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Waterman  
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#### THE HOOGERDYK FAMILY BEFORE 1953

My full name before I married was Everina Pieterella Bongers. I was born on March 26th, 1918. My parents were Dingemarr Adrrianus Bongers and Basbraanbyt Geluk. I had one brother and six sisters. My oldest sister, Aagje, died at the age of 45 years. My only brother, Peter, died at the age of 68 years. Jopie, Sabien, Lenie, Liesbeth, and Nellie are all younger than I am. I married Laurens Pieter Hoogerdyk on the 24th of January 1947. I had already had a son, Martin Jan, and Piet (as he was always called) had three daughters: Johanna Noeltje, born the 19th of September 1941, Gerdina Johanna, born the 9th of March 1943, and Maria Elizabeth, born the 17th of June 1944. Piet was born the 1st of February 1913 in Waddingsveen.

Together we formed the Hoogerdyk family, and we all had to learn to live together as good as we could. Times were hard in Holland than and, although Pete worked hard to make a living for us, it was hard to provide us with a comfortable existence. In the years between 1945 to the early 1960's a lot of people emigrated to other countries and stories started to go around about the success or misfortunes of former citizens of Geldermalsen. Nearly everybody had some family or friend who had emigrated. For me that started the dreams of going too. Starting a whole new life with more possibilities for ourselves and especially for our children. The more I thought about it the more I wanted to go, not only for a better life, but also for the adventure, the challenge our emigration would bring, the travelling, and the sights of other countries. In two words - unlimited possibilities - and I carefully started to bring the subject up to Pete who immediately vetoed the whole idea. He was not going to uproot his family and that was that.

About one year later my brother and his family came from Venezuela for a visit. He advised Pete to emigrate. He had great admiration for Pete's abilities with tools and his willingness to work hard. After my brother's visit Pete thought about it for a few days and decided that we should go. It took over one year before all the formalities-visas, health insurance, funds, and somebody who would employ Pete-were in order. We had between all of us decided that we should go to Canada after looking at books of different countries. What attracted us most within Canada were

Prince Edward Island and British Columbia. However, the sponsor who would employ Pete lived in Ontario.

Our date for departure was set for March 24th, 1953 so we had about six weeks to get ready. In all the excitement over the move to another country we had not been concerned how to get ready in time. A lot of our stuff had to be sold or given away. Only the basic necessities could be packed (ie the beds, linen, dishes, pots and pans, warm clothes and shoes, and some toys and books). We all had to have one blanket for the trip and the clothes we wore were fumigated before boarding the ship. The last week we spent with my parents, and then at last it hit me that I might never see them again. It was a difficult week. I had a lump in my throat and my eyes were sore, just like sand had gone into them. Well, I had an urging desire to cancel the far-advanced plans and stay in Holland.

On the morning of the 24th of March we had to say our farewells to my parents. They not only saw Pete and I go, but also all their grandchildren who lived in Holland at that time, which was hard for they loved them so much. A delegation of family and friends from Geldermalsen, Buurmalsen, and Tricht were on the docks to say good-bye and wave us off. In the afternoon of the 24th of March we left Holland on a ship of the Holland-American line named the Waterman. The kids and I shared a cabin with bunk beds and one wash basin and Pete shared a cabin with men. The toilets and showers were further in the hall.

At that time I thought that everything was very luxurious with great dinners. We got three hot meals a day, which for Dutch people is unusual. For entertainment they showed a movie, but since it was everyday we soon tired of the same movie. On the third day a lot of passengers were seasick-all our girls and I for one, and Pete half the day. He was too busy taking the seasick bags out and throwing them in the water. Martin was not sick, which was not without danger for him. Once a recognized him by his shoes and the rest of him was hanging overboard. For the first time in my life we had time on our hands-our meals were prepared and our beds were made-so I made the best of those nine days and had good conversations with a lot of emigrants who all had the same anxieties as we. There was an older couple with sixteen children who were going to a farm. Pete got talking to a photographer, who had been in Canada for one year, had just gone back to collect his wife and six children, and was now getting back to Canada. He told Pete that he would not like to work for a farmer, and if Pete did not want to stay with the farmer to come to Whitby where there would be plenty of job opportunities. Nearing Labrador we had some rough and very cold weather and we had to stay inside most of the day. We reached Halifax

on the 31st of March, and landed on the 1st of April. After some hassle we could board the train to Toronto, but first bought some food to eat on the train.

We bought bread, butter, a sausage, some cookies, and jam. In the morning Pete got us some tea, and if I remember, milk for the kids. For the rest of the day we had to drink water. We arrived in Toronto on the 3rd of April, which happened to be on Good Friday, and another train was not leaving until 6 o'clock p.m. At the station we met a Dutch man, Arnold Van Pypen, who took us to his home, where his wife was so kind to let us have a bath. We were so dirty from the long train ride. After that she fed us a hot meal of pork and beans. In the train I had already decided that we would not stay in Canada. The mile of bush and the sparse population was for me frightful, for Holland is so densely populated and cozy also, with the well kept houses, where all the windows had lace edged glass curtains, and the window sills full of plants. I thought Quebec was beautiful and wild, but hated the houses and streets in the villages we passed-unpaved streets and unpainted houses, wild running creeks with water the colour of mud.

As soon as we reached Ontario I got more hope. It looked a bit better kept and more populated, and not as mountainous as in Quebec, but certainly not a country where we would feel at home. In the late afternoon Arnold Van Pypen took us to the train station where a train stood ready for Thornbury, where we arrived in the dark and where we were collected by the Dutch farmhand who took us to Pete's employer, whose wife received us warmly. She had the evening meal ready but the children were tired and cranky. Soon after the meal Kees (farmhand) took us to the house where we had to live. It was a big house and used to be the Parsonage. The church people had put up beds for us and there were dishes and some pots and pans. Also we found milk, eggs and pies, bread and butter for us. We appreciated that.

We all went to bed, our first night in Ravenna. The next morning was one of exploring. We found that there was no running water-only a pump outside. The bathroom they had written to us about was not a real bathroom at all. It held a pail with a stovepipe in it, which went through the ceiling. I guess that was for the smell. Outside was an outhouse with two holes in the seat and could be used by two people at the same time. It was all so strange and disappointing to me, but not to the kids who were having a great time trying it out. After two days in which we got a bit of order in place, Pete had to go to the farm to work there. He left at 5:30 a.m. and returned at 8:30 p.m. a very long long day for him, but also for us.

I took the kids to the one room school nearby and registered them. Only Nellie stayed with me. She was too young to go to school. I was so thankful for that. My number one enemy was the cookstove. It was of an enormous size with a water tank, an upstairs (for pots), and a big oven. The trouble was that the wood would not burn. I could not even boil water for tea in the morning, and the stove was the only heat we would have, had it burned. The house was like an icetank. Pete chopped wood as well as he could and had time. To be up early in the morning he could not afford to be up late. The children hated school. They did not speak English and the village children were hostile and mean to them. The second enemy I had was the phone. Every time it rang I answered and was told to hang up, it's not for you. I had never heard of a party line.

After a week I went to see the manager of the only store Ravenna had and asked him to let the phone company know that we wanted the phone disconnected, which greatly amazed the storekeeper, who was a very nice man. His wife helped us in any way she could. One day she took us to Collingwood and treated us to ice cream cones, and while there I bought a little hot plate so I could have tea made before the kids had to go to school.

Two days a week Nellie and I went to the farm where Pete worked and helped the farmer's wife with house cleaning. I worked from 9 a.m. till 3 p.m. earning all of \$2 for it. However, it made a difference. For \$1 I bought four dozen eggs and the other \$1 I spent at the store for the most necessary things.

Martin was the first to have a birthday in Canada. He turned 7. We celebrated as well as we could. We did not have much to do it with, but he was not hard to please.

Nel and I were very homesick. After the four kids left for school we both had a good cry and set out for our daily walk. The Collingwood hills are very beautiful, but at that time I hated every inch of it. Also the house was no pleasure, too big and, to our eyes, too strange. It had an earthen basement with a huge furnace. We could hear rats running around there and the rest of the house was creaking and cracking. No wonder the minister would not live there.

Pete kind of liked his job at the farm, though the days were long. He was well fed and well treated. The farmer, Mr. Armstrong, had had a heart attack before we arrived and was in bed. His son and the farmhand were happy with Pete's help. Every other week he had a day off. We went to church and visited with other Dutch people. We treasured his days off.

Soon I was down to our last dollar, and spent that on oatmeal, bread, peas, and sauerkraut. Our potatoes and milk came from the farm, and I earned the eggs. We had another week to go without money and had to make our meals with what was there, oatmeal for breakfast, every other day peas and sauerkraut with the few potatoes we got, and for lunch bread and butter. You can understand how much I was longing for that first paycheck that Pete was bringing home after a month's work. He only received \$53. The farmer had deducted \$22 from his wage for wood and milk, and broke thereby the contract that Pete had with him for two years.

After some talking about it, Pete and I decided that he should look around for another job, and tell the farmer that we would not live on the wage he paid Pete. The farmer was most understanding, but since he was ill he saw no chance to up his wages and was agreeable that Pete should look for another job. Now, when we were on the boat, Pete had met a Dutchman who told him that a farmhand was not a good job and said that if Pete wanted he should come to Whitby where for sure he could find suitable employment at the mental hospital. We had to make it, so Pete went off to Whitby, which was an adventure for him with buses changing at different stations and he not speaking English, but he got there all right. With the help of John Van Boxtel he went to the hospital and applied for a job as attendant, got a physical, and was hired a day later, for they were always short on staff.

In the meantime I was alone with the kids and coped as well as possible. The children were a big help and good company. The nights were terrible and full of sounds, knocking and creaking, and sighing from the wind did not help either. I was relieved once the dawn came when I could sleep. Pete left on Friday and came back on Monday, I don't remember the date. He came with a Mr. George Hamers, who had been in Canada a long time and had a small truck. The farmer's son, Bob, came also with a truck to help us move. In a few hours everything was packed and we were ready to go to Whitby for our new adventure. We stopped to say good-bye to Mr. And Mrs. Lorne Walters who had the general store. Those kind, good people. I shall never forget them.

We arrived late in the evening in Whitby. John and his wife, Tina, offered us a part of their house, where we could live for a reasonable rent until we found our own accommodation, which we did a few months later. On the 1st of September 1953 we moved into a duplex at 222 Green Street. The house was later broken down and is now a small shopping plaza. The rent was \$80 a month, which was really more than we could afford, but we took a chance on it. Where we lived with the Van Boxtels it was intolerable; between the Van Boxtels and us there were 11 children. Our kitchen was in the basement, and our small living room and one

bedroom were on the top floor. The kids were mixed in with the Van Boxtel's kids so far as bedrooms were concerned.

The house in Green Street was no palace, and was left by the people that lived there before us in a deplorable state, but all of us worked hard, and at least it was clean when we moved in. we had very little furniture, no refrigerator, no stove, and no radio or TV. Of course we needed a stove so we bought one second hand. Pete made some kitchen cupboards and a counter around the sink. In the meantime we met two Dutch boys who had a room in Oshawa. They were not very domesticated and soon we agreed that they should live with us and pay room and board, for which I would look after their food, rooms, and laundry. Those boys were Klaas Zwiers and Jacob VanderEnde, the latter stayed with us for I think about a year, then he went back to Holland. Klaas stayed with us and was one and still is one of our family and loved by all, more about that later.

The winter of 1953-54 was a very hard one. We had so little money, and jobs were hard to get. For Klaas and Jacob especially it was hard for they had no job that first winter. However, together we made it, and I tell you all, I have an endless admiration for our children, and I tell you why. They started a paper route for the Globe and Mail. Joyce (13), Gerrie (11), Mary (10), and Martin (8), he only when one of his sisters was sick, delivered papers 6 days a week, starting at 6 o'clock a.m. It was a bitter cold winter with lots of snow. I felt very uneasy about it, and made sure that they had a good breakfast before they set out for school. What brave kids we had. So they earned their own pocket money, and there was enough for school supplies, and maybe for other things as well. At an auction sale I bought an old couch, two wing chairs, a table, and a big radio. They stole the table, but the rest gave us years of pleasure. The radio was of much service to me to learn more English. Reading from the Bible was for me easiest to understand for it was well known words I heard. Our children mastered the English language long before us. Martin and Nel went half days to school for Whitby had many immigrant children and not enough schools. I think they all did well enough in school though their report cards were a puzzle, and very different from the Dutch school system.

That first winter was a difficult one. Ontario did not have a health system like they have now and we had not any insurance, and all through the winter we needed a doctor. Dr. Hodgins lived on Green Street and we called on him when needed. As good as we could we explained to him that we had no money to pay him but if he was willing to wait till summer we would pay for his services. He told us not to worry and call him when needed. He was called on often, and he came, always friendly, and also a heartening word when we were discouraged, trying to help us as much as he could. A better man you could not find.

He helped many many people like us. On the end of the summer of 1954 we finally could pay him. He wrote out a bill for \$40. Dr. Hodgins is long gone, but what good memories he has left for us and many others.

### THE HOOGERDYK FAMILY AFTER 1953

The summer of 1954 was a lot better. Jacob started a bread route and Klaas got a job at the buckle factory. The buckle factory was situated where the IGA plaza is now. Pete picked any part time job that he could possibly have to make extra money and I cleaned houses a couple of times a week. We still had no TV and no phone, but I acquired a washing machine. How rich I felt, and happy that laundry day was not such heavy work anymore. There are far more stories to tell you about our two years in the Green Street, but they would probably be boring to you, the readers. Were we happy in Canada? Kind of, I would say. I had trouble with homesickness and had such a longing for my parents and sisters, but Pete always assured me that I would go back to see them again. It helped, yes, and hard work, there was no time to dwell too much on the past. There was laughter and cheerfulness too. Our neighbor, Mrs. Love, and I had many a good laugh over our use of English and sometimes misunderstanding of what was said.

In the summer of 1955 there was a long, long strike at GM [General Motors]. A lot of people were without jobs, and everybody was hurt in some way or another. People had very little money to spend, for the GM workers did not have benefits like they have now. Many men had to sell their houses for they could not pay the mortgage.

Though Pete's wages were not high and there were no benefits except pensions for retirees, it was a steady job, but part-time work was sparse. Our landlord wanted more money for rent and, because we had five children, we could not find a place to live. After talking about it for some time Pete and Klaas decided that together they should buy a building lot and put a basement on it where we could then temporarily live, while the men built the house. It is not possible to tell that story here, but after a lot of talking the bank manager was willing to lend Pete \$500 and with that the two men started to build the basement. In November it was done and we moved in. We had a living room, three bedrooms (one with a shower stall), and a small kitchen with half a bathroom (WC). Pete and Kraas had no experience in building, they did in our eyes a marvelous job. We were so proud of them, and I think we never had a cozier living room, with a Quebec woodstove, which kept the place nice and warm. Yes, 1631 Charles Street in Port Whitby was a nice address to be. Soon it would be Christmas, the town was decorated, and all kinds of Christmas music on the radio. Our children became excited and did more fighting amongst each other, for it was winter and for five lively

children there was not enough room to fool around in. We decided that we would not have a Christmas tree. It would take up too much room. At least that was what we thought until one day we were shopping in the Brock Street, and looking back to see where Martin was, saw him trying to pull a big Christmas tree behind him. He had seen a sign at the Salvation Army at the Christmas tree stand that men could have one for free. What can men do? Before they went to bed the Christmas tree was up. We had a lovely Christmas.

After the winter was over Pete and Klaas bought material to start to build the house. Klaas had bought the lot and was owner of the house. Pete worked with him with the understanding that we would buy the house from him when it was finished. It worked out very well for both parties and the men got along very well. They are friends. In order to get a down payment for the house I started to work in the dining room of the Psychiatric Hospital full time. I can't say that I loved the work, but I met a lot of nice people to work with. Pete liked his work well enough after awhile, though he had to work many weekends and always shift work. But that gave him the chance to work part-time and make some extra money. The building of the house came along very well and, in 1957, we moved upstairs. It was a very nice house and still sometimes I long back for the house. It holds many memories.

My father had an operation in 1958. He had lung cancer and we looked at our finances to see if I could go to Holland to see my parents and decided that I should. I went for four weeks. It was so good to see my loved ones again. Father was still very weak but home again he could take it easy. I visited my parents-in-law and found them in good health. I visited Pete's sister, brother-in-law, and their children, and so it is that Jan Van Haarlam came into our lives. He wanted to come to Canada so bad. He was 18 years old, far away from his loving family. The fact that he would live with us gave him, after a bit of discussion, the approval of his parents. In the summer of 1958 Jan became a member of our family. We were now the nine of us. A big family but sometimes so much fun and laughter. The three boys bunked together and had a lot of goings on in that bedroom judging from the noise coming from it. Life in the whole had improved in Canada. There were more jobs, and because many immigrants had settled in Ontario there were more small and big businesses and factories sprouting up, for people need to eat, they need a place to live, they needed doctors, hospitals, insurance, entertainment, and they did not need so much bureaucracy but got it anyway. Churches were built, Whitby got a new funeral parlour, and more schools and parks. Real Estate offices flourished, and builders had their golden years, opportunities for those who were looking for them and willing to work long past the eight-hour workday. Klaas and Pete had both worked for Mr. Thompson, a builder, and had learned a lot from him about

building, which came to pass when Klaas bought another lot in Whitby. Together they started to build a bungalow and sometimes Jan had time to come and help. Jan was a good immigrant and a hard and oh so neat worker. He too had a talent for building and they worked well together.

Our children did well enough at school. They had friends and spoke English with no accent, something we never lost. When we had moved to the Charles Street we joined the Anglican Church, the oldest church in Whitby-small but beautiful with well kept graveyard around it. Our girls joined the church choir and the Anglican girls group. Martin was in boy scouts. In 1958 Whitby got a new high school in the Henry lot, a lot closer than the one we had before in Colborne Street.

What we missed was family, no grandparents and aunts and uncles in Canada, which was too bad. It would have been great to have had them, but we had a couple of trusted friends, older than we were, and we made them an uncle and aunt. Jan and Alida Beyersbergen came to Canada in 1952. They had a nephew in Whitby, and that is how we came to meet them. They have meant a lot to us over the years, for they always shared in our joys and sorrows. Jan died at the age of 78 in 1978 and Alida followed him in 1982. I still miss them. They were good people and sometimes a lot of fun.

Pete's mother died in her sleep in 1960, she was 76, Pete went to Holland in 1961 and so never saw his mother again. 1961 was also the year that Joyce married Tom Hill, and Gerrie married Dave Langille a month later, both excellent men, steady and trustworthy, which they proved to be over the years. 1962 for me not a good year. My parents had made plans to come to Canada and visit us for a while, they had their passports make and were set to come when my father started to experience pain and discomfort. After many tests were done it became clear that his cancer had returned and was now in his bones, it had controlled a bit with pills, and he was up and around. Soon the pain increased and his appetite was gone. I went to Holland and helped my Mother nurse my Father. I spent many hours in the sickroom, and got to know my Dad better than I did before. We had many good conversations, and when he did feel well enough he told mother and me many things about the countries, for many years he read the National Geographic from the first to the last sentence, and so educated himself about many things. I had to go back home after 10 weeks with them, my Father then so very ill, but I had to go home as I was needed there. Seven days after I came home my Father died, June 19th, 1962. Mother carried on but wrote that she only lived half and missed my Dad more and more. After two serious heart attacks my Mother suddenly died on November 19th , 1962, five months after my Dad. I often think about them, and even after 30 years it still hurts that they are gone, for we still had so much to

tell them. We got in 1962 our first two grandchildren Rob Langille was born the 12th of January 1962 and Katherine Hill on May 19th 1962. What healthy and beautiful babies had been added to our family.

Now I come to the 1965-71 years. Mostly it has been a joy to me to write our story for those who come after us, so that you don't have to wonder where your ancestors came from. But I come to years here in which a lot happened, and I will try to put some of it on paper. In 1965 our Mary married Stoney Cooper and gave birth to a son, Ronald Martin and spent the first three years of married life in Germany where two years later Lisa was born. Martin also married in 1965. He and Barbara Milner had a son Jeffrey Michael, the marriage only lasted about three years. They were two young and ill matched, and especially Martin not grown up enough for such responsibility. It takes longer for a male to come to manhood. However both parents loved Jeff, and took good care of him. After they split, Jeff of course stayed with his mother, and was later adopted by Jan Van Haarlem who married Barbara. They had another son Jason. Klaas also had marriage plans and in 1966 married Irena Gregg.

I was far from well then, very depressed, lonely and tired. All the years of hard work, immigration, raising kids, and then in a few years time they had all left and I felt drained and empty, and at that time it seemed to me not much to live for. Oh that empty nest. I went on a long vacation for I really needed it to find myself. Nel was still at home then and she coped as well as she could. Pete worked a lot in the afternoon and night shift. I went to Spain to visit my brother and his family, we had some wonderful talks together, and I started to feel much better. In January I went home again. I think that it was in the summer of 1967 that we lost our beloved grandson Richard, son of Dave and Gerrie, he was 16 months old and died in a car (truck) accident. We were eating supper when Dave phoned and asked us to come as soon as we could, he could hardly get the words out, but we left our dinner on the table and drove to Utica and all I could do was put my arms around Gerrie and hold her. What can man say when such a tragedy is upon a family, there are no words then and there are no words now. Time heals, but once in a while the wounds act up. So you see, these were not good years but out of bad things good are born, and men grow stronger, men also grow a lot wiser, and in myself I could find more understanding and compassion for others.

Our grandchildren, how proud we were and are. The joy to see them grow and learn, especially Rob who came often to stay with us. We had a cottage in Minden and Rob loved to go there, play on the beach and go fishing with his Opa; those two had great times together. In 1968 our Norman joined the family, I had to have somebody to mother besides

Pete, and Norman needed parents to love, and to discipline him when needed, to care and comfort him. He was a challenge, and through we first needed some time to get to know and accept one another, he soon burrowed himself in our hearts. If I had given life to him I could not love him more. He is 35 years, and was 10 when he came, to grow up to a mature, good and honest man, who is doing a fine job in bringing up his son David (now 11). Norman has not had an easy life, but things for him look bright since he got to know Tammy, whom he hopes to make his wife in the near future.

Joyce and Tom have a good marriage, which was blessed with three children, Kathie in 1962, Ted in 1964 and Susan in 1970. As it is for Gerrie and Dave, they too, are happily married. They have three sons, Rob was born in 1962, Ken in 1966 and Steven in 1968. Gerrie and Dave could have two more more, but their little girl Lisa was stillborn, they later had their son little Rickie, who died when he was 16 months. Later came Ken and the Steve. Life is never bland, but a mixture of good and bad, of storms and quietness, of happiness and despair, men can look at families and think that they have everything going for them, but how do we know what really lives in the human nature, matters of the heart, of spirituality? Of all the emotions grief is something that is very personal, I mean, that we all grieve differently, and others can't feel as the grieving person feels. I also know now that when growing up we grieve. We get to be more compassionate for others. Mary and Stoney's marriage failed, Mary wanted Stoney to be something that was not in him, and Stoney failed more than that by not being a faithful husband, and not caring enough for his two children. He was not half grown up enough. For one thing I am glad that now Ron is grown up he and his father get on well and there is friendship between them. Martin after his divorce from Barbara lived in a rooming house and we saw little of him. I worried a lot then, a mother cares so much. Soon though he moved back home and we had two enjoyable years of having him around again. I think in 1970 he married Shari Sims and though two years later they divorced they always stayed friends. Shari married Wendell and she have three children and live in Golden B.C. Martin moved to Vancouver in 1973. He first went in roofing, he earned much money, it paid very well, but he fell off the roof too often and got hurt a few times. We were thankful when he gave it up, and went to work for Household Finance where soon he made promotions, I think finances is the right job for him.

Now I will write about Nel. Nel is a mixture between Pete and Me. On the one hand she is very outgoing, but also in deep water. I think that the only one who really knew her was her late husband Peter Masterton. In a way she is contradictive, sensitive and hard at times, she gets things done, she is not afraid, but once in a while she has to let go, she is a worrier, but so brave, and she has an excellent memory not inherited

from us. Nel did not have an easy life. I don't know the exact date when Nel got married in London, England, to Chris Marshall but I think it was around 1973. A few years later they had a daughter, Adrienne born in 1975 in Christ Church New Zealand. Soon the young couple and baby come back to Canada and moved west. First to Calgary and later to Vancouver, where they divorced when Adrienne was I think 18 months.

In 1978 Nel married Peter Masterton who had three daughters, Fiona, Sharron and Claire. Nel was never accepted by Fiona, but Sharron and Claire are very fond of her and Nel is a good stepmother. Peter and Nel got married in Sidney, Vancouver Island, and it was a happy marriage. After a few years in Sidney the aircraft factory closed and Peter was transferred to Montreal and the family lived in Hudson and later came to Ontario and lived in Yarker. Peter had swollen glands often and went to Kingston where he was diagnosed as having Hodgkins Disease. He got a disability pension and later they moved back to Vancouver Island. I write this here so unemotionally, but we all cared very much about Peter, he was fine man, humorous and intelligent. After eight years Peter had to give up the battle with cancer, he suffered a lot in his last year, and Nel lost a loving husband and the children their good father. It was horrible time for our Nel and also for Peter's father and his wife. It will be Three years since Peter died on the 15th of August 1990; Nel did her greiving and it will never be totally gone, but for her there is a new start. She will be married again on the 17th of July to John Blair Cameron, a very nice man who has two daughters. Nel has now has one daughter and five stepdaughters. When I read all this over it seems that a whole lot has happened to us, but in any family with six children things happen over the years joy and grief, bad and good things, it goes hand in hand, life is like that.

Klaas lived with us for thirteen years and he shared with our family good and bad. In 1966 he married Irena Gregg and she too brought us great happiness, though much younger than I am, we are the best of friends. Pete and Klaas worked in building often together and shared tools and garage and at first we lived two homes from each other. Irena and I did some volunteer work in the sheltered workshop but Irena got pregnant with her first baby and I was busy preparing for the adoption of our Norman. Karl was born on the 10th of July and we got Norman on the 15th of August 1968. Two years later Klaas and Irena had a second son. Gregg was born the 20th of July 1970 and one year later they had a little daughter. Nicole was born the 8th of July 1971. With three small children it was a busy but happy family and we shared in that. We became the adopted grandparents of Karl, Gregg, and Nicole, for us to love and be loved , and a rich source of happiness, for still even though they now have grown up they come to Picton as often as they can and they share in our family celebrations, for us they are family.

Jan and Barb had moved away with Jeff and Jason and lived first in Port Perry and later in Exeter, we have not had direct contact with them for years because family happenings had brought hard feelings from both sides. However, no matter what, we have a lot of respect and love for Jan who lived with us for nine years and was one of the family, and a family should never be separated for good, and we hope for better times.

In 1975 Nel and Chris immigrated to New Zealand. Chris always saw the grass greener on the other end of the fences, and Nel liked adventure and she likes to move. Nel was pregnant and very homesick. On the 10th of April 1975 a daughter was born to them. They named her Adrienne, she was a beautiful baby Nel wrote, and though not a baby anymore, in our eyes still very beautiful. She soon will be 18 years and will graduate from high school in June. Time will learn what she is going to make of her life, and we wish her well. She had such a hard blow when at fifteen, she lost her beloved stepfather, for they had such a warm relationship, she misses him a lot, although she and Blue get on well together. Blue has two daughters, Allison and Elizabeth, they spend as much time with their father and Nel as possible, which for everybody involved is the best. Children need love and security. Adrienne was two months old when she, Nel, and Chris came back to Canada.

The seventies were on the whole tranquil and happy except for some happenings I care not to write about for reasons I have. In 1978 after 25 years of faithful work in the hospital Pete retired at sixty-five years of age. He had a memorable day and many of the hospital staff came to the tea given in his honor, of course we as family were all there to witness that day. Gregg Zwiers suggested that Pete should stay at work, for he said, "Opa, if you retire you will soon die and we don't want you to." Well Gregg, it is now fifteen years later and Opa is still going strong. You see, Opa knew that if he retired and did nothing he indeed would not have stayed healthy, but he is always busy, he rests more then before but he is eighty years old.

For us both it was a big adjustment we had to make. Pete suddenly had the whole day before him, and for me it was tying me down-a lot of sharing what I used to do alone and enjoyed. If we had to do it over I would not ever do it like it now has become. Too much together and not enough outside interests away from one another and we don't do any hobbies together. But there are things that we can enjoy. We both like to sit and read, we don't need any TV then, we enjoy going to church together and discussing it after, and the main thing is, we get along fine.

In the seventies we sold our cottage in Minden. We had bought a building lot on Prinyers Cove 16 miles east of Picton. Pete always wanted

to build a home for us and so he started. We stayed at my sister's cottage beside our lot; that made it easy. Klaas came to help to put down the foundation and Irena and the children came for company; that was fun.

In 1978 we sold our house on Charles Street and moved to the new house on Prinyers Cove. Now in 1993 the house is for sale and once it is sold we will move back to Whitby to be close to our loved ones. We are getting too old to live in the country.

Klaas and Irena both worked hard building houses, men can find many of them in Whitby. Men could not find better built houses than what Klaas built, solid as the bank, and very nice ones.

In 1979 we went for a few months to Florida and landed in Orlando where we rented a small trailer and did some sightseeing. We like Orlando, and in October we bought a mobile home in a small mobile home park, it was an all adult park with many couples our own age. We found friendship with some of them, but now fourteen years later they have all gone, some died and some went back to be close to their families.

Then in 1980 disaster hit our family, but first I have to tell you about our daughter Mary. After her marriage with Stoney broke up, she started to work at the hospital where Pete worked. She was a very good mother, she lived for her children, but she was lonely for adult company, and after dating a few guys she found the man she really took a liking to. Mary and Bob decided to live together and she moved in with Bob who had a house in the Brock Street. They had a few good years there, Bob had a good job at GM but he was not happy with his work. He saw and then bought a hunting camp, also for fishing, there on highway seventeen near Spanish. Bob and Mary both were in seventh heaven about it and full of plans on how they could improve the place. The rest of the family was less than pleased with the plans, we did not see anything but disaster in it for them, but they had the right to live their lives any way they wanted. After I had seen the camp I was even surer that it was a very bad move but held my opinion from them, it was too late anyway. Mary worked very hard for it, and Bob when he found the time to work. The camp did improve some. There was no electricity and everything was so primitive. The only power was on a generator that they could only use a few hours a day. I have to say that the country around there is very beautiful, and plenty of fish and in the hunting season plenty of deer and bears. The cabins in the hunting season rented out pretty well, and in the summer nearly all cabins were rented out. If they had been able to have such business the whole year around it would not have been too bad, but that is not possible. The winters

there are lonely and long and cold. Mary started to look and find some outside interest, they met a couple of people their age and became friends, they came to the camp and friendship flourished between Mary and Joyce and Bill Lawson. Mary was very talented in making things, she knitted and crocheted, sewed for Lisa and herself, and finally gathered enough courage to start a Girl Guide group, soon she had a lot of young girls eager to join and do things together, while Mary got more self confidence.

On the 24th of January 1980 Mary was invested in the Girl Guides as leader of a group of young girls, and I can imagine how proud and happy she was at that evening, the last evening of her and Lisa's lives which were cruelly taken when a drunk driver hit them while they were off the highway and on a snowmobile. Ron saw his mother and sister get killed in an instant. Dave phoned us that evening; how can men describe what men feel, disbelief and frustration, anger, desperation, concern. We did not sleep that night, and didn't know what to do, but a lot of people from the park stood by and helped the next day, one booked us on the plane, another did our laundry, and one did the ironing for us. One cooked a meal and another took us to the airport. We will never forget how people shared in our sorrow, and many people shared in Spanish on the day of the funeral service. Mary was only thirty-six and Lisa thirteen years old. In the few years Mary lived in Spanish she made lots of friends, especially among the Indians, they all came to the funeral. Everybody's heart went out to Ron who was nearly 15 years. Ron decided to stay with Bob and later found a boarding house in Blind River where he attended high school. He was and is a good lad. He and Dionne got married last year on August 15th, 1992. We as a family were all there to witness it and hope they will be as happy as on the day they married.

It is now thirteen years ago that we lost our beloved daughter Mary and her only daughter Lisa. They are buried in the Spanish graveyard, where Protestants and Catholics are lying side by side, and hopefully share in the eternal kingdom of our Lord to be forever happy. But we miss them so much.

Good and bad things happened in the eighties and the joy of our lives were our grandchildren, whom we could enjoy and still did not have the responsibility of bringing them up. They all did well in school, just happy and healthy children. Kathy graduated from college and was the first one to be married and after living and working a few years in Whitby, Simon and Kathy moved to Sudbury. However, their marriage didn't work out and they divorced. Now Kathy is married to John Pennie, they have a little girl, Caitlin, who is the darling of Joyce and Tom. Rob married Susan Elliot after Rob graduated from Waterloo University with a degree in engineering and Susan also graduated from Guelph

University with a degree in early childhood education. They now have three children: Lauren, Benson, and Andrew, a busy family, but so very happy together. Ted also studied in Waterloo and after he had his degree attended two years teachers college in Alberta where he met the girl he wanted to marry and did a few years later. Ted and Jacqueline are teachers and live in Oshawa. Ron and Dionne got married in 1992, Dionne is a nurse and Ron looks after business machines. All the others are still single. Ken works in I would say some kind of detective work and his girlfriend Barbara goes to school and works part-time for a dentist. Steve graduated last year from London University in engineering and works for IDM. Susan Hill attends George Brown College, and has a degree I think for business from Sir Wilfred Laurier University. She wants to be a caterer gourmet cook. Karl Zwiers graduated two years ago from Waterloo University in city planning. Gregg Zwiers graduated from Brock University with a degree in Geology and will probably go on for his Masters degree. Nicole Zwiers studies in London but will get her degree next year and hopes to become a lawyer, which we really need in our family there are so many of us. Norman's son, David, is in sixth grade. In the West Nel's daughter Adrienne graduates from high school. Martin's son, Jeff, works at a travel office in Toronto and a fine young man he is. Martin's other son was born the 23rd of September 1985 and is as dear a grandson as you can wish for. It's nearly three years ago that I saw him, but he lives very much in my heart. Martin's two stepchildren are Brent, he is nearly nine years and we hope to get to know him a lot better when Martin and Mafalda come to us in May, and there is Vanessa, she is going to be six years. On the phone talking to them, both kids are friendly and well mannered, and we look forward to their visit. How rich we are to have so many grandchildren.

Our children except Norman are all middle aged now. Tom Hill is already two years retired, but he is always busy for they have ten beautiful acres of land around their house and their front lawn is as beautiful as a park. In the back he keeps horses and there are lots of trees. Since they have a woodstove there is always lots of wood to chop for Tom. He is an active member of the Presbyterian Church choir and often soloist. He and Joyce take singing lessons, and they sing wonderfully well together. Joyce has been a busy mother and wife, but was some years ago struck with Lupus, that is a disease of the autoimmune system, it is serious and will be life long. At least that is the way it is now, but in the way that science progresses in leaps and bounds, we don't know where it can lead. What is not possible today is possible tomorrow, and we hope that our beloved daughter will be healed in time. She gives her best for church and choir, has an Avon route, and that way meets a lot of people in their neighborhood.

Dave Langille has worked for thirty-two years at Dupont and gave it his very best. It is Dupont's gain that Dave has many talents for machines and other things, he sometimes travels for Dupont because he is knowledgeable. However, he looks forward to his retirement in a few years. His hobby is his boat, his pride and joy, and can hardly wait until his boat is back in the water. At the yacht club at Scugog Lake, Dave and Gerrie spend most of the summer enjoying their days with friends, and we are happy for them. Too early in life came the responsibilities of raising a family, but they met it head on and became good parents. Now they enjoy their three grandchildren. Gerrie knits beautiful sweaters for the kids and is always willing to help out.

Norman and Tammy and David live in Port Whitby, where Tammy has a very busy life. She works in Hillsdale Manor and for her certification as nurse she works at the Ruddy Hospital. In her free time she makes a good and cozy home for her two men. Norman likes his job as a police officer though once in awhile he makes some plans for when he gets his pension. I know time goes fast but he is only thirty-five. Their adult life has just started. But Norman is far from lazy, he works overtime whenever he can, he can cook, do laundry, and many other things, he will make a fine husband when they are ready for it.

As I told you before Martin and Nel live on the West coast. Martin and Mafalda are working hard on a career in "the investor group" and since they are both trained in the finances and are not afraid how long and how hard they have to work, we have confidence that they will make it. they live on Salt Spring Island and the kids attend school in Ganges. Blue and Nel live in Comox; Blue works as a civilian government employee on the airforce base, and Nel is a legal assistant for a lawyer's office. I do mind very much that our children live far away from us and am often longing to see them, for I love them so much. However, that same love has to let go, men do not own one's children, they have a perfect right to live their lives anyway they want. So I pray, I long, I love, and wait for the day that they come and see us, or we can go and see them.

Klaas and Pete worked hard, and Klaas saw his dream fulfilled when they built his six-flat apartment building on Brock Street in Port Whitby; later Klaas added an addition on. Pete fully retired from building so he could work on his house in Picton, but Klaas with the help of Irena built many more homes. They are semi-retired now, their children have grown up, and they now have more time for travel. Last year they made a trip to Australia and New Zealand, Thailand and Indonesia, and this year they visited their families in Holland and Ireland. We are happy for them, they are the best friends anybody could have, and over the years we shared the good and the bad; they are dearly loved by us both. Klaas'

brother leo lived with us for a few years in the late 1960's I think and was later joined by Margaret who became his wife and started married life in Oshawa. They have two children, Arfona and Alan, both grown up.

One of the best things that ever happened was that my two sisters came to live in Canada. In July 1967 Jopie and her husband Tom with Jopie's son Ilmar arrived in Montreal and settled in Whitby. It must have been very hard on Tom (Dutch name Teun) he wasn't very adjustable, had never been far away from Den Haag, got married late in life and had no knowledge of the English language, but he was brave. He found a job at a tool and die business, however he was allergic to the paints I think, and when the Ruddy Hospital opened in Whitby Tom got a job in the maintenance department. He worked there for many years with much pleasure, liked by his colleagues and other staff. For Jopie the adjustment was easier for she spoke English and had been from home time and again. She went house hunting and found the house on Thicksen Road where she still lives now. She and Tom were happy there, it had a very big lot, lots of trees and grass, after a few years lots of trees and a vegetable garden. The house is not big but big enough for the three of them. Later a washroom and a sundeck were added to it. Ilmar was seventeen when he came, and had been longing to come to Canada since he was seven years old.

He was lucky, for Durham College opened its doors for students for the first time in September 1967. Ilmar enrolled for different courses for two years and graduated in 1969. He was happy at the college, later found a job, and became a Canadian Citizen. On one of his trips to Europe he met a Dutch girl, Helma Broeken, who joined him later in Canada. They married, lived for a while in Whitby, and then went to visit my brother Pete in Spain. Pete had a business there, but was also in bad health and Ilmar and Helma took over his business and expanded after they moved to a better location. They have lived in Spain for years now and are raising two little girls, Eva and Carolina. We have seen them off and on when they come to visit my sister. My sister worked at the Psychiatric Hospital in Whitby and liked her work as Clerical secretary in the ward and met many people over the years. Tom and Jopie both retired and had some good years together. Too bad Tom was a heavy smoker for it affected his health. In 1989 Tom took sick and by x-rays they found a large tumor and it was malignant. He had an operation and for awhile it looked like he would be all right but soon the cancer spread, he had a brain operation, and doctors tried to do an operation on his throat but to no avail, he could not talk anymore. Though he had no pain he fell sick, and had no appetite, he lost a lot of weight and in September 1990 he died. He is buried at Saint John's Church graveyard in Port Whitby where when our time comes we too will be buried.

Tom was seventy-two years old when he died, he loved life, loved his family and his work, the family cat, and his flowers. He clung to life as long as possible, and was heartily sorry that he had smoked, as we were too. Tom was a good man, too soon he had to leave. It makes me bitter that still many many people are smokers, so addicted that they won't even try to stop. Heroin is strictly forbidden to be sold and rightly so, but cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and pipe tobacco can freely be sold, while it is a first class killer. It can be produced and manufactured everywhere. It is for the government's sweet tax money that comes in, and it gives work to many people on farms, factories, stores, doctors, nurses, hospital workers, graveyard workers, and funeral homes. Think about it if any of you smoke.

My sister Sabien and her husband Ab came to Canada in 1969 with their six-year-old son Klaas. Ab was nearly sixty years old and had in 1950 retired from Shell. He was an engineer on a tanker stationed in Venezuela. My sister Sabien met and married there and settled in Belgium. They had a beautiful house and what I thought was a big garden, but Ab wanted land and in Belgium where it is overpopulated, that is hard to find. Sabien had visited a few times with us before and liked Canada. They came to Canada in 1969 and lived in Whitby for a year. Ab bought a six-acre lot in Cavan township, the lot was bordered by two creeks, it was all what ever he had wanted. They found a builder in Peterborough and half a year later they moved into their house. Klaas went to school in Millbrook. Ab put in a vegetable garden, and a little orchard, some currant bushes, and planted trees and a hedge. He bought chickens, ducks, and geese. He was happy there and Sabien was content. Klaas found some friends and fooled around a bit after school was out. It was around the early eighties that Ab's eyesight began to fail. The doctor said that he should not drive anymore, and Sabien took over the driving. They could have stayed in the country if only it weren't for the severe winters. Sabien hated to drive on the slippery roads, and it is all hill country there. Ab was heartbroken to have to give up his place in Cavan Township, but they sold the house and moved to Whitby where they rented a townhouse for awhile and then bought a house in Pickering. Klaas had finished school and started to work for CNR. Soon after Ab's eightieth birthday his health started to fail and he died on February 9th 1990. My sister had to get used to being alone, but since she is a quiet and private person it seems not to bother her. Sabien has dry eye disease and can't read much or watch TV too much, but she keeps herself busy and fit. She can run stairs faster than an eighteen year old, she is a vegetarian and on health food. I don't think she weighs more than about 37 kg. However, she is seventy years old, has a healthy colour and I tell myself I should not worry so much about her. You see, my sisters mean a lot to me, and I am happy that two of them live so close to us.

Today is the 22nd of March 1993 and tomorrow is a glad day, for Gerrie will, as all is well, arrive at the Orlando airport at 9:25 a.m. She comes for a week to celebrate with us my seventy-fifth birthday. It makes me so happy that she cares enough to come for a second time this winter to Florida. How much love we have received from this our dear daughter, every year she come to Orlando and she visits us in Picton as much as she can, helps Pete to prepare our taxes, and in her own quiet way shows her love for her parents. I feel that as a treasure.

On the first of April we will be in Canada 40 years. It is a long time, many things, happenings I have forgotten, and many more remembered. I cannot write everything that happened in our life in Canada down, it would be a book with more pages as the Bible has, also it would be very boring.

You might wonder if we are sorry we are sorry we came to Canada? It is true that we left a lot behind in Holland, and it was difficult in many ways our beginning in Canada, but it also was and is a challenge. We lost a lot and we gained a lot, and if we had stayed in Holland it would have been that way too. We are not sorry that we came to Canada, and it was a glad day that we became Canadian citizens on the 16th of December 1958. In our hearts we are Canadians, proud of our beautiful country, which we have seen from the east to the west coast. So diverse and each province has its own beauty and charm. We are fortunate to have seen so much, we traveled by car to the west coast and took our time for it. I can picture it in my mind, the empty prairies, and the majestic mountains, the valleys, the waterfalls, the ocean, too much to set it on paper. I know one thing I would not exchange any other country in the world for Canada. I have not forgotten my country of birth and love that little country dearly, but I realize that had we stayed there we would not have had the opportunities we have here. We didn't go with the idea that we would get rich in Canada. What we wanted were better chances for us, and more so for our children. We were willing to work hard for it and that we did. After two years I had saved \$75, I was at that time bookkeeper and treasurer of our family. How happy I was that now we had money in the bank, and at the same time we learned the value of money. I don't think that Pete and I will ever be reckless with spending. We have a comfortable life, but it still needs watching not to overspend, and live within our means. We did not get rich did I say? But we did! Not in money, but in ways that money can't buy, I will explain it here. Look at all the relatives we have, as you have read in this our story. I would not do very well if I only counted my blood relatives, there are not many. Just Martin and his two sons, Nel and her daughter, my two sisters, and my nephew. Pete has many more blood related people. To

me it matters not a bit well or not, to me it is the love and devotion that bind us as one family that counts.

To me you are all precious, I love you, all of you have entered our lives and our hearts, and have enriched our lives in immeasurable ways, to me it means far more than any amount of money. As you see, we are rich! I hope that you don't think that our lives were perfect, that always we lived in harmony together, for that is not so. Sometimes we were far from happy, we had disagreements and arguments, and only speaking for myself, maybe I was too strict and downright unreasonable. I expected too much from others and from myself and I have a flammable temper, I must often have hurt loved ones with that, and I often have annoyed Pete with different things, for we are so much together. For all that I did wrong I am truly sorry. Pete and I are both old now, we can't work as hard and as long as we once did, and I feel sometimes so frustrated about it. I see much that should be done, but physically I don't feel up to it, and I realize that my spirit has not aged at all, and I feel young inside of me. Pete has the same feeling, as I think that all people do, men would like to live on and on and stay with our loved ones. However, our end station is in sight. It comforts me that we both know that in the moment our bodies give out, our spirit will return to God, He who is our Lord and Savior. The same God who always has looked after us and has provided for us. When men are young they think that they can go in one's own strength. I thought so myself, but I know better now, life itself is a good but tough teacher. At one point when I was all empty inside of me and I didn't see it sit anymore, then I turned to God and asked for His help. From there on my faith started to grow, and is still growing. I am still a sinner, but I know that my redeemer lived and that when my life here on earth is finished, then I can come home. My fear for death is gone, though I like to stay with my you my loved ones, until I get the call.

Long after we have gone, I hope that some of our descendants will sit and read this story of our lives, that I wrote with love in my heart for all of you.

