitalists of Great Britain played with the working class as the pawns. My Mother saw my Father and two Brothers join the army to go and fight for a country in which they had only known poverty and degradation. My ~~Brother~~ Brother Tom was killed in the Battle of the Somme and my Father was wounded in action. My Brother Oliver came back from the war still only nineteen but I remember how old he looked. My Mother was receiving a small allowance because my Brother Tom was killed in action and she took to drinking very heavily, she would draw the pension on a Tuesday and ^{go} into a pub and put the money on the bar and say to the people in the bar "that is blood money" we will drink it, and she would stay in the pub until she was drunk. She had a bitter dislike of Chinamen and thought they were all heathens. On her way home from the pub ~~she~~ she would break the windows of the Chinese laundries. When the police arrived on the scene she would fight with them, and at times they would send for the priest, he was the only person she was afraid of. The Priest would say to her in his Irish brogue "get along home with you Maggie" and I guess he imposed some penance on her.

5
My Father in his early working life went to sea in sailing ships 'before the mast' and like most other seamen of that period he developed great skill with his hands. On a SUNDAY morning he would sit in the kitchen with his LAST and mend the boots of all the members of the family. He could sew, knit, darn and he was a good painter and varnisher. He taught my Brother Bill and I how to make floor rugs out of canvas and old clothes, the old clothes would ^{be} cut in strips and the work was done by punching holes in the canvas with a small 'Marlin Spike' and by passing the strips of cloth through the canvas which would have a pattern on it marked by ^{my} Father and if we deviated from his pattern we would get a severe clip on the ~~ear~~ ear. The rugs would be sold to supplement the family budget or maybe pay for a few pints at the pub.

When my Father quit the sea he went to work on the docks and was a member of the Transport and GENERAL Workers Union for ~~about~~ thirty five years. He was a supporter of the British Labor Party (this party was in power several times) but they have always tried to reform the Capitalist System and like the New Democratic Party in Canada have failed. At the present time 1978 with the Labor Party in power in Britain there are 1,600,000 unemployed in Britain and 1,000,000 in Canada.

6
The family had lived at 98 Leydun St for many years but now with the war unemployment was not quite such a problem that it was before the war and we were able to move into a slightly better dwelling, it was the same size but we had a back yard and ~~some~~ tiny scullery (this is where the washing and bathing was done) there was no bath but we had a tap indoors, and to heat the water there was a boiler, a large cast iron pot bricked in with a space underneath for the fire, the flue ~~went~~ went directly into the chimney, also downstairs there was the kitchen, ~~up~~ upstairs were two small bedrooms, the toilet or WC as we called it, was in the back yard, the rent was three shillings per week (I visited in Liverpool in 1952 and there was that little slum dwelling 19 Victoria Terrace off Rothwell St just the same as it was in 1915 but the rent had been increased to seven shillings and seven pence per week.

In the back yard we had a little menagerie (MY uncles went to sea and as sailors will, they brought home pets.) We had a ~~monkey~~ monkey, a parrot, linets, canaries, and rabbits. The little black faced monkey came from West Africa and ^{he and I} were inseparable he had a cage in the back yard ~~XXXXXX~~ but as soon as I got up in the morning I would let him out and the little devil was full of mischief, I have seen him steal my younger ~~Sisters~~ Sisters food.

One amusing incident was when my Father was out of work for a long time in 1919 my Father took the parrot in his cage to the pawnshop, to try to raise some money, but the pawnbroker told him he would lend him two shillings and six pence on ~~the~~ the cage but he would'nt have the parrot at any price. (Terms for borrowing money from a pawnbroker were a halfpenny for the pawn ticket and a halfpenny per month for each shilling or part of each shilling, this transaction returned the pawnbroker sixty per cent per annum.)

The parrot was a terrible creature, my uncles taught him to talk and he could swear as good as any seafaring man. One of his favorite expressions was "your bars are down" this ~~is~~ is an expression used by coal burning firemen to describe a person who they think is slightly off his head, (occasionally) the firebars in ships boilers will burn out and the bars will fall down into the ashpit and the boiler will not work properly until new bars are fitted.)

In 1916 my Father and two older Brothers were in the army and when they were on furlough at the same time I remember my Father supervising my two Brothers when they were cleaning their buttons and boots, the chore had to be done perfectly before they could go out in the street and when my Father was satisfied he would take them out in the terrace and drill them, and the young boys who lived in the ~~and~~ and myself would fall in with them, if one puttee moved as much as a fraction of an inch he would make them take them off again, then he would go to the pub with them as proud as could be.

My sister Maggie was working in ^a munitions plant and she contracted a disease that had the effect of turning her skin yellow, She must have been psychologically affected also, she started to drink heavily.

When I was six years old I started going to school, I attended St Emmanel's a church school, we spent more time studying ^{scripture} than anything else. There would be prayers and the headmaster would read "The Lesson" taken from some part ^{of the} Bible and even at the tender age of six years I resented it but it was compulsory and I was punished many times for not paying proper attention to ^{the} Scripture Teacher, corporal punishment was used in them days. Amasing though I was always at the top of the scripture class, I could almost recite backwards the Apostles Creed, the Catechism, and the whole Anglican service. My brother Bill and I had to walk to school in our bare feet as nearly all working class kids did. In the winter with snow on the ground it was very cold on the bare feet and my brother would carry me on his back when I cried because of the cold. One of the teachers applied to a fund that the Policemen of Liverpool had to buy clogs for the kids who had no boots and those clogs had wooden soles and a band of iron around the sole and heel, they made quite a noise.

On Sunday we had to go to Sunday School and on Sunday evening we went to the "Band of Hope" this was a sort of mission where poor kids went and there would be a huge sheet hanging on one wall with hymns on it and we would spend almost two hours singing hymns. The Band of Hope would take the kids on a picnic in the summer but if you did not attend regularly they would not allow you to go to ^{the} picnic.

There was a very unfortunate accident with my younger sister Winnie when she was four years old, she was playing on the floor and one of my uncles was rocking in the old rocking chair and somehow she got her foot under the rocker and sustained a broken bone in her ankle.

The bone would not knit and it was discovered that Tuberculosis had set in the bone, and after months of hospital care she was sent to a sanatorium for children this sanatorium was across the river Mersey, I never seen her again until 1929.

The sight of a telegraph boy ordinarily would be no cause for alarm, but in the working class districts of Liverpool during those war years if you seen a telegraph boy on his bicycle in your street it usually meant that he was about to deliver one of those black bordered envelopes that meant another soldier or sailor had been killed.

After the Battle on the Somme we received one of those dreaded telegrams informing us that my Brother Tom had been killed in action. My mother collapsed and it was a very sad time for the whole family, my Father and my brother Oliver were still at the "Front".

Mother never really recovered from the shock and when she was able to get around she took to drink (I have mentioned this in an earlier paragraph.)

There ^{was} some brighter moments during the war such as when my Father or Brother came home on leave, we were so glad to see them, and beside the joy of seeing them we were able to get more rations, food and coal were severely rationed

We were allocated 2 lbs of potatoes for a family per week. In order to be able to get any rations at all we had to register at the Butcher shop, the grocer shop, the fruit and vegetable shop, and also the coal yard, and you had to stand in line for hours in order get the meagre rations.

Things were different when Dad and Brother Oliver were on leave. They would go to ^{the} shops with us and there was no waiting in line, and when they walked into a shop they got 3 times the rations we were allowed. When they had to return to their unit we would go to Lime St station to see them off on the ^{train} and we would wonder if we would ever see them again, and I would hold back the tears, you had to keep a "stiff upper lip", it wouldn't do to let people see you crying.

During 1917 Merchant ships were subjected to unrestricted warfare and they were torpedoed and sunk without warning. I lost two Uncles, my Uncle Jack who was my Dad's brother and my Uncle Peter who was my Mother's brother, they were stokers, and we just received a terse note from the Shipping Federation that they were missing and presumed dead.

Food became very short and the lines outside the shops grew longer, and we were reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt of coal per house per week (2 cwt was 56-lbs)

There were often some very ugly scenes outside the shops as people became frustrated, it seemed that there was enough booze in the pubs because there was no line ups.

Liverpool in 1917 was the disembarkation port for the thousands of American Troops (The Doughboys as they were called) they were kneaded in 1914 and rose in 1917) but to the working class kids they were great guys, they would throw coins to us from their open trucks as they went by.

The war dragged^{on} and eventually the Armistice was signed, there were great scenes on Armistice Day but for a lot of families it was sad, they had lost their menfolk and there wasn't much to celebrate.

The war to end wars had come to an end and while the fighting was going on we were told "Britain would be a land fit for Heroes to live in", but after a very rapid demobilisation of the Forces, unemployment was the order of the day and people were saying you had to be a Hero, to live in Britain.

My Dad and Brother Oliver came home and they looked so different in civilian clothes, and were faced with the problem of finding work.

Mother by this time was confined to bed and she died on Dec 19-1918. (I have described her funeral in a previous paragraph). With frustration building up, the family started to break up. Sister Maggie left home and then Brother Oliver, leaving my Sister Edie at 14 years old to look after myself my Brother Bill and Dad we helped her as best we could.

My Dad would leave home and walk to the docks to find work, and when there was no work he drew the Dole, He seldom had the Tram fare to ride to the docks.

In order to qualify for the Dole it was necessary for him to go on "The Stand" (lining up as thousands of dockers did twice a day outside the dock sheds.) He would go on "The Stand" at 7.30 AM. and if he did not get work he was required to go to the Board of Trade and sign on that he had not worked, this procedure was repeated again at 12.30 PM. The dockers were all members of the Transport and General Workers Union.

During the war big business and the government were obliged to recognise "The Shop Stewards Movement", in order to ensure that war production was maintained, but after the war the Capitalists were determined to smash the movement, Shop Stewards were being fined on the flimsiest of grounds, and it was necessary for the Union Members to create a Fund to assist Shop Stewards when they were victimised by their employers. A Fund was created and became known as the "Tom Mann Fund" which was used to make sure that the Shop Steward and his family would not starve as a result of being victimised.

The confrontation between the workers and their bosses continued and many a time my Dad along with thousand of other dock workers were forced to take strike action to maintain wages and working conditions.

After a long and bitter strike in 1919 we got behind with the Rent and the landlord had us evicted from the house at 19 Victoria Terrace.

The Bailiff and his men dumped all our bits and pieces of household goods in the middle of the Terrace, and I recall how hostile the neighbors were, the Bailiff and his men were lucky to get away with a full skin, but the Police were standing by to prevent any trouble.

We had to hire a hand-cart, load up the stuff and with my Dad between the handles and us kids pushing behind we trudged through the streets looking for a place to live. We spent one night in a horse stable that was not being used and the ^{next} day we got a place on Greek St. Two rooms on the second floor.

Shortly after moving into Greek street I contracted Bronchitis and was taken to hospital and after a couple of weeks was transferred to a convalescent home at Alder Hey on the outskirts of Liverpool.

This to me was a great experience, as soon as I was able to go outdoors I can recall how beautiful it was, there were fields and trees and beyond the fence there were cows grazing. I felt I was in Heaven, how nice it was to sleep in a nice clean warm bed, have nice meals three times a day and cocoa or milk at bedtime,

In my childish way I thought the nurses in their white crisp uniforms were Angels, I had always thought Doctors were people to be afraid of, but these Doctors were kind and sometimes they played with the kids. We had toys and that was something I had never had, I started to think of how I could stay there and avoid going home again.

But it seems all good things have to come to an end.

My sister Edie come to take me home, and I ran all over the place and said I wasnt going home with her I dreaded the thought of ^{the} dirt and fleas, the bed bugs and the cockroaches, and the hunger.

Back to the slum dwelling in Greek St, and the drunken brawls on Saturday nights. Where we had the two rooms there was an Irish ^{couple} downstairs who ^{the} rented the whole house we had the second floor which we rented from the Irish couple, and there was a black family who rented the top floor.

My Uncle Joe (my Dads brother) was a Merchant Seaman, he was a Stoker in coal burning ships, He came to visit us after paying off a ship of the Shaw Saville line, these were refrigerated ships and they were on a regular ^{run} between U.K, New Zealand and Australia,

Uncle Joe and Dad went to ^{the} pub one Saturday night and when they come home about "three sheets in the wind" they become involved in a fight with the Irish couple downstairs, it was one of those stupid fights over religion they were Roman Catholics and we were Protestants, this was what caused most of the fights, and on the following Monday when Dad was at the docks and my sister Edie was at ^{work} and Bill and I were at school The Irish couple put our furniture out on the sidewalk and we had to move again, Uncle Joe had gone back to sea, and we never seen him again but we heard he had jumped ship in Australia.

The move from York St was just about the same as previous moves, hiring one of those famous Liverpool handcasts, I don't know what the transients would have done without, it cost ^{them} sixpence a day to hire them and they were used for many purposes, Having loaded up the household goods we set off in search of a place to stay, One thing that was essential was a paid up rent book but our record of paying rent was to say the ^{best} very poor, So when we arrived at Gerrard St we just moved into a derelict building that already was partly occupied by people who were in ^{the} same circumstance that we were.

Gerrard St in the middle of the 19th century must have been a splendid place to live, each house had four floors and a huge basement which was where the domestic servants worked to keep the rich Merchants and their families in in absolute comfort, all the cooking was done there and there was a dumb waiter to hoist the food to the dining room on the next floor, there was a bell rack, and when the master or any member of his family wanted attention they just had to pull a cord, and when the bell rang the domestic servants could see which room they had to go to. The rooms were spacious and the plastering on the walls and ceilings was really magnificent,

The bedrooms of the master class were on the second and third floor and the servants occupied the attic.

But times change and when the steamships displaced the sailing ships there was too much smoke in the area and naturally the rich Merchants moved to the suburbs.

When we moved into Gerrards St in 1919 the buildings were very dilapidated, previous families had knock^d the plaster off the walls to get the wooden laths to start their fires every room had a fireplace, in some places the wooden bannisters were gone, cupboard doors, and even some of the wooden stairs had been used for firewood.

Every kind of vermin seem^d to thrive in those places, rats, mice, bed bugs, fleas and cockroaches.

Eventually the health authority told the squatters we would all have to go, but where? they made no provision.

Dad by this time if he worked and got some money paid little attention to us kids and spent his time drinking, and when he came home all we got was abuse and he beat us quite often, we knew he was having an affair with a woman, we had seen them going into the pub together. This woman was a drunkard, she eventually became our stepmother.

Sister Edie was 15 years old by this time she had a job washing dishes in a restaurant and she had to give most of her wages to my Dad and he would use it for drink. Brother Bill and I seldom went to school and we were always in trouble with the School Board because we were not attending school.

We spent our time at St Johns Market where if we could we did errands for the stallholders and they would either give us some food or a little money to buy some. At times we had to resort to stealing.

The Policemen in Liverpool went on strike in 1919, this was a great occasion for the poor, with no police to stop ^{us} we looted stores for food and all sorts of things. I recall workers just smashing the windows of the stores and helping themselves it was a common sight to see working class women wearing furs and fashionable clothes. One incident I distinctly remember was a crowd breaking into a music store on London Road, they took violins, concertinas, accordians and wind instruments and finished by bringing a grand piano out into the street and had a party, first time I ever seen the poor really enjoy themselves, but ^{the} strike did not last long, the Gloucester Constabulary were sent in and ^{the} army put a soldier at every store with a fixed bayonet, the rich were safe again, state power had saved them.

My Dad told us we had to move again, the move was much the same, but the difference ^{time} this was we knew where we going, and after loading up our bits and pieces we went to a house on Haig St. We got ^{shock} the ^{of} our lives when we went into the house and Dad told us that the woman was our new mother,

My Sister Edie just burst ^{out} crying and she run out of the door and never come back again, she went to stay with friends we knew on Victoria Terrace.

I scarcely know how to describe this woman, I can only say that I had a terrible feeling of hostility and sheer hate, a feeling I had never had before and have not had since. We ^{weren't} told that as long as we behaved ourselves all would be well, but if we didn't we would come off worst. It may seem strange to anybody who reads this that there could be any warmth of feeling between members of a family living in the conditions I have described, but there was a bond that held us together. With this woman there was just cold hostility.

Right from the start we realised that things were going to be tough. I was nine years old and my Brother Bill was eleven, and in these circumstances the bond between us was strengthened. No sooner had we got into the place, we were put to work to clean the house while they went to the pub, cleaning the house meant scrubbing walls, floors, stairs, tables chairs, and washing windows and polishing the fire irons and fire place, and if they were not done to the satisfaction of the stepmother it meant a good hiding. She proceeded to make slaves out of my Brother Bill and I. One terrible thought I had that she must be the mother of Satan.

She devised ways and means of ^{using} exploiting kids so that would put Charles Dickens Pagan to shame.

Nothing stood in her way and it was all to get money for booze.

She had what she called a "Brokers licence", this was a dealers licence to buy and sell second hand merchandiss, once a week she ^{would} cross the the River Mersey on the ferry and go to a middle class district in Wallasey, there she would beg or buy goods that the well to do residents had no use for, they included old clothes, pots and pans, lamps, fireplace assecories, boots and all sort of things. These she put in a bed sheet, tied the four corners together and carried the bundle on her head. On Saturday she would rent a stall in St Martins Hall and sell off these goods.

The place was nicknamed "Faddy's Market" by the working class it was on Scotland Road, a slum area of Liverpool. My Brother Bill and I would take care of the stall and sell the merchandise the prices had already been put on the stuff by the stepmother, somitimes we would change the prices and we would use the extra money to buy pancakes from a stall where a fine old lady used to make them, they cost 3 for a penny and they were delicious with syrup on them. Most of our customers were foreign seamen they usually bought all the clothing and boots. The stepmother meanwhile would be in the pub drinking and she would return periodically to pick up the cash we had taken and it didnt matter how well we had done it was never enough, then she would return to the pub and as the day wore on she became more drunk and more abusive

Because of the trouble caused by the stepmother when she was drunk we were given notice to get out of the house on Haig St, most of the trouble was caused when she would come from the pub drunk and she would sit on the front steps and insult the neighbors, she hated Roman Catholics and nearly all the fights were caused when she abused them she never went to church herself but she called herself a Protestant. I believe this is what caused me to become resentful of all religion.

We took two rooms above an Electro plating works on Bronte St and the noise of the machinery when the plant was operating was deafening.

We continued to operate the stall at "Paddy's Market" on Saturdays, but another task we were obliged to do was to hire a hand cart and go to the wholesale and retail markets and collect wooden boxes and crates discarded by the merchants these included orange boxes, rabbit crates, (in those days frozen rabbits were shipped in from Australia and formed a major part of the diet of the working class,) we also collected banana crates, apple boxes, butter boxes and even fish boxes, these we tried to avoid because they were wet and smelled which made them hard to sell.

These containers would be taken home and chopped up then tied in bundles, a bundle was sufficient to light a coal fire, and we'd go from door to door selling them at two bundles for a penny.

At times when we come back from selling the wood if the amount of money we had was less than the stepmother expected we got a beating we sometimes spent some of the money on something to eat.

Another job we used to do was help the men who worked at ^{the} Slaughter House on Bronte. It we helped them drive cattle, sheep, and pigs into the pens of the slaughter house where they would be slaughtered, and the men would reward us by giving^{us} some offal, liver, kidneys etc.

On Sunday evenings we had to go to the Coliseum, this was a huge hall where over a thousand children would be assembled to sing hymns and the missionaries who organised this event would reward us by giving each kid a loaf of bread.

When we got outside we had to ^{run} the gauntlet of kids who failed to get in they would try to get your loaf away from you.

The abuse and the beatings from the stepmother continued and Bill and I decided we had had enough, we ran away and lived on what we could beg or steal, we slept in Bibby's Oil Bake Mill on Derby Rd down by the docks. Eventually we ^{were} picked up by the police and were taken to the police station, the police gave us tea and cakes and wanted to know where we lived, but we wouldn't tell them.

They took us to Miss Birt's Sheltering Home for Fatherless and destitute children it was the end of 1920.

When we were admitted to the Home we were taken to the Matron's office and that grand lady took one look at us and summoned the nurse and gave her very strict instructions as to what to do with us.

We were taken to the bathhouse and put in a bath of very hot water so hot we screamed, and a liberal quantity of disinfectant was added to ^{the} water, I have no idea what chemical she used on our heads, but I thought my scalp was being burnt off.

Then we were taken to the isolation ward given some bread and dripping and a piece of bread and jam and a cup of cocoa, there we waited until a Doctor come to examine us, and after a thorough medical and a lot of head shaking the doctor left us and the nurse appeared with some clothes for us and we were allowed to go to ^{the} dormitory we had to get to bed it was still daylight and we could see through the window scores of kids in the exercise ground, and we thought we must be sick.

In later years I found out that Miss Birt the founder of the Home was a rich philanthropist who founded the home thinking she was helping waifs and strays, but in fact this institution was being used to attempt to reduce the ammount of juvenile delinquency and to get kids like us off the streets and out of sight

Also to prepare us for immigration to the Colonies to provide the farmers with cheap labor.

The discipline in the home was very strict and the Superintendent maintained ^{it} with the use of a very stout leather belt.

He made it quite clear to us that he could handle any situation and he told ^{us} that he had been Warden in a Borstal institution which is a correctional institution for young men up to 19 years of age.

The diet in the home was Spartan to say the least some of the food was quite good but the amount we got was seldom enough, the cooking was mostly done by the older inmates, as was all the domestic work. When you got out of bed in the morning you had to make your bed then stand beside it until the Matron or the Superintendent had inspected the dormitory and all beds had to be made exactly the same. Each of us after inspection was over, were given specific jobs to do before breakfast at eight o'clock, before going to breakfast every body had to wash clean teeth and line up for inspection by the Matron, then file into the dining hall, stand in your place at the table and sing grace.

One thing of interest was when I look back on it was that all the kids were Anglo Saxon and Protestant amazing for a cosmopolitan city such as Liverpool.

After breakfast we all had our particular jobs to perform such as sweeping, dusting, polishing floors, and the brass fittings in the bathhouse and laundry the girls had to do washing, and ironing, and mending. school hour was ten o'clock, we had no teachers, each child was issued with an arithmetic book, a Canadian history and geography books

a spelling and writing exercise books, we also were given the Holy Bible and the Book of Common Prayer and a separate New Testament.

Great importance was attached to the care of these books, we never had any examinations apart from Scripture and on this subject we were thoroughly examined, and if you failed your examination in Scripture you could be confined to the isolation ward where without any distraction and very little to eat you soon improved your knowledge of the Scriptures.

Twelve o'clock was lunchtime and again everybody had to wash, line up for inspection ^{by} the Matron proceed in single file to your place at the table and stand, and sing grace before eating and sing grace again after eating God had to ^{be} thanked whether the food was any good or not.

All the boys in the home had to attend choir practice and if your voice was any good you joined the choir at St Lukes Church. I was chosen to sing in the choir, St Lukes paid us sixpence for every service we attended we practised one night at the Home and every Friday night at the church. The money we received was saved by the Home and given to the boys when they embarked for Canada. We also had a scout troop, it was the 8th Liverpool Troop and the Headquarters was in the gymnasium across the street it was at that time a very famous gymnasium and there were World and Olympic Champions who used it.

We had the same facilities as the sons of the well to do people, and meeting some of those young men was a pleasure, we found very few of them were snobs and they seemed to go to any trouble to help us. A few were snobs but they weren't popular even among the other well to do young men.

In May 1921 there was a party of 120 boys and girls being outfitted to go to Canada and when I learned that my Brother Bill was included it was a sad time for me but I was consoled by being told I would be in ^{the} next party to go, alas it was 1923 before I was sent and I missed Bill terribly. He arrived in Canada and wrote to me about life on the farm at a place called Woodlawn about 30 miles from Ottawa.

It seemed to me that the doctors had some doubt about my health, I often had to go to the hospital for tests. The Children's Hospital was only about a couple of minutes walk from the home.

I attended a Dental hospital an eyes nose and ear hospital I had all my teeth that had cavities filled was fitted with spectacles, and had my adenoids removed, worse luck I could not sing in the Choir after that and lost the six pence a week that the church paid to Choir Boys.

We had some contact with the outside world when we were taken for walks, the boys and girls would line up in two long lines and we ^{would} walk to Princes Park and we were allowed to play in the park.

Early in 1922 I was made a Door Boy this was considered a great thing, I was given a smart uniform, and a desk in a little cubicle by the front door. The duties required of me were when visitors came I had to usher them into the main office. I also had to do the errands such as post letters buy stamps go to the drugstore for medicines, this was considered a great privilege. There were times when visitors would give me money and I would buy candies and share them with the other kids this eventually got me into trouble, as I was required to hand in any gifts I received. I also met my sister Edie in the park one day, she was in domestic service about two blocks from the home and when I had to go to the drugstore I would go and see her and she would take me into the basement where she was a scullery maid and the cook would give ^{me} some of the delicious food that the rich people were served. I often went to see Edie after we made contact but I had to be careful in case the home authorities found out.

During 1922 there were two more parties of kids sent to Canada one party of 110 in May and another of 90 in September, I started to wonder if I would ever be sent, and when I got up enough courage to approach the Matron about it I was told that I would be sent to Canada when I was ready and not before.

I was 12 years old and my education was sadly being neglected, we had no teachers and I still used just the same books as when I was first admitted to the home.

Eventually after several medical examinations in early 1923 I was told that a party of 60 kids were to be sent to Canada in June. This was great I longed to see my Brother Bill. We were each given a little green metal trunk about 30" long, 24" wide and 18" deep. we were supplied with two grey flannel suits (short pants), 2 grey flannel shirts, 3 pair of roll top socks, 2 pairs of really good shoes, ties, handkerchiefs, towels face cloth tooth brush, comb, hairbrush, and the Holy Bible. We sailed in the S.S. Regina on the 31 May.

What an adventure this was. I knew the ship as I had seen ^{her} many times there were few ships that came into Liverpool that we didn't know, but I never thought I would sail in one. The final test was over I passed the ships doctor.

The Regina was being used as an Immigrant Ship the passengers were from all parts of Europe, there were Polish people, Germans, Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, Czech-Slovakians, Scandinavians, and British. it was amazing to hear all the different languages, they were all poor, the unwanted of Europe going to try their luck in a new land.

The crew of the ship seemed to go out of their way to make the voyage enjoyable especially for the kids from Liverpool, for most of the crew it was their home port. We were in Third Class, we had a cabin for six 3 bunks high on both sides, a lot of the continental Europeans were travelling Steerage (in the hatches)

The weather was a bit rough going north about Ireland, but when we were out in the broad Atlantic, it settled. I was a bit sea sick the first day but after that we had good sailing.

The food was fabulous, eggs bacon and pancakes and Maple Syrup and fresh fruit for breakfast, five courses at lunch and from soup to nuts for dinner I ate like a hog. The crew organised games for the kids and I remember how good they were with the kids of the Europeans whose language they didn't know.

We saw whales, icebergs, and the whole trip was a great adventure. On the 6th of June we landed at Quebec City and were passed through the Immigration, put aboard a train and I remember how big the trains were compared to the British trains.

We ate and slept on the train, and the next morning we arrived at Belleville.

I was very concerned at this time because I knew Belleville was a long way from Ottawa having studied my Canadian geography book back at the home.

We were met by the Matron and taken to Marchmont Home and to my utter disappointment this place was just the same as Miss Birto's Home in Liverpool, the same drab building, the dormitory, the dining room, the food, the discipline, everything exactly the same. I got to thinking I'll be glad when I get out to the farm and see Bill. I had been told I would be placed on a farm near my Brother and I was anxious to see him.

We were not allowed to go out of the home and there was only a small playground with a very high wall.

I was told I would be sent to a place called Springbrook, and when I asked how far that was from Woodlawn where my Brother was the Matron said she didn't know, and when I told her I had been told I would be placed near my brother, she said she didn't know I had a Brother, and that I would have to go where I was told.

On a rainy Friday morning I was put on a train and told to get off at Springbrook where I would be met by a farmer who would take me to his farm.

I boarded the train with my little green trunk and set off full of apprehension, Springbrook was 27 miles from Bellville but the train was a milk and weigh freight with one passenger car and it stopped at every place along the line, I eventually arrived at Springbrook. I climbed off the train with my little green trunk and was met by a man in bib and brace overalls that were smeared with cow-dung, he said to me, are you Joseph Aye I said yes and he replied you are a small mite of a boy. I could not believe that this was the farmer, I expected to meet someone dressed in tweeds like English farmers

He had a horse and buggy and when the horse broke into a trot the mud splashed all over my grey flannel suit, the people we met on the way to the farm looked at me as if I had come from another planet.

On arriving at the farm I climbed down from the buggy, lifted my trunk out of the back, and the farmer said, put that down, you might as well learn how to unhitch the horse now, so he showed me how to unhitch one of the traces and the hold back strap and told me to go around the other side and do the same, after a bit of a struggle I managed it. Then we watered the horse and went to the barn, (the mud in the barn yard was over ankle deep and what a mess it made of my nice shoes and sox).

The farmer said to me you will have to learn to take the harness of the horse, and he showed me how to undo the belly band and slip that part off the harness off, then how to undo ^{the} haim strap, I had a bad time getting the haims off because I was so small and I couldn't reach high enough, so I just tugged on the haims and they come free from the collar and as they come over the horses neck I got a belt in the side of the head by one of the haims, then when I tried to get the collar off it was hopeless the collar had to be turned upside down and slipped over the head of the horse, the farmer went and got a milking stool and I accomplished the task by standing on the stool.

We gave the horse some hay and oats and headed for the house, Mr Bateman as he was called helped me to carry my trunk to the house and when we went in the wife and daughter of the farmer greeted us and Mrs Bateman said my what a small lad he is I dont think he will be able to handle much work, and Mr Bateman just greeted their daughter Luella looked at me as though she was seeing some sort of an apparition.

There was every kind of question to be asked and answers given the farmer and his wife wanted to know if I had any parents, I think they assumed I was illegitimate, and when I told them I had a Brother at Woodlawn and a Brother and three sisters and a father in England I think they thought I was lying, at least they seemed very much surprised. I wanted to know about school and if I would be able to go. They told me the school was closed until September and that I could start school then.

All the arrangements for me to work for the farmer were made by the Home. I was not told anything until I arrived at the farm and Mr Bateman told me he had agreed with the Home that I was to get my board and lodging and pocket money the amount of pocket money was not disclosed. After some time the daughter condescended to speak to me and I thought what a conceited bitch she was, she was the same age as me but she was a typical farm girl, awkward, and had a very limited vocabulary. I discovered she was in senior third grade at school which is the equivalent of grade seven now 1978. When we talked about going to church I was told that I would have to attend church every Sunday at the Methodist church in Springbrook and when they asked me what I knew about the Scriptures they seemed very much surprised at my knowledge of it, and Luella gave me a very disapproving look, and I could sense an antagonism right away, the farmer and his wife were prominent in church affairs and they seemed to approve.

Five o'clock in the evening was milking time and the farmer said come on Joe lets go and get the cows and roused up the two dogs and we went to the pasture to find them. At this point I should describe the Batemans farm it was 200 acres about 40 acres of bush, 60 acres of rough pasture, rocks and swamp, untillable, but it produced fairly good grass, and there were some good maple trees which were tapped in the Spring to make maple syrup, a good sized orchard about two acres, some very good Apple and Pear trees, a vegetable garden, and a good barn, and a well built brick house and implement shed, a dairy with a cooling tank a milk separator, and a well designed and built piggery and poultry houses, an ice house and sheds for young cattle. The rest of the farm was excellent arable good loam soil. Mr Bateman was the envy of a lot of the farmers in the vicinity a good farmer he owned his farm and there was no mortgage on it, he was very carefull with money.

We found the cows and the dogs rounded them up and drove them back to the barn there was 16 of them, mixed cattle Shorthorns, Ayrshires, Holsteins.

The doors were open and the cows just filed in and each cow went to its own stall, then they were tied up and we were ready to start milking.

There was no milking machine all the milking was done by hand Mr & Mrs Bateman were good fast milkers and I had to learn to milk and there is only one way to learn and that is get at it, and that is what I done. I can tell you squeezing teats is not easy its hard work.

After milking the cows are let out and returned to the pasture there are blocks of salt in the pasture and an ample supply of water cows drink a lot of water.

The milk is taken to the dairy and strained through clean muslin into 30 gallon cans and these are lowered into the cooling tank with water in the tank and a block of ice lowered into the water (the ice is acquired by cutting it on the lake in the winter and packing it in sawdust and it will keep with very little loss all year.)

Supper time and back to the house, the menu is salt pork raised and slaughtered on the farm and kept in brine, to get rid of some of the salt the pork is sliced put in the frying ^{pan} with water and some milk par-boiled and then fried, we have mashed potatoes and some salad the desert is wild strawberries, a substantial meal with home made bread and it's all produced on the farm.

The last chore at night is to go to the dairy and stir the milk and so to bed. I have my own bedroom a feather bed and feather pillows even the feathers for the bed are produced on the farm, the patchwork quilt is home made as well, these are resourcefull people, hard working and they dont waste anything, they even make their own soap, sausages, lard for shortening when baking, and do carpentry, blacksmithing, house building, barn building, they built the school and the church and the cheese factory and employ a cheesemaker and market their own cheese, and when they go to bed at night by the light of an oil lamp there is no electricity. they dont need sleeping pills

The day starts at 5.30 a.m. Mr Bateman wakes me up I dress and we go down to the kitchen, he shows me how to make the porridge, by putting a mug full of (cracked wheat that was grown on the farm) into the double boiler with water and a little salt, the fire is started, we leave the porridge to cook, and head for the pasture to bring in the cows by the time the cows are in Mrs Bateman is in the barn and we start the morning's milking its about six o'clock, when the milking is finished the milk is cooled and Mr Bateman and I go to the house and have our porridge, then we go back to the barn, harness a team of horses, load the milk on the "democrat" (a light wagon with springs,) and head for the cheese factory $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away at Springbrook.

The cheesemaker takes a sample of the milk to test for butter fat, empty's the milk into the scale, weighs it, and records the weight, hands the farmer a slip of paper, we drive around the back of the cheese factory fill the 30 gallon ^{can} with whey, and head back to the farm, the whey ^{is} used along with ground oats to feed 36 pigs. We put the horses in the stable and go to the house for breakfast its just about 8.15 a.m.

Mrs Bateman has been looking after the poultry, she has hens and turkeys geese and ducks and there is an incubator in the house that holds 200 eggs. it is operated by an oil lamp and has to be watched carefully if the heat goes too high or too low the eggs are all spoiled and you get no chicks, everybody has their work to do on a farm and if the work is not carried out properly it can result in a serious loss.

There is work to do in the garden the potato bugs have just put in appearance. These are old bugs and if they are not kept down they will produce hundreds of thousands of young and wipe out the potato crop also the tomatoes we carry a bucket each, hold the bucket in one hand and take hold of the potato plant which is about 12 inches high and shake the plant over the bucket to dislodge the bugs and when we have gone over the whole patch we take them to the house and burn them in the kitchen stove. We do some weeding till dinner time. A short rest after we have eaten and back to weeding. I have spent one day on the farm, the work was hard but somehow it was satisfying.

Learning the farming trade is not easy for a kid of thirteen, especially when he is from an urban environment there is a lot ^{to} learn, it may seem easy to some people, but when you are faced with learning a trade and earning your living at it, things are different.

Handling cattle, horses, pigs, and poultry is something that takes time to learn, animals have their own characteristics for instance, cattle will perform quite reasonably providing you establish a consistent routine, but if their routine is changed they will do things that cause all kinds of problems so you must be consistent, they will respond to kind and gentle treatment and react violently to harsh treatment, it is a proven fact, that cows will give more milk if treated in a quiet way, even a change of herdsman can effect milk production.

Pigs are wonderful creatures they are; contrary to common belief the cleanest of all domestic animals.

All domestic animals will foul their bedding, except pigs they leave their bed when in a pen and go to the farthest corner away from the ^{bed} and urinate and deposit excrement it is amazing to observe a litter of young pigs even when they are only ten days old, if one of them attempts to foul the bed the other little pigs in the litter will set about ^{it} and use their snouts to drive it out of the bed. Also pigs will only eat as much as it takes to satisfy them, other animals such as horses and cows will eat to excess and develop colic which in some cases is fatal.

Horses are the animals that were once used to lighten man's burden of hard work, and they will respond to kind treatment, when working horses in the fields for ploughing, harrowing, mowing, seeding, raking and reaping, Mr Bateman always kept a pail of water with salt added to it, every hour or so he ^{usually} stop at the end of the field, and raise the collar from the shoulder of the horses and make sure the mane of the horse was not under the collar and wash the shoulders with the solution of salt water, this prevented sore shoulders. This will indicate what kind of a person Mr Bateman was, he considered that he got more work from his animals this way and they were easier to handle.

Very few farmers I met were so considerate of their animals but then most of them were not as successful as Bill Bateman.

There wasn't much time for socialising, but the main event of the week was the trip to Springbrook on Saturday night. Nearly all the farmers, their wives and kids would meet at the general store, this was the community centre. The menfolk would gather in one group and the women in another, the kids and young adults went their separate ways. This was where boys met girls, and the younger boys usually got involved in fights and after a few bloody noses the "pecking order" would be established. For a long time I was considered an outsider, and was referred to as that "English Bastard". I suppose it was hard for the other kids to believe that being three thousand miles away from my own country, that I was of legitimate birth.

Nobody ever dressed for Saturday night you just went to the village as you finished work, in the summer time in bib and brace overalls and a straw hat.

The men would occupy the verandah of the store and sit around and gossip talk about crops, politics, the weather and the lousy prices they were getting for their produce, and of course most of them chewed tobacco, as they sat and talked they seemed to be competing with each other to see who could spit the furthest. Every time they spat it would land in the dust, and I was fascinated by the distance they could reach. In the winter the men would sit around the pot bellied stove in the store and yarn and chew tobacco, there was a hole in the door of the stove about three inches in diameter and they could spit through that hole from six or eight feet away without splashing the sides.

The womenfolk always gathered at the back of the store where all the yard goods were kept, bolts of gingham and calico flannel and skeins of yarn, they took their eggs to the store and the storekeeper would credit them with what the eggs were worth and when they made purchases that would be offset against their credit.

Decisions had to be made by the women as to who would be cleaning the church and what flowers would be available for the next week or two, all this work was voluntary and there was never any shortage of willing volunteers. They were also members of the W.I. Womens Institute and they arranged and done the catering for most of the community activities.

Sunday with the morning chores done was a day of rest and, we would set off for church. Bill Bateman had a McLaughlin car but he used it very sparingly never in the winter and he insisted on using the horse and buggy in the spring and summer if the roads were muddy.

Sometimes a travelling Evangelist would pay a visit to Springbrook, they were known as "Holy Rollers" but to me their revival meetings were a lot of fun.

I don't think anyone took them too serious, as a matter of fact the people seemed to enjoy themselves.

These were Methodists and not so highly structured as the Anglicans that I was subjected to as a child.

Sunday afternoon the young boys of the vicinity would meet at the water hole, this was where a creek had been partially dammed and we had enough water to swim, it was sometime before I was accepted and allowed to swim at the water hole.

Bruce Joyce a lad of my own age and I became firm friends, I have never seen him since I left Springbrook but if he is still alive and reads this I would sure like to meet him again, he helped me to adapt to the new life in Canada. The kids of the vicinity were completely different than the kids in England.

When boys fight in England the Queensbury rules were observed, never hit below the belt, never hit when your opponent is down. Not so in Canada, anything goes, as a matter of fact the object^{to} the quicker you can get your opponent down and get on top and pummel him the better. Bruce showed me a few tricks and it wasn't long before I could hold my own.

We built a shack in Bill Bateman's bush and this was our rendezvous, we developed a way of making our own chewing gum, we would collect pine gum that exuded from the trunks of the pine trees, mixed it with Maple syrup heated it and when it cooled it made pretty good chewing gum. We went on fishing expeditions, the fishing tackle we used was pretty crude, just a willow pole, some strong twine and some very cheap fishing hooks, but at times we caught some good catfish.

Occasionally we would take a couple of girls with us, and Luella Bateman seemed to resent this.

I am sure she thought of me as an intrusion into her family we never got along.

When I started going to school in September, I was put in the same grade as Luella, but I had difficulty with my writing, although my spelling was fairly good my writing was very slow and deliberate.

Due to this I was placed in a lower grade, this seemed to be a great source of satisfaction to Luella.

The teacher in the lower grade was very patient with me, she told me I was ahead of the other kids in geography, history, and not too bad at Arithmetic and she got me to spend most of my time doing writing exercises, by the end of the year I had improved a good deal and was placed back in the higher class.

Winter time was a fun time at school, we had a well in the school ground, and when the snow was a few inches deep all the kids got together and shoveled the snow into a bank around the playground then we pumped water from the well and made a good sheet of ice, then I had to learn to ice skate, and after a few bruises and with the help of my buddy Bruce I could skate pretty good.

We had a school hockey team, and sometimes we would play against teams from other villages.

Hockey can get pretty rough at times and I often heard kids on the opposing teams say get that English Bastard, and I got many a hard knock. but after a time I was accepted and when I scored a couple of goals the lads of our school would back me up if the opposing ^{team} got too rough, I loved to play hockey.

But it wasn't all play by any means I had my work to do at the farm, before I went to school and when I returned in the evening my day started at 5:30 a.m. with the lantern and finished sometimes as late as

My teacher asked me if I passed the entrance exams whether I would be going to High School, after a talk with, Bill Bateman it was obvious that I would not be able to go, the nearest High School was at Stirling and that was twelve miles from Springbrook.

Thus when I was fourteen I had to go to work full time. I decided to write to the Home Authorities in Belville and ask them if it was possible to get a place nearer to my Brother Bill, I longed to see him we had been through so much together. I waited quite some time but no reply, then I wrote to the department of Immigration in Ottawa. I received a letter from the Home in Belville reprimanding me for writing to Ottawa and also informing me that they were trying to locate me nearer to Bill.

At about the end of May 1924 I received a letter from the home telling me they would be writing to Mr Bateman and tell him to put me on the train to Belville and that I was to be sent to work on a farm at Woodlawn, I jumped for joy at last I was going to see Bill my Brother.

The sadness at leaving my friend Bruce was lessened by the anticipation of seeing Bill.

On a visit to Springbrook in 1966 accompanied by my wife I found an incredible change, All the farms had been taken over by Agribusiness. During the bad years of depression that started in 1929 the farmers suffered under very low prices for the commodities they produced they were obliged to go to the Banks and borrow money and not being able to pay their taxes and the interest on the money they had borrowed they were forced off their farms

The farms were deserted nobody lived on them, the houses and barns were dilapidated.

What a tragedy. The people of that part of Ontario were the descendants of the United Empire Loyalists, good solid industrious people, they had become displaced people, and were now living in urban areas. As I look at it now. The mere fact that the ancestors of these ^{people} had refused to join in the American Revolution and fight against the British Crown still did not save them from the ruthlessness of Capitalism, they were displaced in order to make way for Agribusiness.

Woodlawn is a village in the Ottawa Valley a completely different place to Springbrook. The area was pioneered and settled mostly by Irish people who had left Ireland generations ago. This was not the tightly knit community that Springbrook was. There was a mixture of Irish Roman Catholics and Anglican Protestants. The Knights of Columbus and the Orange Lodge were firmly established and sometimes some activity from the Ku Klux Klan.

I was met by the farmer I was to work for, he was a big man called Billy Delahunt, and he took me to his farm 3 miles from the village. I will never forget arriving at that farm my Brother Bill come flying out of the Delahunt's house and we hugged each other and tears of sheer happiness ran down our cheeks. All the longing and separation had served to strengthen the bond that was forged when we lived as wickers in the gutters of Liverpool.

We had fought our battles together, if I was set upon by a kid bigger than me he was always there to give a hand, and if he was in trouble I would wade in and between us we managed to give a good account of ourselves. There were times when we had to resort to stealing food. We had a plan to work to, we would go to St John's Market and as we walked along between the stalls, we would separate, Bill would "accidentally" knock over some pile of produce, the people who ran the stalls would start a commotion cursing us kids and while the all the shouting was going on and the stallholders helped each other clear up the mess. I would go to a stall, grab some food and take off with it. Then we would meet at a pre-arranged rendezvous and consume the food we had pinched. There were times when the police caught us but all we got was a real hard belt from the constable they used their heavy rain capes to hit us.

Bill was sixteen by this time he was working on the next farm to the Delahunts farm there was just the line fence between the two farms we could see each other every day as we went about the chores.

He worked for a farmer called Allan Baird this was the only farmer he ever worked for he stayed with the Bairds until they lost their farm because of heavy debts and lived with them after they moved to Ottawa.

The Home Authorities had made an agreement with Billy Delahunt that he would employ me, give me my board and lodging, see to it that I would continue to receive instruction in the Scriptures and pay me forty dollars for the first year or until I was fifteen. This meant that I was to get forty dollars for three hundred and sixty five days work, the number of hours a day were anywhere from twelve to sixteen hours. I had to supply my own clothing and I had fewer of the clothes left that I had brought from England, the Batemans had spent very little on clothes for me. At the end of each year any money left out of my wages was sent to the Home Authorities and put into a savings account to be paid to me when I was eighteen and free to find work and make my own agreements. At the end of the first year there was a balance in my favor of \$3.37. Which was put in the Bank of Commerce. This is how labor was exploited in the third decade of the twentieth century. *B. D. L.*

The Delahunts had two boys one ^{name} Edgar was three years old and Jack two years old. Billy Delahunt was a big powerful man and no matter how much work I done he was never satisfied. I was very small for my age but he expected me to perform work that a fully grown man would only be capable of doing, and he often kicked me up the arse in a fit of temper.

Not only did I have to work on the farm but when I finished at night, I had to do housework, wash dishes, clean floors, attend to the furnace in the cellar, carry in wood from the wood shed for the cook stove and

the furnace split kindling wood, carry out ashes, prepare vegetables, do washing, with a wash tub and scrub board. not only was I a farm worker I was also a domestic servant.

The one thing that sustained ^{me} was that I could talk my problems over with Bill. He was a little more fortunate than I was the Baird's didn't seem to consider him as a hireling but more like a son although he had to work ^{hard} he was treated as a member of the family.

There were several immigrant boys working in the vicinity of Woodlawn. Antagonisms developed between the sons of the local farmers ^{and the immigrants} these antagonisms existed because some of the farmers sons were obliged to seek work in the district, the pay they would receive would vary from \$1.00 a day to \$2.00 a day depending on the season, for instance, at harvest time and when there was threshing to do they would get \$2.00 a day but in winter for cutting wood they would get \$1.00 a day. At times they would see us at the village on a Saturday night and set about us immigrant boys. they resented us because of the small wages we were obliged to work for, most of these farmers sons were big husky men and us lads being smaller usually got the worst of it, but at least we stuck together.

Dr Barnardo's took over the administration of Miss Birto Home in 1924, One of Dr Barnardo's representatives paid us a visit and informed us we were now Barnardo boys and we should be proud of it, and not do anything that would bring disgrace on the Home.

Which he described as a very great Charitable Organization.

Charity we never got, all we ever got is what we worked hard for. J. P. Gallagher in his book "The Price of Charity" gives the financial state of Dr Barnardo's in 1972, as being, total gross income for the year £ 4,345,000. Assets £ 11,745,000. Annual Investment Income £ 523,000. so much for sweet charity.

The Delahunt farm consisted of 200 acres, about half of it was bush and rough pasture the rest was arable land some of it was good soil but some of it was very poor. There was some good sugar Maple trees, the log buildings that were built by the original settlers were still in good condition, the log house was used as a blacksmith shop with an old forge still in good condition, the log barn was used to store hay and the bottom part of it housed the sheep in the winter. There was a fine brick built house with a big summer kitchen and woodshed, the barn was hip roofed and galvanised steel roofing with lightning conductors also a forty foot silo and a root cellar. It was one hundred feet long and sixty feet wide it had been built by the farmers working together. These were the days when radios were very few, but while I worked for the Delahunts they acquired a battery operated set, there was no electricity, but we had a telephone one of those with the little crank on the side, no matter when the phone rang everybody on the line would listen ⁱⁿ the phone line had been built by the farmers, the only work the telephone company had done was the wiring and installation of the phone. it was used for fire alarms, and also if you seen a neighbor go past on his way to the village and you wanted something from the store you phoned the store and the

neighbor would pick it up and deposit on his way back by putting it in the mail box at the gate.

Farmers wives were exploited almost as much as their hired workers, they raised the children without the social services that are available to-day. When they gave birth to a child the only help available to them was the assistance they could get would be from a neighbor, no trained midwife, and the nearest doctor would be miles away. They performed all manner of work, milking, looking after poultry, making clothes, knitting socks and mitts, picking wild strawberries, raspberries, and blue berries, there was always, hundreds of jars of preserved fruit in the cellar. After the freeze up in the Fall we would butcher four or five pigs and one beef animal and the farmers wives done most of the work involved in preserving the meat, they made the sausage skins, this was done by scraping the intestines of the pigs with a wooden wedge and a piece of hardwood board, turning the intestine inside out and scraping the inside, then leaving them to soak in a solution of salt and water with a pinch of saltpetre added to it. The hams and shoulder had to be trimmed and salted before they were smoked. The lard was made by dicing all the fat of the trimmings and this in turn was rendered down and put in a press while the fat was still liquid and pressed, it would run from the press into wooden pails and was stored in ^{the} cellar. The sides of pork were salted and smoked also. The sausage meat had to be ground and pressed into ^{the} sausage skins.

The sausages all had to be cooked, they were preserved by placing them in stoneware crocks and pouring boiling fat over them. Nothing of the animals was wasted headcheese was made by trimming the meat from the heads of the animals cooking it and storing it in crocks. Even what was not considered edible such as the fat residue from making the lard and the skirt of fat that surrounds the intestines was used to make soap. This process was performed by setting up a large cast iron kettle on stones and filling the kettle with the residue fat, putting two pieces of iron over the top and placing an old thirty gallon milk can with holes punched in the bottom over the kettle, putting about three inches of clean straw in the bottom of the can, then filling it with wood ashes and pouring pails of rain water in the top. When the rainwater passed through the ashes it dripped into the kettle and the chemicals from the ashes dissolved the fats.

A fire then would be lit under the kettle and after a couple of hours boiling a good supply of soap was the result.

Billy Delahunt had some of the wild Irish in him and occasionally he would go on a "bender". There was Prohibition at that time in Ontario. Prohibition meant that no alcoholic drinks could be purchased in Ontario. But it was only a few miles to the Ottawa River and across the river was the Province of Quebec where there was no restrictions on the sale of liquor.

1 Billy would just take off for four or five days at a
 2 time, and would come back looking very much the
 3 worse for the wear. Fanny his wife when she discovered
 4 he was gone would tell me to hitch up the horse and
 5 buggy and she would go and stay at her fathers farm about seven
 6 miles away, she would take the kids with her. I would
 7 be left on the farm to fend for myself and look
 8 after the farm. My Brother Bill would come and help
 9 me with the milking. (Eddie arrives in Canada) insert.

In August 1926 I received a letter from Dr Barnardo's Home in Toronto telling me I had to leave the Delahunt's and return to Toronto to be placed on another farm. I don't know how this happened but I suspect some neighbor must have written to The Home and told them what was going on, so I was taken to Woodlawn and put on a train after a very sad parting from my Brother Bill.

I had worked for Billy Delahunt from the Spring of 1924, to the Spring of 1925 at \$40.00 a year and from 1925 to 1926 for \$65.00 a year my balance after two years of work was about \$60.00. The agreement for the third year was to have been for \$90.00 a year, but this agreement was broken when I was suddenly transferred.

On arriving I was met by the superintendent of Dr Barnardo's and taken to the Home on Jarvis St. This institution was just the same as the one at Belville the same routine and the food was just the same for supper we had bread and dripping and a piece of cake and a cup of cocoa. I thought Christ will they never change.

Addition to page 49[#] after line 9[#]

Bill and I received a letter telling us that our sister Edie was coming to Canada, this was great news to us Bill had not seen Edie since 1920 and I had not seen her since 1923 it was now 1926 she was twenty two years old,

She had joined a domestic servants association and was helped by the association to arrange immigration. The qualifications were good references from employers and the Canadian government paid the fare and an advance of money providing the association could find a job for her.

Everything was settled, she had a job to go to as soon as she arrived in Montreal.

When she had worked a couple of months her employer allowed to take a few days off to visit Bill and I. It was great to see her again. Bill and I met her at the station at Woodlawn she couldn't believe her own eyes to see Bill and I two typical farm workers dressed bib and brace overalls and driving a horse and buggy. When the horse broke into a good fast trot she hung on for dear life scared out of her wits. We had a good three days together, she was amazed at the work we had to do, she had never been on a farm before.

By the time she had been in Canada nine months she had repaid the money she owed to the Canadian government and was then free to take any employment she wished if she chose not to work as a domestic servant. She said she found domestic service in Canada far better than in England the employers treated her more like a human being whereas in England they treated their domestic servants as slaves.

My stay at the Home only lasted two days and then I was put on a train bound for Woodstock.

Here I was met by a farmer whose name was Stan Hallock he was a bachelor and worked the farm for his widowed mother who owned the farm.

65 Mrs Hallock was a grand old lady and she treated me as if I was her own son. Her son Stan was a bit of a rake, and I suppose she was glad to have someone she could rely on. The agreement was that I would get my board and lodging and \$90.00 until I was ^{2/25} ²⁷ ¹⁸ ^{20.} seventeen. It was a good farm but had been badly neglected the horses and cattle were in poor shape due to neglect and Mrs Hallock showed her appreciation for the work I done, when I went to town on a Saturday evening she would give me some money and it wasnt deducted from my account of wages.

Her son Stan didnt like the idea of me being treated like a member of the family but his mother told me to take no notice of him. As long as I done my work and looked after things she was quite satisfied.

Stan would go adrift every now and then and would spend his time gambling and drinking there were some bootleggers who brewed beer and had a still at a gravel pit this is where he went when he was on the booze.

I enjoyed working on the Hallock farm, I just went about my work not being interfered with too much by Stan as his mother told him to leave me alone so long as the work was being done, she could see the improvement in the condition of the stock and she appreciated the work I was doing.

On Friday afternoon Mrs Hallock and I would wash the eggs that had been gathered during the week, kill some chickens, pluck them, and on Saturday after the farm chores were done we would pack them in a big basket and I would hitch up the horse and buggy and we would drive into Woodstock where she would take the produce to a store in the market and sell them, then

I would drive to her friends house where she would spend a few hours visiting and I would take the rig and put the horse in the livery stable and go to the cinema. In the evening we would go back to the farm to do the milking and the rest of the chores.

On Sundays Mrs Hallock and I went to the Baptist Church together. I was not really interested in the proceedings of the Church but to me it was a chance to do a bit of socialising and meet other people of my own age and gossip.

When I was seventeen the agreement that was made between Dr Barnardo's and Mrs Hallock was that I would get my board and lodging and \$125.00 for the year until I was eighteen when I would be free to hire myself out to whoever I chose.

Mrs Hallock never stayed rigidly to the agreement and often gave me pocket money that was never deducted from my account of wages.

By the time I was eighteen Stan Hallock was becoming very abusive and on the expiration of the agreement I told Mrs Hallock I couldn't stand him any longer and that she should look for someone else as I would be leaving.

By this time after four years of work the balance in my savings account which Dr Barnardo's held for me had reached just over \$200.00.

I took a job with a farmer who was an invalid, his two spinster sisters were running the farm for him with the help of casual labor whenever they could get it.

I was to get \$20.00 a month and my board and lodging everything went very well the spinster sisters were ⁶² very good to me and were quite satisfied with the work I was doing but the farmer himself when he was able to get around with two walking sticks came out of the house one day when I was ploughing in a field near the house, and when he seen a slight bend in ^{the} furrows at the end of the field he gave me hell, and when I explained to him that the soil was dry and "the field had been in pasture for years and was difficult to plough" and beside that the team of horses I was using would pull to the right when they approached the end of the field and with the land being so hard and dry it was difficult to keep the plough straight.

He said he hired me as an experienced man and that he wasn't satisfied. With that I told him I would leave and gave him a weeks notice and left.

The next job I got only lasted a very short time I was hired by a Mr Mather who lived across the road from the Hallock farm Mr Mather had a threshing outfit and was doing contract threshing, the early oats were just being harvested and I worked with him going from farm to farm threshing.

My job was to help set up the threshing machine and tractor and while the threshing was going on to keep the threshing machine oiled and see that the tractor had fuel and cooling water, when the threshing was finished, to roll the belt up pack all the accoutrements of the outfit in the truck and drive to the next farm. When I first drove the truck I found that the brakes were very poor and when I told Mr Mather about it he said just take it easy and he would get the brakes fixed as soon as he could, after working for him for two weeks I had to take the truck to a farm that was half-way down a steep hill, I stopped at the top of the hill, put the truck in low gear and started down the hill, but even with the brakes fully applied I was going very fast when I reached the farm gate, and when I turned into the gate the off front wheel hit a big solid gate post and bent the front axle. When Mr Mather arrived with the tractor and threshing machine and seen what had happened he fixed me on the spot.

When I asked him for my pay he said he would not pay, that it would cost more than he owed me to fix the truck and the gate post.

I argued it was his fault as I had told him about the brakes. He still wouldn't pay me, and I went to see the County Constable and when he went to see Mr Mather he checked the brakes on the truck and told Mather he should pay me eventually I got my pay and went to Woodstock.

I stayed in the hotel at Woodstock that night, The next day I took the train to Toronto and after a couple of days there I went into the Union Station and there was a big sign that said men wanted on the praries for harvesting - so I bought a ticket, there was a special rate for harvesters, it only cost \$15.15. to Minipeg and a half a cent a mile west of Minipeg.

These were special harvester trains, there was good sleeping accomodation, no sheets nor blankets but good comfortable bunks. There was facilities for cooking too, and when the train stopped at divisional points we would buy what groceries we wanted and do our own cooking I enjoyed the trip west. The men travelling on that train were from all parts of Canada, and there were some from Europe as well.

When we arrived in Minipeg the farmers boarded the trains before we could get off and offered us as much as eight dollars and our board and lodging a day for stooking and threshing. I couldn't believe it after working for such small wages for so long. Wheat was a good price and the crop was heavy. I wanted to stay in Minipeg for a couple of days before going out on the farm and though the offer of eight dollars a day was very tempting I still stayed in Minipeg for a couple of days. The hotel I stayed at was besieged by farmers all wanting to hire men especially if you had experience. After having a look around Minipeg I decided to go further west I heard the money was even higher around Regina so I bought a ticket at a half a cent a mile and set out for Regina.

The same thing happened at Regina, farmers clamouring for men, but I was reluctant to go back to work right away, I had been working seven days a week for years back in Ontario, with some money in my pocket I took advantage of the situation and decided to see if I could get a job in the City. Having settled myself in at the Grand Hotel I went looking for a job and the same day I was taken on at the J. I. Base assembly plant. The pay was less than if I had gone out on the farms, but it suited me fine, I started at seven o'clock in the morning and finished at six in the evening a lot different than the long hours on the farm, the work was easier too, it was mainly unloading agricultural implements from flat cars as they came in by rail and assembling the various parts of the machines mainly binders and tractors just a matter of bolting parts together. I relished my new situation.

Life in the city had many advantages electric lights, baths, hot and cold running water, these things were not available on the farms I had worked on.

When my days work was done I could get cleaned up and take in a cinema or watch a ball game they may seem simple pleasures to me it was a new and pleasant experience.

After a couple of weeks of working at the Assembly plant I met a farmer at the hotel who had come in from a little place called Ritchie away south of Regina near Bengough and when I told him I could handle a binder and stook, also that I had handled a threshing machine he offered me ten dollars a day and my board and lodging the temptation was too much,

and I quit the job at J.P. Base, and went with him, it was a long drive to Ritchie but he had a good car and we made good time, He told me he had been in England during the 1914-1918 war and that he had been an Air Force Pilot. I had no doubt about this when I got to know him better. He was a very audacious person and at times we had a lot of fun.

When we arrived at the farm I was given accomodation in the house and had my own bedroom, the local school teacher was boarding with the farmer and his wife also.

He had a section of land (640 acres) most of it was in wheat but there was about twenty acres of oats, the first work we had to do was get the binders ready for cutting ^{the} crop, check the knives and grind them, make sure the canvasses were in good shape, grease and oil all bearings. Then we had to bring the horses in off the range and stable them so as they would be ready to pull the binders.

We cut the twenty acres of oats first, we hauled them into the farm yard, and filled the top part of the barn, the rest was put into a small stack, these oats were used for stock feed. There were only two cows and four or five pigs, some chickens, but he must have had about fifty horses, most of the horses were out on the range all the year round, but the horses that were being used for work were kept in the barn. By this time the wheat was ready to cut and I hitched four horses to a ten foot cut binder and started cutting wheat. The farmer had still to find more men to do the stooking and threshing so he went off to find them.

Two days later he returned with five men, three of them were either Russian or Ukrainian I could never tell the difference, they spoke very little English, but they ^{were} good hard working men tough as nails. The other two were Scandinavians, Olie and Mogens, damn fine fellows, they spoke pretty good English too, all the men and the farmer also Pat the school teacher sat down to eat together and we could pack away a lot of grub. When you work hard and long you are ready for your food. The other men slept in a bunkhouse and I felt very privileged at being able to sleep in the house.

We had two binders, the farmer drove one and I drove the other. While we ^{were} cutting the other men were stooking and stooking is hard work a lot of back bending, but the wheat was being stooked almost as fast as it was being cut.

The cutting and stooking went on for eight or nine days we never worked on Sundays. As soon as the wheat was all cut and stooked we started to thresh.

The tractor was a big heavy Rumley Oil Pull, and we had a J. I. Case threshing machine,

Four teams and wagons were used to haul the wheat to the threshing machine, each wagon had a box rack on it, the ends about seven feet high and the side boards slanted down to ^{the} middle so that when you pitched the sheaves in, you didn't have to pitch so high. There is a knack in feeding the sheaves into the threshing machine. the tool used is called a spike and it is different to an ordinary pitchfork,

it has only one spike and a pitchfork usually has three, it takes a little while to develop the technique of using the spike but once you get the knack it is much faster. We all got the same pay ten bucks a day. The day was from daylight to dark with an hour break for dinner which was eaten in the field.

The main meal of the day was after work was finished, and after a days threshing you were ready for bed.

When the threshing was finished the farmer asked me to stay with him and do some ploughing, also the fence around the farm buildings needed some repair, and the farmer and his wife wanted to take a few days holiday and they said they could rely on me to look after the farm in their absence.

When the freeze up come and we could plough no longer there was little to do so I told the farmer I would be going. He wanted me to stay with him for -
 e winter, - but the pay he offered was so low I turned it down. He asked me to stay on until he could round up the horses that were out on the range I agreed and stayed on another two weeks.

Some of the horses were young colts that had not been castrated and one day some of his friends arrived to help him to castrate the colts. Well they made a party of this job

I never seen men drink like it they drank the liquor straight from the bottles and when they were finished cutting the colts they grabbed the dog and cut him.

They no sooner finished cutting the dog when one of them said "lets take the nuts out of the Englishman". Well I ran for dear life and jumped on a saddle pony and took off. I didnt go back till I was sure they were all gone, They were drunk enough to do anything. The next day I told the farmer I wanted to go so he drove me to Weyburn

When I took his cheque to the bank to cash it the bank manager said it was N S Y.

I hardly knew what to do I sure was surprised he seemed a decent fellow in every other way

I went to the Mounted Police and asked their advice and they said not to worry, apparently it had happened before. They took the cheque and that evening I picked up the cash and took the train for Winnipeg.

It was snowing in Winnipeg and the wind blowing when I arrived there, hundreds of the harvesters were making their way to the Union Station to return east at least if there was no work for them it would be warmer than in Manitoba. I tried to find work but like the other harvesters I abandoned the search and headed back east. In Toronto another search for work and after a few days I headed for Woodstock where at least I would know the city but the search for work in town was fruitless. I eventually took a job with a farmer, at ten dollars a month and my board and lodging

I had only been in this job a few weeks when I got a telegram telling me that my Brother Bill was critically ill and that I should go to Ottawa to see him

Immediately on arriving in Ottawa I went straight to the hospital, Mr & Mrs Baird were at Bill's bedside, he was in a public ward and was in the crises stage of Pneumonia, he had been out of work for some time. In those days you could not have your own doctor attend you in the public ward and after talking to Mr & Mrs Baird I came to the conclusion that he would be better off in a semi-private ward, at least we would have a choice of doctors. The Baird's and I drove out to Westboro to see a doctor there who had a great reputation in treatment of lung diseases.

The doctor lost no time in going to the hospital and arranging his transfer to a semi-private ward. After examining Bill he said he was in bad shape, but where there was life there was hope, Bill was delirious and he didn't recognize me. But he had a good constitution and he came through the crises alright. He had moved to Westboro and lived with Mr & Mrs Baird after they had lost their farm because of heavy debt, they were forced to sell their farm to pay off the creditors.

Bill had been out of work for some time and he had no money. So I had to guarantee to pay the hospital bills before he could be put in a semi-private ward. After what we had been through in our time it was little enough.

I wrote to Dr Barnardo's and asked them for the money they held for me, as I was over eighteen they were obliged to send it to me.

I went to the hospital every day to ^{see} Bill and when he was able to talk we talked about our experiences since we had been separated. When he was clear of the Pneumonia he had to have an operation, some of his lungs had to be tapped, and this delayed his discharge from hospital for another month. In the meantime

I was searching for work, I was staying with Mr & Mrs Baird in Westboro and my money was getting very low. I walked into a coal and wood merchants office at Woodroffe ^{and} had a talk with the boss and he agreed to take me on at eighteen bucks a week. I was beside myself with joy, I never expected to get a job other than on a farm for low wages.

It was late in November in 1928 and this was the start of one of the best periods of my life up to that time.

Leafloor Bros, Coal Wood and Ice merchants was in Woodroffe a suburb of Ottawa between Westboro and Britannia, the yard was situated beside the B & P R main line out of Ottawa, and the coal and wood was shunted on to the siding which served the yard. The ice was cut on the Ottawa River. This operation was hard physical work, to start to cut ice it was necessary to take an ax and cut a huge hole in the ice about four feet by four feet, having cut the hole, you use an ice saw, a very heavy tool about five feet long, with very coarse teeth, and wooden handle on an arm which was attached to the blade.

then you started at the hole and made a long cut in the ice, then made another long cut, after chopping a few feet of the ice away you had a rectangular hole in the ice, then proceed to cut the blocks of ice, which would float in the water until they were pulled out by using a very large pair of ice tongs, this part of the job had to be learned, the object was to plunge the block of ice as deep as you could into the water and with a quick jerk land the block on the uncut ice. It was very easy to finish up in the water if you were not careful. We wore spikes strapped to the instep of our boots to keep from slipping.

Of all the different jobs I have done in my life this was the one that needed the greatest physical effort. The ice on the Ottawa river was usually about eighteen to twenty inches thick and the blocks were cut approximately twenty eight by fourteen inches.

The Leafloor Bros were the best employers I ever had the relationship between the Brothers and the men who worked for them was not like the usual boss and worker relationship man and boss worked alongside each other. Albert Leafloor was the administrator he handled the office but he could also use a number ten coal shovel with the best of us, he was short and slightly corpulent, when he paid the men their wages on a Saturday, he would bring a roll of bills out of his pocket and give us our pay and he would always say thank you you're a good man.

Your pay was eighteen bucks a week and that's what you got.

There were no deductions, no income tax, no union dues, no unemployment insurance, and there were no time clocks to punch or no time sheets, and there was no absenteeism, men and boss worked together.

Ormond Leafloor, Albert's brother was a short wiry man a little younger than Albert and he was capable of doing a days work with the best of us and he was not averse to having a beer and a game of poker with the men. I really enjoyed his company.

Mogens Jensen, a Dane at that time about thirty five years old, the finest man I have met in my life, he was capable, conscientious, and a devout Christian he had been a farm worker in Denmark before immigrating to Canada. He worked a few acres of land besides working at Leafloor Bros raising market garden produce. He wanted nothing more than to have a wife and family and a farm of his own, he realized all of it, but more about Jensen later.

Dick Keal a big man with a good mechanical aptitude he was capable in many ways, he could sharpen and set any kind of saw with precision with just a file and a setting tool that he had made himself. we had a gasoline engine to provide power for the circular saw that was used to cut the the four foot lengths of wood, two cuts to a four foot length produced three sixteen inch lengths. he always done the repairs and maintenance on the the engine. He was also a blacksmith and done the shoeing on the horses.

Alec Snyder, a Veteran of the 1914-1918 war he had a disability pension because of wounds to one hand and both feet he wore special boots and always a glove on the injured hand, but he still performed his work he was no passenger.

Korman Leafloor my buddy. He was the cousin of the Leafloor Bros, we were the same age, he was about six foot and strong as a bear. Korman's family had had a farm in northern Saskatchewan but couldn't make it pay so they moved to Ottawa his father worked in a foundry he had three brothers and two sisters, we were inseparable. His mother treated me just as if I was one of her own.

By this time Korman and I both had a car. My car was always used when we went out together it was a 1923 Mc Glocklin a big six cylinder open touring car, his was a Durant sedan and we used it when we went out with girls. We had many friends and we always met at one friend's house on Sunday night.

This was the home of the Craig family. Mr Craig was a railway construction foreman and was seldom at home, Mrs Craig as she was affectionately called welcomed a lot of young people to her home, she had two sons and three daughters, it was quite a big house, the front room was big enough to accommodate four couples for square dancing and we became pretty good square dancers the young men would take turns at calling the square dances we had one fellow named Ben who could call in both English and French he was a typical French Canadian we all thought the world of him.

1 Sunday night at the Braigs house was always the same
2 Ma Braig would play the piano and all the gang
3 would gather around and sing. Ma Braig loved to play
4 hymns and we all obliged her by joining in the
5 singing, the Braigs didnt attend any church but
6 they were people of a very high morale fibre.
7 anybody who did not conduct themselves in a decent
8 manner was soon made to realize they were not
9 wanted and we accepted the code of conduct
10 required of us. (Winnie arrives in Canada) insert)

Norman and I joined the militia and went to the Drill Hall every Thursday night. It was a Highlander unit, we wore the kilt and were assigned to D company of the 38th Battalion of the Cameron Highlanders apart from the military training there was the social life we had dances in the Bandroom and we were expected to take our own dance partners we also had smokers when we would be entertained by the Officers there would always be a plentiful supply of beer and cigarettes and a fish and chip supper. The dances were formal occasions when all ranks went in full ceremonial uniform, scarlet tunic shawl, feather bonnet, and white gloves

Norman and I both studied the NCO course and we both passed as NCO's. We never received the stripes as there was a long waiting list. However we were both selected to attend ceremonial parades, the battalion had one hundred men who were required to attend parades for ceremonial occasions.

Addition to page #65 after line #10

My sister Edie had saved up some money and had written to my sister Winnie (who by this time had been discharged from the sanatorium where she had been since she was five year old, she was seventeen years old by this time 1929) asking her if she would like to come to Canada. Edie would pay her fare and send her some money to have on the trip across

All was settled and when Winnie arrived at Montreal she looked terrible, she was dressed in shabby clothes, she told us that the stepmother had taken the money that Edie had sent her, and that she had to leave England as she was.

We just bungled her into a taxi and went straight to Edie's place then we went out and bought her some clothes.

Winnie never settled down in Canada and she went back to England in 1931.

66
Korman was a first-class rifleman a real crack shot, I was never as good as him with a rifle, but I became a first-class machine gunner.

Life was good during those days we had lots of social activity, we had a canoe club and in the summer the members of the club would go out on the Ottawa river, it was a very pleasant way of spending an evening young men and girls, we would erect a short pole in the the canoes and hang paper lanterns on the poles illuminated with candles, some of the young people had guitars or ukuleles and we would paddle up the river to a sandy beach and have hot dogs and soft drinks, and then return by just letting the canoes drift downstream. Korman was very good on the Hawaiian guitar. He also had a dance platform at the Westboro beach and danced there on summer evenings.

The Stock Market crash in 1929 had its effect on our lives the prices of commodities were falling and the price of labor fell too. The first effect it had on the men at Leafloor Bros was when Albert was forced to reduce all our wages from eighteen bucks a week down to fifteen and after a few months from Albert told us that he would have to cut the wages of the single men down to twelve but he would try to keep the married men with families at fifteen, Jensen and Korman and I all had to accept the situation, there was mass unemployment.

I was able to supplement my pay in the summer by doing gardening in the evenings but even that kind of work was hard to get. (New chapter)

1930-1940

In 1930 about the middle of April, Jensen was negotiating to buy a farm and eventually he told me that he was going to Dunvegan in Glenora County to complete a deal on a farm. He asked me if I would teach him to drive and when he learned he said he would buy my car, I had been trying to sell it for a long time. Well it was quite a job to teach Jensen how to drive but he got so he could start the car and drive on the country roads but he was not so good in traffic when driving in town. Eventually he decided to go and complete the deal on the farm, and he asked me if I would drive him to Dunvegan.

The farm he was going to buy was a broken down old place an old log house and barn in bad shape, the land was poor very sandy and stoney, after a good look around I said to ^{him} that he would never get a living out of it. There was some stock, about 25 sheep that were in poor condition, Three horses in poor shape 6 cows not worth much, and the implements were in a scrap condition. The woman who was selling the farm was a dealer, she advanced loans to farmers when they were in need, and foreclosed on them when they could not pay the interest.

I tried to persuade Jensen not to buy the place but he said he had given his word and went ahead and signed the papers.

We drove back to Westboro and when he told Albert Leafloor that he was leaving the job Albert told him he didn't like to see him go, but that by him leaving it would save him having to lay me off.

I had been with Leafloor Bros for a shorter time than any of the other men, so as somebody would have had to go it would have been me.

I always kept in touch with Jensen, we were friends for the rest of his life.

The economic depression was taking its toll, every week some of my friends lost their jobs. Norman Leafloor's father was laid off and this meant real hardship for the family. His brothers and sisters were still at school and the family had a struggle to pay rent and find enough to eat. There was no relief at all for single men and most of them became transients roaming the country looking for work. Relief for married people was meagre and people went short of enough to eat while warehouses were full. The Leafloor Bros kept the men as long as they could but the time came when Albert called me into the office and told me he was sorry but he would have to lay me off. The amount of business he was doing was reduced to about half even after reducing prices.

It is spring 1931. I'm out of work my savings gone, so I just took to the road like thousands of other single men to look for work, an exercise in futility if there ever was one. I set out from Ottawa heading for Montreal walking the highway.

I walked all day and was getting very hungry, I can't hardly describe my feelings I just felt absolutely alone and wondering what was going to happen to me, there seemed to be no future and I wondered why men should be in such a state of degradation. But when you are hungry and cold you put your pride in your pocket. It started to snow and the wind coming off the Ottawa River was piercing cold. When I turned off the road and went up to a farm house, knocked on the door and the farmers wife answered my knock and I asked her if she could give me something to eat, she said go over to the barn and see my husband.

The farmer a man of about forty greeted me and when I told him what I wanted he just said sure, and took me to the house and told his wife to set an extra place for supper. I thought to myself then that these people had little enough and yet they were ready to share it with a complete stranger a bum. They let me sleep on a couch in their kitchen that night and gave me some breakfast next morning and a meat sandwich to take with me.

The snow was about four inches deep and I walked the road till about two o'clock in the afternoon until I seen the Monastery at Rockland about twenty seven miles out of Ottawa. I decided although I was supposed to be a Protestant I would try to get a feed at the the Monastery. It was called, The Holy Rosary Scholastica and I quite expected to get "the bum's rush."

I went to the rear of the main building and knocked on the back door and was greeted by a very old Priest after telling ^{him} I wanted something to eat he said come in my son and get warm and I will see that you are fed, while I was sitting in the kitchen a young priest came in and asked me what I wanted and I told him that I had spoken to the old priest and he said the food would be ready in a little while, the young priest ^{me to} asked me to shovel the snow between the kitchen and the woodshed while the food was being prepared. I was only too willing and was busy shovelling the snow when the old priest came out and asked me why I was shovelling the snow and when I told him that the young priest had asked me to do it he seemed angry and said put that shovel down and come in where it is warm, then he put his arm around my shoulders and we went back into the kitchen and he said to ^{me} when you asked for a meal you paid for it, there is no need to work for it. He said we live on what is given to us, and if we can't share it with others then we don't deserve it. I have always remembered that old priest, and although I am not a religious person I found that the Roman Catholics never questioned you when you asked for help, not so with the other denominations of organized religion.

Back on the highway again I walked until after dark and I turned off into what turned out to be an abandoned farm there was still some hay in the mow so I burrowed myself down into the hay and slept there that night it was about two miles from Plantagenet.

Walking a main road gets monotonous after a time so I turned off the highway at Plantagenet and headed for St Isidore. I knew that it was only a few miles from St Isidore to Dunvegan where Jensen was living so I decided to go and see him. I was picked by a farmer driving a ramshackle Model T Ford truck.

He asked me where I was bound for and when I said Dunvegan, he said he could take me as far as St Isidore. When we got to his farm he gave me a meal and I hit out for Dunvegan.

When I arrived at Jensens place he was glad to see me we were the best of friends and when I told him I was broke and out of a job he said I was welcome to stay with him, but he didnt know for how long as he was badly in debt and the Woman who sold him the farm was forcing him into bankruptcy for non-payment of interest on the mortgage.

He had another friend of his staying with him a man by the name of Donald Cruikshank they had met in a lumber camp in Northern Quebec shortly after Jensen had immigrated from Denmark.

Donald was from England he was a handsome looking man with red curly hair and a marvelous physique but like myself he too was out of work.

He was a well educated man and he come from a middle class family at Faversham in Kent. The family had their own buisness they owned and operated grocery stores at Faversham and Maidstone. He never told us why he left England and we never asked him, I often wondered.

The three of us eked out an existence, we shared the farm chores mostly Jensen and I. Donald was a good cook and we left the cooking to him, he was also a good shot with a rifle or a shotgun and he often came in with partridges and rabbits that were a welcome supplement to a very monotonous diet of beans.

Occasionally Donald or I would get a days work on one of the farms around Dunvegan and if we got paid at all it was only a dollar a day, mostly we got something in trade like a cut of pork or beef when the local farmers done their own butchering.

The farmers in Glenegarry County were the descendents of the pioneers who came from Scotland generations before, they even carried on the old Clan Feuds that had been going on for ages, and although they all went to the Presbyterian Church there were some that wouldn't speak to each other. When a farm was up for sale they would combine together to prevent a Roman Catholic from buying it, there were French Canadians in the counties around Glenegarry but I never met a French Canadian who owned a farm in Glenegarry County.

Donald Bruikshank was very popular with the people of Glenegarry he had Scottish ancestors, Jensen was accepted and made welcome as he attended the Presbyterian Church every Sunday, I was merely tolerated and was considered a Sasanak.

Donald and I made a deal with Archie McRae the farmer who owned the farm next to Jensen.

The deal was that if we would cut a year's supply of wood for him he would give us a piece of land at the corner of his farm, and that we could take the logs to build a cabin so that we would have a place of our own to come back to at anytime we wanted it.

We cut the year's supply of wood and Archie and Donald and I went to measure off the piece of land. Archie started at the log fence along the road and just took one hundred long paces and drove a stake in the ground, then took another hundred paces and drove another stake in the ground. We shook hands and Donald and I were landowners.

We selected the best logs we could find they were all about a foot in diameter, notched them, cut poles for rafters and joists for the floor and ceiling and built a stone chimney, the cellar was just a hole between the rocks under the cabin. We found a really good ash tree and fell it, this was taken to the sawmill sawn, tongue and grooved and dry-kilned. To borrow the horses and wagon to do the hauling we helped Archie McRae to shingle his barn.

The glass for the windows, the putty, the nails, the hinges we got from the village store and paid for them by cleaning out a well for the storekeeper.

When everything was ready for the "Raising" Donald invited the farmers to a the raising bee and the cabin was raised in a day and when the floor was laid a lot of the farmers and their families joined us, brought a fiddle and lots of food, some cider and we

had a party in the evening.

Jensen was eventually evicted from his farm, but he was still determined to own a farm one day. He made a deal with Donald Mc Brimmon to clear seventy five acres of land. He was to cut the trees, pull the stumps burn off and leave the land ready for the plough.

He was also allowed to use the land that he cleared until the whole seventy five acres was cleared, besides that he had the use of a house and barn.

When the mail contract was put up for tender he bid on it and won the contract as the lowest bidder, but it gave him a small income.

I worked with Jensen clearing that seventy five acres we took the part that we could clear the quickest and we got about ten acres cleared he sowed oats on it and sold most of the crop as it stood the rest we cut with a scythe and stored it in the barn to feed Jensen's horse.

Donald Cruikshank had become a victim of the wanderlust again and gone off we had no idea where. He had left a letter with Jensen saying that in the event that he did not return his half of the cabin would belong to Jensen.

(1932) I stayed with Jensen until the late summer of 1932 and I decided to hit the road again in search of work. Jensen felt that he owed me something. I told him he didn't owe me anything and that I might be glad of a meal and a place to sleep, he insisted however and gave me twenty dollars.

We parted at ^{the} railway station in Greenfield about four miles from Dunvegan. I gave him a letter just as Donald had leaving the cabin to him in case I didn't return.

The train stopped at Greenfield and I boarded it and bought a ticket to Montreal \$1.60 out of my twenty dollars. When I arrived at the Bonaventure Station I went straight to where my sister Edie was living on Wellington St in Point St Charles.

Her husband had been out of work for months he had been laid off from the Steel Company of Canada, he worked there as a millwright, they had a baby son and they lived on an allowance of \$2.50 a week from the relief. I gave Edie five dollars and she cried. They used their relief money just to buy food and coal. The rent was never paid if the landlords had evicted all the people who were not paying rent they would have had to evict half the working class of Montreal.

Mass unemployment everywhere the single men standing in the breadlines, but the rich still lived in comfort in Westmount and Point St Clair. These were the conditions of the working class and the wonder was that there was no revolution.

Alec my sister's husband would walk the streets of Montreal all day searching for work but it was hopeless. Capitalism was in an economic crisis and there was no solution the workers had to starve.

I give up trying to find work. I bid goodbye to Edie and Alec, they were worried about what would happen to me, and I told them that my problems were nothing compared to theirs and went down to ^{the} railroad yards and caught a freight train, I wasn't much concerned as to where it was going even, I had become a hobo, one of many thousands.

The freight stopped at a water tank out at Lachine and I found an empty box car, there were already several hoboes in it, I pulled out a packet of tobacco and papers and rolled a cigarette and the guy next to me put out his hand for the tobacco and it went around till everybody had a smoke these were the knights of the road, and I was one of them, we shared everything and anybody who failed to share was ostracized, we called them working stiffs, they were usually men who still thought they could find work. A lot of them became knights of the road too.

The freight went to Ottawa and I spent a few days with my Brother Bill, he was still living with Mr & Mrs Baird they kept him when he had no work and when he found work he made it up to them, he was treated as a son. After a few days I felt I was imposing on the Baird's and hit the road again.

I knew that a freight left Ottawa West every night and it would be passing through Westboro station at about five miles an hour.

The Baird's house was near the station and when I heard it blow I went onto the station platform and boarded it.

This was a regular freight train and ran between Smiths Falls and Ottawa, when it stopped to take water I found there were quite a few hoboes on it we all assembled in one empty box car, it was good to have the company of men in the same circumstance as I was, and we exchanged information about the best towns to hit, where the cops were hostile, and where the jungles were located.

The jungles were places where the hoboes rested from riding the rods. They were usually near the railroad yards. Sometimes in the "deadline" a siding that was used for rolling stock that was out of commission and waiting to be repaired or scrapped.

There was always a can of coffee and a can of stew on the fire, it was a code among the real hobo's not to bum from the working class, we would branch out usually into the suburbs (to go on the stem) in other words to beg for food and tobacco or maybe money. When we had done our share we would return to the jungle to contribute what we got to the common larder. (the working stiffs) men who rode the freights to look for work were easily recognized and were ostracized, we just ignored them.

92 Names were not normally used we called each other buddy there were some well known hobo's who had (handles) nicknames. I met a few of them and eventually I was given a handle I became known as Blackie. There were different ways of acquiring a handle, you never tried to acquire it, the way a hobo usually got it was if he looked after some old hobo or helped to fight off the cops when they got hostile

The reason I became known as Blackie was I often rode the (Head End) on the tender of passenger trains, the locomotives on passenger trains burnt coal and after a while my face would be black from the smoke and soot from the engine. Some of the engine crews were hostile, but usually they wouldn't bother you, the problem with riding the head end of a passenger train was you had to look out for the (Bulls) railroad police, they could be real tough at times and usually they would beat you up, and sometimes they would hand you over to the local police and you would be charged with trespass on railroad property, and if there was room in the local hoosegow you would get seven days.

The winter was a tough time for the hoboes, you had to ride inside and sometimes we had difficulty finding an empty, usually you had to board a freight when it was being made up in the yards. Sometimes we would ride on the tender and crawl into the tool box, but that could be very cold too. There were two different kinds of tender some had hot water tanks and some were cold, we always could tell the hot water tanks they had a different silhouette, there was a calorifier in the hot ones, this was a device for pre-heating the water before it was injected into the engines boiler. A calorifier was a coil of pipe inside the water tank, this coil was connected to a steam pipe and when the steam passed through the coil it pre-heated the water.

Another way to recognize the hot ones was by the engines number but this wasn't reliable as the older engines bearing the same number would be cold.

When we were not actually riding we had the problem of finding a place to sleep where we could keep from freezing. The roundhouse was a favourite place, but if the Bulls were tough that was impossible, then we would have to go to the police station and the police would put us in the cells and lock us up for night. The procedure at the police station was always the same, we would be lined up and each one of us would be booked. The sergeant always asked the same questions, What is your name? Joe Bloe, John Smith I never seen so many, Joe Bloe's and John Smith's, the sergeants usually put it in the book anyway they knew we were lying but so what, sometimes a sergeant would lose his temper but all he got was a chorus of jeers from the men. Next question where do you come from? you gave him the name of the last town you were in, now and then some bum would get frivolous and say Timbuctu, and I've seen sergeants write it in the book, how old are you? color of your eyes? color of your hair? what do you weigh? have you got a razor? they always took your razor, and gave it back to you in ^{the} morning. One night at Brockville in Ontario there were a bunch of us being booked in at the police station and there was a fine big black man with us he was ^{the} happy go-lucky type, and when it come his turn to be booked he stepped up to the sergeant and said. Im George Washington, Im two hundred years old, I come from the South Pole, I got blonde hair, blue eyes, and here's my goddam razor, and he pulled a straight razor out of his breast pocket and the blade flashed out, ^{and} just passed the sergeant's nose. The bums roared with laughing, the sergeant was just embarrassed

There were never any beds in the cells, we just laid down on the cement floor, usually four or maybe six in a cell, but least it ^{was} warm. They always let us out at seven o'clock in the morning. I travelled all over southern Ontario that winter hitting all the main cities between Brockville and Windsor.

About the end of March 1933 I palled up with a hobo. he was called Gillie. I never found out what his real name was, it was sufficient for me that he was a knight of the road, we never enquired about each other's background's.

Gillie wanted to get to Chicago and we decided to make it together. The Worlds Fair was on during 1933 and 1934. "The Century of Progress Exposition". Where the progress was I dont know there were millions of unemployed in the U.S.A and Canada.

We tried to get a freight in Niagara Falls that we knew would cross the border, but there were so many customs and immigration people watching those trains it was impossible. Then we got ourselves cleaned up as best we could, and tried to make it across the bridge, but the immigration people refused us on the grounds that we had no means of support, in other words they had enough bums and didn't want anymore.

Gillie was undaunted, he said what we should do is ride west in Canada until we got to the praries and walk across the international boundary at night in the open country.

The plan seemed feasible to me so we set out to the west. The weather was good nice warm spring days when we caught a freight in Toronto bound for Sudbury in Northern Ontario.

Gillie and I had a lot in common, he had been shipped out from England by the Salvation Army as an orphan and put on a farm. He was prepared to work, but not for the lousy pay that was being offered if you could find work.

When we were not riding the freights or "on the stem" we spent a lot of time in the libraries reading we memorized a number of the poems of Robert Service Dangerous Dan McIrew, The Cremation of Sam McJee and a few others.

When we got to Sudbury the weather turned cold and we tried to stay there for a while but it's a God forsaken town. The cops were hostile and the only place we could get to sleep was the jail.

Regardless of the weather we set out for the west and it ^{was} still very cold. There is very little civilization between Sudbury and Winnipeg, the only places the trains stopped at were the divisional points to change engines. There was very little habitation in any of these places and we went very hungry at times until we reached Transcona, and then we had to walk into Winnipeg. In Winnipeg we rested up for a while. Part of the old Union Station had been turned into a hostel for the unemployed single men, we got two meals a day and we slept in dormitories the bunks we had were three tier high, six bunks suspended from two steel stanchions with a mattress but no sheets or blankets or no pillow anyway it was better than the police station. The food we got was fairly good.

Winnipeg is a good town for stemming the storekeepers were pretty good, and you could nearly always get a packet of Bull Durham cigarette tobacco at the United Cigar Stores.

There was also facilities to have a shower and wash clothes at the hostel this was always a problem for the hobos, you felt a lot better when you could keep clean the library in Winnipeg was one of the best I ever seen.

I read some socialist literature there and this was the beginning of my political thinking I started looking for the alternative to Capitalism, and want, and misery.

I am still looking for it and someday it will come. Yille and I decided to head for Chicago, we caught a freight out of Winnipeg going west, after consulting maps the place which appeared to be the best for making our entry into the States was along the border between southern Saskatchewan and northern Montana.

We made it, Regina and after a couple of days we caught a freight to Weyburn. This was the period of the dust bowl the land was dried out and there was a plague of grasshoppers, wherever the land had been cultivated the soil drifted, during the dust storms the sun was blotted out, The farmers had nearly all moved out.

We walked south across country, and slept in abandoned farm houses, we lived on boiled wheat, which we found in abandoned grainaries the residue in the corners that the people had left behind and the mice and the gophers had not yet eaten.

At the border we just walked across the only indication that you were crossing from one country to another was a furrow plowed in the soil and a post here and there.

The first railroad we come to we waited until a freight came and we boarded it and started on our way east to Chicago. 82

The Great Northern Railroad went all the way to Chicago and we stayed on it, passing through Bismark, Minneapolis, St Pauls, Madison and into Chicago.

The railroad yards were immense it seemed that every railroad in the U S A went to Chicago.

The deadline covered a good many acres, there were thousands of hobos in the jungle. Every body seemed to be out of work, we met men who had university degrees Engineers, Architects, Chemists, skilled tradesmen of all kinds, farmers, seamen, railway men, and men with degrees in Theology.

It seemed that every hobo in North America had decided to see the Worlds Fair. Gillie and I fixed up a box car as our place of residence, we gathered hundreds of newspapers and shredded them to make a bed.

Chicago in 1933 was a hobo's paradise, the cops didnt bother us much there were too many of us.

We would set out in the morning and go to food stores, tobacco stores and bum the essentials, then bum dimes some times the cops got hostile when we bummed money but they never come near the jungle.

The Salvation Army was one of the places we used to wash and shave, for five cents you could get soap and towel. The Sally Ann never gave us anything you always had to pay. We had a plan to work to if we got seperated we always went to the central Post Office and wait for each other, But one day I waited for hours and

Gillie didnt turn up, I went back to the box car, and no sign of him, I waited around the central post office for a couple of days but I never seen him again.

There was an old tober a couple of cars away from the one I was sleeping in and I stood watching ^{him} whittling one day he was shaping the hull of a model sailing ship and when I asked him what he was going to do with it when it was finished he said he put them in bottles and sold them. I was fascinated, the old guy made a beautiful job of the hull and I asked him to let me see it when it was finished, the next day I went to see him and he was making the sails and the masts, when the masts and sail were finished he took a stick, dipped it into a bottle of glue and put some glue into the bottle, then put some glue on the hull where the masts were to go and placed the masts in position leaving a length of the rigging cotton loose, then he very carefully pushed the whole thing into the bottle waited a few minutes while he rolled a cigarette and gently pulled on the loose end of the rigging cotton until the masts stood erect put a cork in the neck which secured the cotton and there it was, a perfect model of a schooner fully rigged inside a bottle. I asked how much he got for them when he sold them, he said sometimes he only got fifty-cents, but he said at times he got two or three dollars. I asked if he would let me have it to sell it for him and he agreed, he was an old man and I said I could get around a lot quicker than ^{he} could so we made a deal that he would make them and I would sell them. I took it to the worlds fair and after haggling fifty cents I paid my way in and within half an hour I sold it for two dollars.

Back to the jungle I went to see old Harry he was about the only hoboe I ever called by name he had been a seafaring man. I gave him the two bucks and he gave me one back again, we decided to make and sell the bottles as souvenirs at the worlds fair. Harry would do the work that required his skill, and I would find the bottles, do the bumming or the shopping when we had money, do the selling, rough out the wood for the hulls, do the cooking, while Harry plied his trade.

We got things pretty well organized, I would go to the city dump and find the bottles they had to be clear glass, I done the washing of them and always had a supply on hand with corks to match.

The material for the sails I bought by the yard the cotton for the rigging at Woolworths, the glue at the hardware store. I even bought Harry a new pair of scissors. With my help we could make two sometimes three a day, and when we had six finished I would go to the fair grounds and sell them. I got an idea that if I could get a stamp on the bottles stating that they were souvenirs of the Century of Progress Exposition we could get a better price and they would sell quicker.

I bought a small piece of copper and marked it out with the words Century of Progress Exposition Chicago 1933, then I took it into a garage and had the mechanic drill holes along the lines I had made then sat for hours filing the stencil out until I was satisfied with it. Harry thought it was a great idea.

The paint we used was artists oil paint, but it didn't adhere very well to the glass. I'm afraid some of the people who bought the first lot we stencilled were dissatisfied because after a few days the paint peeled off. Then I got the idea that before painting, the bottles should be sandblasted using the stencil so as just to get a slightly rough surface for the lettering.

102 Finding someone to do the sandblasting was quite a problem I went all over Chicago nobody could be bothered with a small amount of work at the price we could pay. Eventually I came across a Polish fellow who had a small shop who done sandblasting for a foundry that made castings and he agreed to do the work at a price we could afford, so I left the stencil and a couple of bottles with him. The next day I went back and he had them done and he said if I brought twenty five at a time he could do them for five cents each. After that when we painted them we had no more trouble with the paint and we could paint them much quicker the paint adhered readily and there was no trouble with running paint, the only trouble was that the sandblasting wore the stencil and we had to make a new one when they become worn.

When I went into the worlds fair I would go along the midway and display my wares outside a sideshow or a refreshment stand, any place where there was a lot of people about, holding a little case with two bottles in it with the lid ^{up} speaking to the people. With ^{the} improved product I would be sold out in half an hour two dollars apiece and if the trade was brisk I would put the price up to three dollars, old Harry and I never went short

of anything we had good food, got ourselves some decent clothes, and took a day off now and then and go to a tavern and have a few beers.

Things were going well until one day after we had been operating for about two months, I had just started selling when a man wearing a badge came up to me and asked for my permit not being able to show a permit he told ^{me} to get out of the grounds or he would call the cops. I was an illegal immigrant at that time having just walked across the border, so I couldn't afford to argue with him and I just had to go. When I got back and told Harry what had happened he was furious and he wanted to accompany me on my selling trips but he was so old and slow it wouldn't work out, we went to City Hall and applied for a permit but if you had not rented space inside the grounds you couldn't get a permit. I tried selling the wares door to door in the suburbs of Chicago but some days after walking miles I hadn't sold any. There was only one thing to do, hit the road again. We had some money stacked away, and we divided evenly. Harry and I parted the best of friends. I often wondered what happened to him he had real skill in his hands it seemed a shame that a good man like him could not have a better life.

The job of finding a freight to go to any specific place from Chicago is almost impossible. The yards are so immense with hundreds of freights going in all directions. I took a bus to the east side of Chicago and boarded the tender of a passenger train on the Nickel Plate line.

The engineer and fireman saw me but didn't bother me. It was a fast train and took mail and water "on the fly".

The water was picked up from a trough between the rails.

I rode this train to Fort Wayne, Indiana where it changed engines. I knew from a time table that there was a fast passenger train leaving Fort Wayne on the Pennsylvania Railroad. I just had time to make it so I hurried over to the Pennsylvania depot and was just in time to get aboard, no trouble from the crew, and I made it to Canton Ohio. The train was bound for Pittsburg and I decided I would stay with it, she was just about ready to start when a railroad Bull seen me and started yelling at me to get down, I jumped from the tender to the ground just as the train started to move, when I heard two shots, the bullets kicked up the gravel about three feet away from me. The Bull grabbed ^{me} and started punching me, he said, I'll kill you, you black bastard why didn't you stop when I told you, and when I said I didn't hear him because of the noise the engine was making, he discovered I was a white. I guess my face was so black from riding the head-end he thought I was a black man. Normally I would have been arrested but there were so many hoboes riding the rods in those days the cops just beat us up and let us go. There was a good hostel in Canton, and when you applied for admission you had to take a bath and your clothes were taken away and baked in an oven to make sure you didn't have any lice on you, the food was good too we were given two meals a day. and the sleeping accomodation was clean and comfortable.

Three days was all you were allowed to stay at the hostel then you had to move on. I decided to head for the coast so I took a freight out of Canton. The incident with that Bull had made me apprehensive of riding the lead end for a while. Harrisburg was the next city I hit and spent a couple of days there it was a bum town mass unemployment and the cops were hostile they threatened to have the firemen turn their high pressure water hoses on the stacks in the jungle, so I reckoned the best thing to do was hit the road.

From Harrisburg I went Philadelphia, After spending the night in the jungle I set out to explore the town.

This is where I changed my method of bumming.

I had learned from experience that the people who were most helpful to hobos were the Professionals, Doctors, Dentists, Lawyers, and the like; but I never got much help from the professional Theologians, they always recommended some charity and from my experience with most but not all charitable institutions you could become very hungry before they made up their minds it seems there was always some red tape.

The method I used was to go into a phone booth and get the names and addresses of a few professionals and go and see them at their own homes. This method proved very successful and I was not only able to get enough to eat but at times I was given money and clothes. The clothes I was able to share with some of the other hobos. I found it paid to keep clean and shaved, but not too well dressed, some of the clothing was more suitable for working in an office, than for a hobo.

One Doctor who I went to see was very helpfull, he gave me some nice clothes and an address of a farmer at a place called Mullica Hill in New Jersey he said I might get a job there. He also gave me two dollars.

106 Taking his advice I crossed the river and made my way to Mullica Hill.

The farmer I went to see was a pleasant man and welcomed me, and after a long chat he offered me a job. He was satisfied I knew something about farming he offered me twelve dollars a week and my board and lodging. I had my meals in the house with the farmer and his wife and daughter, and slept in a nice little room above a garage.

The farm consisted of about eighty acres of very good land, there was about twenty five acres in tomatoes fifteen acres in asparagus a pasture and a few acres of strawberries and raspberries also quite a lot of nut and fruit trees.

When I arrived the asparagus season was nearly finished and the harvesting of the tomatoes and fruit was just starting.

My duties were to milk and look after the cows he only three, they were really ^{good} Jerseys. He also had two horses. After milking in the morning I would put the milk on a stand at the farm gate where it was picked up and taken to a dairy.

After breakfast I had to take the truck into Mullica Hill and pick up casual laborers. These people were mostly black men. They were paid a ridiculously low wage sometimes only fifty cents a day. Some of the people who worked at casual work.

were Italian immigrants but they were paid better than the black people, they were good hardworking people.

After picking up the people that were required or sometimes all I could get, I would take them back to the farm, their work was first to cut the asparagus, wash it, grade it, there were three grades, colossal, extra fancy, and fancy. Then the asparagus was made up in bunches according to grade, and packed in crates after the crates were filled and the tops nailed on they were picked up by long distance truck and taken to Camden.

The rest of the day would be spent at harvesting fruit and tomatoes. These black people being so poorly paid lived in dilapidated shacks around Mullica Hill, sometimes when I went around to get them to go to work they would just say no whitey you come to-morrow I got enough to keep me to-day and I dont feel like working. The Italian immigrants were more dependable and always turned up for work.

When the tomatoes were picked they ^{were} put in two bushel baskets and were transported to Campbell's packing plant in Camden.

After the tomato harvesting was finished there was not enough work and the farmer had to lay me off.

I had some money saved and went to Philadelphia and rented a room but I wasn't able to find work. and when my money was gone I just took to the road again. This time not to ride the rods but to hitch hike the highways. I was travelling north with the intention of going back to Canada.

While I was walking north towards New York I got a lift. The man who was driving the car had been hired by the woman who was in the back seat. She was from Florida and was in a hurry to get to New York. The man was tired and he asked me if I would drive to give him a rest so I got behind the wheel and drove all the way to New York.

New York was one of the best towns I ever hit. There was a lot of unemployment but my method of bumming worked well and I continued to use the telephone books to get names and addresses of the people and visit them at their own homes.

I was able to rent a room and lived pretty good. I made a terrible blunder though. I went to a house on Riverside Drive that I had not looked up in ^{the} telephone book. The man who opened the door was a Police Inspector after asking me what I wanted he identified himself and he told me to get out of New York that if I ever was picked up he would see to it that I got the "full treatment".

Discretion being the better part of valor I went back to my room, got my few things together and took the highway north again.

Albany was the next place on my way north I relied on my method of bumming making sure not to go into any place unless I knew who lived there. Albany being the Capital of New York State was more prosperous so I stayed there about ten days I bummed most of the likely places in Albany and took to the road again still heading north.

I made my way to within a couple of miles of Rouses Pt. when I was picked up by of all people an Immigration Officer. I had intended to try to go around Rouses Pt by going across fields and picking up the highway north of the Port of Entry. The Immigration Officer took me into the office at Rouses Pt and when I was questioned I told them exactly what I had done, they asked me where I was born, they said I could be deported to England and I just laughed and when they asked me what I was laughing about I said I couldn't care less where they sent me. There was a Catholic Priest in the office at the time and they asked the Priest if the address I had given them, that of my sister Edie in Montreal was genuine he was a parish priest from Pointe St Charles. I don't know what went on between the priest and the officials but they said I would be allowed to go to Montreal with the priest but I would be barred from entering the U.S.A. again.

I have visited the U.S.A. many times since and had no problems, but I was no longer a hoboe.

The priest took me right to Edie's home. They had been worried about me and said I could have written to them, they were still on relief. The next day I went to the railroad yards and got a freight going to Ottawa.

In Ottawa I went to see my brother Bill he was out of work but still living with Mr & Mrs Baird, I only stayed there one night as I didn't want to impose on them. The next night I caught a freight at Westboro station and was bound for southern Ontario, it was November and getting very cold. When the train got to Smiths Falls I met a hoboe about my own age,

he was going to Trenton Ontario where there was a government relief camp for single men. We became friends and travelled together until the spring of 1934.

The Conservative government had found out what to do with the unemployed the men at the Trenton relief camp were used to build the Royal Canadian Air Force base there and it is still in use.

There were thousands of men in this camp, every nationality you could think of and from every trade. carpenters, plumbers, masons, bricklayers, plasterers, electricians, lumberjacks, seamen, railway men, chemists, engineers, mechanics, sheetmetal workers and many others.

They were working for the department of National Defence, hidden away in this and other camps, the Trans Canada Highway was mostly built by the industrial army of unemployed men, for twenty cents a day and if you didn't go into these camps you would be charged with vagrancy. Yes five dollars and twenty cents a month, a thirteenth of a pound of tobacco a week and your food and clothing every man got the same whether you were a tradesman, a professional or a laborer.

We lived in barracks, that we built ourselves, and were treated like prisoners under direct command like any army. The morale of the men was very low attempts were made to organize sports to keep up morale but it had little effect as the months passed the land was cleared barracks, administration buildings, mess halls, hangars, and the flight paths were constructed, the ^{men} openly resented the fact that they were being made slaves.

On Sunday all the religious denominations held services from six o'clock mass by the Roman Catholics, then the Anglicans the Methodists, the Baptists, the Salvation Army. Sometimes when the Sally Ann was finished there would be some political agitation from a small group of Radicals, but the men had no use for anybody who talked politics, they were disgusted with the whole political set up.

A few attempts were made to demonstrate but were soon put down by the administration.

On one occasion we did start to organize a march to Ottawa but the police were ready to put a stop to it.

The men fought back the only way they could but there was no unity among them some actually preferred the life in the camp to tramping or riding the rods. A lot of the ^{men} would not work at all, they would just take their tools and go to the work site and some would just ^{sit} around and do nothing others would deliberately break axe handles, shovel handles all supposedly by accident.

My friend and I decided to spend the winter in the camp and in the spring we would head for British Columbia. My friend's name was Walter Stuart he come from B.C. He told me had some trouble with his father, he never said what the trouble was about and after all these years I still don't know. We played chess together and done some boxing in the gymnasium.

His people had a small farm at Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island, his father also had a small building contractors business.

Walter and I started out for the west in late March the weather was good and we were keen to get out of the camp. I had never ^{been} to B.C. and the prospect of going there appealed to me. We went into the office and told the manager we wanted to go and I think he was relieved as neither one of us had done much work.

Toronto was the first place we headed for we knew we would get a freight going up to the main line. We made our way to Sudbury. The weather turned cold so we had to stay in Sudbury until we were able to get an empty going west. We seen a freight just pulling out, there was a box car with doors open and we jumped into it, glad to be getting away from Sudbury. There was about two tons of coal in one end of the box car, this we couldn't understand but we soon found out. The train stopped and shunted the box car off on a siding and we had to abandon the box car and ride the head end there wasn't another empty on the train. The tender had a cold water tank if we had been lucky it might have been the calorifier type and the water would have been hot, no such luck we nearly froze to death. Walter was in real bad shape and I wasn't much better. I lay on top of him to try to protect him from some of the cold but he was starting to go to sleep and I knew if I couldn't arouse him he would freeze to death. With my energy going I had to do something, the train was going slow as it was on a long grade, I managed to climb along the catwalk of the engine and kicked on the door of the cab and the engineer opened the door.

The way that engineer looked at me he must have thought I was a ghost. I told him my buddy was on the tender and nearly frozen and he stopped the train and with the help of the fireman we got Walter into the cab, it was a close call.

The divisional point was Armstrong and the engineer took both of us to his home and fed us and let^{us} stay until we were fit to travel again.

There was no place to stay in Armstrong, so we had to find a freight with an empty on it,

The weather was below zero. Luck was with us a freight with a string of empty stock cars on it was in the yards and there was a stockmans coach on it (these coaches were used by the men who looked after the livestock when going east.) We got into the coach and stayed with^{the} train all the way to Winnipeg.

There was a stove in the coach and we soon had the fire going, there were also bunks and we were able to sleep.

The crew knew we were aboard but took no notice.

When we got to Winnipeg we swore we would never ride the rods again. We stayed for a few days at the hostel and set out to look for work.

There was no work to be had in the city so we headed out into the country. The farmers in Manitoba were in a very bad way, the grasshoppers had eaten their crops for a couple of years and the price of farm produce was low, a lot of farms had been abandoned; we stayed at one place for a few days and worked just for our food and slept in the barn.

Then we set out again walking the road, until we went into a farm and asked for something to eat.

The farmers wife took us in to give us some food. The farmer had been kicked by a horse and his back was badly injured, he was confined to bed. After we had our meal the farmer called us into the bedroom and asked us if we had done any farm work he said he could hire one of us providing we could handle horses and use the farm implements. We told him we had both done plenty of farm work, he said he could only ^{hire} one of us, so Walter and I tossed a coin to see who would take the job. I won the toss. We shook hands and we parted, he said he was going to head for B.C. and home.

The next time I saw him was at his home at Cobble Hill.

The work on the ^{farm} was no problem for me, the seeding was the first job. With the help of the farmers young nephew a lad of fifteen, we sowed four hundred acres of wheat one hundred acres of barley and some flax. The farmer was badly in debt a heavy mortgage on the land a chattel mortgage on the stock and implements, he even had to borrow the seed on a seed grain mortgage.

When we were sowing we could see millions of grasshopper eggs and I thought to myself the guts these farmers had risking everything in a gamble against those grasshoppers. When the seeding was finished there wasn't a lot to do just the chores and we watched the fields, the young grasshoppers started to hatch out, and it looked as if the crop would be eaten as it germinated.

It started to snow, we got about three inches and optimism built up.

If it would only stay cold for a few days those cursed grasshopper would be killed off. We had three days of cold weather and when the snow melted there was the wheat and the barley all nicely germinated and the fields were turning green. The farmer was so excited he wanted to get out of bed to see for himself but he had to wait. The feeling of optimism was everywhere people were smiling again.

There is not a lot of work to do on a prairie farm until the harvest. We had the farm chores to do there were only four cows some chickens, turkeys, and a few pigs, the horses were on pasture.

I made myself busy checking over the binders the tractor, the threshing machine, and harness getting everything ready for the harvest.

We went to the village on Saturdays with the farmers wife, we took eggs and butter and bought what we needed at the village store. Elm Creek was about thirty five miles out of Winnipeg.

The summer was getting very hot and the worry was then about hail storms, and every time we seen those inky black clouds we thought we might see that lovely crop hammered flat.

But the luck held and when the crop was ready we started to cut. It was a fantastic crop. The grasshoppers had eaten everything for two years - even the weeds, and there was just a beautiful crop no weeds. The crop was so heavy the binders could hardly handle it.

The farmer was able to get around on crutches and I have never seen a man so happy as that farmer even with the pain he was suffering.

We started to thresh the barley it was a special brewing barley and it turned out at seventy bushel to the acre, the few acres of oats yielded nearly one hundred bushel to the acre and the wheat that lovely Manitoba hard red wheat about forty bushel to the acre.

After the threshing was finished all that crop had to be hauled to the elevator at Elm Creek but it was all in the granaries, We hauled it in horse drawn wagons seventy five bushel at a time. By the time it was finished hauling the farmer had paid off a lot of his debts.

In October it started to snow and blow. There is no colder place on earth than those prairies in the winter and I decided to head for the west coast. The farmer owed me ninety dollars and he gave it to me and thanked ^{me} he even wanted me to stay the winter but I said it was too cold. I bought a ticket at Elm Creek and went into Winnipeg. Not wanting to ride the rods again I just went to the ticket office and got a ticket to Vancouver, B.C. The price thirty five dollars and thirty five cents but I rode the cushions, and as the train sped westward I pitied those poor hoboes who were riding the the rods.

The passenger trains in those ^{days} had cooking facilities and you could shop at the divisional points when the engines were being changed and do your own cooking on board, you also had to make up your own bunks.

I became friendly with a Chinaman on the train. We went to the stores together to do our shopping and shared the cost. He was a good cook so I prepared the vegetables and done the washing of the dishes.

He owned a restaurant in Montreal and was returning to China to get married, he spoke good english. He told me that his father had found a bride for him, I thought this was a bit strange but he assured me it was quite normal in his native land. When we arrived in Vancouver he took me on a tour of Chinatown he seemed to have friends everywhere I enjoyed his company, he found me a place to stay that was reasonable and I went to the docks to see him off on one of the Empress ships. After a few days in Vancouver looking for work I decided to go to Victoria on Vancouver Island so I boarded the ferry at midnight and at seven o'clock the next morning I was in Victoria. I remember how much like England it was. Some of the people dressed just like the people in England and a lot of them had English accents. I stayed in a cheap hotel down near the waterfront and when my money was gone I resorted to bumming again. Having looked up a few names and addresses in the phone book I went to what I considered the affluent section of the city and tried to get enough to live on but the affluent people of Victoria were I found very careful with their money. I called on one Reverend gentleman. Who, when I told him I was broke and needed help to buy food and pay for my bed, he asked me where I come from,

I told him I come from Liverpool in England, he said I'm from England aslo old chap, but he said I cant give you any money, my cook has got the day off, so I cant give you any food, but I will give you three rousing hearty British cheers and recommend you to go to the Salvation Army. Well I was so disgusted I told him what to do with his three rousing hearty British cheers. Then I set out to walk north on the road.

I walked from Victoria to Bobble Hill and went to see my buddy Walter Stuart, He had made his way from the prairies and was living with his parents. They welcomed me and I spent a few days with them, his father gave me a few days work on a building job and with a few bucks in my pocket I set out again walking north up the island. Nanaimo was the first place I stopped at and after a few days looking for work without finding any and the money getting low I proceeded to walk north. Eventually I reached Port Alberni where I spent nearly two years. The City of Port Alberni gave the unemployed four days work a month doing work on a sewage system that the city was building. The pay was forty five cents an hour and I managed to get a days work here and there besides. I rented a shack just off one of the main streets for five dollars a month, there were several of these shacks which men in the same circumstances as myself rented, the rent also included electric light, one bulb.

There was also a bed and a stove. I managed to live fairly good. There was work in the town for skilled building workers as Mc Millan and Blodell were building a big sawmill, but having no real skill in the building trades I was unable to get a regular job, so I had to be content with casual work. One of the jobs I did was for George Shead.

An Englishman who owned a woodyard and service station. The job was at night I would go to the Alberni Pacific's sawmill and as the waste wood travelled on a conveyer on its way to the burner my job was to take the four foot slabs of wood off the conveyer and pass them through twin circular saws, making three sixteen inch long pieces, they ^{wood} went down a chute into a huge hopper, and was taken away by trucks that belonged to George Shead and delivered to the residents of Port Alberni. George Shead also owned the taxi service in Port Alberni and he had other business interests beside.

① Port Alberni in those days had wooden sidewalks and it was a lively town especially when the loggers come in from the camps.

I got to know a farmer who had some land outside Alberni. He had cleared a few acres and was growing market garden produce, he asked me if I would like to clear some land for him and we made a deal that he would help me fall the big Douglas Fir trees and the Alder trees I could fall myself I was to pile the brush ready for burning and could have all the wood I could cut so long as I left the brush piled, and he could burn off and

pull the stumps. There was a good shack on the place with a stove in it so I bought a seven foot crosscut saw and an axe and went to work.

The farmer's name was Trevor Goodhall. He was a big strong man, a bachelor, and one of the most amazing men I ever met. He was as good as his word and he helped me do the falling on the big trees.

He had little or no use for anything mechanical and seemed to delight in doing hard physical work.

I have never seen a man who could use an axe the way he could, his axe was razor sharp and when he used it each blow he struck drove the axe right up to the handle into the trunk of the tree and the cut was absolutely precision, the tree when it fell would be right where he wanted it to go.

When he went to town he walked, he just would not be bothered with any kind of transport.

I earned a living cutting wood for some time but when the big trees were finished and I started to cut the Alder production was much slower. I was getting three dollars a cord for it cut into sixteen inch lengths and split and piled.

After some time I was joined by a man who like myself had come to Port Alberni looking for work we worked and lived together. He had been born in Russia and his parents became refugees after the revolution in nineteen seventeen.

We saved some money, and we decided to buy a truck, we could get four dollars and a half for the wood if we delivered it.

We bought a circular saw that was mounted on a saw frame and used the truck for the power to drive it. This was done by jacking up the rear end of the truck and putting the belt on one of the tires on the wheels, we had lots of power by running it in second gear. The only trouble was the engine run hot, but when it got too hot we would shut it off and do some splitting and piling. It was nearly a mile to the main road and sometimes we got stuck in the mud when we had a load on the old truck. It really wasn't suitable for the kind of road we had, but we hauled in dry weather and we fell and skidded and sawed and split and piled when the road was bad.

One day when we were skidding I had an accident to my knee, I was using half inch wire cable and when I fell a piece of a loose strand of wire went under my knee cap. I just washed it and bandaged it, but in a couple of days I was in agony with it and my friend Charlie had to go and get the doctor. When the doctor examined it he said it ^{was} septic poisoning and I had to go to hospital. I was in the hospital for weeks, Charlie came in to see me and said he could not manage on his own, he said he had delivered a lot of wood but was having trouble collecting the money.

I told him to keep what money he had and sell the truck, he came in to the hospital to see me and left me one hundred dollars and went back to Vancouver where his parents lived.

I visited Charlie and his parents after I got out of the hospital.

They were nice people and told me how they escaped from Russia after the revolution started, they dressed as peasants and made their way to Vladivostock and from there to Vancouver.

Charlie's father had been a judge in Russia his mother was an opera singer. I met other members of his family also, they had all been aristocratic people in Russia. One of his uncles who had been a cavalry officer was working in a shingle mill as a laborer.

I was badly in debt and no work I owed the doctor and the hospital a lot of money with no hope of ever paying it.

There were two English tramp steamers loading lumber at the saw mill one day and I went aboard to see if I could get a job.

I spoke to one of the crew who turned out to be the second engineer and when I asked him if there was any chance of a job he said that one of the stokers had been injured on the trip from England and would have to be replaced.

He took me up to the bridge and the captain asked me where I was born and when I told him I was born in Liverpool he didn't believe me but I was able to tell him the name of all the docks in Liverpool and convinced him.

He was more concerned whether I was born in England than whether I could do the work or not he didn't want any trouble with the immigration authorities in England. I signed the ship's articles as a fireman and trimmer and was bound for England the next day aboard the S.S. Sedgepool.

It was January nineteen thirty six. My pay as a fireman and trimmer was £8/12/- a month and all found.

All found in a British merchant ship in those days did not amount to much. you had to supply your own bed and and plate and cutlery all you got was a wooden bunk.

The food was terrible there was no refrigeration in those tramp steamers and after three or four days at sea the meat we got was salt beef out of barrels, and you could smell the stuff a mile away. The Sedgepool belonged to Ropeners of West Hartlepool they were notorious for bad food and bad accomodation.

The crew were the scum of the earth at least that is how they were rated. Some were from Northern Ireland some from Southern Ireland and some from Liverpool. Catholics and Protestants and they fought each other the whole of the time.

They asked me what I was and I told them I was an atheist and they hated me worse than they hated each other, I thought I would never survive to see England. I only had one friend on the ship I made friends with the cook, I always seen to it that he had good coal for the galley he was a little Welshman out of Barrie in South Wales. We had wheat in the hatches and an eighteen foot deck load of timber. The accomodation for the sailors and the firemen and trimmers was in the after part of the ship, the galley was amidships and we had to bring our food along from the galley and climb over that deck load of timber it was a frightening experience especially in bad weather.

The ship had three coal burning boilers, but one of the boilers was shut down, the centre boiler. The reason for operating on two boilers instead of three was to reduce operating costs. Normally the ship would have had three firemen and one trimmer per watch.

There are three watches in the stokehold and engine room, the twelve to four, four to eight, eight to twelve. By only employing six firemen and two trimmers, (one trimmer working two o'clock to six o'clock and the other from eight o'clock to twelve o'clock. This meant a reduction of three firemen and one trimmer, a total of four men's wages.

British ship owners became millionaires because of their ruthlessness in the way they exploited the crews of their ships and spending the absolute minimum on accommodation and food, also on the maintenance of their ships.

When I went down to the stokehold on the first watch while the ship was still in the Alberni Inlet I had a strange experience, I had the feeling that I had been there before, actually I had never seen a ship's boiler, the work just seemed to come naturally even the tools used to fire the boiler felt familiar in my hands. Firing a boiler is not an unskilled job, but to me it seemed to come automatically.

I can only assume that it had something to do with heredity, as for generations the men of the family had been seafarers and as a child I had heard my father and my uncles relate their experiences on voyages all over the world by sail and by steam.

The Sedgepool was a ship of about ten thousand tons displacement registered in West Hartlepool.

She had been used as a Q Ship during the 1914-1918 war, there was still evidence in the tween decks of where the guns had been, these guns were used against the enemy by elevating them from between decks to the main deck.

We were bound from Port Alberni to Panama and thence to Port Royal in Jamaica.

We put into Port Royal to take on bunker coal. The loading of the bunkers and the trimming of the coal was done by the native black people and the method used was primitive to say the least. Both men and women were used to carry the coal aboard in baskets carried on their heads. I was told that their pay was seven shillings and sixpence a week. They lived in a shanty town near the docks, and there was poverty and degradation even worse than I had experienced as a child in Liverpool.

Being thoroughly fed up with life aboard the ship I decided to go ashore, but when we got tied up the captain gave orders that nobody was to go ashore. I was determined to get ashore so I cleaned myself up the best I could, put on some decent clothes and went down the gangplank. At the bottom of the gangplank there was a big black policeman and he said nobody was allowed ashore. I told him I was a passenger on the ship, and when he asked me my name I gave him a fictitious one.

He had the names of the crew on a list and after reading all the names he allowed me to go ashore, with a warning that the ship would be leaving at high tide and if I wasn't aboard the ship would sail without me.

I had a Canadian five dollar bill in my pocket and went into the first bar I come to, it was a pretty rough joint. I had a few drinks of the local Rum and got feeling pretty good. The rum only cost 1/6 a bottle the equivalent of about thirty five cents, so I bought several bottles and sauntered back to the ship. I went straight to the galley and gave my friend the cook a couple of bottles then being pretty drunk myself I went and turned into my bunk and fell sound asleep.

I can only describe what happened as the ship started to leave Port Royal by what I was told by the deckhands. The cook had drank a lot of the rum I had given him, and had gone down into the engine room where the second engineer was on watch and picked a fight with him. (He hated the second engineer who was always complaining about the food) he gave him an awful beating.

Apparently the ship was anchored and the radio was used to summon the shore police, who came out in a launch and after they had subdued the cook he was taken ashore and the ship sailed without him. I had to pay for my misdemeanors also. I was summoned to the bridge and after being severely reprimanded by the captain and called a few very uncomplimentary names and logged ten shillings and a days pay. I was told to get below.

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We proceeded from Port Royal to Liverpool and this was a real experience for me. The first thing that happened was the fresh water was rationed, a padlock was put on the galley pump and the carpenter had the key. The only way we could get any fresh water was go to the carpenter and he would give you a days ration. Each man was given an empty one gallon pickle jar and the carpenter would fill it and that had to last you until the next day for tea and drinking water. The water for washing ourselves we got from the condenser in the engine room.

The ships stores were running low and the food we got was worse than ever, we were reduced to a diet of mainly rice, beans, peas, and the flour for baking bread run out as well. The firemen and trimmers were then given the best of what was left as they had to perform the hard strenuous work of steaming the ship.

The fresh water in the tanks that supplied the boilers was getting low and the coal in the bunkers was all gone and the reserve bunkers were all used. We had to resort to cutting up the deckload of timber and drop the wood down the ventilators into the stokehold to keep the fires going. The fresh water for the boilers run out and the evaporator was used continuously and eventually it became so blocked up with salt from the sea water it would not function, we worked like fiends to get that evaporator opened to remove the salt and when we were working on it the boilers were being fed sea water direct from the sea.

While we were still about five hundred miles out from Liverpool I went on watch and when I opened the furnace door to clean the fire I noticed some bumps on the crown of the furnace I knew there must be something wrong as these bumps were not there before so I went into the engine room and told the engineer, he went as white as a sheet when I told what I had seen. He ran into the stokehold and looked inside the furnace.

He shouted "Oh my God" shut the draughts pull the fires, and went and had a look at the other boiler and told the fireman the same as he told me. As we pulled the fires from the two boilers we shovelled the fires into the centre boiler and started to warm it through. We had no steam at all and the ship just drifted until we were able to raise steam on the remaining boiler. The job of raising steam on a cold boiler takes a long time as the boiler has to be circulated by using a circulating pump for hours so as to ^{get} even expansion of the metal in the boiler, if it is done too quickly it could cause serious damage to the boiler. We also had an auxiliary boiler, a small boiler in the tween decks which was normally used just for steam on deck to operate the winches in port. This too was started up and after hours of drifting we got enough steam out of the one main boiler and the auxiliary to maintain about two knots.

When we were about one hundred miles off Liverpool we were taken in tow by two tugs.

We put into the Hornby dock. Some of the firemen were arrested as soon as we were made fast, the police were waiting for them. I never found out what for, I can only assume that they had committed some crime before they had signed on. The rest of the crew were paid off the same day there was only the old Donkey Man, the captain and myself left. I had to be cleared by the Immigration Authority before I was allowed to go ashore. This meant I had to go to the Immigration office accompanied by the captain.

When we arrived at the office I was questioned by a surly old immigration officer who told me I had no right to land without a passport and that he could have me detained by the police. I told him he could do as he liked that I was born in Liverpool and I intended to land there come what may. After a long time he came back to the office and told me he had contacted Dr Barnardo's and he was satisfied that I had the right to land.

The captain and I returned to the ship and he asked me if I would work by the ship until she was put in dry dock and I agreed providing he gave me some money to live until I was paid off, he gave me five pounds off my account of wages.

When the deck cargo had been discharged a sucker came alongside to discharge the wheat. (A sucker is a floating grain elevator that sucks the wheat out of the ship's hatches and puts it into barges to be taken to the main elevator.)

I got the surprise of my life when the men who handled the pipes of the sucker came aboard. There was a man who I was sure was my brother Oliver.

I went up to him and said are you Oliver Ayré and he just threw his arms around me and said its Joe.

I had not seen him since shortly after he was demobilized from the army after the 1914-1918 war.

He said to me how in hell did you come to join a bloody ship like this he said they were the worst ships afloat and when I told him about the voyage he said your lucky to be alive, that some of Kopeners ships had put to sea and had sunk with all hands.

He took me to his home and I met his wife and family one neice and three nephews. I stayed with them for a little while but when I was able to find a room I moved into my own place.

The cargo being discharged, the ship was taken across the river to Birkenhead where she was put in dry dock. The Lloyd's inspectors came aboard and carried out a survey of the ship and when they were finished the Boiler Makers come aboard and cut out the furnaces of the two boilers and welded in new ones. The Inspectors found so many plates in the sides and the bottom of the ship that were unsound that by the time they were removed the ship was like a skeleton.

The captain took the old Donkeyman and I to the shipping office at Birkenhead and we paid off. The captain with the Shipping Masters permission washed out the log that I had incurred at Port-Royal and we shook hands and parted.

My Aunt Annie was still living in the same house on Bell Street, when I went to ^{see} her she had aged considerably her weight was falling. My cousin Albert who was the same age as me was unemployed he had left school at fourteen and had never had a day's work, he had spent twelve years in enforced idleness. This was common among most of the the young men I had gone to school with.

Aunt Annie was able to tell me where my sister Maria and my father was living. I just had to go and see my father regardless of what had happened in the past. I went to the little slum house on Brick Road and knocked on the door, there was no answer so I decided to look into the pubs in the neighborhood for him. I knew he always drank Walkers Ale so I visited Walker houses, the third pub I looked into there he was standing at the bar with a half pint of beer in front of him, I thought that strange as I never remembered him drinking out of a half pint glass.

I went and stood alongside of him and ordered a pint and a tot of rum. He turned his head and looked at me in surprise. Most of the men in the district were unemployed and for someone to order a pint and a tot of rum was almost unheard of, he didn't recognize me. I asked him if he would have a drink and he was so surprised he could hardly reply. I ordered him a pint and a tot of rum and he picked up the tot and said good health and lowered the rum in one shot then picked up the pint and drank half of that.

I said to him I was surprised to see him drinking from a half pint glass, he gave me a strange look and said how do you know that I didn't drink half pints

I said you had a long rest as that last year didn't make half day and you didn't drink half pints. His face went white and he said you're Bill and you've come back from Canada. I said no but you and tears started to roll down his cheeks. He wanted to know about Bill and sister Edie. He had not heard from any of us in all those years.

We had a few drinks together while I related some of my experiences. I asked him if I could go and see the old place, not for any sentimental reasons, but out of curiosity. ^{we} went to the house and when I seen her she looked just as well as ever. I only stayed a few minutes, the old dog was still there so I soon left.

Winnie was married and had a baby girl her husband was always unemployed. But he belonged to a group of Buckers in other words street entertainers and they made some money by singing and playing music, the people would throw them pennies.

It is March 1936 I have some money left from the ship living in a room on Islington just across from Islington Square. There is mass unemployment in Liverpool and in the square the unemployed meet and organize, they march to city hall, they demonstrate at the labor exchanges. There is an unemployed workers union the N.U.W.M. The National Unemployed Workers Movement. I attend the meetings and become an enthusiastic supporter, after all I had seen mass unemployment in Canada and the U.S.A, but this was the first time I had ever seen the unemployed organized in an effort to try to get something done. I had always thought about all the work that should be done, the clearing of the slums and building houses for the slum dwellers.

The different political parties, The Conservatives, Liberals, Labour Party, had all governed Britain in turn, but no solution to unemployment and poverty.

I become involved in the National Unemployed Workers Movement. This was my first experience of public speaking and I was approached by the Labor Party, the Communist Party and even the British Union of Fascists, (Benito Mussolini's Black Shirts). I decided to devote my time and energy to the N.U.W.M. At that time they were organizing for a march to London and I was soon a member of the committee. My money was gone. I had no money to pay my rent, no food, no coal.

I applied for Public Assistance and when I was interviewed by the Public Assistance Committee I was asked when I had last worked. I told them that I had paid off the ship two months ago and they said why haven't you found another ship.

When I told them I had walked the docks and the shipping offices for weeks without success, they asked to see my account of wages from the ship and I showed it to them. After it had passed from one member of the committee to the other, there ^{were} five of them, three old men and two old women. The chairman of the committee told me to come back in four months time as I had paid off the ship with £22 and that should have kept me for six months at least. When I told them I had no money for food or rent or coal. They said you will have to see us again to-morrow and by that time we will have reviewed your case and be able to tell you what we can do for you. Being frustrated I thought well I will wait to see what I got next day.

There were thousands of people lining up outside of the Public Assistance office when I went back the next day, people from almost every country in the world all receiving a weekly allowance. The single men were receiving seventeen shillings a week, married couples got twenty six shillings there was also a child allowance of three shillings a week for those that had children.

When I got to see the committee the chairman said we have decided to send you to ^{an} institution on Belmont Rd, you will be taken care of there.

I became furious I had some choice words for the chairman and his committee. The institution they wanted me to go to at one time had been the Workhouse, It was now a place for the aged and the infirm.

In my anger I picked up the side of the table and dumped it into their cups. Besides to say I was arrested there was a policeman at the door to deal with any incident and I was taken to the police station and charged then put into a cell.

The next afternoon I was taken into the court and when the clerk of the court read the charges I was charged with assaulting members of the committee, disturbing the peace and resisting arrest when I was asked how did I plead, I said I would plead guilty to assaulting members of the committee, disturbing the peace but not guilty to resisting arrest. The constable was asked to give evidence and he insisted that I resisted arrest. The magistrate asked me if I tried to get away from the constable and I denied it. Then the magistrate asked me about how the incident occurred and when I told him.

I resented being sent to an institution for the aged and the infirm and lost my temper as I had seen thousands of other people receiving relief benefits. The magistrate then questioned the chairman of the committee. He asked the chairman how much it would cost to keep me in the institution and he told the magistrate it would cost twenty eight shillings a week. The magistrate then asked the chairman how much it would cost to give me outdoor relief and the chairman replied seventeen shillings a week. The magistrate said I cannot understand why you refuse to sanction seventeen shillings a week outdoor relief when you are prepared to send an able bodied man to an institution for the aged and the infirm at a cost of twenty eight shillings a week.

Then the magistrate spoke to me and said I find you guilty of assault and disturbing the peace but not guilty of resisting arrest, I will bind you over to keep the peace and I will make an order that you will be given immediately outdoor relief in the amount of seventeen shillings a week, you are free to go. I was given a voucher for the money and left the court.

This is an indication of the way bureaucrats abuse the power that they have, they are even prepared to waste resources in their stupidity.

I continued my work in ^{the} National Unemployed Workers Movement, we organized deputations to visit Members of Parliament, the Mayor of Liverpool and City Councilors to demand that something should be done to help the unemployed, All we ever got from the political parties was sympathy and assurances that if we voted the right way that a solution would be found none of the political parties even said what the solution was.

I always retained my interest in farming. When reading in the library one day I came across a farm and country magazine and read an advertisement for a cowman near Grimsby in Lincolnshire.

I wrote a letter to the farmer and received a reply that the farmer would hire me if I could get to Grimsby. I was fed up with doing nothing only what seemed to be useless political agitation so when I received my relief money I bought a ticket to Grimsby. (there was no riding freight trains in England) if you wanted to go somewhere you either walked or went passenger.

I arrived in Grimsby and was given directions how to get to the farm. The farmer was a retired army Major a wealthy man he was well known.

When I got to the farm I went to the house of the farm foreman, Major Lower who owned the farm was at the foreman's house and after being interviewed I got the job. Farming in England was a lot different than farming in Canada. The Major as he was called by everyone was a professional soldier and knew very little about farming. He hired a farm bailiff to run the farm for him.

I made arrangements with ^{the} foreman and his wife that I would have board and lodging with them, this to me was unusual as in Canada I always lived with the farmer. The bailiff came to see me that evening and I found out why I had been given the job. The cowman that had been doing the job must have been a very poor type as the grade A certificate had been suspended because of high bacteria in the milk.

The milk was pasturized and bottled then delivered in Grimsby and because of the high bacteria the sale of the milk had been stopped and the milk had to go to a powdered milk plant. The bailiff was very anxious to get the grade A certificate back again.

The cattle had obviously been abused and neglected, they were very dirty too.

I started work the next morning, there ^{were} eighteen cows and about twenty head of yearling heifers and a huge bull. The farm was divided, the cowman attended to everything regarding the cattle, a pigman took care of the pigs and the foreman and laborers looked after the field work.

All I could do was to clean up the milk cows first and after the mornings milking, which was done by hand I spent the day cleaning the cows, I curried-combed them and brushed them but their hind quarters were so dirty that I had to soak and scrape them and as I got one cow cleared I started on the next one while the first one dried off then I clipped the hind quarters with a clipping machine. it took me days on end before I was finished cleaning them. The yard was fenced so I let the cows out and then proceeded to clean the cow shed, I had to sweep down cobwebs and white wash the whole place. The next job was in the dairy, all the equipment and utensils had to be scoured and sterilized, it took me about three weeks before I could send for the inspector to make an inspection and test the milk.

When the inspector did come he said to me you have transformed this place, he tested the milk and it passed the test and he issued the certificate. The bailiff was delighted.

The other men on the farm told me they were going to a union meeting one night and they invited me to go with them and I went along and had a lovely evening with^{em} and I joined the union, the National Union of Agricultural Workers the meeting was in a pub in Grimshy and after the meeting we played darts and had a few beers. How different it was to working on a farm in Canada.

My wages were two pounds a week and I paid a pound a week for board and lodging.

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Now that the milk could be delivered in bottles to the customers in Lymington it meant that I had to put in a week longer day, starting at four thirty in the morning. The milking had to be done first, the milk from each cow was weighed we had to keep a record of performance of every cow. The milking finished the milk had to be fractionized, this process meant putting the milk in a container that had a thermometer attached to it and a coil inside and was fitted with a tight fitting lid, then turn the steam on to raise the temperature of the milk and hold the temperature for twenty minutes.

Then the milk had to be passed through a cooler and then bottled ready for the delivery man.

The steam came from a boiler which was operated by the man who looked after the pigs.

It was my duty to see that all records were kept relating to the cattle. The amount of pcc used, the weight of the milk each cow produced, the total number of bottles taken by the delivery man and the amount he brought back. I had to keep records of breeding and milk tests for butter fat content, and for bacteria tests, also all visits by the Veterinary, records of the amount of food consumed by young cattle and the bull.

Besides feeding, cleaning stables, grooming the cattle, washing and sterilizing all the dairy equipment and utensils and bottles.

As a member of the union after fifty six hours in the week I had to claim overtime for hours worked over that, and at times I had to claim as much as sixteen hours in a week.

This seemed to irritate the farm bailiff, he insisted that I should be able to do the work in fifty six hours. When I asked him if he could tell me what I could do to improve my efficiency he had no suggestions whatever, but continued to grumble every Saturday when I presented him with my overtime statement.

The sales of milk increased and the bailiff was obliged to buy three more freshly calved cows, and when I complained and said I wanted an assistant, he said your getting paid for your overtime, what more do you want, I told him I worked ^{to} live and that I didn't live just to work, he was very angry and said I had spent too long in Canada and had big ideas.

After a week or so he hired a young man to help me with the milking in the morning and the bottling and the milking and bottling in the evening, this worked very good but when the inspector came to test the milk for bacteria the count was very high.

The bailiff was furious because I couldn't explain what was wrong but I told him I would do my best to find the cause. I tested the pasteurizer for leaks and found none, I scoured all the utensils checked the sterilizer with two thermometers and they both recorded the same. Then I thought I would check my assistant to see if I could find if he was causing the trouble. I found that when he was milking he was a wet milker, that is a persons who squirts milk on their hands when they are milking. When I told him I thought that was why the bacteria was high he became angry and gave his notice and quit the job.

The bailiff was furious and I told him if he didn't like the way I was doing the job, to get somebody else and I would leave.

When I told the foreman I was leaving he said he was sorry to see me go because he and the other men enjoyed hearing me speak at the union meetings and when we went to the pub, where I would tell them of my experiences in Canada and the U.S.A.

Back to Liverpool and still I could not find work in the city, I went to the Labor Exchange for a long time but it was hopeless. Then one day when I went to see the manager of the labor exchange to see if it would be possible to go to another part of the country. He said he could send me to London to be trained as a welder providing I could pass a medical examination and a test of general knowledge.

When I enquired how I would pay my way while being trained, he said the government would pay for my board and lodging and give me seven shillings a week for pocket money. Needless to say I accepted his proposition. I passed the medical and the general knowledge test, and was given a train ticket to London, also I was given the names and addresses of the people I was going to stay with. These people lived at Brompton about twenty minutes walk from the Government Training centre. We became good friends and I corresponded with them for years after.

The training centre had facilities for teaching a lot of different skills, including carpentry and cabinet making, bricklaying, painting and decorating, fitting and turning, upholstery, welding and sheet metal work.

When I arrived at the training centre I was issued with overalls, a leather apron, and welding goggles, a hammer, a six foot rule and a set of books on the practical application of welding. I had two excellent instructors, one instructor for the practice and one for the theory of welding. I worked eight hours a day, four hours of practice in the morning and four hours of theory in the afternoon. I was fascinated by this new experience. The instructor who taught me the practice of welding was a very skilled craftsman and when he saw I paid such attention to work he gave me the talk of his life in any way he could.

He was a man with infinite patience and he took great care to see that all danger was avoided.

The instructor who taught the theory of welding was methodical and had a profound knowledge of the subject he was teaching. He was also an instructor at the night school and invited me to classes at the Polytechnic.

I first learned to weld sheet steel. The instructor would observe what I was doing and correct me when I made mistakes. After I passed the test on sheet steel, I was given heavy plate to work on and also was to learn to cut plate with the oxy acetylene torch, then I went on to cast iron welding.

This is fascinating work, great care has to be exercised to make sure that the welds do not crack after welding. I have worked with hundreds of welders in my welding career but I have never seen a welder who could weld cast iron like that instructor it was his speciality, but he was very proficient in every branch of welding.

I was also instructed in the welding of brass and aluminium - very difficult metals to weld but the instructor taught me the technique and once the technique was learned it became quite easy.

My instructor in theory was very helpful and as I was one of his pupils at the polytechnic he paid particular attention to me. I studied the theory of the gas used in welding, the theory of metallic arc welding, the basic maintenance of welding equipment and elementary economics of welding, my instructor also took me to welding exhibitions in London where I met a number of people who I learned quite a lot from, metallurgists and welding engineers.

After a year of training I was given tests in the metals I had instruction on and passed them all with good marks. There was also a written exam in the theory which I passed, my instructors were delighted and we were friends for years.

Having passed my tests I was sent for an interview for a job to a firm that manufactured electric water heaters at Northolt in Middlesex.

After the interview with the manager I was taken to the welding shop and the foreman gave me two pieces of copper steel to weld. I had never tried to weld copper before and I was very nervous in case I failed the test. I must say I made an awful mess of it, but when the foreman looked at it he said it was better than a lot of applicants had done. He said I had potential and asked me when I could start. After I got over the shock I told him I would start as soon as I could arrange for board and lodging in the vicinity, and he gave me the name and address to go to.

The address was near the factory so I went to see Mr & Mrs Kouzlas who agreed to give me board and lodging. I could not believe what was happening. I've got a job and nice people to live with in a nice comfortable home.

The village of Northolt was a place of beauty: The old village green with its little wooden bridge and a stream that run through the village green, the gravel path that started at the village pub, (the Rose and Crown) and wound its way to the twelfth century church (St Mary's Anglican) and the cemetery that surrounded the church, the Manor House, the old village one roomed school, the ancient vicarage, the cottages that had been occupied by generations of farmworkers, one of these cottages housed the Registrar of Births and Deaths.

The "Plough" another old fashioned pub, the "Load of Hay" a pub that had once been a workhouse back in Feudal Times, A race course where pony racing took place, this race course was a replica of Royal Ascot in miniature. It was a lovely place to live and what a pleasure it was to sit outside of the Rose and Crown with a pint of good ale on a Sunday morning and watch the people coming from church, usually one of the first people to enter the pub when it opened at twelve o'clock was the vicar. When I thought of the places I had been I determined I would never leave Northolt.

I started work at the factory on a Monday morning. The factory was situated a short distance from the village. The work I was first given to do was quite simple. I had to roll sheets of copper into cylinders

and these in turn were welded by two of the other men one of whom was the welding chargehand. I had to do some silver soldering and soft soldering on the various component parts of the water heaters, such as element tubes and thermostat tubes, and generally assist in the work of the welding shop such as going to the stores for copper sheets and bringing into the welding shop, cylinders of oxygen and acetylene gas.

The containers of the water heaters were made by welding the seams of the copper sheets and after welding the welded seam was planished until the weld was completely flat. This operation was performed by placing the copper cylinder on an iron bar and hammering the seam with a two pound hammer to do this without leaving hammer marks in the metal took some time to learn and it was hard work, after a few hours of planishing my arm would ache but after some time I could do the job without any trouble. I was quite content to work hard as I was learning a trade. My pay was a shilling an hour and

I worked forty eight hours a week and after paying for my board and lodging and health and unemployment insurance I still had twenty two shillings a week left, I always saved part of my wages.

I made friends easily and went to the pub in the evenings and on the weekends. I also went to dances organized by the Labor Party which were held in a little hall behind the "Rose and Crown".

One Saturday night I went into the "Road of Hay" to have a beer and I saw two women dressed in long dance dresses.

One was obviously older than the other, and I had never seen them before, but it was obvious they were going to a dance, so when they left, I thought I would see where the dance was. They went to a school just outside the village, when I got to the school I saw that the dance was organized by the Conservative Party. Having no use for that party, I went to have a beer in the pub across the road, a big modern pub called "The Target".

After having a couple of beers I decided to go to the dance regardless of my politics, and there I met Dorothy, that girl I had seen in the load of Hay. I danced with her and her mother and then took Dorothy home after the dance. We went out together after that, she became my wife, my lover, my companion, my eyes and my counselor, my comrade, the mother of my children and we are still in love after thirty nine years. She is sitting across the table from me now as I write.

The wildies were the most jealous people I have ever worked with, they did not want me to learn how to weld the copper. It suited them fine to have me do the lesser skilled work and be a laborer for them.

I was fortunate, the company had lots of orders and the management wanted to increase production and one day the owner of the plant came to me and asked me if I had done any welding on the copper. When I told him I hadn't he said you have been here long enough and that you should be learning to weld instead of doing the lesser skilled work. I replied that I had a keen desire to learn.

He said he had read the report from the training centre and had noted that I had a good report both for practice and theory and also that I had attended the polytechnic. The owner was from Switzerland - he was a silversmith and he also had a degree in electrical engineering. He had designed the various type of water heaters he was manufacturing. His business was started in Switzerland and he had moved to England. He asked me if I wanted to learn to weld if I would stay behind after five o'clock when work normally finished so he could teach me how to weld. I agreed and each evening I would stay in the shop when the other men went home and he would come into the welding shop and show me how to weld. He was a real craftsman.

He could weld quicker and better than either of the men who worked for him and it was a great experience for me to see the high quality of the work he done. He was a master with a hammer and when he planished a weld it was perfect, no hammer marks anywhere and when he was finished planishing the weld could not be seen. He told me that the hammer was the most difficult tool to use but it was also the most useful tool in any trade and once you could use a hammer properly you ^{could} master any job.

Under his tuition I soon learned to weld copper and he gave instructions to the foreman that I be given a chance to weld. The other two welders resented the fact that I had stayed behind in the evenings to learn under the guidance of the owner but I just got on with my work and took no notice of them.

Mr and Mrs Douglas who I was living with were very good to me. I helped them in their garden, they had bought the house when it was new and the garden needed a lot of work to get it into shape. Mr Douglas and I spent a lot of time at it but in the end, what was just a pile of heavy clay we turned into a very nice garden.

Dorothy and I were going out together some evenings and always on Sunday. We were planning to get married we didn't tell Dorothy's parents as Dorothy's mother obviously didn't want her to be married. Her mother was a very domineering person. Dorothy's father was a house painter a fine man who allowed Mabel Dorothy's mother to completely dominate the household he just submitted to Mabel and to keep peace in the family so did Dorothy. Mabel was a great character, she had been housekeeper to a very rich woman who had a mansion in Wood Green North London.

And when this rich old woman died she left Mabel a considerable amount of money, some beautiful furniture and some very expensive jewelry. Mabel was very conceited and always copied the dress that the Queen wore. She could have been mistaken for the Queen in appearance, if the queen changed the style of her hat so did Mabel. We nicknamed her "The Duchess" and even the neighbors called her the duchess. She was a heavy drinker and spent most of her money in the saloon bar at the Road of Hay which was quite near the house which she had bought after she got her money. She made the minimum down payment on the house and proceeded to enjoy herself with the remainder of the money.

In August 1939 it looked as if there was going to be a war, the Air Raid precautions were being increased, the air raid sirens were being set up everywhere, and some important buildings in central London were already sandbagged.

The war was declared on Sunday the third of September and as soon as the Prime Minister had finished speaking on the radio the air raid sirens sounded. I could remember the previous ^{war} and to me it seemed unbelievable that we were at war again against the same country that had been defeated after the terrible sacrifice of lives there had been only twenty one years before.

Dorothy and I decided to get married as soon as possible, we had very little money but we didn't let that deter us - we intended to have some married happiness not knowing what the future would bring. We posted the banns in Coling's Registrar office and without telling Dorothy's parents; we were married on the thirtieth of September, after leaving the registrar's office we went into a pub called "The Feathers" and the witnesses and Dorothy and I drank a bottle of champagne. We had little money but at least we toasted each other with the traditional drink. The only relative we told of our plans to get married was Dorothy's Aunt Mary.

Mabel's sister and we gave her a letter to be given to Mabel on the day we were married stating the time of the wedding. Aunt Mary went into the Road of Hays and Mabel was sitting at the bar and when she gave Mabel the letter she looked up at the clock and she said, Good God they're married. The news spread around the bar and when the proprietors of the pub heard they called for drinks on the house. Mabel was very embarrassed.

We had rented an apartment at South Harrow about two miles from Northolt the Saturday before the wedding and spent what money we had which was only twelve pounds we bought a bed, four chairs and a table and a sideboard some utensils and groceries. When we moved in after the wedding the first thing we had to do was blackout all the windows. If there was the least bit of light showing the air raid warden would be at the door to tell us to turn the lights off until the blackout was complete.

That evening by arrangement with Aunt Mary we went to the "Timber Carriage" a pub in South Harrow to find out from Aunt Mary how Mabel had reacted when she heard the news, we had a good laugh.

After a few days we went to see Dorothy's parents Mabel and Dorothy's Dad realizing that it was "fait accompli" welcomed us and all was forgiven.

After only being married for one week I went to work on Monday and found the factory had been closed. The Government had requisitioned all the metal and the plant could not operate. I am unemployed again. Dorothy who was a gents milliner by trade worked for Henry Fleethers in central London Hatters by Appointment to their Britannic Majesties.

She had worked for the firm from the time she left school and had served for years at very low wages. She was a skilled milliner but the wages she received were only a pittance even when she brought work home, she was on piece work and the money she brought home sufficed to keep us until I got another job.

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I volunteered for the army and when I went to the recruiting office I was told I could not join the army as all welders were in a reserved occupation, the government had complete control under Dora, "Defence of the Realm Act". After a week without any work I drew three days dole, unemployment insurance. I drew fifteen shillings and if it had not been for Dorothy's wages we would have been in a sorry state. I got a job unloading coal from railway-cars at the Alladin factory near Northolt and worked at that until the water heater plant was reopened to work on war contracts making gun mountings, field kitchen equipment and field sanitary-equipment for the army. My pay was increased.

The family living below us at the apartment had a lot of children and they were very noisy and unruly so Dorothy and I rented a nice little bungalow near to the old village of Northolt.

All trucks had been commandeered by the government and we were obliged to hire an old man who had a horse and wagon to move us from the apartment to the bungalow; it was to be our home until 1948.

Early in 1940 there were a lot of air raids in the daytime and when the air raid warning sounded everybody had to go to the air raid shelters. I was a member of a volunteer ARP squad "air raids precaution" and along with other workers we patrolled the factory during the air raids.

After a week when there was a lot of air raids when I received my wages I got less than half a weeks pay. I demanded to see the managing Director and told him that during the air raids I had been doing ARP work but he refused to pay me and fired me on the spot he said he wasn't going to have any troublemakers.

At the labor exchange I asked to see the manager and made a complaint about the treatment I had received at the factory he told me if I wanted to he would have me reinstated but he said that there was work for me at an aircraft factory at Hayes in Middlesex about four miles from Northolt and that the pay would be better also if I went to the job he would see to it that I received my full pay that all plants engaged on government contracts were obliged to pay the full hourly rate during air raids. I agreed to go to the new job. The firm had to pay all the workers for any time they had spent in the shelters during air raids. I received the wages owing to me.

Aircraft welding is strictly controlled before you can perform any work on a flight aircraft the welder is required to pass a test that must meet the quality control standards set by the Aeronautical Inspection Department of the Government.

The test consists of various thickness of tubing a flat weld on steel-steel. These specimens are x-rayed and subjected to bend test, tensile test and microscopic examination. Aircraft materials are of the highest quality. Before I was given the test I was allowed to practice until I felt confident that I could pass the test, and when I performed the test there was an A.D.D. inspector there to make sure that the test was a true one, the test pieces were stamped before and after test. I passed the test and was set to work making components for the Spitfire and the Albacore a famous fighter plane and a torpedo carrying aircraft. There were many air raids during 1940 and because of the need for fighter aircraft we were asked to continue work during the air raids and we did, we had to work twelve hours a day, there were twenty welders in the shop and we had to work twenty seven days consecutively before we got a day off. In addition to doing twelve hours work a day we were also required to do six hours a week of A.R.P. patrol, I had to report to the Air Raid Wardens post and the Warden would give me instructions when I was required to do my patrol it might be any time in some times in the early hours of the morning and that meant getting out at perhaps two o'clock in the morning and patrolling till four o'clock back to bed and up again at six to go back to work. Food was strictly rationed as was everything else eventually.

Dorothy became pregnant and gave up working, although the war was on and there was a lot of air raids we were happy about the coming event and made all the preparations we could.

During the night of the seventeenth of November there was a very heavy air raid on Northolt and the surrounding districts. Thousands of incendiary bombs were dropped. These bombs were about 12 inches long and were made of magnesium, on impact a fuse was triggered and the magnesium burned with a very bright white light - it was the noise made by one of these hitting our bedroom window that woke us up. (By this time we had become so accustomed to air raids that when the air raid sirens sounded and the guns were firing we didn't get out of bed.) When we got up there were a lot of incendiary bombs burning in the back garden. I went to the front of the house and saw that the bungalow across the street was being hit and the front room curtains were burning. We were expecting the baby at anytime, and I wanted to Dorothy for herself take don't go into labor now. I took the stirrup pump and a pail of water and went to deal with the fire. There was nobody in and I had to break the window to get in. There are two ways to deal with an incendiary you could put sand over it, or spray a very fine spray of water on it. You could not throw a pail of water on it because that would cause the molten magnesium to spread and make things, having no sand I used the stirrup pump.

Having succeeded in getting the bomb cooled off I saw that the piano was on fire and in order to get at the back of the piano I tried to move it and got a terrific electric shock. I suppose some electric wiring had come in contact with the piano and everything being wet, the piano had become a conductor. By this time I was joined by a neighbor and we succeeded in getting the fire out. No sooner had we got the fire out than we seen a huge fire at the end of the street. The Plough was on fire.

This was the new Plough a beautiful Tudor type building with a thatched roof it had only been built in 1939. When we got to the pub the roof was ablaze, the door was open and when we went in the barman and the proprietor were dealing with the incendiary bombs that had started to burn inside the bar, the proprietor was very drunk and he was just a nuisance so we just made our way outside and helped the barman as best we could until the fire brigade arrived. I ran back home to see how Dorothy was and we went back to bed. The all clear came at six o'clock in the morning and we got up had our breakfast and I went off to work. The fire brigade came along the next day and removed what was left of the upper part of the pub and covered the lower part and it was back in business again. English pubs are very important institutions they are the social centre of activity. In the winter of 1941 Dorothy went into labor, I had to go and get the Midwife and she delivered a lovely boy of eight and a half pounds. I assisted the Midwife.

The next morning I was late for work, my fellow workers lined up to greet me as I walked into the welding shop and in one voice they all chorused together "Good Morning Father" they knew the baby was due. They all wanted to know every detail it was embarrassing for me but at least it caused a little diversion from the daily routine.

During 1941 Dorothy and I were restricted in our social activities with our son to look after and the excessive hours I had to work. The only time we were able to go out was when I had a day off from work then we would go for a bus ride and take our son. We couldn't go very far because we never knew when there would be an air raid and we might have difficulty getting home.

The government made an order compelling all British men over eighteen years of age who had served in any British merchant ship at any time to register with the Merchant Navy Reserve Pool, and having only done one half of a voyage I didn't consider myself a bona-fide Merchant Seaman, I went to the National Service Office and asked them if I was supposed to register and they said I would have to register but due to the work I was doing it wasn't likely I would be required for service at sea.

The contracts we were working ^{on} at the Fairey Aviation came to an end in April 1942. The new aircraft that was to be built had very little welding on it and this meant that a lot of the welders had to be placed in other jobs.

Some of the welders had worked for the company for many years and when the National Service Officer gave them notice that they would be required to leave the company, they resented it very much. The welder working on the bench next to me told me that he would go to see the manager and get the notice withdrawn. The N.S.O. told him that the manager had already been given notice that he would be transferred to other work. It didn't matter who you were whether a manager or a hourly paid worker you had to go when the N.S.O. said so. It was just the same if you wanted to leave your job you had to get permission from the N.S.O. The government had complete control. The Trade Unions supported the national government to make sure that the war effort was maintained at its maximum.

I was transferred to a plant that had top priority. Being an approved aircraft welder, I was set to work making containers for munitions that were dropped by parachute. At that time the Hugo Star guerrilla forces were attacking the enemy and this is how they were supplied. These containers were urgently required and we were put on payment by results. A welder and a sheet metal worker worked as a team. The sheet metal worker made up the components of the the containers and I assembled and welded. We were paid a bonus for each one we made, in other words if doubled our output we received double pay. We earned very high wages.

I was only on this job for seven weeks when I received notice that I had to report to the

Merchant Navy Reserve Pool. The manager of the company took me to see the C.S.O. and was told that although his work had high priority the Merchant Navy was the most essential and that I must report to the Merchant Navy. It was strange after the years I had spent without a job suddenly I become essential. I had no desire to go to sea and I told the C.S.O. He said if I disobeyed the order I would be prosecuted and would probably go to jail. There was no alternative I had to report to the Shipping Federation at Dock St London.

When I reported to the Shipping Federation I was told to go and see the doctor and the Union and report back to them as I would be required to join a ship at once.

The Doctors examination was a complete farce. His office was in a basement dark and there was only one small electric bulb with shade.

He never examine me at all, he said drop your pants and looked at me and alright pull your pants up and gave me a piece of paper saying I was in category A.T.

When I went to the National Union of Seamen the secretary said I would have to pay two pounds and join as a probationary member. I told him I had been conscripted and had no intention of paying anything and he said if you dont pay you will called up for the army and I told if that is to be I would prefer that. When I went back to the Shipping Federation they asked me for my doctors report.

and my union card, I gave them the doctors report and told them I refused to join the union.

I was told if I didn't join the union I couldn't go to sea. I said to the officer in charge you must be an idiot. I have been conscripted I don't want to go to sea and I am certainly not going to pay union dues to work at a job I don't want.

I got the same reply from him I would be called up for the army. I said right I will go home and wait for my calling up papers, with that he got mad and he said I can have you arrested right now so you better think it over, I said the next move is up to you. Then he went and seen the Shipping Master who came and told me that nobody could go to sea unless they were members of the union and when I refused again he said you will have to go home and you will be summoned to appear in court. I went home and Dorothy and I talked it over and we decided that I would refuse to join the union but sooner than go to jail I would offer to go to sea. As there was no law compelling me to join the union I had nothing to worry about I wasn't refusing to obey the governments orders. The next day I went back to the shipping office and informed them that there was no law that compelled me to join a union and I was prepared to go to sea when I was required. They told me to go home and I would hear from them. I went home and after a couple of days I got a telegram telling me to report to the Shipping Office

When I went to the shipping office I was ushered into the office of the Registrar of Seamen and he was very apologetic and said the people I had been dealing with did not know their job, as I had offered to go to sea he would see to it that my union dues would be paid and asked me to sign the application form for membership in the union. I refused and he said in that case he would make an order that I would go to sea without union membership. Then I said that if I had to go to sea I would need a seamen's outfit and I had no intention of paying for it and also as clothes were rationed that I had no clothing coupons. He said I see you are determined but I will see to it that you are fully rigged at government expense. I received a complete outfit and a kit bag and was told to go back to the shipping office and that I would be sent to join a coastal vessel that was in the pool of London. Again I objected I told them I had been conscripted, and the only ship I had ever sailed in was foreign going and if they didn't have a deep sea ship for me I was prepared to wait until they had. They told me to be at Euston Railway station at midnight to get the train to Liverpool and report to the shipping office there.

After a very sad parting from Dorothy and our eighteen month old son Norman, I took the train to Liverpool knowing that Dorothy would be having our second child in about three months and wondering when I would see them again.

None of the Merchant Seamen were not told the name of the ship they were being sent to join and if you refused to join a ship you were liable to prosecution.

The train to Liverpool was crowded with troops, there was a coach reserved for one hundred Seamen but when we got to the station it was full of troops and we had to stand in the corridors all the way to Liverpool. When we went to the shipping office we went down to the pier-head and put aboard a tender, taken out to midstream where a rusty old tramp steamer was anchored and told to get aboard.

Merchant Seamen especially stokers are not the most fastidious people in the world, But when we looked at that old tramp we wondered what accommodation there would be for one hundred men.

We held an impromptu meeting and decided to send three men aboard to investigate.

I was one of three chosen, to go aboard and we went up to the bridge to see the captain.

He told us that we would be sleeping in hammocks in the hatches. There was no extra sanitary facilities or no extra messroom. We refused to go on it. When we went back aboard the tender and made our report all the men said they would not sail. The tender took us back to the pier-head, where we met by the shipping master and union officials who told us we would all be arrested if we refused to sail. The reply was start arresting because we were not going to sail in that tramp.

We were then put aboard another ship. This ship already had a hundred Merchant Navy Officers on board they had first class accommodation on the Port side and on the starboard side there was the same kind of accommodation which was vacant and this the one hundred stokers occupied.

It was obvious that this accommodation was meant for us but we never found out why we were taken out to that old tramp. The cabins were luxurious Irish linen and Hudson Bay blankets, a duty free bar open all day, beautiful breakfasts, five course lunch, seven course dinners, and after living on rations ashore it was unbelievable. We joined a convoy after we crossed the bar and spent fourteen days at sea living in luxury.

At Halifax Canada we went aboard the train bound for Montreal again the best of everything.

When we arrived in Montreal we were taken to the Place Viger Hotel which had been turned into a Merchant Navy Reserve Pool headquarters.

The hotel had been modified to suit Merchant Seamen and it was like a barracks but the food was good. After I got settled in I tried to reach my sister Edie by telephone, but there was no answer, then I phoned my brother Bill in Ottawa and he told me that Edie was visiting him, and asked me to get on a bus and go to Ottawa which I did and spent two weeks with them and renewing old acquaintances. Edie's husband was in the Canadian Army in England.

My brother Bill had volunteered for the army but was turned down for medical reasons.

The Merchant Seaman Reserve Pool in Montreal sent seamen to man ships that were built in shipyards around the coasts of North America for the British Government.

These ships were mass produced and of welded construction. The loss of ships was so great that this was the only way they could be replaced and while ships could be replaced seamen to man these ships were not easy to replace especially stokers.

The ships had coal burning boilers, they were hand fired and it takes a particular kind of man to do the job. The stokers during the war took full advantage of the situation and although they cleaned their ships when at sea, to say the least, their behaviour ashore may have left something to be desired.

On returning to the Reserve Pool in Montreal after my trip to Ottawa I was severely reprimanded by the captain in charge of the pool and was told that I could be prosecuted for being adrift.

I told the captain that he could do as he liked I was ready for anything, then he said if I would sign articles to proceed to Portland Maine, all would be forgotten. I signed the articles and boarded a train for Portland Maine on the eastern seaboard of the U.S.A. I had instructions to report to Captain Sinclair at Grand Hotel in Portland and when I went to the captain he said that the ship I was to join was still being built and I would be staying in the Grand Hotel until the ship was ready for sea.

I spent a very enjoyable month in Portland the people of Portland made British Merchant Seamen welcome and at desk at the hotel there was always invitations to visit local people at their homes.

There was always invitations to visit club and we were made welcome at the Masonic Hall and were given the use of their club facilities whenever we wished to use them, everything was done to make us feel welcome.

The ships were built in dry docks six at a time sections of the ships were prefabricated and the engines and boiler were installed as the ships were under construction. When the ship was ready to go to sea, the dry dock was filled and we went aboard and raised steam. We used the ships engines to go astern out of the dock and went outside the harbor to swing the compass. This is done by pointing the ship in different directions and adjusting the compass until it reads true.

Having finished swinging the compass we set course for Brooklyn through Cape Cod.

When we arrived in Brooklyn we were no sooner made fast when the dockers started loading forty oil on drums of gasoline and after they had loaded about five thousand tons of that, they killed each of the five hatches by putting five hundred pound bombs on top of the gasoline drums.

The security in Brooklyn was very strict. Before we could go ashore, we had to be photographed and finger printed, and escorted by armed guards while we were in the dock area. The same again when we wanted to get back aboard, we had to go to the guard house at the dock gates and be escorted by armed guards until we were back on board.

We left New York harbor and joined a convoy of about sixty merchant ship and an escort of two corvettes and a destroyer. The convoy was averaging about seven knots and at that speed it was fairly easy to maintain steam. There were three hand fired coal burning boilers. On the port boiler there was an old fireman who had been going to sea for years and knew his job. I was on the centre boiler, and the man on the starboard boiler was making his first trip. All went well until we encountered some enemy action about the third day out from New York. The escort vessels started dropping depth charges and if they were close to our ship when they dropped them the noise was terrible and the ship shook. The convoy started to zig zag and this meant an increase in speed. The old man on the port boiler didn't have any faith in welded ships and every time the escort dropped a depth charge he would look at the welds on the side of the ship and then being a Roman Catholic he would sit on the valve box and take out his rosary beads and pray. The man on the other boiler was not capable of firing the boiler and I had to help him besides firing my own boiler. With the increase in speed the steam pressure began to fall. It was pretty scary knowing that if we got behind the convoy we would be a sitting duck for the enemy. With that cargo of gasoline and bombs we wouldn't stand a chance. I worked like I never worked before try to maintain steam.

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I never was so glad in my life when the next watch came down to take over. The weather turned bad it was a real gale and as the sea hit the side of the ship she shuddered and I could hear those bombs rolling about in the hatches. She had some heavy military trucks lashed down on deck and two Lockheed lightning aircraft also huge wooden cases of empty oxygen cylinders. The trucks trucks broke adrift and smashed the stokehold ventilators, then the cases of oxygen cylinders broke adrift and the cylinders were rolling along the deck. The altered course to head into the wind and the captain gave the order all hands on deck to dump the remainder of the deck cargo that hadn't already gone over the side. It was very scary working with oxygen cylinders sliding about and the lashing that held the trucks and the aircraft flying about in the wind. The water was going down the smashed ventilators into the stokehold and the firemen were hard put to maintain steam. We eventually cleared the decks of the remainder of the deck cargo. The storm lasted for two days and when the seas settled there was no sign of the convoy we were on our own.

Before a convoy sails in wartime. The Commodore and the captains of all the ships hold a conference and all the ships-captains are issued with sealed orders. At sea they sail under command of the Commodore while in convoy but if a ship is separated from the convoy, the captain then opens the sealed orders and the instructions are for a rendezvous which

is usually at noon for several days after contact with the conyon, but for a fact, The use of radio in war is a new thing.

We made our rendezvous after the storm abated but there was no sign of any ships. The Ocean Traveller was one of the first ships ever to be rigged with torpedo nets. These nets were suspended over the side of the ship from two booms at the foremast and another two booms at the aftermast. The object was to catch the torpedoes in the nets. The deckhands had never used the nets before and experienced some difficulty in getting the nets in position, there was still a heavy swell as a result of the storm, but they managed to get them set. All to no avail as when the nets were in the water, the speed of the ship was reduced to two knots. We made it to Liverpool on our own and anchored outside the bar waiting for a pilot. There must have been a lot of sea ships in that conyon that were lost we certainly didn't see as many ships as we did when the conyon hit the U.S.A.

In Liverpool the shipping master came on board to pay the crew off. The chief engineer asked me to sign on again and I said I saw enough of the ship and took the first train I could get to London and home.

I had been away five months, and when I got home I went around to the back door and the first thing I heard was my son shouting Daddy Daddy. It was great to see them again. Dorothea Forman who was nearly two years old and my lovely little daughter just one month old.

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The worst thing about the war was being separated from home, from the children and the worry about the future. At least if you were on a ship when you were attacked you could fight back we had plenty of anti aircraft guns. The mail was bad too usually with some time it would reach the letter boat I had sent me, my letters to Dorothy were often delayed and a while so the only news she got was from whatever shipping company I was sailing for. The note would say your husband has reached a foreign port and is safe.

We made the best of it when I was on leave I visited friends, and it was a great pleasure to take the children to the park. I missed the most interesting part of my children's lives when they were young.

I had two weeks leave and had to report again to the reserve force at Dock St. Leonards and was sent to Guernsey in Scotland. When I arrived Guernsey I was put aboard a motor and taken aboard a ship called the Empire Hylcliff. As soon as I got aboard I went to the stokers quarters and the stokers said she was a bad ship to steam. They took me down the stokehold and showed me the boilers there were only two and a big open space between them the men said there was something wrong with a ship they had had a lot of trouble just bringing her from Liverpool to Guernsey. I had to go and see the chief engineer and when he asked me for my sea service book I told him I didn't have one that it was to be my first trip. He took me up to the bridge to see the captain and told the captain not to let me sign on as he needed men with lots of experience.

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I was over a lot. I didn't want to sail in her and the US I told her that. When I reported back to the shipping office at Liverpool I was sent right away to a ship called the Gran. It was a ship - exactly the same as the Iron Triangle, but she had been built in Oakland California. The ship was operated by the Bee Line of Lark and all the crew were from Lark or Larkton. I was the only Englishman on board. They were the best crew I've ever had with having the year of work. We were anchored in Loch Long and I had no room to store the articles and we were under way. There were hundreds of ships in Loch Long and the river Clyde, the joined a convoy of about a hundred ships. The cargo was trucks jeeps half tracks and tanks. In war you don't know where you are bound for and even a change of course doesn't mean anything. We sailed away out into the Atlantic and after three weeks we sighted Gibraltar the main sea knew the rock.

After sailing through the Straits of Gibraltar the convoy broke up and a number of ships as indicated might drop to about 10 knots we were only a few miles off the coast of North Africa.

There was a great noise sounded like heavy artillery fire but we had no idea what was going on. But when we went close in shore we were told that most of the French Fleet had been sunk in the harbor. We lay at anchor off Gran for two days.

Then we sailed along the coast of Africa until we were abreast of Benghazi.

There were a lot of Royal Navy ships outside of the port and some merchant ships. The combined American and British forces were advancing on Bougie from the west and we had to anchor until the port was under Allied control. Then when we went into the harbor the captain had to take the ship alongside with the help of tugs. It was quite a job but he managed it. The Royal Engineers discharged the cargo. A lot of the men of the dock operating detachment were from Liverpool and some of them were men I had gone to school with.

By this time the French and Arab people of the town were getting back to a normal living routine and the cargo was opening, it was good to get ashore and relax for a few hours and sample the Moroccan wine and the Calvados. We had very little contact with the people of Bougie because of the difference of language but the small business people could speak some English.

There were some air raids while we were at Bougie, but only by a small number of Italian aircraft.

The cargo was all discharged and we sailed for Gibraltar. At Gibraltar we had to wait for a convoy.

Some ships had been attacked by frogmen operating out of Tangiers and in order to prevent the frogmen from attaching explosives to the ships the navy were patrolling the harbor where dozens of ships were on board and they would drop depth charges every few minutes. It was difficult to get any sleep but after a few days we got accustomed to the noise and were able to get some sleep.

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It was possible to get a liberty boat to go ashore on the Rock. There were some nice taverns and as usual and like seamen do we enjoyed ourselves regardless of our work. The attitude of most of the men was enjoy life. I you might say to be dead.

We left Gibraltar in ballast and made the trip home and docked in Manchester. The Ben line was a good company to sail for compared to most of the shipping companies.

Even though it was laid on for the crew to be paid off and get home as soon as possible, the men all asked to sign on again and every member of the crew signed up for all articles and signed on again.

The Captain told us he would send us a telegram when the ship was ready to sail. I took the first train I could get from Manchester to London and home.

Over the next few days I enjoyed a good time and the neighbors were very nice and I had a few children a couple of times until we went out.

Rationing by this time was very strict and the people were sick and tired of the monotonous and inadequate food. Everything was going to the war effort and with the heavy taxes of ship supplies were low.

The pub was short of supplies. If they did manage to get beer or whiskey it was sold out in no time. So I was lucky though, the lady who owned the Rose and Crown in Northolt had a soft spot for me and she always had something for them.

As soon as I was home in I got a pig and a lot of rum on the house. I received the telegram to go back to the ship and returned to Manchester. All the crew were delighted to see what cargo come aboard it was the same as the previous trip.

We all thought it would be a seven or eight week voyage and we would be home again. It was not to be.

The ship action of us was loading the same kind of cargo as we were and she was managed by me from both end Southampton was to operate by the British.

She was the Fort Babean sister ship to the Ocean Valentine. Both crews knew each other and we had had a lot of fun together in the pub called the Old Trafford. They were a sociable lot and we had some good times together. Some of the lads had musical instruments, one had an accordion and we would have a few drinks together and a good old sing song.

We left Manchester, passed through the ship canal and out into the river Mersey and joined a convoy after we crossed the bar. Sure enough after eight or ten days at sea we sighted Gibraltar and turned into the straits. We were about a dozen miles east of Gibraltar almost abreast of Ora when we were attacked by torpedo bombers. The convoy opened fire with everything we had but they hit the Fort Babean, the torpedo went into the engine room, the men on watch would be instantly killed we seen the rest of the crew abandon ship and they were picked up by the escort vessel. The ship didn't sink and a day later when we were in Ora we seen her towed in with her decks awash. The deck crew had been put back aboard. Her bulkheads had held and the cargo was still intact. When the cargo was discharged she was put in dry dock. The lads from our ship went aboard her and removed some of the bodies, some were missing. They were given a decent burial in Ora.

That's the way it goes, when you see your pals go. We finished loading up and then we would be in our way out. Then they started to load us with ammunition, big guns, and anti-air shells, we took on about a couple thousand tons of them, and after a few days we sailed east in the Mediterranean to Bone in eastern Algeria near to Tunis. As we entered the harbor we were attacked by dive bombers, but the anti-aircraft fire from the ships and the shore batteries barrage was terrific.

Most of the aircraft were shot down and not a ship was hit but it was pandemonium for a while. The strafing felt like hell. All the time we were in Bone there were bombing attacks day and night. In the daytime there were three warships in port. One British cruiser and two destroyers and when they fired their guns even the sea used to shake. At night the three warships would put to sea and come in again just before daylight. They were there for twelve days and we were bombed every day and sometimes at night. They would fire our guns till they were so hot they wouldn't fire any longer and I'm sure if it had not been for those three warships we wouldn't have survived. It got so bad some of us left the ship and went up into the hills behind the town we had to get some sleep and rest. The buildings in the town were badly damaged and we found stores that still had some food in them, and we helped ourselves. One cafe we went into we found some bottles of cognac and after a few good stiff drinks we were able to get some sleep before going back to the ship.

After we left Bora we went back to Gibraltar and
 came back to Bora in a week. Then we left Gibraltar and
 didn't know just where we were going, but we had passed
 through the straits we joined a convoy and turned
 south. We sailed down the west coast of Africa
 and it became very hot. It was my first experience of
 the tropics, it is hot work in the stokehold of a
 coal burning ship in the temperate zones but in the
 tropics it is unbearable. We broke away from the
 convoy when we were abreast of Fakoradi on the
 Gold Coast and dropped anchor off the port and
 we were anchored there for a couple of weeks before
 we went in to take on cargo. All the time we were at
 anchor we had visits from the bum boats. These were
 the local people who came along side in their
 dug out canoes to trade with the crews of the
 ships. They would have stalks of bananas and
 mangoes, eggs, chickens, sucking pigs, parrots and
 monkeys. We bartered with our cigarettes for the wares
 that they had to offer. They would also get us to
 throw coins in the water and they would dive for
 them. It was amazing how deep they could dive,
 we were anchored in about fifteen fathoms and they
 would go to the bottom if necessary to retrieve a coin.
 The water was absolutely clear you could see the bottom.

When we went into Fakoradi it was to take on iron
 ore. There was a fine Merchant Club in
 Fakoradi. The club had been built with money that was
 donated by United Garment Workers of America.
 There were a number of these clubs in different parts
 of the world one in particular on Rupert St just off
 Piccadilly in London.

It only took a few hours to put ten thousand tons of iron ore into the ship. But ^{we} were in port for a few days so the ship's stores had to be replenished.

One day the crew bought a bunch of bananas. I bought a bunch that ^{was} absolutely green and hard and got a crate to put it in and packed it in palm leaves.

We hadn't seen a banana in England since just after the war started. I thought what a treat they would be for Dorothy and my children who had never seen a banana. When the stores were aboard we left the dock but when we were bound to sea, instead of going just off the port and had to wait three weeks for a convoy. The hull of the ship was in bad condition and needed scraping and painting. Lying in tropical water ships develop a lot of marine growth on the hull. When we joined the convoy we found that it took a great deal of work to drive the ship and we had to work like fiends to keep the ship in the convoy. The coal in the bunkers was getting very low and we just made the run to Gibraltar before the coal ran out. It took us to look at two thousand tons of coal. The ship had to lay at anchor

waiting for a convoy again. My bunch of bananas in the crate had gone green and all the others and we ate what we could and had to dump the rest.

Eventually we joined a convoy and headed for home.

Iron ore is one of the worst cargoes a ship can carry. Usually there is less motion in the stowhold than any part of a ship, but with a cargo of iron ore the opposite happens, with the weight all in the bottom of the ship it acts like a pendulum.

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After the weather in the Bay of Biscay got a bit rough the ship started to roll and she rolled continuously until we got to Middlesboro. It took twenty eight days from Gibraltar to Middlesboro going north about Scotland through the Bullard Firth.

The voyage had taken nearly seven months and I had not had any news from Dorothy and when we went alongside I got twenty six letters that Dorothy had written to me. After paying off all of the crew got together in a pub in Middlesboro and we had a good farewell party. Needless to say I missed the first train to London and so did my ship mates miss their train to Scotland. We all stayed at the Seaman's Mission. We couldn't stay aboard ship as the boilers had been put down, she was due for dry dock.

I left for London the next day after enjoying the company of the best crew I ever sailed with.

I have visited Mith since and always go to a pub when seamen get together it was run by a man called Dan Carmichael and he is quite a character he will always help a seaman who is down on his luck. Seamen from all over the world talk about Dan Carmichael.

I had twenty one days leave due to me and when I got home Dorothy and the children and I enjoyed every minute of it. It was summer and we went out every day. My daughter Margaret was ten months old and as cute as could be, Norman was nearly three years old and had already assumed the role of protector of his little sister. When she was put outside in her baby carriage he never left her.

2

We visited our friends, the Douglas family in particular who I had boarded with before we were married. Mr and Mrs Douglas often visited Dorothy especially if there had been an abso told they were very good to Dorothy and just loved the children.

We could not visit the seaside resorts because they were all blown with barbed wire and defence installations, but we made the best of it by going out into the rural areas.

Twenty one days pass very quickly when you are enjoying the one thing you love more than anything just being with your family.

The next ship I joined was a twenty five thousand ton troopship. I was sent from London to Liverpool and as soon as I got to Liverpool I boarded a tender and went out to Loch Long and went aboard the Otranto one of the Orient Line ships she already had five thousand American troops on board. We joined a convoy of troopships with an escort of destroyers and sailed immediately. I signed the ships articles and went forward to the stokers quarters. What a difference, none of the firelines I had experienced on the Ocean Valentine. Some of the crew had been in the ship for years. The ship before the war had sailed out of Tilbury to Australia and New Zealand, a few of the crew were cockneys from East London, there were a few from Liverpool and different parts of the British Isles.

The second engineer came into the messroom and said Aye you will be on the eight to twelve watch and you will be in. No questions about where you come from or what ships you had been in what a difference to the men on the Ocean Valentine.

At eight o'clock I went on watch. This was an oil burning ship. She was twin screw and had two huge Parsons steam turbines, two stokeholds and I went to the forward stokehold and there was one fireman and a (Splasher) a junior engineer making his first trip.

The other fireman was a little Scot from Glasgow. He told me he had been released from Brixton Jail in Glasgow on condition that he went to sea. That was how short of firemen the Merchant Navy was.

The little yock turned out to be a very interesting man and we became good shipmates. The work in an oil burning ship is easy and simple no hard physical work like there is in a coal burner.

We had lots of time to sit and talk. Yock had read a lot, especially philosophy, he had read Greek and Persian Philosophy and this was what I enjoyed about him, he was also very versed in history.

The junior engineer was supposed to keep the water level in the boilers balanced, he didn't have a clue and besides that he was sea sick for the first four days so we had to do his work for him.

In the forward stokehold we had three huge double ended boilers, and two super-heaters there were eight fins on each of the boilers and four fins on each of the super-heaters making thirty two fins in all the work involved in stoking and clearing the burners and keeping the inside surface of the furnaces clear of carbon build up. I didn't like working in an oil burning ship the smell of the oil was everywhere. The one thing I did like about coal burners was that I was always physically fit.

We passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and went into the French naval base base at Mers El Kibir just next to Oran. After putting the troops ashore we stayed at Mers El Kibir for a long time. The lifeboats of the ship were removed and replaced by infantry landing craft. We knew then we were going on an invasion but we had no idea where. A group of Canadian Royal Navy men came aboard and carried out exercises, lowering the landing craft and speeding away from the ship. This went on for days. We had to maintain steam all the time we were in Mers El Kibir. Normally when a ship is in port the watches are suspended and the crew can go ashore, but we were kept on watches and could only go ashore between watches. Mers El Kibir was a very interesting place. Most of the people were Arabs. One day I was in a bar and I could hear a group of Arabs talking and one of them was speaking Arabic with a Cockney accent. When I went to speak to him, I found that he had been a merchant seaman and had missed his ship in Oran. He got a job in a cement works and had become a foreman. He had become a member of the same religion as the local Arabs and was married and had five children.

He dressed the same as the Arabs. I asked him if he would ever consider going back to England and he said no fear mate, I like these people he said they're the best friends he ever had, he seemed perfectly happy. He also spoke French without any trouble but with a slight Cockney accent. He invited Jock and I to his home to meet his wife and family, they had a nice home and lovely children who were very well behaved.

We started to embark troops about the first week in September. The first to board were Americans five thousand of them and just before we sailed about five hundred British Commonwealth. We sailed not knowing where we were going. As we got out to sea it seemed as if every ship in the world was going east in the Mediterranean. Hundreds of troop ships, tank landing craft, LSTs, etc., every kind of warship from colliers to cargo liners, transport carriers, battle ships, destroyers, minesweepers and some ships I couldn't describe.

On the morning of the ninth of September we sighted Sicily. A little while later the heavy warships started bombarding the coast with their heavy guns and waves of bombers flew over the head and bombed the shore.

We got within about a mile of the coast and dropped anchor. Immediately the Canadian Sailors started to load the landing craft from the davits and the troops and scrambling nets went over the side into the landing craft and sped toward the beaches. There was a hospital ship anchored near us and some of the casualties were already being brought from the shore and put aboard her. The shells from the battleships were passing over us. The noise was deafening. I wondered what it was like for the troops ashore and counted my lucky stars I wasn't with them.

The landing craft kept returning to the ship and taking troops to the beaches until they were all ashore.

When we sailed after discharging the troops there was one landing craft missing. These Canadian Sailors must have known their job, it must have been a tough making trip after trip to those beaches amongst the carnage that was happening.

I was glad to leave Salerno. We sailed south and through the Straits of Messina and put into Catania. There we took on part of the fifty first Division. The troops were very tired and dirty covered with red mud and hungry all they wanted was something to eat and lie down.

But within a couple of hours of coming aboard they had to be ready for kit inspection. I thought then it was bad enough being a Merchant Seaman but at least we weren't subjected to that sort of bull.

The troops recuperated after a couple of days and it was a pleasure to have them aboard there was always some entertainment. They put on concerts and gymnastic displays. We had a good run back to England and docked in Liverpool. It was a couple of weeks before we paid off. The shipping master tried to get the crew to sign on again but most of us refused, we had completed the articles we had signed and we ^{were} entitled to be paid off.

I paid off on the first of December. I had ten days leave and Dorothy and the children and I made the best of it we took the children to the zoo one day but it had been bombed the night before and only a small part of it was open.

We visited our friends and when we could get somebody to look after the children Dorothy and I went out in the evenings. Ten days soon passes when you are on leave. The next ship I joined was the *Caverock*, she was a fleet auxiliary vessel. I joined her at New Haven. She was a very old ship of about twelve hundred tons, her engine and boilers were right aft and she had natural draft and a huge high funnel. The master was captain Papworth the worst master I ever sailed under.

He was annoyed and expected the crew to call him sir. I told him the uniform was a private uniform and to me he was just Mr Papworth. He was out of Liverpool and he knew that he had met his match with me.

At sea a seaman has to obey commands without question but when the ship is tied up for and after it is a different thing the master is just another seaman.

The ship swept all the ports along the south coast of England and the ports along the east coast right up to Scapa Flow in Scotland with boom gear. A boom is an anti-submarine device consisting of steel wire nets and floats and weights that is stretched across the entrance of a harbor.

The reason she flew the Blue ensign as a fleet auxiliary was that we served the Royal Dockyards as well.

We were loading boom gear and a couple of days before Christmas I went to see the captain and asked him if I could go home for Christmas. It was the first chance I had had to be with the family since I had been away so long. He said nobody could go home, and I told him if we were still alongside on Christmas Eve I was going to London it was just over a hour by train.

He still refused and set the watches to raise anchor and took the ship out into the harbor and anchored.

On Christmas Eve he went ashore himself and when he returned to ^{the} ship he had his wife with him.

To say the least I was furious and so were the rest of the crew. We remained at anchor until the day after Boxing Day and continued to take on boom gear, we had to work watch and watch the captain said we would be sailing at anytime but ^{we} were there for another week.

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The crew of the Boverock were a pretty good lot. One of the firemen in particular an old man, he must have been sixty years old. One of those seamen who to him the ship is his home. He never spoke of his home I don't think he had one, he always stayed in the Seaman's Mission. Charlie was the best fireman I ever met he could make the boiler work on its own legs he was tough as nails.

When he went ashore he always went by himself and never wanted to associate with anybody, he hated the captain. He said he had sailed with him before and the only reason he signed on with him was he couldn't refuse due to wartime regulations.

We had signed Home Trade Articles. That meant we were signed on for six months. In a ship when you sign Foreign Going Articles you sign for the voyage or two years that means that you must complete the voyage and on return to the United Kingdom you are entitled to be paid off.

If the ship does not return to the UK after two years you can demand to be paid off wherever you are and be returned to the UK.

We finished taking cargo and sailed in a coastwise convoy. The east coast at that time was known as "E Boat Alley". The enemy were using very fast motor torpedo boats that usually attacked either just before dawn or just before dark. The torpedo boats were so fast that the only defence against them was by aircraft which we did not always have. In addition to that the enemy used a lot of mines along the east coast. Quite often we sailed only in daylight and as the light started to fail we would pull into the coast and anchor or go into harbour.

Progress along the east coast was very slow, most of the coasting vessels were very old. The Baverock was fifty years old and there were several that were older.

We eventually reached Scapa Flow the great naval base in the Orkney Islands of Scotland. This was where an enemy submarine had got into harbor in 1939 and sunk the battleship Royal Oak. It was blowing about half a gale when we got there and we waited for a long time for a pilot. Then captain Papworth decided to take the ship in himself and nearly succeeded in demolishing the wharf. He smashed it to bits and broke a lot of the piling and took away a good chunk of the wharf. The crew all hated the captain and nobody had any sympathy for him.

He was so egotistic he thought he could do anything.

We were at Scapa Flow for a long time. There was an inquiry of some sort, and the boom gear on our ship was only discharged as it was needed.

I was able to go ashore and go for long walks. I found some farms and visited the small farms on Orkney. The farms were very small most of the farm products was wool, potatoes, and some of the farmers also had fish boats. We spent most of our evenings in the canteen at the army barracks.

The northeast coast of Scotland sees a lot of very stormy weather and quite a lot of fog.

We ran into some bad weather just after we left Scapa Flow and it looked as if we would be blown onto the rocks. We had to keep up maximum steam pressure and keep the ships head into the wind just to keep from being blown aground.

The storm blew itself out after about a day, and we were able to get back on course. Then we noticed that one of the boilers had developed a crack and was blowing. We had to anchor in the first suitable place and blow down the boiler and carry out repairs. This was a bad situation to be in as there was not much shelter along the coast and only having one boiler working we could only get half speed. We made our way into an inlet and anchored. I felt sorry for the engineers and the old donkeyman, no sooner had we blown down the boiler the captain insisted that they go inside to caulk the crack.

The boiler was still hot and when they attempted to go in they couldn't stand the heat and the captain just heaped abuse on them. The old donkeyman told the captain to go inside the boiler and if he did the donkeyman would follow him. Captain Papworth just left the stoker alone without saying another word.

We continued to serve the ports along the south and the east coast with boom gear until early in May nineteen forty four, when we were ordered to proceed to the Bristol Channel. After putting into Milford Haven we were told that the ship would be used for a special operation. That we would be paid off as the six months articles we had signed had just about expired, and we were asked to sign on for a special operation, but after we learned that captain Papworth would be in command we all refused to sign the special articles, even though we would have received higher pay for the special operation.

I returned to London and home as soon as I was paid off. This was about the time when the V I was being used to bombard the London area and the south coast. I was worried there were rumours that the area around where our home was had been badly bombed. When I got home everything was alright but there had been some bombing in the neighbourhood. There were three kinds of air raid shelters in use at the time. One type was the Anderson shelter named after a cabinet minister. It was made of heavy corrugated steel and it was constructed by digging a hole in the garden or back yard and erecting the corrugated steel so that it was partly in the ground and partly above ground, this type gave good protection from blast and falling debris, but they were always wet and cold, and to go into them straight from a warm bed when the air raid warning sounded took a lot of doing, we never used them.

Then there were street shelters, just rectangular block houses that were constructed in the streets and built from the materials salvaged from bombed buildings, they were also cold and damp.

The other type was called Morrison shelters after another cabinet minister, they were made of four pieces of heavy angle iron and a steel plate placed over the top and a steel mesh all around. They stood about thirty inches high and were four feet wide and six feet long, they were assembled inside the house and they were the only shelter we ever used.

The children got so accustomed to using them that when the air raid warning sounded they would

go to the shelter without being told. My son Tom, who was not yet four years old would take his little sister by the hand and say "come on, Jerry is over" and they would "crawl" into the shelter and stay there until the "all clear" was sounded. It was an amazing thing during the war that even with food severely rationed the children of the working class families looked healthier than they ever did before the war.

All children received free milk, orange juice, cod liver oil, and they had their own special ration book. They always got two eggs per week and if there was any fresh fruit available the children had priority with their special ration books. Also the children's nurseries that looked after the children of working mothers had a good quota of food and there was always a dietitian in attendance.

The next ship I joined was the Empire Deed. This was just after D Day, she was in the East India dock in London and already had a full cargo and was ready to sail. She had some troops on board and I was surprised to learn that some of the troops were from the thirty eighth battalion of the Cameron Highlanders from Ottawa Canada a unit I belonged to when I lived in Ottawa. They were motorised infantry and were going with their trucks to Junau Beach.

She had trucks, half tracks, tanks, jeeps, and field guns in the cargo. This was a special operation and when we arrived at Junau Beach we dropped anchor and had to discharge the cargo ourselves.

The method that was used to discharge the cargo was, we used the ships winches and rigging to lift the tanks and vehicles over the side and lowered them into a very large pontoon.

This pontoon was made by first pulling a net with floats and weights attached to it over the side of the ship and securing it to the bow and the stern of the ship. Then we had hundreds of rectangular steel tanks which were lowered over the side and kept in position by drawing the net tight, then we lowered long lengths of channel iron over the side and these were laid on top of all the steel tanks and by joining the whole thing together with clamps we had a huge flat topped pontoon. After that was done we lowered two huge outboard motors over the side and they were attached one on each side of the pontoon. When we had a part of the cargo on the pontoon the motors were started and the whole thing was driven up onto the beach and the vehicles were driven off.

The weather was not too good and it was a difficult operation but we managed to get the cargo discharged and returned to London for another cargo and repeated the operation. By this time the fighting was a lot further inland. The next trip we went into Cherbourg and by this time the American Army dock operating units had some of the berths cleared and we were able to ^{go} alongside and the American troops handled the cargo, and I must say they were far more efficient than we were.

On leaving Harbours we were involved in a collision with an American ship. There were so many ships manouevring in the approaches to the harbor it was inevitable there would be a collision. We sustained considerable damage to the bow of our ship and we were ordered to Blythe in Northeast England to go into dry dock. I had only been in the ship one month but we were all paid off.

With the VI attack as it was I decided to try and stay in coastal waters in case anything happened at home. I stayed in Blythe for a couple of weeks it was possible to write and keep in touch with Dorothy, so I stayed at the Seamens Mission until I was sent to Amble a small port north of Blythe where I joined a ship called the Mervaldin.

This was a very ancient vessel. She had belonged to the Latvian Government and had been chartered by the British Government in the 1914-1918 war and when the Russians occupied Latvia she escaped and was taken over by the British in the second world war. She was being used as a collier between the northeast coal ports and the power houses in London. Her engine and boilers were in such bad condition that after one trip to London we were ordered to go to the Tyne where she was moored to the bouys and we were paid off.

I returned to London and it was a relief for Dorothy to have me home for a while, the flying bombs were worse than ordinary bombing they flew low and when you heard the engine stop you just waited for the explosion it was nerve wracking.

I was at home for two weeks and then I was sent to Southend as a stand-by. Southend is about fifty miles from London and it got its share of bombardment.

The object of a stand-by is that if a ship comes down river from London and there is any shortage of crew, the shortage is made up from the stand-by.

After a few days on stand-by I was put aboard a tug at the end of Southend pier and taken out to a ship called the Sherwood she had sailed from London short of one stoker so I was signed on while the ship was under way. She was carrying two thousand tons of gasoline in jerry cans a very volatile cargo there was no smoking on deck and the fumes from the cargo were sickening.

The allied forces had taken the port of Boulogne is a that is when we put in. As soon as the army had cleared one of the wharves we went alongside and it was obvious that the gasoline was badly needed.

There were Royal Air Force trucks and army trucks waiting and the cargo was soon discharged. The city of Boulogne lay in ruins, it was the worst devastation I had seen, hardly a building was left, the old Citadel was conspicuous standing in the middle of a huge area of rubble. The streets of the city could not be seen, the army had just bulldozed passages through the debris. The civilians that were left in the city lived in basements under the debris.

Near to the dock room was a huge pile of rifles and hand grenades still fixed and machine guns, burnt out vehicles and temporary graves it was obvious that an enemy infantry unit had surrounded there.

When we left Bologne we were in the British fleet on the north shore of the Thames and took on a cargo of pitch. The pitch was in big lumps and when it was loaded into the ship the dock workers and the crew of the ship had to wear masks over their faces because of the very fine particles of pitch in the air. Soon with the masks some of the crew and dockworkers developed swollen faces. The particles of pitch were so fine that they entered the pores of the skin and melted just from the heat of the blood and caused swelling and a lot of pain. The weather was very warm for the time of year, pitch is usually transported in cold weather but due to war conditions it had to be carried when it was needed. We took the cargo to Rouen on the river Seine. When we opened the ship's hatches we found that the pitch had partly melted and it was a very slow job to discharge it. We were there for a month.

The pitch was used in the manufacture of briquets, it was mixed with coal dust and pressed into the briquets which seemed to be the only domestic fuel available to the French civilian population in that part of France.

I developed a severe toothache while we were in Rouen and after a day of agony I went to see the captain and asked to go ashore to see a dentist.

The American army were in control of Rouen and the only dentist available was at the American army hospital and when I went to the admittance office they didn't know what to do with me being dressed in civilian clothes. The sergeant at the desk told me he was sorry but it was an armed forces hospital and there was no facility for treating civilians.

I showed him my seaman's identity card but he still wouldn't admit me for treatment, then he went off with my identity card and when he came back he was accompanied by a surgeon, who apologized for the delay and said it was the first time that they ever had to treat a British Merchant Seaman and that having read the regulations he had found that it was possible to give emergency treatment to British seamen.

I was admitted and was treated just as if I had been an American. My teeth were all x-rayed and when the dentist who was to ^{do} the extraction came along he said I would have to have a general anaesthetic because the roots of the teeth that had to be extracted would make it difficult. I was taken to the operating room and put to sleep, when I woke up I was surrounded with a lot of wounded soldiers. During the extraction my lower jaw had been fractured and my jaws were wired together. The treatment I got in that hospital was simply marvellous. I had the best of everything and a lot of good humoured leg pulling from the Americans it was quite a novelty for them to have a Limey seaman among them. When the wires from my jaws were removed and I could talk again I was able to give the Yankees as good as I got. I enjoyed the stay in that hospital and was reluctant to go back to the ship.

The ship was about ready to sail when I went aboard. This time ^{we} went to Sunderland on the north coast. The people of those ports along that coast had lost a lot of their menfolk at sea and they gave merchant seamen every consideration.

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