

Biography of Wilfred Ronald Leavoy 1915-1986

My name is Wilfred Ronald Leavoy. I was born at Matheson, Ontario on February 11, 1915. The year is 1983 and I am attempting to write my autobiography and narrate it on tape.

I would like to go back to my great-grandfather who is the oldest ancestor that I have knowledge of. Born March 28, 1818 in Paris, France. He immigrated to Canada in 1839. His name was Etienne (*Achan*) Lavoie in French. The name means "the thoroughfare" or "highway." He came to Quebec City then Montreal as he was a chef by trade. He finally ended up in the white pine country around Arnprior, Ontario. He went up the Quyon River into Onslow Township in the Province of Quebec. He met and married a woman there. She was of Irish descent and her name was Mary Ann Mackey. The year 1840 (*27 October 1840, Fitzroy Harbour*). Etienne worked as a cook in the lumber camps in the winter and farmed in the summer months. They had seven daughters and three sons (*Nancy m. Alex McGoon, Harriet m. James Kerr, Hanna m. Enoch Taylor, Peter m. Agnes Wilson, Charlotte m. David Parker, Mary Jane m. William Hogg, William m. Janet McWhirter, Etta m. ? Walker, James Edward m. Isabel Wilson and Emma m. J. Brown*), one of which was my grandfather, William Henry Leavoy (born September 5, 1854). He was the first white boy born in the village of Pontiac in Pontiac County. This village has since disappeared.

Around 1860 Etienne moved his family across the Ottawa River into Sands Point, Ontario. As the white pine forests were receding westward, they followed along the Madawaska and Bonchere Rivers, which were the highways of the day as far as the logging was concerned. My Grandfather and his younger brother, James, settled on farms close to Combermere, Ontario (which is situated on the Madawaska River). As the three sons grew up they sought to change their names to sound more English as apparently the mother would not let Etienne speak French in the house and besides he was away all winter so the children didn't learn much French. The oldest son Peter spelled his name "Levoy", William "Leavoy" and James "Lavoy".

My grandfather followed the logging and as a young man became a foreman which meant you were like a captain on a ship. When you went into the woods in the fall you took your men, horses and supplies to last five months and in most cases when the snow got deep you were pretty well isolated. You had to be able to lick any man in the camp as you couldn't call the cops. There were none. No phones and no radio either. You were there till the ice went out then the men drove the logs down the rivers to the sawmills. It was a terrible job, wet and cold and quite a few graves lined the river banks as the logs would get caught and pile up in the narrow places along the river. Then you have a logjam. They would have to pry the key logs out and sometimes the whole thing would let go suddenly, crippling some and drowning some. When dynamite came along it helped in these situations.

My Grandfather married Janet Hamilton Hynes, March 21, 1882. They had fourteen children (6 boys, 8 girls). My father was the oldest, born December 31, 1885. He followed his father as a lumberman going to the woods as soon as he could drive horses. His family had very little schooling, with a large family on a farm; they had to dig in to help feed the rest.

Etienne died May 11, 1902 and was buried in Purdy, Ontario.

Around 1910 the white pine forests were pretty well exhausted. The farms in that region were terrible. Their best crop was stones. They had a harvest of them each year. They built stone fences with them. As they plowed the land the frost brought up a new crop.

My father married Annie Mae McPherson April 15, 1912 at Fort Stewart, Ontario. The whole family began to think of moving to a new region and a better life. I might mention that none of my fathers' family's births were recorded.

In 1909 gold was discovered at Porcupine Creek and the news spread. Also farmland was offered at 50 cents an acre, minus any stones. My people went up to Matheson to have a look. The farms were 160 acres. They purchased four farms, one for my Grandfather, one for Raymond (my father's brother) and one for John Henderson, who had married my father's sister Ella. They moved up by train as the railroad went through Matheson. This was 1913.

They had horses and cows. My father and a brother rode along with the animals to feed and water them. Then they had to grab the saws and axes to virtually hew a living out of the forest as the farms were just a forest. As my father had a team of work horses by this time, it was right up his alley as they needed men and horses for the lumbering and later the pulp mills were built and needed much wood. Also all the goods were moved and roads were built by horses. I remember my father saying he had gone to the woods in the winter over thirty years without missing one. My father purchased two lots in the town and built two houses. I was born in one of them February 11, 1915.

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Then July 29, 1916, a Saturday, there was a terrible tragedy. The woods were tinder dry. Many who had land were clearing brush and burning. Well the flames just took off and the town and surrounding countryside all burned with the loss of two hundred and twenty-three people. My father's two houses were gone. My mother and I were put aboard a freight train and managed to escape to a lake about thirty miles down the railroad, Sesekinika. My father made his way to my Grandfather's farm where some of the family were. The fire came close to the buildings but the land was cleared back a ways so they kept carrying water and wetting the ground. In so doing, managed to save the buildings. In a few days my mother and I were able to return. We had to go to my Grandfather's farm. As the fire had burned much of the woods, it was a great time to clear land, so the men were busy at this. As they were engaged in this, they used a horse and a stone boat (as they called a home made sled) which they would load with stumps and haul them to a pile to be burned. They sat down to have a smoke and the horse took off for the barn. So my mother noticed this and called to one of my father's sisters to watch me while she took the horse back down to the field but apparently the sister was having a snooze and didn't hear her. At any rate, I took off after my mother, as I was 18 months old. But on my way I got into one of those fire holes in the ground where the tree roots were still smouldering. Went about twenty feet through that and sat down on the edge of it. When they got back to me I was peeling the skin off my feet. That night they swelled up like footballs. So, another train trip for Mother and I. We landed in the Lady Minto Hospital in New Liskeard, Ontario. They couldn't keep anything on my stomach and I was just wasting away. Mother met a farmwoman on the street that she had

known in the country they had left. The woman told her to bring me to her farm and she would fix me up, which she did. Well back to Matheson. Of course, I remember none of this.

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The first incident I remember happened in 1919 when I was four years old. One of my father's horses had a colt. When this colt was about three months old, one day he found it near a neighbour's house. There were no fences or lawns, the animals wandered around town and kept the grass short. At any rate, this colt just lay there. It wasn't feeling well so my father improvised a stretcher, got some help and carried it home to our barn.

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The next I remember, 1921. They built a big brick school close to our home. As I was starting school that year and the builders were late finishing, we started in the United Church for awhile. I might add, my mother had taught school and I, being her oldest, she had taught me the alphabet which I could write and recite, also my numerals to one hundred. So it gave me a head start. I never had any problem in school. I wasn't a genius but never failed an exam.

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When I was eight years old, I was introduced to work, which was my close friend until I was fifty years old. The homes were heated with wood in those days. My father kept a pile of it split up so it would go in the cook stove. In the winter we also had a box by the door and my job was to keep it full.

We always had a cow as many of the people in the town did. They were driven outside the town in the morning by myself and other boys. A few of them had bells on so after school we would go looking for them and the bells helped. We would bring them into town, our folks would milk them then they would lay down in a back lane till morning, when they would be milked again and driven out.

One person had tied their cow with a rope. The cow got loose from the tether and went away with the rope. It started to rain, the rope shrank and they found the cow choked to death. So I learned a lesson right there.

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1922 – Age Seven.

My Grandmother was killed by a train. Many people walked on the railroads at that time, as the roads were few and poor. She had gone picking raspberries and was nearly home. The train came around a bend, the engineer blew the whistle but as she was almost deaf, she never moved over at all. He tried to stop but was unable. I was nearby with some boys but didn't actually see the accident. But we walked over and I saw her big Collie dog. Then I heard someone say it was her.

My Grandfather came to live with us after that. He lived with us about ten years. I learned many things from him and he told many stories of his life and many old sayings, which are still relevant today. He knew many old songs and was a top-notch step dancer, as they called them then. A mixture of clog and jig dancing to the old Scottish and Irish jigs and reels.

I remember all of one song:

There was a man named Johnny Sands. He married Betsy Haig
Although she brought him gold and lands she proved a terrible plague
She was full of prowisk and whim and he was tired of life
She said she was just as tired of him as he was tired of life
As he was tired of life
If that's so, I'll go drown myself, the river runs below
She says go long you silly elf, I wished it long ago
I wished it long ago
Perchance that I should courage lack and try to save my life
Pray tie my hands behind my back; I will replied his wife
I will, replied his wife
She tied his hands behind his back and when securely done
Now you stand on the river bank, whilst I prepare to run
Whilst I prepare to run
He stood upon the riverbank, she ran with all her force
But as she neared he stepped aside and she went in of course
And she went in of course
Dashing, splashing like a fish, Oh save me Johnny Sands
I can't my dear, though much I wish, for you have tied my hands
For you have tied my hands

I only know part of the next song.

Foreman young Monroe – The log jam on Gary's Rock

'Twas on a Sunday morning in the spring time of the year
Our logs were piling mountains high; we could not keep then clear
Turn out brave boys, our foreman cried with voice devoid of fear
We'll break the jam on Gary's Rocks for Eganville Town we'll steer
While some of them were willing, there were others who were not
To go out and work on Sunday was not quite right, they thought
But six of our brave Canadian lads did volunteer to go
And break the jam on Gary's Rocks, when their Foreman this did say
Be on your guard my boys, the jam will soon give way.
These words he had scarcely uttered when the jam did break and go
And carried off our six brave lads and their Foreman young Monroe

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In 1923, at eight, we moved to our farthest farm, three and a half miles from school. (I walked for two months in the spring). In order to receive our deed to the land we had to spend a certain amount of time and have thirty-two acres under cultivation. Boy, I remember being very tired at night

In 1924, my father had three teams of workhorses, so he sent me to drive one of the teams during the summer holidays from school. We got up at four in the morning and left about five. Went out about eleven miles to the sawmill. The two hired teamsters loaded up the three loads of railroad ties and planks. We drove back about a mile to have lunch and feed the horses. We would arrive back in town between four and five o'clock. Of course, I couldn't load or unload as the lumber and ties were too heavy. But it was a long day and I slept well.

That winter I had three cattle to feed and clean out from, of course we were right beside the school. My father worked that winter hauling machinery and supplies from Chemenis, Quebec to Noranda, Quebec as they had discovered the great ore bodies there.

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1925 - Age Ten.

We moved to my Grandfather's farm in the spring. The house in town was rented, as we were to stay on the farm for some time. We worked the farms and my father went to the woods each winter with the horses. We had more cattle by this time and had to have a man in the winter to do the chores. We had purchased a driving horse as they called him. Scot, was his name. Had been a good fast horse in his day but was getting a little old. We used him to go to school, using our barn beside the school to keep him out of the cold during the day. I think he used to stand all day dreaming of his prime for when we hitched him up and were ready to go, he would rear up on his hind legs and lunge into the harness lifting the sleigh right off the ground, tear down the road for a hundred yards, then he was all pooped out. At last we traded him to a farmer for ten bags of turnips.

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1926 - Age Eleven.

Still on the farm. One big event that sticks out in my mind. My father went to town one day and came home driving a new car. I don't know if he had been thinking of it but it was a surprise to us. It was a 1926 Model "T" Ford (a four door with a soft-top and side curtains for rainy days). Well my father expected work from us but he also shared any pleasures there were, so it wasn't long till I was driving it over the fields. Lots of room there. When the snow came the car was drained and raised off the floor on blocks, the battery removed and placed in the basement so it would not freeze. Of course, by spring, it would be dead. The roads were not plowed in those days, so back to horse and sled. In the spring we would install the battery, hook one of the big horses on the front and after a short pull it would start and ran to charge the battery.

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1927 - Age Twelve.

This year when the snow was gone, I used to drive my brother Ernie and Sister June to school with the car, unless my father needed it. Of course there were very few cars on the roads. The worst was when you met a horse and buggy, especially if a woman was driving, for some of the horses would rear up and make for the ditch. If you saw they were nervous, you had to stop, get out and lead them by, then go on your way.

We had a hockey team at school. I was the goaltender. The first pads they had were an old pair of cricket pads, which just wrapped around the front of your legs. They had wooden canes encased in leather. Every hard shot, you were sure your leg was broken. But then they got a regular set. Boy, what a difference!

On the odd Saturday we would take the train to a nearby town and play the team there. Then they would come to our town. It was a big event.

We had a wonderful Principal at our school. He had been a Pilot in the First World War. His name was Herbert Sweetnam. He was Principal all my school days. Did not smoke or drink and I never heard a swear word out of him. A person you could really look up to. I learned a lot about life from him, the right and honourable things.

1928 – Age Thirteen.

This was my last year of school. I received my Entrance to High School Certificate in June. As there was no High School in our town, it meant that you had to go away to a boarding school to continue. Today, they have buses to take you everyday, then of course, as I said before; the roads were closed by snow from December to April and no buses anyway.

That winter I went to the woods with my father. We had two team of horses. We went up close to Cochrane. Took us almost two days to drive that far. We were hauling four-foot pulpwood, which had to be loaded in boxcars on the railroad to be taken to the paper mill at Iroquois Falls. It was a six mile haul and we made two trips a day, from 7:00 in the morning till 6:00 at night. It was dark when you left in the morning and dark when you go in at night and bitterly cold. You had to tie up the lines and walk behind the sleigh or you would freeze. After two months we got a job back at Matheson hauling gravel to build a new road going south to Ramore, so we moved as it was close to home.

During the summer we were working in the fields one day when we saw some people walking along the road that led to our farm. As they turned a corner in the road about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from our farmhouse, we could see there were three of them. It wasn't very often that someone came to visit, so we watched as we worked to see if they would turn in our gate. Well they did. It was around 11:00 o'clock so we knew they would be there for dinner (as we called it, supper was the evening meal). At any rate, when we came in to eat we saw three men we had not seen before. We had been taught to keep our mouths shut and listen unless we were spoken to. We all sat down and my Mother asked one of them to ask the blessing, so I knew they were religious people. After dinner, we moved out of the house, which was very hot, as the food had to be prepared on a wood burning stove and it was about 85 degrees outside anyway.

There were two hired men and our family. The one man hauled out his Bible and after asking God's blessing on it's reading, proceeded to tell the wonderful Gospel or Good News of Jesus Christ, which would eventually turn my whole life around.

I had always felt my people were fairly good living, although we seldom went to Church. But as I used to think, my Mother would take a religious fit once in awhile, dress me up and off to Sunday School. But at the least excuse I would manage to get out of it. But from what I could understand of it all, you did the best you could and in the end, if your good deeds outweighed your bad deeds, you went to Heaven; if the other way around, well you went to the bad place.

As the man read from the Bible that we were all lost, guilty sinners, that there was none righteous. No, not one. And that God had sent His only Son to die in our room and stead. That without the shedding of blood, there is no remission from sin. That Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby ye must be saved." God, through Christ's sacrifice, is presenting us with the Gift of Salvation and if a gift therefore cannot be earned or paid for, it is the Gift of God.

When the invitation to accept Christ as Saviour came though, I felt I was not ready yet, had all the usual excuses; I was too young, and had many things I wanted to do. I knew that I would sure have to change a lot of things in my life. Well I thought I had lots of time yet.

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1929 – Age Fourteen.

I worked all summer on the new road with a team of horses ten hours a day for \$6.50, which seemed good money at that time. We cut down the hills with wheel scrapers, a forerunner of the large carryall scrapers used now. We moved about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a yard where they move up to thirty yards and more.

In the fall we left for Porcupine to haul pulpwood again. We arrived home on the 18th of April. We had a good long run. Of course on the farm, there was always plenty to do. When we had any spare time, we would clear land so we could produce more. But it took all the money we could earn, as there was always some new equipment we needed. This was the year of the Stock Market crash in the U.S.A., which had terrible consequences through the 1930's.

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1930 – Age Fifteen.

This summer I worked rebuilding bridges on the farm roads north of our town. In most cases the bridge had to be torn out and new piling driven into the riverbeds. I drove a team of horses that pulled a big weight up two timber guides with a stretcher built around them. This was called a pile driver.

About forty feet up, a man would trip this weight and it would come crashing down onto the pile (which was actually a tree sharpened to a point on one end). The result was after seven or eight

crashes; the pile would be driven to solid ground and onto the next, until there were enough to support the bridge structure.

Well the winter of 1930-31 I had to stay on the farm as we had quite a few cattle. In the fall of 1930, my father decided to try and sell some of our beef in Timmins and Kirkland Lake which were about forty miles away in either direction. Father bought a pick up truck. There was a man living in our home in the town who was a butcher, so he came and I went with him to help him. He was a good butcher. Things went fairly well, as we would slaughter the animals and sell the meat in quarters. So we started to buy animals from other farmers also. Of course, I learned to slaughter the animals also and was able to do this for years after when needed.

But the terrible depression of the 1930's was on by this time; for the dressed beef, we received .05/lb. for the front quarters and .07/lb. for the hindquarters. Other prices: Milk - .09 a quart; Eggs - .11-.15/dozen; Bread - .09 a loaf; Potatoes - .50 a bushel.

Well, as I said before, I stayed home on the farm to care for the livestock and my brother Ernie, who was thirteen, went to the woods with my father. Before Christmas that year, my mother had to be taken into the hospital and spent the winter there. So I also had to cook for my sister June and brother Cliff, who went to school. They were ten and eight years old. It was three miles to the school, how they made it as I look back, I'll never know. (As I remember two weeks when it went down over 40 degrees below zero each night for two weeks.)

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1931 – Age Sixteen.

In the spring I went to do some work with a team of horses at an old gold mine that they were trying to revive. When the job was finished, I got a job working at the mine. The mine had been discovered around 1914 and was the richest per ton of ore in the world at that time and for many years into the 1960's. It was named Creosus.

Well at any rate, they had taken the ore, which was hand picked and bagged to a mill about two miles away by horse and wagon. There was a large pile of residue which they considered waste. When this was assayed, it was decided to build a small mill which put through about twenty-four tons in twenty-four hours, so I worked on this and when it was finished, I worked in the mill twelve hours a day and received \$6.50 a day, with \$1.00 per day for room and board. The job lasted into the winter and shut down. So back to the farm. The work was never finished on the farm and my father always found something to work at with the horses, although trucks were starting to come into our part of the country but were able to work in the summer months only, on account of the snow and cold.

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1932 – Age Seventeen.

In the spring I got a job at another small mine. I worked on surface, as they called the above ground work. I got to know the manager and his wife real well. His last name was Salkeld. He was the manager of two small mines; the Blue Quartz and the Coulson. They had a small mill at the Blue Quartz and quite a large pile of ore on surface which had been dumped there before the

mill was built. There was a small rail track on the top of the pile and I worked for awhile loading these cars to supplement the ore that was brought up from underground. They had an old horse to pull the cars up the grade to the mill.

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1933 – Age Eighteen.

Then they moved me over to the Coulson. They had decided to pump the water out of the old shaft and do some more mining in the hopes of finding some larger bodies of ore. I worked alone there for some time. The manager had a lot of confidence in me. Had me do all the pipe fitting to the different buildings. When they were ready to pump out the water and I was eighteen (which you had to be to work underground) he put me on a shift attending to the pump which was mounted on the cage (which is like an elevator to take men and materials up and down the shaft). As the water was lowered then the cage was lowered and more pipes added until the bottom was reached. There had been a pump left down on the 150' first level fifteen years before, so we connected the compressed air to the right pipe and away this pump went. It pumped water for about two weeks before giving out which was a big help. The mines have a logbook like a ship so that was how we knew the pump was there, if it would start up, which was a small miracle after all that time.

Well I thought I had it made, \$4.25 for eight hours work. They hired some miners to start mining. Of course I had to start at the bottom, a mucker, which meant you loaded broken rock (muck) into steel cars that had a door in one end and could be dumped. There was a narrow gauge railroad that went from the shaft into all the working places and the steel cars we pushed along this track. The cage also had track on the floor. The cars were pushed in and they were hoisted up to the surface, dumped and returned.

Well I was eager to work on the drilling machines, which paid \$4.85 a day. At any rate, the first opening I was moved to a machine helper. The machines made a terrible noise. I couldn't hear a thing for two weeks and I have had a heavy ringing noise in my head ever since.

The preachers were still holding meetings at our farm and of course I would hear them when I was around home. I was really convicted but kept putting a decision off again and again till one evening, which of course I will never forget.

They had a battery lantern as it was called, as we had no electricity at that time. This showed slides on a white sheet hung up on a wall. This slide came on. It had a picture of a door grown over a bit with vines and weeds and a man with his hand raised as though knocking. The verse of scripture was Revelation. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door I will come in and sup with him and he with me."

Well that broke down all the barriers for I knew He had been knocking for a long time. A flood of tears came and I was able to say "Come in Lord Jesus". He has been with me ever since and I know I will be with Him forever for this life is as the snap of a finger in eternity.

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1934 – Age Nineteen.

We worked till the late fall of 1933 and the mine closed down for awhile. They were having financial troubles. So I went to work in the woods again with the horses for it didn't look as if they would start up before spring. It was in the great Depression of the 1930's so you could not be sure of anything.

My brother Ernie and I were working together with two team of horses. I was nineteen, so he would be sixteen. It was real hard work. Sixteen foot pulp which we hauled down and dumped on the river ice. This meant you were loading most of the time. We were about three miles from the camp. It was a French fellow who had the contract and most of the workers were French (who are good woodsmen).

About 11:00 each morning a horse and sled would arrive at the lunch site which was a place tramped out in the snow. The sled would have a large iron kettle full of pork and beans, a few loaves of bread and a 10 lb. pail of corn syrup. The same every day. We would be so hungry, it always tasted great.

One day as I was pulling out onto the river, the ice broke and my load, which was mostly balsam wood, which is very heavy and barely floats, sank down almost to the top of the load. This put my horses in the water also. Fortunately, their front feet were still on the ice but they were excited. The only place they could go was down. Ernie arrived in a few minutes, luckily. I had to cut the harness off them, as everything was so tight.

Well we got a hold on the one horses' head and he gave a lunge which brought him up on the ice. The other horse really started to lunge around but went right into the water, hauling Ernie in with him, but I grabbed him and got him out. Eventually we got the other horse out but he was so tired, he just lay on the ice for about ten minutes.

Well I got on the one horses' back and jogged them back to the stable. They sent some men and they fished the harness out of the water. So back to work the next day.

In the spring the mine started up again, so I was glad of that. During the summer of 1934 I met the girl who eventually became my wife. She and a sister had come up to Matheson to visit their cousin who had married a girl from Matheson. Her maiden name was Annie Wolfe and she had married William Bingham in Hamilton. They were living on Annie's father's farm.

The one I was interested in was Lorna Burley from Hamilton. I thought she was just perfect of course. Well anyway, I was still quite shy but managed to meet her and from there on we got along real well. I would have married her right then and I'm sure we would have made it okay. The big problem was she was just fourteen, I was nineteen but I was sure she was around eighteen. At any rate, I tried to see her as often as I could till they took off for home again. Then I kept the Post Office busy. As the mine was twelve miles from town I had lots of spare time to write.

Well I started to save money for myself from then on as I had ideas of my own. We were snow bound in the winter. We got to town about once a month by horse and sleigh. My father bought a dump truck during the summer of 1934, a Ford V8, as there was some road work. But that was

about the end of the horses in our lives. My folks moved back into the home in town and sold all the cattle and horses. A couple of fellows tried to make the farm go but never quite made it.

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1935 – Age Twenty.

During the winter of 1934-35 I worked in the shaft at the Coulson mine sinking it deeper to open some new exploration levels. It paid \$6.50 for eight hours, which was good money at that time and I worked every extra shift I could. By spring I had a nice bank account.

In June I took a two week holiday, took the train for Hamilton, of course. It was my first trip to a city and quite different. I landed in Hamilton around 10 o'clock in the morning. There were a line up of big black limousines waiting for passengers. One of the drivers, all dressed in uniform with the old leather puttees and black shoes shining like a mirror, rushed up and grabbed my suitcase out of my hand, ushered me into a big black Packard. Well I gave him the address, if I had known, it was only about a mile away. He pulled up at the door, slapped by suitcase down on the sidewalk; all the way I'm wondering "how much is this going to cost me?" Well I decided that I would give him \$10.00. He looked at it and said, "I can't change that". Well I asked him how much it was, he says 25 cents. Well I gave him 50 cents for good measure, but I often think of it, especially now that the cabs flip the meter on and start around \$1.00.

Well I had a wonderful time. She looked as beautiful as ever. I went out looking for a car. I decided on a 1929 Model "A" Ford Coach. A two door with a split front seat and a full back seat. It was in beautiful shape, had been owned by a school teacher. When we got done haggling, I gave him \$185.00 and \$1.00 to change the ownership over.

Well then we started to see the surrounding country, Niagara Falls etc. Went over to Buffalo. Gas was .11 a gallon in the States, .20 in Hamilton.

Well the time flew by too fast and I had to bid them all farewell. The long drive back was uneventful. I stopped in Cobalt and stayed the night with an aunt and uncle there, arriving home the next day. Back to work, had to keep that bank account growing.

During that summer Lorna and her sister managed to make it up to their cousins again. So that meant more gas and rubber burned. I had to go to Timmins to have my yearly medical for underground so took them along for the ride, of course my sister June as well.

In Schumacher we picked up my cousin Edrie. As we were approaching Timmins, we came around a curve and there was a policeman standing in the road with his back to us. As we got closer, he turned around and started waving us to stop, taking off over the ditch at the same time. Well we stopped alright, dead centre on a railroad. It was then we saw some freight cars bearing down on us, but too late to move. They piled into us, carrying the car down the rails sidewise. Ruined the body on the car and the wheels. We received a few cuts and bruises but other than that, okay. There was a man riding on top of the cars and he managed to get the brakes on. Well later on I made a body for the car, used it to go to the mines to work. Lorna and sister went home for school and the Postman caught it again.

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1936 – Age Twenty-One.

In the winter of 1935-36 the Coulson closed again. But in the spring I got a job at another prospect about twenty miles away. Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company was doing the work. We only went to town every second weekend, but the mail came in with the provisions every few days.

I might mention that I always liked sports. My mother could have beaten me in a foot race but on skates I never was beaten for speed. Couldn't understand it. I played hockey but never had a real coach, so I played defence mostly. When I got the puck I could get it up to the other end in a hurry but never scored many goals.

I also loved boxing and always carried a set of gloves into the lumber and mining camps. Hung them up over my bunk and received many sore ribs, but I was a natural and met many boxers. No one ever put me down but I decked a few. I never smoked or drank and was always in good shape. We boxed almost every day after work. It provided the men with some entertainment. I usually took on two or three, one after the other, as they ran out of wind.

In the late summer the company decided to sink a shaft down in the Temagami area, so as I had shaft experience, they sent me down there. Well it was a lovely spot, right beside a big lake. A young fellow was the cook who specialized in pastries. The best I had ever seen in a camp. Wow! We were about five miles out of the town of Temagami. The rock was a lot easier to drill and break here. A real picnic. They kept the roads open in the winter, not as much snow and not nearly so cold as Matheson. Well I had to have a car to enjoy it, so I purchased a 1935 Ford Coach, a V8. Sure was a nice car, \$450.00. My other car I had left at home, sold it to a man for \$20.00.

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1937 – Age Twenty-Two

The next summer I had a visitor from Hamilton. I had a married cousin living in Cobalt, so Lorna came and stayed with them a couple of weeks. It was thirty miles away but I didn't miss any chances to be with her.

I worked till the late summer of 1937 then they moved me back to Matheson and I worked there till December 1937. I might add that my brother Ernie was working in Temagami the spring of 1937. When I went back to the Matheson property, he remained in Temagami.

Well one day I was drilling away, one of the muckers came into our working place and handed me a letter. We were already snow bound by this time. But a snow plane, as we called them, they had a cabin for two people on skis and a motor mounted at the back with a large propeller on it that drove it over the snow like a plane. This machine had come in bringing the letter, which was offering me a job in a new mining area in the Province of Quebec. It was a mine that would be producing in a few months and would mean a steady job. Well I turned the machine over to my helper and took off up out of there.

The captain met me as soon as I hit the surface and tried to talk me into staying. But there was no way I could miss this opportunity. We didn't think the mine would run all winter and it did close down shortly after I left. It was the first time I had ever quit a job.

The letter had been from an uncle of mine by marriage. He was the mill supervisor at the new mine "Sladen Malartic" in Malartic, Quebec. I had never heard of the place before. He also sent my brother Ernie one.

Well the snow plane took me back out to town and my brother arrived also so that we could take off together. We would not be working for the uncle as they needed shaft men and my uncle had nothing to do with the mining end of it. His name was Ken Burwash, a mining engineer with a lot of experience. So we went to Noranda on the train and from there by taxi. They just had a winter road through the bush fifty miles.

It was a very cold day, I remember. The old Pontiac had a heater but in the back seat you just froze and we had on heavy clothes. Whenever he would stop we would change places and get a little heat in the front. The driver had never been over the road before and had to stop often for directions. At any rate, we arrived about the 18th of December 1937. They had the old familiar cookery and bunkhouse. They put us to work right away so we had Christmas and the end of 1937 there.

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1938 – Age Twenty-three.

Malartic was a small town. Still is. There were a few stores, three banks, seven hotels and a theatre. Each of the three large mines had a hockey team, so my brother and I played for Sladen. We were in a league with another community named Cadillac, also a mining town twenty miles away.

We won the league 1937-1938 and 1938-1939. After that, a lot of the hockey players were off to the Second World War and the league died out for want of players. The players they had were away over my head but as I said, I could fly on skates and I loved to hand out body checks. So they would send us out to give the good players a breather, as we didn't have enough of them.

My brother and I made up a line with another fellow, Croteau was his name. He was about our calibre. The French people are real hockey nuts. These games were all played on outdoor rinks and the people would stand around on the snow behind the boards and cheer us on or give us dirt, depending who they were rooting for.

But we were the French line as all the other players had been brought in to play hockey. One game I overheard the cook, who was an avid fan, telling another guy in broken English, "Dos two Laviva and Croteau, Dey are da bes on da whole gang."

Well the climate was the same as my hometown, Matheson. Being on the same latitude, about 150 miles east of Matheson.

Well I had good news from Hamilton, Lorna had decided to save me some postage. She came up to Malartic and we were married in my Uncle's home. He had a company house on the mine's property. Of course, by this time I knew the manager and the mine superintendent real well as they enjoyed the hockey too. The mine Super, John Kostuik, became a very good friend but he was interested in the working end of things as he had a tough job on his hands. The mines were low grade and very hard rock. So there were always plenty of problems.

At any rate, as Lorna's parents couldn't make it (a two day journey by train) John gave the bride away and of course I was glad to take her. It was the 26th of March 1938. The cook made a big cake with crossed hockey sticks on it and of course, the hockey players all dropped by, also the mine staff.

Well when I started to look for a place to live, there just wasn't anything. I hadn't realized how bad it was. So, after a few weeks, we decided that Lorna had better go back home for awhile. We knew there would be a lot of homes and apartments built as soon as the snow left.

Well we started to sink the shaft down in April. It was in three shifts around the clock, Sunday and all. I was a foreman or leader on one shift. Ernie was on my shift. It went along well till May 30, 1938 about 9:00 p.m. We had a terrible accident. We had finished drilling and had blasted the cut or centre of the round as we were having trouble breaking the ground, had cleaned the broken rock out and loaded the remainder of the holes. Ernie had gone up to take off the extra bucket and another fellow went up to the timber to let down the lead wires for the blasting. The timber was up about 75 feet as the rock was so hard. Ernie had sent the cable down and we had hooked it onto the bucket we had left. These buckets were about three feet wide and four feet deep.

There were four of us on the bottom. The blasting was done by electrical charge. The detonators were electric; the wires have to be all connected in series. Well I had finished my half and another man used to connect the other half. Two men were standing on the rim of the bucket and holding onto the cable, which is the way we rode the bucket up the shaft. The bucket had to be raised about six inches off the bottom so it would not break the wires. I was standing on the bottom steadying the bucket with my hand till the other man finished and got on the bucket. Suddenly, there was a terrible explosion. Now the shaft was about eight feet wide and eighteen feet long and the walls were straight up. Now the detonators are numbered, as the rock has to be broken from the centre first and work your way out so that four holes went at the same time, then one second later, four more and so on, until the thirty-two holes have been blasted.

None of the rock from the first blast hit me and as I had often thought about such an accident before, if I could make it into the bucket, a person might have a chance. At any rate, that's where I ended up, head first, which no doubt saved my life.

After the blasting was all over, I couldn't get my breath. I thought I was face down in the bucket and though I pushed with all my strength, I could not get this terrible weight off me. But what had happened, I found out after, was I was on the back of my head and neck and the two men had managed to get in on top of me. My knees had come down on my chest and they were on top of me.

Well the man who ran the hoist up on the surface kept his head. He had worked in the shaft before. He was Swedish, Nels Strand, was his name. And of course, though I made it into the bucket, if he made any mistakes, I was dead. After the blast, there is a deadly gas. A couple of minutes and it's all over.

Well I thought I was all buried up in the rock but then I felt the bucket move up and I could hear it scraping through the broken rock. I don't need to tell you it was a terrible experience. Things are flying through your mind. I thought of my brother first and I knew he was safe. I knew I was dying, as I couldn't get any air. I thought of Lorna. The bucket stopped to steady it, as they always do, as it swings on the cable like a pendulum. Then I felt it start again but too late for me. I knew by the time I reached the station I would be dead. Then I passed out. Of course my brother would be in an awful state as we were very close, but like myself, we were practical guys and whatever happened had to be met and taken care of.

Well this part is what he told me. When the bucket came up, the man who was up on the blasting set had climbed up the timbers and arrived at the same time. Of course he had to get out quickly as the gas rises up also. Well we had some shovels and part of a case of dynamite in the bottom of the bucket and that took up about a third of the room, so the two men on top of me were almost totally exposed and never had a chance. The shaft is just like working in a rain all the time, so we had to wear heavy rubber suits called "oilers". Now trying to move a person with these clothes wet and slippery is a task. When they got the two men out, then they saw my light shining and hauled me out too. My brother had thought the first man was me as he had hair about the colour of mine. But when they got me out they saw I wasn't breathing. The other bucket was laying there on its' side so my brother got me draped over it and started to roll it back and forth. But still no sign of life.

Well we had to be taken up to surface another five hundred feet yet in the cage, which is like an elevator in a large building. Of course by this time the news had spread. Three doctors from the surrounding mines were waiting. Amazingly, one of the men was still living. Of course one of the men was still down on the bottom. Well they had thrown a blanket over me, as they thought I was gone and they were all trying to do something for the living one. The manager was standing near me when I started to move, so he grabbed the blanket off me and says, "Hey, this guy is still alive". So they hauled me off into the office and laid me on the floor in there.

Well my uncle was there by that time and of course was very concerned. He was telling me one of the doctors gave me three shots for shock before I woke up. Suddenly, I came out of it. It was just like you would see in a movie. I opened my eyes and I could see all these faces in a ring, but they were fuzzy. But then kept getting clearer until I could recognize them. Well I had a sore foot I knew and my whole body was sore. It turned out my foot was broken and my back badly strained. But they were so concerned with internal injuries that it was a month when I started to walk around that they discovered my foot. Well anyway, a doctor slept in a bed right next to me the first night. But I was sure I was okay internally. One of the mines had a little three bed hospital for minor cases so they moved me over there the next day. The doctor's wife was the nurse, a very nice lady.

Well I always made it to the washroom, although my whole body was in pain. About the third day, I happened to look in the mirror and I still looked real scared. After a week they moved me

up to my uncle's house. He and my aunt were very good to me. My aunt went up to my hometown and drove my car down as the snow was all gone.

So after three weeks I was able to make it out to the car and drive myself around, although it took awhile to get my strength back. My foot was still sore so the doctor x-rayed and found I had three bones broken but they had healed back together by this time, but had fallen down a bit as I had been trying to walk and had healed together in a crooked way and still give me a bit of trouble. Well he put a pad on the bottom of my foot and a cast up to the ankle. I was still able to drive. I drove up to Matheson and Lorna met me there.

In July we went back to Malartic, as I would have to return to work soon. We were able to rent an apartment in a new building September 1, 1938. Well I had enough money saved, we were able to furnish the apartment with cash and I might mention we never bought anything on credit our whole lives so far. The apartment was thirty-five dollars a month and I was earning roughly two hundred dollars a month. I was back at work again but with my own home with someone I loved. It was like a bit of Heaven. The work seemed like nothing, although it was hard.

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1939 – Age Twenty-Four

By the spring of 1939 there were quite a few new buildings so we had a chance to get the upstairs of a house for twenty-five dollars. We tried to get our rent lowered with no success, so we moved.

The shaft at the mine was finished and the Super gave me a Foreman's job, which sure helped, as it meant supervising the work and not doing it. We were expecting a child and on the twenty-second of August 1939, our son Wilfred Ronald II, was born. He sure was a beautiful, healthy boy. Lorna's mother had come up to be with her. Everything went well and in a few weeks I had my holidays so we drove her and Lorna's brother Jack (about 12) back to Hamilton and spent our holidays there.

William Henry Sr., my Grandfather, died in 1939 and was buried at Matheson, Ontario.

War had been declared by this time, so the army was getting busy. Of course it was on a voluntary basis at this time. That was the end of the great depression. When I saw what took place in the next couple of years, it was almost unbelievable. From the crash of 1929, the government couldn't find a dollar anywhere and if you didn't work, you didn't eat either. When you heard of a job, even if you had to walk two or three days to get there, you went. No unemployment insurance nor welfare as we have today. Every farm had someone on it trying to grow something to eat. Well they found millions in a hurry. The farms were left and to the cities they went. Work for everyone. They were turning out guns, ammunition, trucks, all the things needed for war. The Germans were sinking ships in the Atlantic, destroying all those man-hours of labour, but it was creating great times. I began wondering "How can it be?" Since then, it seems to me we have to have war every so often to keep going.

Well my car was getting near the end of the road, so I traded it for a 1936 Oldsmobile four door. It was in good shape so we had a nice trip home.

Well as we nearly froze in the house we had moved to, and the apartment we had left had trouble with tenants, Lorna went to see the owner and she got him down to \$22.50 a month. As it was heated and real comfortable, we stayed there till our family outgrew the place.

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1940 – Age Twenty-Five

I don't recall too much happening that year. Lorna and I both bowled and curled. Ernie left the mine, went back to Matheson and bought a truck. My father had two trucks by this time and they were getting a bit of roadwork. In the fall, my father had a heart attack and had to spend three months in bed.

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1941 – Age Twenty-Six

At the mine we had sunk a new shaft about half a mile away from the old one, where the mill was located. So this ore had to be transported by truck to the mill. The contractor who was doing the hauling had old trucks that were always breaking down, so the mine was held up a lot. At last the Super asked me if I thought my father could do the job, so I knew he could. They were working on a road job at Rouyn, Quebec at the time, about fifty miles away. So he told me to go out and contact them right away. So I took my car, went out and found my brother Ernie, as Dad was laid up. He came into Malartic with me and we made a deal to do the hauling. Of course, I stayed with the mine, as I had a good job, but was able to give them a hand between shifts.

My brother Clifford had joined the army and was sent to England.

In the fall of 1941, we had a daughter born September 25th, Donna Maureen, we named her. Shortly after a truck ran into my car, which was parked at the mine, and while it was being repaired, the garage burned down. So I was without a car. Then on October 29, 1941 we lost our daughter. Poor little soul, she had dysentery and the doctor just didn't know what to do. There was no hospital in the town and she went down so fast. In three days she was gone. She died in my arms. Lorna was exhausted from loss of sleep. I don't need to tell you, we were heartbroken. Dad and Mother came down and our neighbour loaned us his car. We took her up to Matheson and buried her there in my father's plot. She lies beside them now, her Grandfather and Grandmother. Lorna's sister, Madeline, came up to the funeral, which we sure appreciated. Well it was a sad Christmas for us that year.

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1942 – Age Twenty-Seven

Well the war was in full swing and more young men were going. It became tough to find men to work in the mines. They were conscripting men by this time of course. The body shop where my car burned, gave me a car, a 1940 Plymouth, four door. A real good car. I had to pay three hundred and fifty dollars difference as it was worth that much more than my Oldsmobile 1936.

Well on the first of January the trucks started to haul the ore from the #2 shaft at Sladen. My brother Ernie was looking after it as our father was still laid up. In the summer of 1942, Father and Mother moved down to Malartic, also my sister Juanita.

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1943 – Age Twenty-Eight

Well everything was moving along well. It was almost impossible to buy a new car and they had stopped changing the bodies. They remained the same shape till 1946. A twenty dollar tire cost one hundred dollars on the Black Market. Gas was rationed and you needed coupons. But we always managed to make it down to Hamilton for our holidays. On the 12th of July we had another son, William John, named after his two Grandfathers. He was also a real healthy boy. It also meant a move, as we needed more room. We got an apartment with more room but had to be heated by a wood stove. The war was still raging on and more young men were leaving, also the married men were being conscripted.

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1944 – Age Twenty-Nine

Ernie joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and went into training, also my sister June. All was running along at the mine. They had to change the mining system a bit to get along with less manpower. The ore hauling was a steady income, but getting harder to get equipment.

My father's health was fairly good; of course his only problem was Angina. He would have the odd attack but as the doctors were handy, he was able to get attention right away. I received a conscription notice. Went and had my medical. As I had an offer for my car, I decided that I would sell it. It was one thousand dollars brand new. At this time it was four years old and I got twelve hundred dollars for it. My father was disturbed about this as already two brothers and a sister had gone, so he had some prominent men write letters to have me excused, as he needed me. The mine also wrote for me. Whether it did any good, I don't know, but in order to pass my medical, I would have had to go through an operation and they couldn't force me to take it. So that ended that.

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1945 – Age Thirty

My father had bought a home in Malartic, having sold the farm and town property in Matheson. The war ended in 1945. My brother Clifford also Ernie and June all returned home. So we were all together again. The mines were able to get men again and the mines were a good place to be as the war jobs all fell off.

By this time we had two big bulldozers and a few more trucks. The town started to build houses and we were able to dig the basements with the bulldozers (as there were no shovels around as everything went into the war effort).

The sport revived as the young men returned. We had lots of bowling, curling and hockey. I even went back to playing hockey for two years but found it very hard as we didn't have time to

train right. When I was younger, I could get along okay, but I didn't have the wind for it anymore. So I stuck to the bowling and curling, then later to curling only. They broadcast the hockey games those two years. I was a little heavier by then and still loved to body check. When I came on the ice, the announcer says "Five ton Leavoy is coming on the ice". They had just started to make a five ton truck (before they had been three ton). Here's what he said in French "Gardez vous. Cinq tonnes Lavoie est arrive". Well we worked all day and played at night and all for free. I was glad when it was over.

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1946 – Age Thirty-One

I left the mine that year and went into the business with my father and Ernie. Of course, I had talked it over with management beforehand and they had time to replace me. So it went smoothly. We were still working for them anyway. We bought a shovel that year which could be converted into a backhoe, dragline or a boom for erecting steel. That was my job. I learned to run it and we had lots of work for it. Everything went along well. The mines were starting to use back fill, which is gravel, to fill the large empty stopes underground. Wherever the ground is unstable they fill them up and it saves the rock from crumbling in and causing problems in other areas of the mine. So this gave us a lot of work. We were able to purchase a truck which had been built for the army. It came all crated and ready to ship overseas. A Dodge three ton. Also, a ten wheel truck built for the army. A Reo. We installed a large dump box on it to haul fill. When the snow came, we got a contract to plow twenty-five miles of the highway and we installed a plow on this truck.

In the middle of the winter, the garage we were using on the mine property, burned and we lost this truck in the fire. I bought a used Nash car, which I didn't keep very long as it took a lot of repairs. I sold it. Dad had a 1937 Lincoln and a 1938 Lincoln, so I used the 1937 for two years.

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1947 – Age Thirty-Two

We decided to get some property in the town as we had been burned out on the mine property. We bought four lots and built a large garage of cement blocks and a brick front. It was built so it could be used later as a public garage. It was built on solid rock so it still stands as good as ever today, 1985. Well we worked on and were getting more jobs all the time. Lorna and I had another son born this year, Wayne Paul, a healthy boy. No problems.

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1949 – Age Thirty-Four

In 1949, Ernie left the company to go into the automobile business. He had a Ford franchise, so he got the garage as his share of the business. He branched out and had a used car lot in Rouyn, fifty miles away. Around 1952 or 1953, he sold out and moved to Vancouver. He had married a girl from there and her people were there, so he started back in earth moving in Vancouver.

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The years passed by. Nothing outstanding that I can recall. We were growing very slowly as far as the business was concerned, but still making a good living, curling and bowling. Usually had a holiday in the summer. We still went to Hamilton to visit Lorna's folks, so our holidays were around there.

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1954 – Age Thirty-Nine

My sisters were married and had moved away, so my mother wanted to go down to Toronto to be close to them. So my father decided to go down to Toronto. He bought two rooming houses, so that kept him busy. I bought his home in Malartic, so we moved in there. Our first home.

Our daughter Cynthia Lou was born at this time. While Lorna was in the hospital, I had moved in so they came from the hospital into our first home. Well we had the three boys and then seven years later, Cynthia came along.

When my brother Ernie left the business, my brother Clifford came into the business, but in two years he got out again. So I was alone in the business for three years. My father was in Toronto.

In 1949 I had bought a new Meteor, Ford product, from Ernie. In 1950, I sold it and bought a 1950 Meteor from him. This one I traded for a 1950 Buick Roadmaster. In 1955, my father came up to Malartic and I took a month's holiday. We went down to Toronto and I traded the Buick for a 1955 Cadillac. Then we took off for Texas. Lorna's sister and family had moved down there. Her husband Chick, was in the steel making business and they had started a new mill in Texas. So he had a good job there. Of course the roads then were not like they are today, so it was quite a trip. Anyway, on the way back we went over to New York City and toured the city. Might add we haven't been back there since. Flew over it a couple of times and landed there once.

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1956 – Age Forty-One

We had another daughter, Kim Ann. I might add, all our children had been born at home, except Cynthia. Well we were sure happy to have those two little girls. It just made a real nice family.

The next thing I can remember, our son Ron, left to join the Navy. Would have liked him to continue in school, but he had no interest at that time. My father and mother moved back to Malartic and bought a house there close to our home. But dad had been bothered by angina for years. Had quite a few attacks and had come through them okay. Now he seemed to be having them at closer intervals. In 1957, he went down to Ottawa with some mining men and had an attack in the hotel. They took him to the hospital. About a week later, my brother Cliff, who was visiting us, and myself, we went down to bring him home. I still had the 1955 Cadillac which had a split front seat. We removed the one seat back and made a bed on the one side so he rode home as if he were in an ambulance. A five hour drive. We carried him upstairs to bed but had hardly left the house when he came down again. You just couldn't keep him quiet. My mother was bedridden by this time. She had cancer. It had gone into the bones, so she was getting weaker all the time. Had to have a woman looking after her. We had got a hospital bed

that could be adjusted, so that helped a lot. Earlier in the fall, Ernie had come from Vancouver to visit them, which they enjoyed very much.

Christmas day 1957, we had television in Malartic for the first time. Mother was getting very weak and thin by this time. Her father had died of cancer when she was twelve years old. She had a breast removed five years before but whether she realized her present trouble was cancer, I don't know.

On the eighteenth of January 1958, Dad had another attack. The doctor was there in about five minutes and after a couple of shots, the pain left him, but he was tired. He asked me what the doctor thought about 'your mother' as he always said. At any rate, he turned on his side and fell asleep. In a few minutes he gave a few gasps and he was gone. The doctor came back, but it was all over. Although he had many attacks before, it was still a bit of a shock to realize he was gone. Well as they had plots in the graveyard at Matheson, we made arrangements to take him back to the old home one hundred and sixty miles away. The weather was between twenty and thirty degrees below zero. But anyway, we had the hearse from Malartic take him back. Had a service in Matheson and laid him away close to his mother and father and other relatives. Then on February 4, 1958, my mother passed away. So we had another journey to Matheson.

Well I really missed them. Although Dad couldn't help much around the business, it was always nice to have them there just to talk to. I really loved them because I knew the hard conditions they were under as we were being raised. They worked hard just to exist and we were what they were working for. Through the 1930's the times were terrible, but they never lost heart. They were real pioneers. They never took any welfare. My father was a real hustler, spending every winter in the woods with the horses. He would be away for five months. He was never one hundred miles from home. But as you could only travel by train after the snow got deep, he might get home two or three times in the winter. Of course after I was thirteen and was through public school, I was away with him and then Ernie, the same. So we knew of the loneliness and hardship also. But he prepared us for the worst and we took it all in stride. Our whole family were workers and self-sufficient. The 1930's taught us a lesson we would never forget. My ambition was to escape the poverty and all that went with it, but I must say, I never missed a meal in my life. We didn't have anything fancy but all good wholesome food and good warm clothing and lots of hard work to go with it.

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In the early 1950's I purchased a cottage on Lake Malartic, about seven miles from town and eventually a powerboat to pull water skis. As the children were growing, we had many grand times there as it was only ten minutes from our home in the town. And of course we had many friends from town who came and brought their children also. Lorna had her hands full as they were always hungry. Many times she wished she had stayed home. Most of Lorna's people came up in the summer, some lived at the cottage and of course being from the city, with the good fishing and all, really enjoyed it. We had electricity and the phone, so it was about perfect, good spring water.

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1959 – Age Forty-Four

The Ford garage in Malartic went into bankruptcy and the head salesman talked me into buying the equipment and renting the building. We had no trouble getting the franchise so he became the manager, as I had my hands full with the earth moving business.

Well the mines were starting to run short of ore and were using their mills to do custom milling. That is they would mill ore for other mines but that meant they had to haul the ore by truck to these mills. At any rate, I got work building some new roads and also got into the trucking of the ore. Well I wasn't in the garage business very long. I sold out my interest to a businessman in town and they went right along. Moved over to Val d'Or, a larger town. We had named the new company Fairway Motors and it is still going strong today, but has changed hands a few times.

The ore hauling increased. 1960, I doubled my income from 1959, then doubled it in 1961, also 1963. Then it sort of levelled out; we were hauling day and night. I had built two more big garages to hold the trucks. They were big tractor-trailer dumps and took a lot of room, as they were about thirty-five feet long. I was putting everything back into the company, as soon as I had some money; I would buy another piece of equipment. This way, I never had to borrow any money, which meant, no interest. Of course you can't always do this but it just worked out that way for me. By the end of 1964, I had a good outfit in top shape. But I was having union trouble and with getting called out at night and in the winter time especially, when it's down around thirty degrees below. Also, I kept the books and payroll after hours. Well I was getting tired; I had no holidays from 1955.

In December 1964, two large companies wanted to buy me out. One was in a hurry to have it before the end of the year, so I gave them a good deal and they accepted it. As my children were in school, I agreed to stay and manage the company for them till the end of June 1965. They formed a new company using the Leavoy name and they had bought the assets of my company. So I still had the company name which I continued to use for eighteen years.

My son Ron had been married while in the Navy. Put in his five years and was working for me. He had two boys by this time. Wilfred Ronald Leavoy III born in Montreal on August 14, 1962 and Jody Maurice Leavoy born in Val d'Or on March 13, 1964. He had married a girl from Montreal, Jean Dick, a school teacher. Married July 15, 1961.

Bill also had married a girl from Amos in 1961, Ginette Larochelle. They had a daughter Paula born August 12, 1962. When the business was sold, they stayed to work for the new owners.

Lorna and I decided to move down to Toronto so in June we went to Toronto to look for a home. We spent two days looking and decided on a home, bought it and went back north till my stint was up July 1, 1965. There was no rush then but we got moved down during July. It sure was something not to have to go to work and all the pressure was off. I had some friends at Mack Trucks, one especially that I had bought a lot of trucks from, so I spent a bit of time with him. A big finance company had gone bankrupt and they had financed a lot of trucks and almost anything you can imagine. Well these were all seized (that is any that were behind in their payments) so I started buying the trucks and selling them. I met a young man who was a manager for the finance company, Ted Wallbridge. He had a lot of experience in finance and was able to dispose of many of the trucks for me. So we started to work together. He has always

had a good position in business, works on commission with me. After two years we went into mortgages. I had to form another company, Leavoy Holdings Ltd., as my Quebec company, being a construction company, had very few powers. All my children are shareholders in the new company.

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1966 – Age Fifty-One

In 1966 Ron and Bill moved down to Toronto. Bill had a son by this time, Bill Junior. Wayne had come down with us, finished his high school at Kipling Collegiate and went on to University at McMaster in Hamilton. While in university, Wayne married a girl he had gone to high school with in Quebec, Catherine Campbell, September 18, 1967.

I know this may seem all out of joint as I tell it. I have tried to keep on a year to year story but it has got away on me.

We decided to take a trip across Canada to visit a few relatives. Lorna, Cynthia, Kim and myself. We had a new Fleetwood Cadillac four door, so we had very comfortable transportation. We went to Kirkland Lake to visit my Uncle Raymond and Aunt Bertha. I might add at this writing, 1985, Raymond is still living. The only one of my father's family, eighty-eight years old.

We went on to Matheson. Visited the Hendersons and Maurice's family. He had died in 1957. On to Kapuskasing to my cousin Gilbert Henderson and family. We had friends in Regina, the Poppins, then on to Calgary (a niece, Marlene Hlavsa, Lorna's sister's daughter). On up to Edmonton, more friends, the Myers family. Came back down to Calgary and on to Vancouver.

My brother Ernie and family lived there in North Vancouver. We stayed there a week or so then started down to California. Had a visit in Seattle, then on down to San Francisco. I had a cousin living about thirty miles out of the city so we went out and stayed with them. We made side trips from there. Then on to Los Angeles where we went to Disneyland, Knotts Berry Farm and other spots, a few days in Hollywood. Then up to Las Vegas. One Hundred and Five degrees. Sure lit up at night. Then over to the Hoover Dam and through Arizona. We stopped a few times at spots to see. On to St. Louis, up to Chicago and then on home. I had taken a lot of slides and movies, which we look at once in a while.

I had bought two more homes, one for Ron and one for Bill to help them out a bit. They both had jobs at the airport which was about five minutes away. I had joined the Weston Golf and Curling Club. One thing, I never made out golfing, started out too late in life I guess. So I stuck to Curling.

Everything was going along smoothly. I had many ask me how I could retire that young – Fifty. Well if they had followed me from thirteen to fifty, they would have known. I have enjoyed every day of it and haven't time to do many of the things I would like to.

Bill joined the Weston Club. Of course my three sons are natural athletes and are good at almost any sport they take up.

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1968 – Age Fifty-Three

Lorna and I went to Hawaii for a holiday. What a beautiful place. I always say, the closest thing to Heaven on earth. Wayne and Cathy had a girl, Angela, in 1968. He was still in university.

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1969 – Age Fifty-Four

We went to Mexico with Al and Doris Duncan. He was a pilot for Air Canada. We had a wonderful time, Mexico City, Taxco (a silver mine town), then Acapulco, another favourite of mine.

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1970 – Age Fifty-Five

January we went to Florida for the first time.

Well on November 20, 1970 our son Ron lost his life in an auto accident. He loved sport cars, so a young fellow took him out in a Corvette to show him what it was like. But they cracked up and the car exploded and they were both burned. Well it was the most horrible thing that had happened in my life up till then. He had been at the house that morning, his day off, with Jody his son. I never saw his face again. It happened at eleven o'clock at night but I got a phone call at five o'clock in the morning. Well Lorna and the whole family took it real hard. The casket had to be sealed and I kept hoping it was a mistake. If I could have seen him laying there, it would have been much easier as a few times I have seen someone in a crowd that looked like him but it wasn't. Well his sons were six and eight years old at the time and didn't really realize what had happened. They have grown up to be two fine young men. Their mother did a fine job, still teaches school.

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1971 – Age Fifty-Six

We went to Barbados with Ernie and Jean Miron, who were friends from Malartic days. Beautiful weather in the winter months. Well we enjoyed it. Has a bit of history, a British colony at one time. Some buildings dating back to the fourteenth century.

Ronnie had been there in 1970 with his two sons. As he worked for Air Canada, he had passes every so often wherever they flew. His sons still have passes and have seen many places that I have not seen. Of course when they get out of school, they will stop (the passes, that is).

Around 1970 we started to take the two girls down to Florida in March, a ten day school break. Have many happy memories of those trips.

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1972 – Age Fifty-Seven

We took another trip to Hawaii with my cousin Norman Price and his wife Bea. They love the place also.

Our son Bill had started to work for a meat company as a salesman and they had decided to start up a branch in Montreal. And as he had worked in Montreal around 1960 and could speak French, they sent him over there. He was there for five years and of course we went down to see them a few times. We had been in Montreal a few times while we lived in Malartic, so we knew our way around a little.

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1973 – Age Fifty-Eight

We went to Acapulco with Norm and Bea. Had a great time again. In January it just does not rain. Hot, sunny days, every day.

Wayne had moved in 1970 to Sudbury and was working for International Nickel Company. In 1973, they had another daughter, Julie.

In October 1973, we went to Spain, Morocco and Portugal with our neighbours, Jim and Cam McQuaid. We had a great time. They were still riding donkeys in Morocco and looks like they always will. But they were gearing up for tourism, had beautiful hotels. Still have walls around a lot of the cities. We were in one, Fez. Over eight hundred years old, a real experience to see. Spain and Portugal of course are very old too. Some real interesting sights to see.

Well I was into the mortgage business quite heavily by this time. Everything was going along very well. Ted had become like another son to me by now (1969). I sure wouldn't try this business without him. I bought a cruiser "Vagabond" over in the States just across Lake Ontario and Ted and I went over to bring it across the lake. The waves were about four feet high. About a mile out, one of the motors quit. What a time. The boat was really rolling around but the one motor kept it heading into the waves. Well Ted steered and I managed to get the motor going. Took us six hours to reach Oakville where I was going to keep it at a marina there.

I had back trouble for many years. In the spring of 1973, it really got bad; a disc swelled out and was pressing on the sciatic nerves running down both legs. I had to lay down all the time. At last, an operation.

By now I had been dealing in baits and was on my third cruiser. "The Jakalin", she was berthed up in Penetanguishene on Georgian Bay. I bought it in the spring and used it up there on summer. Sure a beautiful place for boating. Many lovely islands to go to. But a ninety mile drive to get from Toronto to the boat. The berth was paid for till the next spring; Bill and a friend drove it down through the Trent system to Lake Simcoe. From there I had it loaded on a float and hauled to Lake Ontario at Frenchman's Bay. Then drove it over to Toronto to Ontario Place marina. A beautiful spot. So after the operation, when I got out of the hospital, I went down and lived on the cruiser as it had stove, fridge, toilet and telephone, TV also. The kitchen wasn't too far from the bed. Well we had many nice days spent on the water. I loved the boating and have many fond memories of it all. Lorna never cared much for living on board, but

liked the cruising okay if it wasn't too rough. I liked taking friends for a cruise. She would cook up a storm and we had many a lovely meal on board.

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1974 – Age Fifty-Nine

We didn't make any trips except the school break to Florida and back up to Quebec. But there was always something cooking, never had time to do all the things we would have liked. But never bored either.

It is very hard to put all the events in place as I am telling it. Have to rifle through many papers and so forth to come up with years.

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1975 – Age Sixty

We took a tour to South America, by plane of course. We landed first at Acapulco, Mexico then to Lima, Peru where we spent six days. Francisco Pesaro, from Spain, founded the city. His bones are on display. Some good museums there. One is of all gold artifacts. Then to Santiago, Chile a week. They were just over a military coup there and things were pretty stern. While there, they had an uprising in Lima. We had just left. Over one hundred people killed in one of the squares where we used to walk around in the evening. We then flew across the Andes to Buenos Aires, Argentina. The third or eighth largest city in the world and claiming the widest street in the world. We had a week there with bus tours around. We went out on the pampas, which means "plains". They have cowboys known as Gauchos. They put on a show for us. Then up to Sao Paulo, which is a very modern city. Lots of business there. Then on to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil which is a very beautiful city. We had a week there. Went to see many things there. The big cross of Christ on the mountain of Cordovaco. Also the Sugar Loaf Mountain. I had a sound movie camera and got some great footage, of course I think so. From there we flew to New York. Nine and a half hours. Changed planes and flew to Toronto. We got up in Rio at 8:00 a.m. and arrived home the next afternoon at 3:00 p.m. Thirty hours without sleep. I went to bed. Someone came in and woke me up at 6:00 p.m. for supper and it was about two hours before I knew where I was. Took about a week to get over that one.

Well Wayne and Cathy had another daughter, Lara. Still in Sudbury but Wayne always liked the north. So it means quite a bit if you like where you live.

Life went along. We had the boat in the summer with some side motor trips. Then a winter vacation to miss some of the cold weather.

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1976 – Age Sixty-One

We went to Hawaii again. Met a couple on the flight, Maurice and Maureen Labelle, from Ottawa. Had a nice holiday with them and have been good friends ever since, visiting back and forth.

In March, Lorna and I drove (1976 Cordoba) down to Florida, as my brother Ernie and his wife Jean had come to Toronto to meet another couple from Nova Scotia and they then flew to Florida. As we had only a day together, we decided to drive down and have a holiday with them. We met them at my sister Juanita's, then after a few days, the four of us went on down to Miami for a week. They then took the plane back home and we drove over to the West Coast to visit with some friends, then on home.

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1977 – Age Sixty-Two

January we went to Hawaii with our neighbours, Jim and Cam McQuaid, her sister Jean and husband Frank. We had made arrangements to meet my brother Ernie and his wife Jean over there, as they flew out from Vancouver. We had a grand time, four couples. It was so nice being together as Ernie had been in Vancouver twenty-five years. Of course, we had seen them on short visits.

In the spring of 1977, March, we took a trip to Florida (1977 New Yorker) with my cousin Norman Price and his wife Bea. We stayed in Miami for a week then went across to the Gulf side. We had some friends there. We visited them for a few days, then drove across to Texas to visit Lorna's sister, Madeline, and her husband Charles O'Connor. We had a great trip, a brand new New Yorker car and all went well.

In the fall of 1977, our daughter Cynthia was married to Gordon Whynot, from Nova Scotia. Had a nice reception at the Airport Howard Johnson Hotel.

When we had made the trip with Norman and Bea, we had looked at some of the double wide trailer parks which were springing up all over Florida. They were twenty-four feet wide and up to sixty feet in length. Of course as we had the two girls at home, we didn't feel that we could leave them. But when Cynthia married, Kim was going to university, we felt it might work okay. So I sold the cruiser, took all the utensils, T.V. and so forth, packed them into the car (1978 LeBaron) and we started out. There were a lot of companies promoting sales in Canada for these parks in Florida. In fact, you could make the deal right in Canada. Well we had information on a few. We decided to try the West Coast around Clearwater. Had remembered a park, didn't know the name, but we found it. Spent a few days looking at others. At last we decided on the park mentioned. Stonehedge, in the Tarpon Springs area. A double wide, sixty feet long and had been furnished as a model, so we thought it was beautiful and now eight years later, still think so. Also we are only seventeen miles from the Tampa Airport and with all the folks who have flown down to visit, it has saved us many miles of driving. We came down after the New Year and bought around January 15, 1978. Unpacked the car and were all settled shortly. Met some real nice people, of course most of them were glad to have new friends too. We had one couple especially that we have been friends with ever since. They were very helpful and knew all the inner working of the park. Roger and Marg Dumont. So we have been going down the end of September, coming back for Christmas around the tenth of December and back down around the fifteenth of January (as I have to balance up the books for the two companies and get them to our accountant). He then has plenty of time to make out the financial statements. We return about the tenth of April to Toronto.

I have missed the boat but it was a lot of work spring and fall. Had to be lifted out of the water and blocked up. Then in the spring the bottom sanded and painted and of course, lots of small repairs and maintenance.

In 1971 I had a slight stroke on the right side. It bothered my speech and numbness on the right arm and leg. But in half an hour, was over. Then the doctor decided to find out what was causing it. They injected some dye into my jugular veins after putting me to sleep. When I woke up, the nurse was slapping my face trying to get me to wake up. Well then I was right back into a real mess. Speech was all garbled. What a time. Two days like that. But then on the second night, Lorna started to put wet wash cloths on my forehead. Suddenly, I came out of it. What a relief. Then they decided to put me on blood thinners and have been on them ever since.

I had curled at Weston Golf and Country Club till 1976 but as I had trouble with my back, I decided to give it up as I was missing too much time.

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1978 – Age Sixty-Three

Gordon and Cynthia had a daughter, Donna Catherine Whynot. She had kidney problems. Spent awhile in Sick Children's Hospital in the city. What a time she had, the poor little soul. We would have her out for awhile, then back in. They had to live with us, as she was too much for Cynthia to handle. I had never been so close to my own children as I was driving it all the time. If they were up at night, Lorna had to look after them. But with Donna, it was different. If she cried anytime, day or night, I had to get up and comfort her. I grew so close to her. When she did feel well, she could always give a little smile. But after fifteen months, they decided to give her a kidney transplant. Well she only lived about a month and most of that in trouble all the time. When she finally passed away of course we all felt terrible, but God knows best. We have to accept that. We laid her away beside our son, Ronald.

When we moved down to Florida, they had a shuffleboard team and played in a league, so I started to play. Soon I was on the team and I have really enjoyed it ever since. At this writing, I have won nine trophies. Some in tournaments. Played a few games of golf and some ten pin bowling but I prefer the shuffleboard. It's similar to curling in many ways. The courts get slower and faster and have falls just like the ice. It looks easy but when you play, you soon find out it can be rough.

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1980 – Age Sixty-Five

Wayne and Cathy had a son, Paul. Still in Sudbury. So after three girls, they were happy to have a boy. A very nice family of beautiful looking children. They had bought a home out of the city proper, near a large lake and still seem to like it there. Cathy's father and mother had moved to Midland. He is manager for Indusmin, a silica mining operation. The mine is on an island near Manitoulin. They break the rock there and ship it down to Midland by boat where it is crushed to the various sizes needed. So it is nice for them as they see Cathy and family quite often.

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1981 – Age Sixty-Six

Kim married Jon Merglesky from Toronto. Had a lovely wedding in the Greek Catholic Church and a very nice reception at a large hall. They stayed with us for a couple of months and then bought a home of their own about a mile away from us. Kim had gone through University of Toronto and was employed by the Ministry of Correctional Services of Ontario. She has since moved up to Parole Officer. Jon was just finishing his accounting course and has been with accounting firms since. They had a daughter, Natalie, October 26, 1984. A little blonde beauty, at least I think so. Lorna watched her through the summer of 1985, but now she goes to day care as Kim still works.

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1983 – Age Sixty-Eight

We went to Acapulco for two weeks with Roge and Marg. Had a good time. It is much warmer there in January than Florida. Not a drop of rain and in the 90's every day. It was our fourth time there. We stayed at the Hyatt Regency, a beautiful hotel with lovely grounds. I always lose one day to "Montezuma's Revenge" every time there, but it is worth it.

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1984 – Age Sixty-Nine

We went to Hawaii with Roge and Marg in April. It is always nice there. They drove up to Toronto and we left from there. When we came back, they drove down to visit their sons in Connecticut for the summer.

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1985 – Age Seventy

We had planned to have a Leavoy reunion June 30 – July 1, 1985 to be held in Matheson, Ontario. (Descendants of my grandparents, William Henry Leavoy Sr. and his wife Janet "Hynes" Leavoy. I then started some searching to come up with as much information as possible on family history. I had contacted a branch of the family a few years before. They were unable to give me any information that I did not have, except their immediate family in and around Pembroke, Ontario and spelled their name, Levoy. At the same time having decided to try to come up with a family tree. I had very little on my mother's side of the house, so we took a trip to that area north of Bancroft, Ontario. Received a bit of information from relatives still living, also from cemeteries in the region, but will have to do some more work on it. I had gone up to Matheson to reserve a suitable hall to hold the reunion, make arrangements for lodging in the area. A cousin who lives there took on the job of seeing everyone had a place to stay, and meals. She did a marvellous job. We had close to two hundred at the reunion, also some friends of the families who wanted to come. Families from Detroit, Toronto, Sudbury, Orillia, Little Current, Elliot Lake, Timmins, Iroquois Falls, Kapuskasing, Pembroke, Collingwood, North Bay, Mississauga, Kirkland Lake, Orlando, Florida, Burlington and Vancouver.

Well many of these children had never seen one another before. It was really gratifying to see them getting together. I'm sure they will always remember it as long as they live. I was able to take movies of them all as I have a video camera. We had the old jigs and reels and waltz music playing that the old folks loved so well. Of course, out in another section of the building, the young folks were dancing to their own music. Well I was glad it all went so well but also that it was all over. A lot of time but it was worth it all. I had a family tree in a frame and pictures in albums of my great grandfather, Etienne Lavoie and his wife, Mary Ann Mackey, all their children and all the descendants of William Henry Leavoy, which everyone found very interesting. We spent the remainder of the summer around home. Got well rested.

Went down to Florida the end of September. More shuffleboard and old friends again. Went over to spend the U.S. Thanksgiving day with my sister Juanita and family in Orlando. Then on November 17, 1985, Lorna's brother Bill Burley, passed away also. The following Friday, my cousin Norman Price passed away also. Norman was one of my very best friends and I surely miss him.

We went home for Christmas. Had a nice Christmas but Wayne and his family had not been able to come down. We missed them as most of the children are grown up now and it's really for the small ones. Just to see their faces.

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1986 – Age Seventy-One

We got a decent rate, so decided to make another trip to Hawaii. Roger and Marg were at their sons for Christmas, so flew on up to Toronto and we took off. The weather was beautiful as usual. We had a pleasant holiday. Left January 2, 1986 and returned January 17, 1986. Lorna had fallen near the end of our stay and hurt her arm. When we got home it had turned black, turned out it was fractured. We were to leave for Florida on the twenty-first so she stayed home as the doctor thought it better.

On January 23, 1986 Lorna's oldest brother, Walter, passed away. I had gone to Florida on the twenty-first. Roger and Marg also.

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On March 8, 1986 Wilfred Ronald Leavoy passed away in Tarpon Springs, Florida. He was laid to rest in the family burial plot along side his son Ron and his granddaughter Donna. As you have read, Wilfred led a very full life. He travelled extensively and experienced many different cultures. We are fortunate, in that we have many photo albums and hours of movies to share in some of these experiences.

When I think of my father, and I do frequently, I remember a man who was very wise. He was well read and was able to converse on just about any subject. He had the gift to teach and also the ability to listen.

The strongest memory I have of my father though, is of the faith that he had in God. I remember him telling me of the day that he committed his life to Christ and all of the blessings that followed. We grew up in a Christian home and Church has always been a part of our family life. Faith has comforted our family in times of sorrow and brings us the promise of being together again. On my father's headstone are the words "Jesus Never Fails." Three little words that hold a very large meaning.

We were truly blessed to be raised in such a loving environment and hopefully will be able to provide the same for our children. Family is so very important and to know where it all began makes us even stronger. Thank you, Dad. We love you.

Wilfred Ronald Leavoy
1915 - 1986