

Catherine 'Kay' Collicott
nee McAndrew
by Daughter Joanne
Collicott
Irish War Bride
Queen Mary
September 1946



Ralph and Kay
Collicott in 1943

This story is written from the memories of Kay's daughter, Joanne, who accompanied her on this courageous journey to Canterbury, New Brunswick, Canada.

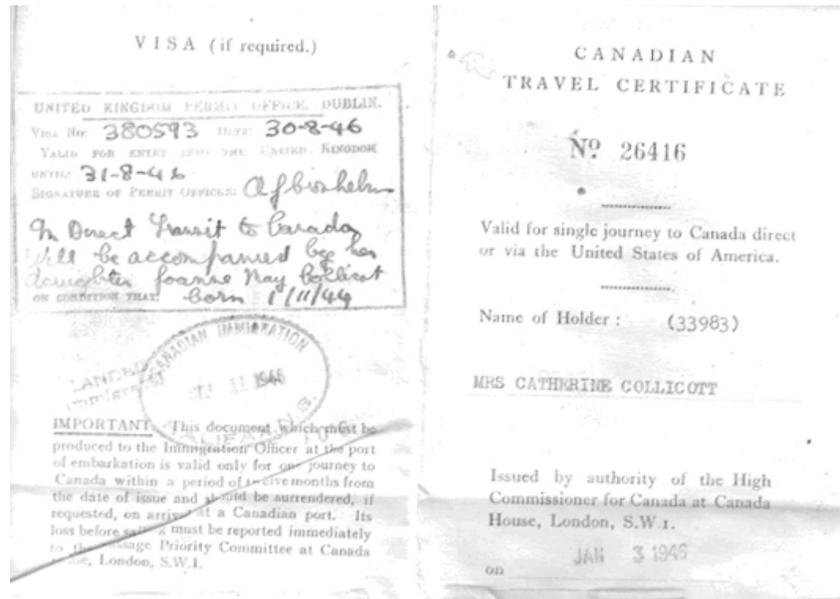
On September 2nd of the year 2006, it will be 60 years since my mother, Catherine Patricia (McAndrew) Collicott, and yours truly, Joanne, at twenty-two months, set sail from Liverpool, England. We were aboard the Queen Mary. This relatively new ocean liner was bound for Pier 21, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Mother's Canadian Travel Certificate, No. 26416, is stamped Sep 11 1946 by Canadian immigration, Halifax N. S. Name of Holder: (33983).

It had been a year since we had seen my father and this had been my mother's last chance to join my father in Canada on a ship provided for the war brides and their children.

After the war ended in 1945, my father, Ralph Benjamin Collicott, and his regiment, the 89th Carleton-York, out of Woodstock, New Brunswick, had returned home. Their brides and children were to follow on a later passage.

My mother and father had met in war torn London, England, and married in September 1943. On Nov 1st of the following year, I was born in the Hammersmith Hospital. Hammersmith was a suburb of London where my mother, now nicknamed “Kay “by my father, had worked as a nurse during WWII.

Mother said it was a full moon the Halloween night she lay in labour with me. Amidst the chaos of the shrieking sirens and the panicking people, a chubby 8lb. 12 oz. baby girl with hair the colour of the flaming sun, made her appearance. It was 8.30 the next morning and my mother could not believe we had survived the night. The doctor remarked to her on the determined look I had on my face on arrival into what was no longer “Merry Ole England”.



Before we left the hospital, half of it had been demolished by the bombs. I do not know why my mother was not sent out of London with the pregnant English girls during the bombing.



I know she could sleep through anything. She told me of the time we woke up in the morning and the total city block across the street had been destroyed. Mother never forgot the sight of a baby carriage hanging off what was left of a building.

After the war my father returned to Canada. Mother and I returned to her family in Kiltane, Co. Mayo in the Republic of Ireland. It was from

Kiltane my mother had left to make the long journey to England to train as a nurse.

In later years, I asked Aunt Jo, my mother's sister, why mother went to England. Aunt Jo said that she had cousins from the Collins and the McAndrew families that she made contact with in England.

Mother said that the spirit of the English people never wavered. Sometimes they would go to parties and to dances, even if their fun was cut short by the sound of an air raid siren. That sound meant to go quickly to a shelter to escape the bombs the Germans were aiming in that area. It was at one such party that she had met my father. She was introduced by his 1st cousin, Ray MacFarlane. Two of my father's brothers, Joe and Arthur, along with his cousins, Ray, Allison, Walter and Harold MacFarlane, had all joined the Canadian Army and were now shipped overseas

My father, Ralph Collicott, was a gunner with the Canadian Army and while his good people back home in Canterbury, New Brunswick were praising the Lord in the Primitive Baptist Church, he was shooting at the enemy flying over England. There in England he had contacted trench mouth and had to have ½ of his upper teeth pulled. I can still see his wide generous smile with the teeth missing from the right side of his mouth. In later years he had a full denture fitted in place of all his upper teeth. These false teeth never seemed to fit properly as he was always filling and whittling at them. He said they always hurt his gums and up until his death, Dec 21, 2002, never had a comfortable denture.

Even without a full set of teeth, Mother had been anxious to introduce her tall, dark-haired handsome, protestant Canadian soldier to her Catholic family back in Ireland. Everything must had gone quite well as in later years my father spoke of fishing with his brother-in-law, Jack McAndrew, in the stream behind the home in Kiltane. They also spent an afternoon shooting ducks and later sampling some Paddy's whiskey at a pub in Belmullet. Belmullet is a beautiful scenic town on Co. Mayo coastline.

After a tearful goodbye in the summer of 1945, my mother had promised to join my father in Canada within six months. A ship would be leaving England to bring the war brides and more of the troop's home by then.

Once my father had left for Canada, Mother quickly fell back into the life she had before going to England. She rode her bike, with me seated in a carrier behind her, around the breathtaking Irish countryside. As we visited friends and relatives, away from the horrors of the war, Mother said it felt good to be home in Kiltane. It really was a magical land, this

Ireland, where the clouds reached down and touched the hills of Mayo. As a child Mother has believed the little people lived in those hills. If you ever caught one, your every wish would come true. But life was not so simple anymore. Whenever my Mother talked of joining my father in Canada, her mother, Maria McAndrew, became very upset.

“So far away,” she cried, “I will never see you or little Joanna again!”

“You know you must look after your health,” she continued, “You had rheumatic fever when you were 12 years old and now you are going off to this strange country you know nothing about.”

Mother’s father, Edward McAndrew, had been a tax collector. My mother was about 12 when he died. After his death the job fell to two of her brothers, Michael and Paddy.

She told me about going with them to collect. This was not always a pleasant task as many people were just getting enough from the marshy Mayo soil to feed their families and livestock. She heard tales of how her father had tried to help by any means possible. He would come back again to collect after they had sold some livestock or even put in a few shillings to make up the balance.

Needless to say, money was scarce all around and Mother had not only come back to Kiltane but she had brought another mouth to feed, Joanne, her lively year old child.

Mother helped as best she could on the farm. There were cows to milk and chickens to feed. Mother told of the time when the eggs had hatched and the baby chicks were kept in a shed near the main house. Although I was only about 18 mos. Old, somehow I had managed to get into the shed and handle those baby chicks. Soon I was at the main house holding a lifeless baby chick in my outstretched hand. My mother was not amused. But my grandmother, Maria, much to everyone’s surprise, seemed to take it in her stride. Although she had been very strict with her own children, she never let my mother chastise me in her presence.

“Don’t you ever spank that child,” she warned my mother. Mother was raised when the attitudes were spare the rod and spoil the child!

Safely back in Kiltane, my mother let the first six months come and go. She was not yet ready to face the snakes and the bears in Canada. Long ago St. Patrick had chased the snakes from the Irish soil and my mother thought to see a snake would be to meet the devil himself! Ireland, much like the province of Prince Edward Island here in Canada, does not have much wildlife. The only time my mother would have seen a bear would

have been at the London Zoo. She certainly wasn't prepared to see one in a berry patch behind the house.

By now my father was writing my mother repeatedly; telling her of the house he had built on the Collicott property in Canterbury, New Brunswick. He had been upset after going to the train station at McAdam and finding that my mother and I had not arrived after six months. My Aunt Beulah told me of going with him and of how upset he was that we were not on the train. In those days it would take a letter a few weeks to reach Canada from Ireland.

In Kiltane Mother was always called Kathleen although the name on her birth certificate was Catherine. From what I can gather it was a custom of the Irish to call their children by a nickname. Being of a superstitious nature, they believed for a stranger or an evil person to know their proper name was to give that person power over you.

Despite her mother's protests, 1946 Ireland was no place for a married woman without her husband. Many of the village people would inquire after my father. They wondered if Kathleen had any intentions of ever living with him.

Like any good Catholic girl of the time, my mother attended mass every Sunday. The closest church was in Bangor Erris where her brother Michael now lived with his new wife, Maggie.

Mother loved to dance and would still go with her younger brother, Jack, to the local dances.

Like any small community, gossip was a daily pastime. The comings and goings of anything unusual was noted with great interest and random speculation. Gossip had always made my mother uncomfortable and she knew of the whispers behind her back on why Kathleen had not taken her infant daughter and joined her husband in Canada.

The Queen Mary sailing from Liverpool, England in September of 1946 would be my mother's last chance to come to Canada on a ship that the government would provide for the war brides. It was now or never for my mother and me to come to Canada and be with my father.

Mother knew that the Canadian winters would be a lot harsher than anything she had ever experienced. She had a lady knit some sweaters and jumpers to keep us warm and with her own mother's prophetic words ringing in her ears, Mother said her goodbyes. After Mother had hugged her three brothers, Michael, Paddy and Jack and her sister, Jo,

she promised her mother, Maria, that she would write faithfully and return soon for a visit.

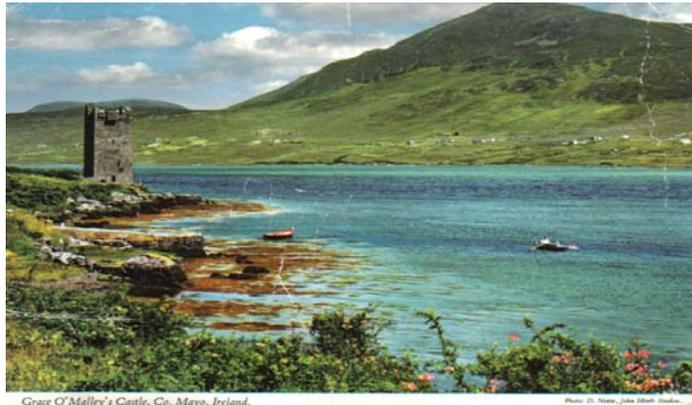
Finally we headed for England to sail to Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was quite a trip just to get to Liverpool. Uncle Paddy drove us by car from Kiltane to Ballina. From Ballina we took the train to Dublin. At Dublin we boarded a ship to cross the Irish Sea to Holyhead, Wales. We would reach Liverpool by train from Wales. Mother said she thought of it as a great adventure.

My mother's people had settled in Co. Mayo, Ireland, after being driven from their lands in the present counties of Tyrone and Derry, by the English. Her great grandfather, Mike McAndrew, had married Catherine Hegarty of the race of Eoghain, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages.

It would seem like the days of singing, dancing and storytelling were only memories of happier times as the three Hegarty brothers left their homes and headed towards North Mayo. With few belongings, their families and their livestock, they settled in the wild, rugged County of Mayo. North Mayo had been uninhabited until they arrived. This information comes from a genealogy of "The Hegartys" by Phelin Henry, Co. Longford, Ireland.

My mother's father, Edward McAndrew, had married Maria O'Malley. Maria's roots could go back centuries to the great seafaring woman warrior, Grace O'Malley.

All I know is that Grace died around 1600. The highlight of her stormy career was the beating off of an English seaborne expedition which besieged her in Carrigahooley Castle.



Grace O'Malley's Castle, Co. Mayo, Ireland.

Grace O'Malley's castle, Co. Mayo, Ireland.

My father's people were also pioneers. According to the Collicott genealogy, a direct lineage to my father comes from John; one of the four Collicott brothers, who sailed from Wales in the 1700's and settled in the Canterbury area. Fred Collicott, a cousin, had researched the family tree and told me this personally. He got some information from an 1830 land grant. The family had always thought Collicott was English but for whatever reason the brothers sailed from Wales. The ship's records had

been destroyed in 1877 in the St. John, N.B. fire. This was known as the great fire and it destroyed almost the entire city centre.

Benjamin Collicott, had died when father was a child of eight. Death was caused by infection from a ruptured appendix. This left my grandmother with many mouths to feed and literally no income except what she made from selling off their land. She was a physically strong woman and would often do housework for a Mae Price whose husband owned a lumber mill where many of the local people were employed.

My father was the youngest of seven brothers, William, Sam, George, Charles, Joe and Arthur. The oldest of the family was a half-sister, Pearl, or Pauline, as she liked to be called. As a young woman Nanny, father's mother, had worked for a Russian immigrant, Adam Bair, and became pregnant by his son, Daniel. The Bair family lived at Dorrington Hill just a few miles from Canterbury. According to a 1901 Census, Nanny was listed as 26 years old and had two daughters Melba (that is what the name looks like in the census) aged 5 and Pearl (later called Pauline) aged 3.

The story told in the family was Daniel Bair went to Alberta and took the oldest girl, Melba. I did not even know anything about my grandmother having two children previous to marrying Benjamin Collicott until I saw the 1901 census a few years ago. Anyhow, by the time Nanny married Benjamin Collicott, Pauline was still with her. Pauline was born in 1897 and died in 1990. She always spoke of Benny Collicott with the utmost respect and said he had treated her like she was his own daughter.

Pauline had died before I even knew about her sister, Melba. It was another family secret kept sweep under the carpet and never mentioned. My father was 20 years younger than Pauline and did not know anything about the matter. He said his mother never spoke of it. It must have been heartbreaking for my grandmother to not see or hear from her oldest daughter.

Nanny had been Ella MacFarlane, who had roots going back to Loch Lomond, Scotland. Her people had come to Canada in the 1800's and had eventually settled in Nackawic, New Brunswick. This is a small community along the St. John River, between Canterbury and Fredericton. It is the home of the St. Anne Pulp & Paper Mill which employs about 400 people. Also in Nackawic is a sculpture of the world's largest axe!

My great grandfather, Sam MacFarlane, was a bare knuckle fighter. He would walk clear to Nackawic from his home in Dow Settlement just to have a match with someone who said they could beat him. My

grandmother, Nanny, remembered him as a rather cruel man. He had married Mary Anne Adams and they lived at Dow Settlement, a small community about four miles from Canterbury. After Sam died by the age of forty-five, she married a sailor from Nova Scotia, Joe Slocum.

Memories of my paternal grandmother, Ella Collicott, known to everyone in the Canterbury community as Nanny, always bring a smile to my face and sometimes a tear to my eye. Some of my cousins, Bobby, who lived with Nanny; and Marion, Nora and Shelia Collicott would gather around the big wood stove and Nanny would regale us with ghost stories and tidbits of information about local characters. The MacFarlane children, Susan and Patricia were usually with us. Their mother, Dorothy, was an English war bride who had married Harold MacFarlane, Nanny's nephew, in England. Dorothy, like my mother had to adjust to this pioneer lifestyle of rural New Brunswick.

It was a wonderful safe place, Nanny's home, where I was away from the strict upbringing of my Irish mother.

Ned Depow, a childhood friend of my father, told me he always remembers Nanny as a grand lady who had a kind word for everyone. He spoke of ice skating with my father and afterwards a group of them would come back to Nanny's house. She would always have something for them to eat. Maybe there would be hot tea with big molasses cookies or hot biscuits. The old wood plank floors would be white and glistening from a scrubbing by hand with a brush and lye.

Nanny could neither read nor write and money was scarce. As a child, she had only one dress and when it was washed, she had to stay in bed until the dress was dry enough to wear. She did attend school for a few days but being one of the older children in the family, her mother, Mary Anne, needed her at home to help with the younger children and the housework.

Nanny told us of how in the harsh Canadian winter, the people were lucky to have rags to stick in their boots to help brave the cold. She told about having to put her youngest brother, Earl, in a barrel while she washed and dried his clothes. Everything she did was from memory. Perhaps that was what made her such a great story teller. Nanny's cooking recipes had to be filed in her head. I remember her making mats out of old rags and knitting socks and mittens. It was at Nanny's I had my first cup of tea and where I learned to read the tea leaves.



This is a picture of Mother, Nanny, Bobby and me taken in 1952. The truck in the background would have been the vehicle my father used working for the forestry services as a game warden. When Bobby saw this picture he laughed as he remembered I always had a piece of grass in my mouth.

When Mother arrived in Canterbury in 1946 most of womenfolk had to chop wood and carry water great distances from a well or spring. Their few clothes were washed by hand on a

washboard. It was necessary to preserve as much food as you could from your garden to last the winter. Jams and jellies were made from wild fruit. Apples were stored in the cool of the dirt floor cellar and they may last until Christmas. Also in the cellar was a large wooden box filled with dirt that carrots were stored in to help keep them edible for some part of the winter. Maybe someone would shoot a deer or a moose and give you a quarter of meat from the kill. A few hens were necessary for eggs and cows for milk and butter. You slaughtered your own pigs and cattle for meat. I was turned off of eating meat for years after watching my father butcher a pig!

One fall day, I can still see Nanny, by now near eighty years old; catch a chicken to kill for supper. Bobby held the chicken while she chopped its head off with an axe. It's bloody lifeless, headless body flapped in the air before coming to rest near my feet. As a child of seven or eight, I ran screaming into the house vowing never to eat that chicken. By suppertime the feathers had all been plucked from the warm body of the chicken and it had been roasted in the oven of Mother's wood stove. No matter how good it smelled, I did not eat chicken that night!

Food was not always so plentiful. A balanced meal was unheard of. At times it was difficult to scarp together enough money to purchase flour, sugar, molasses, fat and soda to make biscuits and cookies. The vegetables and fruit were seasonal except for what could be preserved. In the spring we tramped through the woods looking of fiddleheads to be picked, and then brought home to be cleaned and cooked on the store just like any other vegetable. Luckily father would have caught some trout to

be cleaned, stripped of most of the bones and rolled in flour before frying. In winter the food was not so plentiful. By Christmas you would be lucky to find an old shrivelled up apple in the cellar. No wonder everyone over the age of forty had only a few teeth or false teeth.

Mother had acquired a good education from the nuns at the school in Bangor Erris, Ireland but after her bout with rheumatic fever she didn't do much physical work at home. Well, here she was amongst the Collicott and MacFarlane women who could work as hard as any man!

In later life Mother became an excellent cook but when she landed on Canadian soil she could hardly fry an egg! Nanny taught her how to do a lot of her cooking such as making bread and biscuits.

Besides the almost daily interaction between the many family members living in or near the Canterbury area in the late 1940's, Nanny's main social life centered on the activities of the Primitive Baptist Church. Bobby and I went to all their church picnics. I can still taste the delicious potato salad made by my Aunt Beulah. Beulah was a Canterbury girl who had married Joe, father's brother, before he had enlisted in the army and went overseas.

Bobby and I would sing those glorious old hymns with Nanny. I still get teary eyed when I hear "Beyond the Sunset" and "The Old Rugged Cross".

It was the best of both worlds. From Nanny I experienced the warmth of the Baptist religion and later in my teenage years the love of the Irish Catholics for dancing, playing cards and gambling. Why you could even drink in moderation and it was not considered a sin but don't have an impure thought! To this day I do not know exactly how much "dirty" thinking an "impure thought" covered! I always used it as one of my standard sins when I went to confession before mass on Sunday mornings. Taking the Lord's name in vain and disobeying my parents were usually my other standard sins.

Thank God the priest at the time, Father Donald Gillis, never questioned me too deeply on these "sins." I guess he had bigger fish to fry! As a child in rural New Brunswick in the 1950's, I was quite naïve and innocent. Father Gillis pointing his finger at the congregation could send the touch of hell's fire through my soul. He was a big man and preached the hell and brimstone sermons.

Hell was going to be painful as I had already experienced numerous burns on my hands and arms from the wood stove that mother kept full of wood. Wood and the wood stove was a bit of a mystery for her also as in Ireland she saw peat from the bogs being used in a fireplace to heat their cottage.

I felt looking up “bad” words in the dictionary was enough to send me to purgatory! Mother would always tell me Saturday night to remember all my sins to tell the priest Sunday morning. I would lie in bed Sunday morning trying to think of something that would be acceptable but not raise the wraith of Father Gillis!

At that time we did not have a television and there certainly wouldn't be any books or magazines around the house that were not approved by my mother. I remember having an argument with her about a magazine called True Stories. Some of my girlfriends had these romantic books and I, at fifteen, thought I should be able to read them. In any event, those books never got pass the doorstep of our home.

Mother never drank and instilled in me that drinking or any sexual activities (or the thinking of it!) would not be tolerated. I never heard my mother swear or use foul language of any kind. In later years she told me I was her most difficult child to rear. I like to think it was because parents expect more from the oldest and not because I was determined and headstrong!

On the other hand, I remember many evenings when she would teach my cousin Bobby and I to do a dance called the fox-trot. Other times she would teach us the old fashion waltz. Mother laughed a lot and liked to play pranks on us. She liked to play cards and to play for money! I remember playing a game called 45's for a quarter a game. Mother learned to knit from Nanny and then she taught a lot of the other women from the community who would come for an afternoon visit. In 1960, I remember a beautiful sweater with skaters on the front she had knit for me. Of course I wasn't the only one. All winter long she would be knitting something for one person or another.

Mother was not a reader but she loved watching her favourite hockey team, The Toronto Maple Leafs, on the small black & white television we acquired in early 1960.

Since we lived on a small farm there were always animals around. Besides a few milking cows and an old work horse, there was always a dog and a cat. Mother had a great love of animals and father worked as a game warden for many years in Canterbury. In summer they always had a great vegetable garden and in later years would sell some produce to the neighbours or just give the vegetables away.

Even the Catholic and Baptist graveyards are connected in Canterbury. At least once a year, I have the opportunity to visit my parents and brother,

Kevin, in the Catholic cemetery and then walk over to the Baptist and visit Nanny's grave and many other Collicott relatives.

It was into this tight-knit primary protestant community that 26 year old, Irish Catholic Catherine (McAndrew) Collicott and her 22 mo. old chubby red-haired daughter, Joanne, entered. Catherine now became known as Kay for the rest of her life and yours truly was called Joanna. Father thought I had been named after a favorite aunt of his but my mother said she wanted me to have a real Canadian sounding name and she spelled it Joanne on my birth certificate. I have to wonder if it was the Irish superstition coming out where it is one way to protect your child from the powers of others by not revealing their proper name.

The first word my mother woke up to in Nanny's home was "Micky". I'm sure she would have wanted to run back to the old sod of Ireland if she knew what it meant! It appeared that one of father's brothers was not too impressed with a Catholic sleeping in the house. Catholics were nicknamed Mick's at that time. I think it comes from the Mc (pronounced Mick) at the front of a lot of the Irish Catholic names. Nanny, who ruled her home with an iron hand, would not allow any prejudiced in her home and that was the last my mother heard of the word "Micky". It was years later before she actually knew what it meant. Later the same week, William, another brother, craved a beautiful wooden cross and presented it to mother. Already the first hint of mother's bittersweet life in this new country of Canada had begun.

Mother said about the long train ride from Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia to McAdam, New Brunswick,

"I thought the trees would never end."

Never in her life had she seen so much forest. By the time we got on the train she was already angry and upset that someone on the ship had stolen the sweaters and jumpers she had someone knit us for the cold Canadian winters.

I wish now I had paid more attention to little things she said about the voyage. She did tell me how I ran away from her on the ship and fell down the stairs. She thought I must have killed myself but I was a chubby little child and that must have saved me from any broken bones. She said I got up like nothing had happened!

She did talk about meeting a lovely English lady on the ship, who was going to join her husband in Harvey, New Brunswick. Father took her to Harvey a few weeks later but to mother's disappointment the lady had

returned to England after one week of seeing her husband not draw a sober breath!

To anyone not raised in the Catholic faith, the mystery of the mass, at that time, said in Latin and having to confess your sins to the priest did not make much sense. Why would you not speak directly to God? Praying to The Blessed Virgin Mary and all the other saints was worshipping false idols in the eyes of the Primitive Baptists. To the Catholics it meant asking saints, who performed miracles in their lifetime, to intervene to God for them.

“Why you could drink and party all you wanted as long as you went to confession”...I know a lot of Catholics lived that way but that was not suppose to be the intention of the confession. In comparison, the Primitive Baptists were death against drinking alcohol and going to the local dances.

It was often said at the time,

“The Catholics drank and made a fool of themselves in public while the Baptist drank out behind their barn.”

It was quite a common practice for the Catholic men to take a “Vow of Abstinence.” This meant they swore to abstain from alcohol for a given period of time. At the time of their marriage, father had agreed to raise any children as Catholics. Soon after Nanny’s death in 1956, my younger brother, Shaun, refused to go to church because father didn’t go. My father turned Catholic at that time but seemed to have quite a drinking problem starting in his forties. I remember my mother saying she now wished he had adhered to the Baptist faith.

“Then he wouldn’t be out making a fool of himself!” she said.

I remember her packing that big trunk that she had brought with us on the ship and telling me we were going back to Ireland. But somehow father would make amends and things would run smoothly for awhile.

Nanny had lived about ½ mile from our home. Her bachelor son, Sam, and her grandson, Bobby, lived with her. Nanny’s funeral is still very vivid in my mind. At the Primitive Baptist church in Canterbury, Nanny’s casket was open and after the service everyone trooped up by the casket to view her lifeless body. I was eleven at the time and I could not believe that I had lost Nanny forever. My father was never the same after Nanny died. It seemed he was never again the happy fun loving father of my childhood. Nanny had been the matriarch of the Collicott family and she had kept her sons in line, probably without even knowing it.

Nanny had died at her daughter, Pauline's, in Houlton, Maine, on February 10, 1956. Everyone in the family had a forerunner of her death. Father was away working at a lumber camp and he said there were 3 knocks to the door that night. He went to the door but no one was there. It was February and fresh snow had fallen but there were no footsteps in the snow. Twice more the three knocks came but no one was there. Father knew that his mother had died. That same night mother and I were asleep in separate bedrooms at the home in Canterbury when we both woke to the sound of an owl screeching. The owl seemed to be at the bedroom window where mother was sleeping. Within a few minutes the phone rang and it was Pauline telling us that Nanny had died. At this time, besides me, mother had two boys, Shaun, 5 years old and Kevin, just six months. Mother left me with the boys, who were sleeping, and in the freezing cold, she ran down towards Nanny's house to tell Uncle Sam that Nanny had died as he did not have a phone. Mother meets Uncle Sam coming towards her on the road.

"I know", he said but he would never tell anyone for years that Nanny had appeared to him that night.

A week or so before Nanny died, father and Mother had taken us children to see her for the last time. They had warned me not to ask her any questions as I wanted to know when my Nanny was coming back to her home in Canterbury.

Nanny was lying in the bed at her daughter Pauline's home and mother laid my brother, Kevin, beside her. I can remember it like it was yesterday. Kevin was wrapped in a blue baby blanket and Nanny turned to touch his tiny face and looked up to my mother and said,

"Take good care of him for he will not live to be a man."

It was almost five years (1960) later that my father came home for Christmas from the logging camp and said to my mother,

"Where is Kevin, I had a terrible dream he was killed by a car."

Kevin was the child that my mother had risked her life to give him birth. Mother had to have a heart operation in Montreal in 1955. When she was young the rheumatic fever had weakened her heart and with the birth of each baby Mother seemed to get worse. With the tests taken in Montreal, the doctor found she was pregnant and wanted her to abort the baby before the heart operation. Mother would not hear of this and went on to survive the heart operation and on October 24, 1955 delivered a healthy baby boy.

By December of 1960 there were five of us children. Besides yours truly, now sixteen, there was Shaun , eleven years old , Kevin, five years old and Rose born in 1957 and the last child, Steven, born in 1959.

December 24, 1960, the day after father's dream and five years after Nanny's prophetic words, the roads in Canterbury, New Brunswick were a glare of ice. Shaun and Kevin took a sled and a toboggan and went across the road to where the Kenneth Lutwick family lived. Mother had always warned them not to slide down the driveway towards the main road. By 10:00A.M Kevin lay bleeding to death on the road. He had taken the toboggan and slid down the Lutwick driveway, onto the main road, into the path of an oncoming car.

Because of the severe weather conditions, the ambulance from Woodstock never reached Kevin for two hours. By then the parish priest, Father Gillis, living in Debec and the Canterbury Red Cross nurse, Gladys Mason, were at the scene but nothing could be done to save his life. Father took blankets off the beds to help keep him warm until the ambulance arrived.

At that time most people had the wake for the dead at home. Everyone in the village of Canterbury came through our home showing their sympathy for our great loss. My girlfriends, Anne Murphy, Joyce English and Linda Keilty all came to give their condolences, not knowing what to say or do for me.

I do not know how my mother and father coped as I was too involved in my own sorrow. Kevin and I had a natural affinity. Maybe it was because we were both born under the sun sign Scorpio. I had chosen his name from the Viking hero, Kevin the Bold. There was a comic strip about him in the Free Press Weekly that came in the mail.

It is said that the greatest tragedy is to lose your children. I would learn this firsthand as I lost my only child who I named Kevin, in memory of my brother, on December 25, 1998. He was 35 years old and was killed in an automobile accident.

Even after her death, Mother's spirit seemed be reaching out and protecting her family as the following incident shows;

Although my mother was dead by the time I lost my son, she did appear to my cousin Bobby before my Kevin's accident. He said he woke up in the night and she was standing before him. Behind her was our Uncle Sam who is also deceased. There was a glow around both of them. Bobby said he did not know if he was dreaming or not but mother said to him,

"Find Joanne as she will need you soon."

When Bobby told me about this visitation, I thought it was my father going to die as he was now eighty-two. But within two months of mother appearing to Bobby, my son Kevin lay in the casket at the Jacksonville Funeral Home in New Brunswick, never again to come through my backdoor with his auburn hair and crooked smile.

Irene Bate, a friend who I used to work with at the Auto Workers Credit Union in Oshawa, Ontario gave me some solace when she said that maybe God needed the young people from my family.

In 1960 after my brother, Kevin, was buried, mother became worried about losing Rose. Rose was two years younger than Kevin and they always played well together.

Kevin could not pronoun R's and always called her Wose.

It was months before my mother told me why she was so afraid. Apparently Rose would wake up in the night and tell my mother that Kevin was in the closet and wanted her to play with him. Rose said he had wings and was now an angel. My mother was terrified as Rose was only three years old and couldn't be making up this story. Mother was afraid Kevin was lonely and wanted Rose to join him.

In later years I spoke to Rose about Kevin appearing and wanting her to play with him. She had no recollection of the events. My youngest brother, Steven, told me of hearing our mother talk of this incident when he was a teenager.



This is a picture of Joanne and her brothers Shaun and Kevin in 1956. Kevin was about 6 months old.

True to Maria McAndrew's words, Mother never got to see her again. She never returned to Ireland until 1966 and by then her mother had passed away. With her ill health and children there just wasn't any money to return sooner.

Mother died on my birthday, November 1 in 1987. She was 67 years old. She and my father had been married 44 years and given life to five children. Since coming to Canada, Mother had gone through two major heart surgeries and experienced the heartbreaking loss of a child.

She never lost her lilting Irish accent and would get upset when people couldn't understand what she was saying.



I know mother never got used to our cold winters and dearly missed her family back in Ireland. Through it all, she always said she was glad to have come to Canada; she thought it was a great opportunity for her children.

This picture of Kay and Ralph Collicott with their children was taken in 1984, three years before she died. Left to right: Steven, Mother, Shaun, Father, Joanne and Rose.

The following is a picture taken at Skiff Lake N.B. of mother's grandchildren at my sister Rose's wedding in 1994. From Left to right: My son Kevin Fewer (Apr 11, 1962-Dec 25, 1998), Shaun's two daughters, Jane and Amy (on each side of Rose) and Shaun's son, Allison. Steven's son, Andrew, is kneeling.



These next two pictures are a mystery that I would like to share with you. On Nov 1, 2002 while my father was staying with me in Whitby, Ontario, I took these pictures of the Halloween pumpkins at the front of

my house. If you look closely to the left under the protruding window you will see a small white globe. Then in the next picture you will see that the globe (or spirit orb) has enlarged and moved to the top step. Also the solar light that was beside the small white globe (or orb) came back on once the orb enlarged and appeared on the top step. The same thing happened with the solar light on the ground in front of the enlarged orb. It would appear that the spirit used the energy in the solar lights to make itself known.

Spirit orbs have been known as one way that angels have appeared.

I like to think that after fifteen years, Kay of Kiltane was waiting to bring her Canadian soldier safely home.



The Spirit Orb
Taken
November 1,
2002



Father died at
age 86 on
December 21,
2002 (less than
2 months after
these pictures
were taken). He
lived fifteen
years after
Mother.

The Collicott and MacFarlane Families: At War and Back Home.

No one came home from the war unscathed. Not only had some lost their lives, but sometimes it was a limb, a friend or a sweetheart. Others like my father's brother, Arthur Collicott, lost their mind for a time.

During the war Arthur helped to bring the dead and wounded off the battlefields. Bringing in the stretchers with so many wounded and dead had played havoc with his mind. He suffered from shell shock overseas and was never the same as when he left. Shell shock is a psychological trauma suffered sometimes by the men serving on the key battlefields. Today this is labeled post traumatic stress disorder. When he returned to Canterbury he was plagued by visions of the dead soldiers. Uncle Arthur had really got into the drinking in the pubs overseas. In his confusion he still thought alcohol would help ease the painful memories and that turned many people against him.

When Arthur returned to Canterbury his irrational behaviour was really upsetting to Nanny and this led to many discussions in the family concerning what to do about Arthur. Eventually he was hospitalized in St. John, New Brunswick. Arthur had never married and he never returned to Canterbury after his release from the hospital. Arthur told my father, "I have nothing to return home for now mother, (Nanny), is dead."

Father said before Uncle Arthur went overseas, he sometimes entertained the family with tunes on the Jew's harp. He would lie on the floor with the cat on his stomach and play this instrument with his mouth. As a child of about six, my last recollection of him was in our apple orchard with a huge black cast iron pot he was using to boil down sap into maple syrup. Naturally it was in the spring as the sap was running. My cousin, Bobby, who is a year and a half older than me, and I are watching this whole process. I somehow thought Arthur had the Collicott disposition of being kind to children as he let us drink out of the sap tin. The raw sap tasted so good it left me with a life-long desire to sneak a drink from the sap tins hanging from the many maple trees Bobby and I passed on our way to school.

Uncle Arthur reminded me of my father; he was only two years older but not quite as handsome. It had long been a joke in the family that although my father was the youngest, the brothers would always take him with them as his good looks attracted the ladies!

I still have an image in my mind of Uncle Arthur's camp along the tree lined wagon path going to the Collicott property where Father had built the house for my mother. The camp was about 1/2 mile off the

Canterbury main road. If you continued on another ¼ mile by the camp you would come to Father's house "Up on the Hill." For years every time we would pass by the building we would say, "There's Arthur's camp." Each year it was becoming greyer in colour as the outside boards became beaten by the elements. There it was, nestled on the left hand side of the well-worn serpentine wagon path, in a small clearing. It was surrounded by the many maple and softwood trees that also majesty guarded the path. Long spindly grass and colourful wild flowers grew randomly in the space between where the old wagon wheels had left their parallel marks. The roof of the camp was made of brush. It did not leak, so I don't know how he did it. He sort of weaved the small branches together. The branches, possibly from a cedar tree, would hang down a bit over the sides.

Whenever we walked up that way to pick apples or berries with my Mother and Nanny, we referred to the expedition as "going up on the hill." Bobby and I would run ahead and go inside Arthur's camp. As it was just one room, everything was in full view. I remember the black wood stove with the rusty old pipe sticking out the side of the building.

Built into one corner was a single wooden bed with Arthur's grey army blanket thrown loosely on the top. On the window ledge sat the kerosene lamp he would have lit to provide some light at night. Under the window was a handmade wooden table attached to the wall with leather straps. It had one leg in the middle and could be folded down when not in use. On a small bench was his water pail with the long handled dipper still inside. Resting carelessly on the table were some old tins and a partly opened blue match box with a few wooden matches left inside. The floor was made out of wide planks and resting beside the stove were a small pile of kindling wood and some papers in a wooden crate. Although he was an avid reader, I think he had been saving the now yellowing paper to help start the fire in the wood stove. Through the rays of the sun streaming in the one window, the intricate webs of the numerous spiders, and the flies they captured, seemed magnified as the light picked up the dust particles floating in the air. Mother would always warn me not to go into the camp but I always managed a peek in the door anyway.

Much to Bobby and my disappointment, Uncle Arthur never returned to his camp and lived out his life in a boarding house in Sussex, New Brunswick. Eventually over the years the old wooden door hung lazily off one hinge and sadly Arthur's camp sunk to the ground.

Father's brother, Joseph (Joe) Collicott, had enlisted with the Carleton-York in Woodstock, New Brunswick but because of his previous army experience with the Lord Strathcona Horse in Alberta, he was sent off immediately for advanced training. His wife, Beulah, told me that during

the war he was with the troops on the front lines, in France, Holland and Belgium, beating back the German forces.

Joe had come back a year after the war to his wife Beulah and their two daughters, Little Marion and Nora. The family eventually expanded to include Morris, Michael, Martin, Jeffery and Joey. They had adopted their oldest child, Little Marion and their youngest, Joey. Joe's son, Martin, told me his father had been with the Lord Strathcona Horse in Western Canada for five years in the 1930's. The soldiers in the regiment rode horses and he had to look after his horse before he took care of himself. Joe served with the RCEME (Army Engineers) during the war. Martin also said, "All the while Joe was overseas he did not meet any of his brothers or cousins. He figured the closest he came was one time on leave in England. Joe was in a pub which was divided into two parts. He went up to the barkeep and asked for a beer. The barkeep said, 'You were just in here on the other side!' Joe hurried to the other side of the pub as he figured it must be my father, Ralph, but he was long gone."

As I got older I always looked forward to walking over to their house with Mother. It was a short walking distance from our home and I knew there would always be great conversation and an even greater desert. Perhaps Aunt Beulah had baked that day and she wouldn't let us leave until we had sampled a piece of chocolate cake or a huge molasses or sugar cookie to go with a steaming cup of tea. In comparison, Martin, who is about the same age as my brother, Shaun, remembers as a teenager helping Father with the haying and enjoying Mother's delicious strawberry shortcake.

Mother and I only stayed one winter in the house "Up on the Hill" Father had built after the war. In his letters, he had neglected to tell her the house was a good $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off the main road, surrounded by a forest inhabited by bears! Even if he had told her, I do not think she would have ever comprehended the vastness of the land and would have thought he must be exaggerating.

The property had been originally cleared by my father's people and at the turn of the 19th century my grandfather, Benjamin, and his brother, William, a bachelor, both had houses on this land which was a few hundred acres and backed onto a lake. On the old maps it was called Collicott Lake but in the present time called The Risteen.* As a young child it was to a spot on this lake that I had gone with Nanny and Bobby to witness some Baptist baptisms. I often wonder why my mother had no objection to this as there was quite a division in the different religions, one being the Catholics were baptized as children, the Baptist as adults.

The following story tells how deeply engrained the animosity could be between the Catholics and Protestants. Years before there had been stories of a Klu Klux Klan uprising in Dorrington Hill, a settlement a few miles outside Canterbury. It happened on the Herb Collicott property. Herb had married a Catholic girl, Mariah Gallagher, and this did not set well with some people in the area. It was reported that some men in white sheets went to their home and burned a cross on the lawn.

This story of the Klan rising was confirmed by Herb Collicott's grandson, Michael, who now owns this property. Aunt Pauline always told about another cousin, Gordon Collicott, who was visiting Herb when this happened. He was a young lad at the time and, fearing for his life, ran out the backdoor, through the backwoods, to his parents home in Johnson Settlement as if the hounds of hell were chasing him. Gordon talked for years of how scared he was witnessing this demonstration by the Klu Klux Klan. There were men and horses. The shouts and commotion were terrifying to the young Gordon. When the word got around the community there was a meeting held, possibly at the Orange Hall*, and afterwards there was no more actions of this kind from the Klan.

No matter what religion it was, I was in my glory to be with Nanny, Bobby and other family members at this large gathering but became afraid I was going to be pushed under water also. It seemed the minister raised his arm with fingers outstretched, and then said some words and the person would fall over backwards into the lake. Amidst screams of, "hallelujah," "praise the lord" and "Jesus Christ," the baptized person would rise fully clothed from the lake with water squiring out of every opening. Nanny had to explain to me that these were screams of joy, not of anger from being pushed into the lake!

When the land 'up on the hill' was cleared you could see all around the Canterbury area clear to the Marne, the Skiff Lake Shrine and some places in the State of Maine. My father had been raised here and was emotionally attached to this land.

By the time Mother arrived, Nanny had moved to a house on the main road to Canterbury beside her brother Earl MacFarlane. Earl's wife, Nora, had died and Nanny helped him with his children. Her house up on the hill was now dilapidated although the barn was still standing and in good shape.

The William Collicott house had long gone by the wayside but we still went to the apple orchard on his old property. It was referred to as the Billy Place and in the summer we were always searching this property to see if the Georgie apples were ready to be picked. This apple tree was

suppose to have been brought over from England and had been planted by grandfather's brother, George Collicott. This tree produced the best tasting apples. It was distinguished by the small bump near the stem. The Georgie apple was smaller in size than the New Brunswicker and the Alexander apple. I recall these apples along with one called a yellow transparent, a russet, and another hardy red winter one called Sandow. There were also tiny crab apples found on the Billy Place. Mother and Nanny would have on their aprons made from the cotton flour bags. Aunt Beulah said she always referred to the apron Nanny wore as a belly apron. It had a large pocket across the front and would hold enough apples to make a pie. The flour came in a coarse cotton bag and when the bag was empty the women would collect these bags until there was enough material to make an apron. Nanny always made a large deep pocket on the front of hers that extended across her stomach. Sometimes she would take an ember from the wood stove. When it had cooled she would draw some flowers on the cloth and then embroidery around them. Beulah told me of the time Nanny took her up on the hill and they came across a lovely patch of wild blueberries. Not to be deterred because they didn't have a bowl or pail, Nanny lined her belly apron with leaves as not to stain the cloth and filled it with blueberries.

Aunt Beulah always thought Nanny had magical or shamanistic powers as wherever they saw a bear in the orchard or in the berries, Nanny would wave her belly apron and the bear would saunter off into the woods. Another time Nanny was putting the good apples that had fallen on the ground in her belly apron when they heard a grunting sound. Nanny looked up and there was a cub bear in the apple tree they were under. "Don't say anything and walk slowly away from this tree with me," Nanny whispered to Aunt Beulah. After they were a safe distance away from the orchard, Beulah looked back to see the mother bear at the bottom of the apple tree calling for her cub to come down. It was not a good place to be between a mother bear and her cub!

There were many stories told of encounters with the bears up on the hill. Nanny told of another encounter one early spring day after her husband, Benny, had died. In the 1930's and 1940's there were no such government help as Widow Allowance or Old Age Security cheques. You were at the mercy of your family for financial support if your husband died or you were unable to work. That day it was coming near dusk and she was walking up the shortcut path to get to her house on the hill after doing housework all day for Mae Price in Canterbury. Nanny heard a noise and looked to see an angry mother bear on one side of the path and her very young cub on the other side. Nanny was between them and the mother bear headed towards Nanny. Without a second thought, she threw her coat over the cub and picked it up in her arms. She had always heard the mother bear would not harm you as long as you held

her cub. The mother bear followed as Nanny managed to hold the squealing cub bear until she reached the door of the house. She dropped her coat with the cub by the doorway and quickly got inside the house. As she was closing the door the mother bear took a swipe at the closing door with her paw, but to Nanny's relief, she took her cub and swaggered away! Another time Bobby and I were with Nanny and Mother behind the old house in a raspberry patch when Nanny quietly said, "There is a bear on the other side of these raspberries. If we don't bother him, he won't bother us. Just take your berries and we will go back to the house." I looked across the raspberry bushes and saw the bear but he acted like he didn't even know we were there.

Mother lived in constant fear of running into a bear or a snake on the path or in the fields on our excursions for berries and apples. She would never go unless another adult was with us. As we walked along we would sing loudly or bang on our berry pails to keep the wildlife away.

My cousin, Little Marion, as we called her because she had an aunt by the same name, told me of sometimes taking the shortcut through the woods to visit Mother during that first year we lived up on the hill. The shortcut was a path which first took you off the Canterbury main road, and then up behind the Cyr house, later lived in by the Ken Lutwick family. The path curved upwards, winding in and out among the pine, fir and spruce trees, until you got to the top of a knoll and could see the clearing where the house and barn stood. From the knoll you could look to the right and see another big hill which had been originally cleared of lumber and was now a hay field. A pile of rocks that had been hand picked from the land was visible. In my mind's eye, I look to the left and see another field, on fertile, flatter ground. It was separated from the path by a longer larger rock pile in which the two mature cherry trees and the gooseberry and current bushes made their home, along with numerous snakes, weasels and field mice. On the other side of the rock pile was the vegetable garden. If you were on foot, taking the shortcut was a lot faster than the old wagon path, but was just as scary if you travelled alone! She told me how frightened she would be and she would run all the way up and back down as fast as she could pump her legs.

Little Marion told me of the time she was picking gooseberries with Yvonne Cyr. They were about ten years old and in their search for the gooseberries had wandered up towards the hill as she knew there were gooseberries bushes among the old rock piles and fences. Suddenly they were almost upon a mother bear lying down with her two cubs playing nearby. They dropped to the ground and crawled on their hands and knees back down the hill until the Cyr house was in sight. Little Marion said their knees were cut and bleeding but Yvonne kept whispering, "If we get up to walk the mother bear will hear us."

They arrived at the Cyr house with their grass stained clothes in tatters and Yvonne's mother speaking to them angrily in French. Little Marion, not being able to understand the French language, never knew what the exchange of words were between Yvonne and her mother or if she even believed their bear story. She ran to her own home as fast as she could, hoping her mother would believe the reason her dress was ruined. She did as her mother, Aunt Beulah, had stories of her own about the bears 'up on the hill!.'

Being a few years older than me, she remembers Mother having a cow, a goat and some chickens on the hill. There were always one or two work horses that father used to haul logs out of the woods and also to plough the fields. Because of her own experiences on the way to the house 'up on the hill', Little Marion could understand why Mother did not venture down to visit them very often unless Father was with her!

Winter "Up on the Hill" was another story but at least Mother was safe from the bears as they would be hibernating for the winter! By the time Mother and I arrived in Canterbury in 1946 no one except Father was living up on the hill. I can clearly remember Mother wading snow up to her waist, with me on her back, as she made her way to our house one blustery winter day. She kept telling me to hang on as she needed all her strength to get through the snow.

Often the fire in the wood stove would go out and she couldn't get the fire started again. Sometimes Father was away working at a logging camp or in the pulp woods and would be gone most of the week. I remember another cold winter day Mother told me to stay by the window and watch for her to come back. I amused myself by drawing lines on the frost inside the window pane. The fire had gone out and she would have to wade down through the snow the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the main road and then to Nanny's house and get someone to come and help restart the fire in the wood stove. That day it was my Uncle Sam who came to help. He was the right man for the job as Uncle Sam could get a wood fire burning so hot it would melt the butter in a dish on the table! (I saw this happen many a time). Bobby remembers coming with him and staying the rest of the day to keep us company.

It must have been a lonely existence for my mother with just me, a small child, as company most of the week.

The next winter Father let the Bruce Grant family stay in the house he had built on the hill, and, much to Mother's joy, we moved to the Morrissey house on the main road near Nanny's. Mother always liked living there and remained there until her death in 1987.

She was now on a small farm and within walking distance to the stores in the village of Canterbury. At the time, the house did not have running water or an inside toilet, although we did get electric lights before I started school. The catalogue that came in the mail had a dual purpose. Not only was it used for dreamily looking at the pictures of all the beautiful things, but it was the main source of toilet paper in the outhouse. You tore out a page and rubbed it between your knuckles to get it soft enough to use. This would leave black marks on your hands from the ink. I do not want to think what it did to the other end! It really makes you appreciate the soft tissues they have on the market today.

As I got older, it was my job to bring in the wood from the woodshed each day and to carry the water from a spring that was quite a distance from the house. Whenever my father was away it was my mother and I who milked the two cows, a Holstein and a Jersey, in the morning before I went to school. Thankfully, when my brother, Shaun, got old enough, the milking job fell to him. Mother would separate the cream from the milk and sell it to the Woodstock dairy in the winter. We, like most of the people in Canterbury, did not have a refrigerator. No one worried about refrigeration in the winter as it was cold enough outside to kill any germs.

In the summer she would keep the milk down in the spring. All the water had to be carried in pails to the house. Wash day was an all day ritual, usually done on Monday morning. First you had to get the water to the house to heat on top of the stove for the first wash and then carry more water to rinse the clothes. Some winter days Mother would melt some clean snow, in a large square galvanized wash tub on top of the wood stove, to heat for washing the clothes.

In the winter I would start from the spring with two full pails of water but by the time I sloshed through the snow and ice there would hardly be half a pail left to bring in the house. This would mean many trips back and forth from the spring to the house. I used to wonder why we couldn't have a well right outside our door like the MacFarlane children.

Harold MacFarlane, my father's cousin, was out in western Canada when the war broke out. Harold, along with other local lads, used to ride the railroad west for seasonal work on the grain harvest. Harold was listed under G 94971 second anti-aircraft with the Winnipeg regiment.

While he was stationed in England he literally ran into his future wife, Dorothy Willimott, at the Perley Ice Skating Rink, accidentally knocking her down. When he helped her up that was the beginning of their courtship and subsequently her new life in Canada.

Dorothy was born in Birkenhead, England and nursed at St. Heliers hospital in London. Dorothy and their four month old daughter, Susan, sailed on the Andes, arriving at Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia on Nov 17, 1944. Susan's mother told her on the ship the children slept in a hammock beside the mother.

Harold like my father had been a gunner with the Canadian forces. He had been discharged six months earlier as he had been sent home to recover from the post traumatic stress disorder called shell shock and was already in Canterbury.

Dorothy's daughter, Susan, told me, they arrived at the McAdam train station to a warm welcome by Harold's family. Mother and I would take this same route almost two years later. First being met at the train station and then driven by car through the McAdam woods to Canterbury. The road was little better than a wagon path and you could go for miles without seeing any signs of civilization. Dorothy arrived dressed stylishly in a short fur coat and no boots. Baby Susan was in a three piece knitted outfit wrapped in her christening shawl. (Dorothy was of the Anglican faith and maintained that religion in Canterbury). There was a lot of snow and Dorothy said she nearly froze to death.

Dorothy experienced quite a shock with the pioneer lifestyle in Canterbury but she stayed and had four more children in five years. They had lived with Harold's father, Earl MacFarlane, until they got their own house not far from my parent's farm. The children, Susan and her sister Patricia spent a lot of time with Bobby and me. Sometimes my brother, Shaun, and Susan's younger siblings, Teddy, Barbara and Leslie would tag along.

Mother always welcomed the children to our home but she did not like me visiting other homes. In retrospect I think she was afraid I would make a nuisance of myself and be an object of the idle talk which was very much a part of everyday life in Canterbury.

The great outdoors was our playhouse. As children we roamed the open fields, rode the work horses, jumped from the rafters to the haymow in our barn. We played cowboys and Indians and, in good weather, usually stayed outside until it was dark. In the winter we skated on the ponds and slide down the hills on cardboard or whatever was available.

Mother always worried about us. I can still see her at the window or door motioning for me and exclaiming, "Come in the house this minute, you are going to kill yourself riding that wild horse!" Much to Mother's dismay, I was a real tomboy and a daredevil. Being crazy over horses, I

would ride them around the pasture whether or not they could buck me off.

When we were in the twelfth grade, Susan and her family moved to Fredericton. Mother took in their dog, Laddie, as they were unable to take him to their apartment. Harold never got used to living in Fredericton and pined for Canterbury but Dorothy relished her new life in the city and became active in the Legion and with the war bride association. Ultimately they parted ways and were divorced.

Ray MacFarlane worked as dispatch rider during the war. His job was to deliver vital messages to the troops. He told of being in Italy and at times going like a “bat out of hell” on his motorcycle to avoid being detected by the Germans. He came back from overseas married to an English girl, Mavis Green. They settled in Canterbury just outside the village limits and eventually had three children, Linda, Nancy and Brian.

Sometimes my mother, with Shaun and I in tow, would walk the couple miles to visit Mavis for an afternoon. Although we traveled the main road there was a steep hill in Canterbury we had to climb. Mother would have to stop and rest a few times, never admitting the climb was almost too much for her weakening heart. This was always a great day as Mavis would roll out the red carpet for my mother. She would tell us funny stories in her cockney accent and lay out a wonderful array of cake, cookies and breads for us to munch on all day. Naturally there were the never ending cups of tea to go with these treats. Then Mavis would insist we stay for supper as Ray, like my father at that time, was working away from home. Mother, basically shy, did not like to impose on others but after much coaxing we would usually stay longer.

Along with my father and two of his brothers, Joe and Arthur; six of my father’s first cousins, the sons of Earl MacFarlane, were involved in the war effort. Besides Harold and Ray; Allison and Walter were sent overseas. Otis was with the Canadian forces in defence of Labrador and New Brunswick. Earl’s youngest son Jasper was in basic training stationed in Quebec.

Allison McFarlane* had been with the Canadian forces in Italy when he lost his leg. Another cousin, Neil Collicott, told me he asked Allison how it happened as Clifford Fox was killed at the same time.

Clifford Fox’s mother had been Cassie Collicott, a sister to Neil’s father, Allen. The family wanted to know how Clifford died. Allison said he and Clifford had been in what was left of a basement of a house in Italy. They were under attack and they were using it as a bunker when a grenade was thrown in. When the German troops attacked, Clifford, with all the

strength left in his battle fatigued young body, valiantly jumped up and yelled, "Take this you bastards!" With his gun he mowed some of them down, but in the end he was killed. Allison, although injured, crawled out and escaped. A sergeant major rescued him and got him medical attention, but his leg could not be saved.

Aunt Beulah told me Allison met this sergeant major years later at a function held at the Woodstock Legion. Allison said, "That was the man who saved my life. He found me when I was unconscious and carried me with my leg dangling." Allison had another loss when he returned to Canterbury to find the girl he had hoped to marry was engaged and about to marry another man. It wasn't long before he fell in love again and married a Canterbury girl, Alma Cyr. Allison and Alma had six children; Gerald, Jimmy, Roger, Cheryl, Gail and David.

Alma's family, the Cyr's, had lived directly across the road from the Morrissey farm where my parents had moved and it was behind their house where the shortcut path 'up to the hill' started. Although Alma's mother was French descent and could understand hardly any English, I would sometimes sneak over to her house and spend a whole afternoon enjoying her company. Funny, as a child, you have no concept of time or that your parents might be worried about you. When I finally returned home, Mother would chastise me. I thought she really was a worry wart, becoming very upset and agitated when I had been gone for a long time. If any punishment was to be given, Mother was always the strict disciplinarian, whereas, Father was more forgiving of my little excursions.

Walter McFarlane* had enlisted with the N.S. Highlanders and did not return to Canada like his brothers after the war. He was buried in France. My mother told me of meeting Walter a few weeks before he was sent to Normandy and to his death. On D-Day he was shot in the neck by a sniper bullet intended for his Colonel. I was always told he was a batman for a Colonel during the war. Earlier while he was stationed in England, he married Betty, a Scottish lass.

Walter had loved going up into Scotland whenever he was on leave. It was common for the Canadian soldiers to meet and mingle with the local people in the pubs. In fact it was quite a novelty, for this was a lifestyle that would be frowned upon by their Baptist folks back home in Canterbury. But in the unstable atmosphere of a war, the boys partook of a little pleasure whenever they could find some. It was in one of those quaint Scottish pubs Walter had met and fallen in love with Betty.

A few years after Walter was killed, Betty came to Canterbury and stayed with her father-in-law, Earl MacFarlane, hoping to heal some of the grief.

She stayed for about a year. Later she went to live with a sister in Chatham, Ontario but she kept contact by letters with some of the family for years.

Most of the soldiers from the Collicott and MacFarlane families, or their spouses and offspring's, were in and out of my Mother's house on a monthly, if not weekly basis. Everyone's weakness and strength was discussed and remedied over a cup of tea in the large farm kitchen.

I always tried to keep the stories alive by telling them to my son, Kevin Fewer. Being an only child, I thought it might help sustain him in life when the going got rough and there was no one else to compare with. Little did I know that after his death it was me, Joanne Collicott, who would need these stories.

The soldiers have passed on now and most of the women folk of my Mother's generation.

I dearly miss the loved ones who have gone on before, but they never really die when they live in fond memories.

In closing, a special thanks to the many family members who shared their memories so I could incorporate them in Mother's story.

Also, I would like to acknowledge the helpful insights from my cousin, Robert Collicott, (Bobby). Bobby and I were close as children and although distance separates us, we still get together at least once a year and go 'up on the hill' and visit the old grounds of our ancestors. Inevitably our walk takes us through the Baptist and Catholic cemeteries where we stop to say a silent prayer at Mother's gravestone.

Footnotes:

* Risteen- My brother, Steven, now a forest ranger in this area, told me it was now named after Jacob Risteen who had settled on the headwaters many years ago, on the other side of Dorrington Hill road, near the dead water. The dead water was always called the Risteen and the lake's name was changed over the years from Collicott to the Risteen.

* Orange Hall- This was a two-storey building in Canterbury where the Orange Order had their meetings and social events. It was an organization for only men of the Protestant faith. Members were called Orangemen, named after Billy of Orange, King William III of England. In 1690 he fought and won against the Catholics forces lead by the exiled King James II at the famous Battle of the Boyne in Ireland. As strange as it may appear, the Catholics in Canterbury rented this hall every year for

what was called an Easter Ball. Mother, along with the other Catholic women of the community, would provide a supper upstairs while there would be dancing on the main floor. Although this Orange Hall no longer stands in Canterbury, as a teenager in the late 1950's, I remember the Easter Ball held there was the social event of the year for Canterbury and the neighbouring communities.

*McFarlane-Although they were the sons of Earl MacFarlane, Allison and Walter spelled their family name as McFarlane.

Joanne Collicott McGuigan has written two other books, in which her mother, Kay Collicott, had a strong influence, entitled "Child of Danaan" and "The Dream Mechanism." They are available on Amazon.com.