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FIVE YEARS WE WILL NEVER FORGET!

Our decision to come to Canada was made one autumn night as my husband, Sydney, John my eldest son, and I sat around the fire talking. John had been doing an intensive study of Canada at school and had been encouraged by his Geography master to get tourist literature from all the provinces - this he had done and we all had a wonderful time going over the various booklets. John was particularly interested as he had become absorbed in Forestry and had read anything about it he could find; the opportunities in England seemed very slight and Canadian forests sounded very exciting.

Well, as we sat there John suddenly said, "Let's go to Canada." Something of this mood caught me and I said, "Yes, why don't we." My husband who is normally a very cautious person, surprisingly said, "Well, we can try."

After that we didn't let the grass grow under our feet and numerous enquiries were made and there was a visit to Canada House, x-rays, medical examinations, etc., and all the usual preliminaries to be gone through. Most of our friends and acquaintances probably thought we were mad. Sydney had a good job at the Grammar School and we owned our own house and four acres of market garden. We realized ourselves that it was now or never as we were neither of us young but with three boys it seemed worth trying. We felt it could be a wonderful experience for all of us but for the boys a great opportunity. And so it has been and I feel sure still will be.

June 9th, 1950 was then perhaps one of the most moving and exciting days in our family history, We left our Gloucestershire smallholding and set out for Liverpool to board S.S. NEWFOUNDLAND sailing for Halifax that evening. It was quite an undertaking as my husband had his leg in a cast having broken a bone in his ankle three weeks previously and there were three boys aged 14, 10 and 4, to look after, not to mention numerous pieces of luggage.

Late afternoon found us all comfortably installed in two adjacent cabins and the older boys were busy exploring. Martin, the four year old, was a

bit bewildered and clung to us. However that night we all slept well but awoke to find ourselves approaching Ireland and that was not so good ! I discovered to my chagrin that I was an atrocious sailor and Martin was prostrated also - the other three kept going and after about twenty-four hours enjoyed deck games and all meals and made many friends on board. Martin and I recovered as we steamed into Newfoundland and we all very much enjoyed a trip ashore and a conducted tour of St. John's offered by a passenger landing there.

I was convinced that all would be well with us when I found a 10¢ piece at my feet as I got out of the car at the foot of Signal Hill. We landed in Halifax on a lovely summer morning, June 16th, and due to the consideration and foresight of the Gardners from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, we were assured of comfortable accommodation for that night. The boys and I spent that day in the very lovely Public gardens in Halifax and ate our meals in a very clean little restaurant in Barrington Street. My husband was busy being interviewed by the Education Department.

We very quickly realized that the meagre £100 that we had been allowed to bring out of England was not going to last till September unless we lived very simply and we realized that we had to get out of the city into the country. It was probable that my husband would get a job at Dartmouth High School so we decided that the outskirts of Dartmouth might be cheaper than Halifax. Accordingly next morning John, my eldest boy, and I set out for Dartmouth to explore the possibilities, leaving my husband in charge of the younger two.

It was another lovely morning and we could not fail to feel cheerful even though we missed both the security of the ship and the comforts of our English home. We realized that we needed what we called House Agents and decided to go to the Town Hall for a list of them. The people we found there were friendly but had little to offer or suggest and told us that moving was almost impossible in Dartmouth at that period. Then somebody said "Carl Merson will help; do you know Carl Merson ?"

Well, as a matter of fact, he was the only person in Dartmouth we did know as he had been a passenger on S.S. NEWFOUNDLAND, and had been very friendly to us all. So when somebody rang him up and explained our situation to him, he said "Sure, tell them to come right along". We felt no hesitation in going.

We discovered that he had a men's clothing store and that he was a very busy person; that, however, did not prevent him from being wonderfully kind to us. I don't think I will ever forget his efforts on his behalf. It was his first morning in his store after 6 week's absence in England, and

there were many things to see to and hosts of friends dropping in to welcome him back.

Despite this he spent every spare moment that morning telephoning to try to find us somewhere to live that was within our means. Finally towards lunch time he said we must go home with him and he would take us to see a place in the afternoon. His wife was kindness itself; I knew it must have been very inconvenient to welcome two strangers on her first day at home after a long holiday but she made us feel at home. The chance to wash and rest in a very delightful new house on the hillside overlooking Dartmouth was more than welcome. After we had eaten a very delicious light meal, they showed us the house which seemed to us like a house straight out of a magazine. It didn't seem possible to us then that we would ever live in a comparable one.

We then said goodbye to Mrs. Merson and set out with Mr. Merson to find somewhere to live. We were very soon into the country and as we went along he told us stories about the places we came to. Summer was just beginning and everything looked green and smelled wonderful. We stopped and made enquiries from people beginning to open up their cottages after the long winter and finally we draw up before a little roadside store where he was apparently well known.

The storekeeper had a number of small cottages on the grassy hillside opposite the store. We very soon gathered that Mr. Merson was trying to persuade Len Oickle to rent us one at bargain price as it was early in the season. Finally he agreed to do so and we climbed the hill to inspect them. They were by no mean luxurious - just one fair size room partitioned at the back into two small bedrooms just big enough to contain beds. The second bedroom could also contain a chest of drawers and mirror and a curtained closet. I felt they were adequate and we could enjoy a country holiday there.

There was electricity, a hot plate and a wood stove for cooking. The sanitation was primitive and all water had to be fetched from a well behind the store. But the air was wonderful and fragrant with pines that whispered behind us, and over the tops of the trees behind the store we glimpsed a lake so blue and sparkling that it seemed like a calendar picture.

Mr. Merson was inclined to apologize for not finding us something better, but we assured him that it would do very well and we knew we could be happy there for the next few weeks. We arranged to move in that evening, and got into the car to return joyfully to Dartmouth. On the way we discussed ways of moving the family and luggage. Mr. Merson found us a

taxi driver who agreed to do it very reasonably, leaving Halifax at 6:30 that evening.

After thanking Mr. Merson, we caught the ferry to Halifax, told the exciting news to my husband, Roger and Martin, and then embarked on a tour of the Dominion Stores to get supplies to take with us.

While we were out shopping, my husband read in the Halifax paper of the sudden death of Dr. Sheldon, a mathematician at Acadia University in the Annapolis Valley, and he wondered idly whether he might be considered suitable for this job. He asked the owner of the house what she would do about it and somewhat to our amazement, she said "Ring the President immediately". Well, in England such an action would be the last way of getting a job. However, he compromised and said that he would ring him up on Monday morning, it was then late Saturday afternoon.

At 6:30 we packed ourselves into the taxi and set out for Portobello which was the name of the district where the store was. On the way the sky darkened and the wind blew and the rain lashed the windows and there were a few heavy claps of thunder and some vivid flashes of lightning.

It was still pouring with rain when we arrived at the Oickles, so we picked up the key at the store and the taximan manouvered his way up the steep grassy slope with the heavily laden car. Then he dashed out and unlocked the cottage door and we all trooped in to survey our new domain. It seemed rather congested when all our belongings were put down on the limited floor space but as soon as the taxi man had gone, the rain abated, the sky cleared to a beautiful sunset and our hearts lifted too.

Len Oickle appeared soon after that accompanied by his twelve year old son Brentwood, who was very interested in the English children. Mr. Oickle was kindness itself and brought us a radio to use while we were there and a toaster, and he also found a cot for Martin which we managed to wedge into our sleeping compartment.

We slept very well that night and awoke to a perfect morning air like wine, clear blue sky and bright sunshine. The boys were afoot early, busy exploring and as I fried bacon on the wood stove I felt life was good. We spent that day sorting ourselves out and watching the cars in the highway out for a Sunday drive. Many people stopped at the store for an ice cream or hot dog or soft drink and a chat, and we felt we saw a good cross section of our new countrymen.

I was a trifle disconcerted and afterwards much amused at one remark I overheard while waiting at the counter to be served. One woman was talking indignantly to Mrs. Oickle about the treatment meted out to her son by his teacher. She ended up saying "Anyways, Mrs. Oickle, all teachers is Bums!" My husband being a member of the profession, I thought momentarily, oh dear !, what have we got into ? Then my sense of humour reasserted itself and I also remembered that "Bum" is not nearly so unmentionable a word here as in England! Mrs. Oickle was watching my face and I think she saw what went through my mind and was amused also.

Next morning, my husband went down to the store and rang up Dr. Kirkconnel, the President of Acadia University, and somewhat to his surprise he was asked how soon he could come for an interview. He said next day, and then arranged to leave for Wolfville that afternoon to be there in time for a morning interview. We were very excited about all this, wondering whether we were to live in Dartmouth or in the famed Annapolis Valley.

During the late afternoon of the next day something happened which made it all the more exciting. Mr. Ian Forsythe, Inspector of Schools for Dartmouth, arrived and enquired for my husband. I said that he was away and he said "What a pity", as he wanted to offer him the Dartmouth job. I didn't know what to say as I knew we might be very glad of it but I had sensed that my husband was very keen to get the Acadia job if at all possible.

While we were still talking, I saw my husband return, and as he walked slowly up the hill (he still had his leg in a cast), I could see from the expression on his face that all had gone well. Mr. Forsythe went to meet him and quickly learned the news; he was very nice about it and congratulated him and wished us well. He said he regretted he had not been able to make a definite offer earlier. He told us that Acadia was a very pleasant place and that he was sure we would like it.

After he had gone, we all eagerly questioned my husband and he told us that the job was for one year only, but that he thought it was worth taking as it might lead to other similar jobs. When the younger boys were in bed we sat around the campfire that we lighted to repel the mosquitoes, and he told us how much he had liked what he had seen of Wolfville and the Valley. In England we had come from lush agricultural country and we had at once noticed the barren rockiness of much of the country around Halifax. Since we had not thought much of the gardens we had seen, apparently as soon as Sydney entered the Valley, he felt at home.

It was all so green and beautiful - the lawns were velvety and spacious and the borders were gay with flowers. Wolfville was a quiet little place dominated by the very lovely campus from the top of whose green slopes the Administration building stood proudly. It seemed to have an air of dignity and graciousness.

He was directed to a small hotel named Revaron Lodge for the night and found the proprietor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Fishman, most charming. This hotel seemed to consolidate his impression of the place. Here was quiet and serenity, no one hurried you, it was all very comfortable and pleasant, and the service and the food were excellent. When he was ready to leave the next morning, Mr. Fishman told him that if he came to Acadia, he would be only too pleased to help the family establish themselves. How true an offer this was I was to learn later.

I suppose that we lived at Portobello for about two and a half weeks. We were happy, temporarily care-free and we all learned about Canada without any effort.

Mrs. Oickle taught me a great deal that I shall never forget. I found it quite bewildering to be confronted by rows of tins with unfamiliar labels and wondered which to buy. She advised me again and again and taught me a lot about 'good buys'. Sometimes they took me into Dartmouth to shop and sometimes they brought meat home for me. Always they were patient and kind and never laughed at foolish mistakes I must have made. They were very nice to the boys, too, I wouldn't like to say how many free snacks they had with Brentwood and his sister, Corinne.

Due to the currency restrictions, we were budgeting very strictly and had no spare money to give the boys. Mrs. Oickle helped them to earn a little with odd jobs and finally by collecting soft drink bottles from the woods and trading them in at the store when the picnic season started. Roger, aged 10, became adept at this and persisted in the habit long after we left there and for nearly two years could scarcely pass a dejected bottle !

Once again we packed ourselves up; we were almost sorry to leave our little house among the pine trees. We said goodbye to the friendly Oickles and told them we would not forget their kindness for a long time. Then we set out by taxi for the trip to Halifax.

We decided on arrival there we had better have a sound meal before setting out on the train, so we decided to go to the Lord Nelson Coffee Shop. It was a very pleasant place and we ordered cold meat, salad, and potato salad - fortunately we ordered half portions for the younger boys. When our order came, there seemed to our eyes, still coloured by English rationing, to be about a week's meat for a family on those five plates.

Certainly it was more meat at sitting than any of our children had ever seen before. They attacked it manfully, and we left there feeling more replete than for years.

The train journey from Halifax is really very slow and dull, but on this occasion, it was an exciting novelty and there was very little boredom. Every farmyard where we stopped to pick up or set down milk cans was examined minutely and the names on the stations were of absorbing interest.

We finally arrived at Wolfville at about 6:30 P.M. By this time the boys looked rumpled and a bit grubby, and we seemed to have innumerable packages tied together with string. I certainly did not feel we looked very smart; however, we piled into a taxi and in a few moments were alighting at Revaron Lodge.

I have often wondered whether Mr. Fishman repented of his offer in those first few moments, as this scruffy gang arrived, contrasting very unfavourably, I fear, with his more opulent looking tourists. He was there to welcome us and showed us at once to our room, a huge room on the top floor with two double beds and a cot for Martin, with a bathroom next door. He said that as soon as we had washed, he and his wife would like us to come down and have supper as their guests. After we had eaten a delicious meal, and the boys had gone to bed, bathed in comfort for the first time in weeks, we sat down with him and Mrs. Fishman to talk things over.

That evening stands out in my mind and I think my husband's also. I believe we really relaxed and felt completely at home and with friends. He told us that many years ago he had arrived in Halifax with \$50.00 in his pocket, and that he had had to struggle too. We found out later how successful he had been and that the hotel was merely his hobby to occupy his years of retirement.

The offer he made us that evening was wonderful. We were to pay him a very low rate for the room provided I cleaned it. They were prepared to allow us to do something hitherto forbidden for guests - we could prepare our breakfast and supper in our room with a hotplate, toaster, and crockery that they would supply. And we could have our main midday meal downstairs with a 10% reduction on each bill. It was very clearly emphasized that none of the other guests were to suspect any difference in our arrangements from theirs. In the dining room, we were entitled to choose whatever we liked from the menu provided we would agree to eat at 12 noon before the rush started. I asked whether my help would be of any use to them and was told that they would be glad of it in the

afternoons when the kitchen was empty to hull strawberries and do similar jobs.

On the Sunday night my husband left for Dalhousie, we hated to see him go, but we all felt much better being at Revaron without him rather than at Portobello. Pleasant though it was, Portobello gave us a feeling of being out in the wilds, and I would not have liked to be there without him when, as sometimes happened, the Oickles went away for the night taking the only car for miles (so it seemed to me) with them.

My husband and I decided that, although Mr. and Mrs. Fishman had said we could stay indefinitely under this arrangement, we must find a place of our own as soon as possible. The boys were very well behaved, but it was a certain amount of strain on them to live for long in a hotel primarily intended for the peace and quiet of adult tourists. Accordingly, I asked Mr. Fishman how I could find a house. He directed me to Mr. Sproule as the most reliable real estate man he knew.

Mr. Sproule was very pleasant and understanding, but not very encouraging at first. He said that there hadn't been a house to rent in Wolfville for ages, and he had no apartment large enough for a family of three boys. Because of my desperation, I was not easily put off and I'm inclined to think Mr. Sproule must have wondered if he would ever get rid of me.

After he told me that he had nothing but houses for sale, some of which had been offered for sale for several years, I asked him whether he could not think of one owner who would rent a house to us for the one year we expected to be in Wolfville. He thought hard and said there was one possibility, and if I liked he would show me the house. He didn't expect I would like it as it was old fashioned, had stood empty for two years and was very dirty.

We got into his car and swung out of Main Street into Linden Avenue and thence into Prospect Street, and then up a very steep, short hill known as Hillside Avenue. Almost at the top, a square dark brown house stood by itself with an empty building deep in grass on the one side, and a steep hilly garden deep in grass on the other. I was attracted to it by the space around it and there was an old barn at the back which looked interesting. When I got out of the car and looked back at the view, I knew I had to have it. There was a wonderful view of Cape Blomidon with the dykes and red sand of the Minas Basin. Main Street lay almost at our feet, or so it seemed, with the houses gleaming in the sunlight from amongst the trees.

There was a verandah on two sides of the house, and I immediately saw how wonderful it would be to sit on the seaward side on a hot day and gaze and gaze at the lovely view. Mr. Sproule agreed that it was a fine view, but he was a busy man, and proceeded to unlock the door and go in. It certainly wasn't roomy but there were three good bedrooms and one tiny one with a huge closet and an antiquated bathroom upstairs. Downstairs, there was one fair sized room, which could be turned into two small ones by the closing of folding doors, a large kitchen, a small pantry, and a low ceilinged very dusty basement.

It all needed painting and a very thorough cleaning, but I felt it had a certain character and it attracted me quite strongly. My husband had left it to me make any decisions regarding accommodation. I thought hard for a moment and then asked Mr. Sproule if he thought the owner could be persuaded to rent it to me for a year. I said that I would do all the necessary tidying up and cleaning myself and promised to leave it in a more saleable condition at the end of it.

He seemed a little amazed at the rashness of my offer, but I think he sensed my sense of desperation, and said he would write to the owner who was a Mrs. Peters, an old lady living in Halifax. I went back to Revaron and told Mr. Fishman all about it, but expressed doubt that I would get it. We discussed other possibilities he had in mind.

The boys and I explored Wolfville during the next two days and agreed heartily with my husband's first impressions of the place. On the Wednesday morning I had a 'phone call from Mr. Sproule, who said that the owner had agreed to rent 19 Hillside Avenue to us for one year from July 15th. I was almost delirious with excitement, and he let me have the keys to show the boys and Mr. Fishman, who was keenly interested and most helpful. He agreed with me that it had possibilities and was certainly adequate for our needs.

I despatched a cable to England asking for our furniture to be sent off. I received a reply saying it had left on the City of Birmingham from Avonmouth and should reach Halifax about August 10th. That gave us a month to clean up the house - John and I were very keen to start straight away.

On Mr. Fishman's advice we went to McCluskey's for our first purchases, a broom, dustpan, bucket, and scrubbing brush. John and I spent the afternoon cleaning up litter and the preliminary dirt while Roger and Martin played outside. We returned to the hotel in time for supper. We were by this time somewhat dirty and disreputable, and we slunk through the sidewoods trying to attract as little notice as possible. We took a short cut across the Acadia campus and entered our room via the

kitchen and back stairs. I put Martin to bed and the remaining three of us washed and changed and ate a supper of sorts of my preparing. Roger went to bed while John and I went down to the lounge to relax in comfort and read the papers.

We decided that if we were really going to work seriously on the house, we had to change our plan by setting off after breakfast, taking a sandwich lunch, a teatime snack, and having our main meal on our return in the evening. Mr. Fishman agreed to this and next morning we carried this plan into effect. I made a special effort to get the pantry clean enough to store odd cups, etc., and packaged food. This was no mean feat as the dirt of ages seemed very securely lodged. However, I eventually decided it wasn't so bad, and we were able to put non-perishable foodstuff and crockery away from the confusion that reigned elsewhere.

One lunch spot was very pleasant and shady - the side of the verandah overlooking the sea. I felt quite refreshed after about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour gazing at that cool and beautiful view, and smelling at the same time, the wild flowers and grasses in the field adjoining the property.

By our English standards it was a beautiful summer, day after day of cloudless blue sky and hot sunshine. Whenever it clouded over and rained though, we met people who muttered about the cold, wet summer.

Our first big thunderstorm was something we will not forget in a hurry. We had decided to give the whole of the interior a coat of Satin Speed to make it look brighter and cleaner. Early one afternoon we had finished the upstairs and were working on the kitchen, when we noticed the sky looking very dark and ominous. Torrential rain started to fall almost immediately accompanied by vivid flashes of lightning and deafening claps of thunder. It was a more violent storm than any we remembered previously, and John and I realized that Martin and even Roger would be scared if we didn't think up a diversion. So we suggested that whenever it thundered they should rush about roaring and trying to drown the noise. Doing this dispelled any fear and kept them happy most of that rather trying afternoon.

We got quite a fright at one stage when the wind blew the front door open and the storm seemed to invade the house. Later on a very vivid flash of lightning set fire to a lighthouse down on the dyke, and the ominous noise of the fire siren howled above the noise of the storm. I felt that I had to keep occupied. Having finished the kitchen, I started on the dining room. Whenever a particularly heavy clap startled me, my hand holding the paintbrush jumped, and a slight smudge appeared on the ceiling. I used to notice these marks afterwards and remembered with

amusement how I made them. The afternoon wore on and the storm continued.

Around 5:30 it had stopped thundering, but the rain was still torrential. I realized we had to return to the hotel somehow, and a taxi seemed the only answer; when to get one was the question. We knew nobody on the street and the houses were well spaced. There was a house opposite but it always looked deserted. Then we saw a man enter it, so John volunteered to go and ask him if he had a 'phone we could use. He was very nice about it and let him use the 'phone. John told him what we were doing and he offered us the loan of his high steps while we were painting. That was wonderful and we arranged to get them the next day.

When we returned to Revaron, we found the power had been off for some while and only cold food was available. Everybody had their own hair raising tales to tell and it seemed to have been the worst storm for some time. In Halifax, 70 miles away, they were unaware of it.

When my husband came back at the weekend and saw the painting, I think he was frankly amazed. He then came out with a wonderful suggestion. He said, "Why don't you move in now and camp out in the house?" At first it didn't seem possible as we only had sleeping bags and no chairs and tables. I decided we would need a kitchen table and chairs anyway. If we could get some cheap mattresses, it might be cheaper than Revaron, and would save us from imposing on the Fishmans any longer.

Mr. Fishman told us again that there was no need to move. However, we could see that the tourists were coming thick and fast, and we hated to prevent him letting so large a room at his normal rate. When he saw that we had made our minds up, he offered to help us get what we needed. He drove us to New Minas about four miles away to the only second hand furniture store in the district. Mr. Fishman helped me to buy a good kitchen table and an icebox. There were no kitchen chairs to be had, so I ordered the cheapest in Eaton's catalogue. Woodman's Furniture was very helpful in supplying cheap mattresses.

Mrs. Fishman loaned us the crockery we had been using, and a few odd pots and pans. I bought a small grill and, on Mr. Fishman's advice, a wood stove for the kitchen to help warm the house in winter. How good that advice was I was then to discover. This stove was connected to a water tank and supplied hot water for the bath and the kitchen.

We finally moved in and took up housekeeping again and it seemed quite fun. The boys enjoyed having the nearly empty house to scamper in and the wilderness garden to explore.

Just before we left Revaron, we got to know three different sets of people. The first was Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin, a very pleasant elderly couple who were Nova Scotians. They spent their winters in Florida and their summers in Nova Scotia. They were most kind to us and took us on a wonderful drive to the Lookoff on Mount Blomidon, where the countryside seemed to be at our feet in neat little squares. They took a keen interest in our housing project and gave me many useful tips. They told the boys many things about Nova Scotia and always had a cheery word of greeting for them. Mr. Goodwin was a very sick man, but they were both wonderfully brave about it.

A few days after we became established at Revaron, an American geophysicist arrived with his wife and two small daughters. He had a summer job and was living there until he could move into an apartment they had rented. We became friendly. They were strangers even as we were and Canada was a new country to them too. They were very kind to us and took us for several expeditions to neighbouring beaches.

I well remember our first trip to Evangeline Beach on a warm but dull day. We played around in swim suits for hours without realizing we could get sunburned on a dull day. That night all four of us had red, hot backs and tossed miserably on our floor beds. This was a lesson once learned and not easily forgotten. Other occasions were happier, particularly for Martin as Laura Southwick was the only child of his own age he played with that summer.

Mrs. Southwick was unable to wash her children's clothes by hand as the soap or detergents caused a skin rash. There was no washing machine in her apartment and she was sending huge quantities of tiny garments to the laundry, which was both expensive and inconvenient. I suggested a plan which was of mutual benefit. I would wash the clothes for half the laundry rate and she could iron them. This offer was eagerly accepted and for the rest of that summer I did a row of tiny garments twice a week and received a very welcome \$2.00 in payment. I laughed to myself very often as I had never envisaged coming to Canada to take in washing.

My experiences were many and varied that summer. Up to then I had done many things I had never expected to do. I had carried pails of water up the steep, grassy slopes of Portobello, learned to cook on a wood stove, and scrubbed at incredibly grimy shelves and floors until I ached all over. I had painted a complete house from top to bottom (with John's very considerable help, I must add), slept on the floor for weeks on end, and finally as a great triumph, I learned to bake excellent bread.

My teacher was a Mrs. Saulnier, who was staying at Revaron whilst her husband was working for the Provincial Examinations Board, which was in residence at the university. I can see her now, kneading the dough with skilful fingers and smiling gently at my somewhat clumsy efforts. She was very pleased and proud when I finally achieved success and so was I.

Her husband was an Acadian Frenchman from Digby, and he, too, was very kind and helpful. He gave me much practical help and advice on the treatment of my sadly neglected floors, and he also cut our knee-deep front lawn with Mr. Coldwell's scythe. Mrs. Saulnier helped me to wash the windows and that was no mean task, I can assure you.

As soon as we moved into the house, the street came to life as far as we were concerned. Everyone who passed by stopped to speak to us, particularly the children. This was strange to me and very pleasant. English children seem stiff and shy until they really know you, but these children smiled and spoke as soon as they saw you.

Max and Betty Coolen were among our first visitors. They were about John's age. Whenever he could be spared (I'll never forget how that boy worked when he might have played that summer), he was to be found at the Coolen's house up the road. Roger found a friend in Jimmy Coldwell at the top of the hill. Jimmy was youngest son of old Mr. Coldwell, who had brought up a very large family, and was related to half the neighbourhood or so it seemed.

Mr. Coldwell was a great gardener, and before very long, he appeared at the house with his son's wagon loaded with vegetables as a present for us. I was very touched as he quite obviously not well off, and living on a pension. I persuaded him to let me buy future vegetables from him, which was of help to both of us, as he undoubtedly had a surplus. They were much fresher and finer than any I could buy in town. Mrs. Southwick also took to buying from him.

The house across the road was fully inhabited now. Mr. Hiltz's wife appeared with one of the prettiest little girls I have ever seen and a new baby. She was friendly, but a little shy, and obviously very busy.

The Rockwell children, Sandra and Mary Lou, were very chatty when they passed, and Alison and Willie were friendly to the older boys. Mrs. Rockwell was also very friendly and came to sit on our porch one afternoon, while the two little girls played with Martin.

I had not yet met Mrs. Coolen, the mother of Max and Betty. One Saturday evening, she came to call together with Mrs. Vernon, the wife of

one of the Acadia professors, who was Mrs. Coolen's next door neighbour. We still had not got our furniture, so we entertained them in the kitchen, where they admired our clean-up efforts. Mrs. Coolen told me many pleasant and interesting things about the Peters, who had lived there for many years, and had been much liked and respected in the district.

Mrs. Vernon told me that she had a son, John, almost exactly Martin's age, and hoped they would play together. She invited us to drop in to chat whenever we felt like it.

Two or three days after that, we had what I have always considered on one of the worst days of my life. I was awakened early by Martin vomiting. He looked very ill and I managed to take his temperature which registered 104°, which did not seem very good at 7 A.M. The vomiting persisted at about twenty minute intervals, and I got alarmed as his abdomen was very tender, and he seemed to be in considerable pain. I despatched John to Mrs. Coolen saying that I needed a doctor, and could she get me one. She came rushing down to investigate and was very helpful.

Mrs. Coolen said that she would telephone Dr. Wheelock, and would also bring down a small bed and some sheets for Martin, as a sleeping bag and mattress did not seem very suitable for a child so ill. I was exceedingly grateful as I felt rather embarrassed at letting any doctor see our gypsy like existence. John went back with her and in a matter of minutes, they returned and we had the poor little fellow more comfortably settled.

Just then he gave us a terrible fright - he vomited some blood. Mrs. Coolen fled to hurry up the doctor and I felt almost ill with anxiety. She certainly hurried him up and in the next five minutes he appeared. Dr. Wheelock was so gentle with Martin that I liked him immediately. He allayed my worst fears and told me that Martin had vomited blood because he had broken some small blood vessels with the violence of the attack. He said that it was merely a very bad attack of stomach infection prevalent at the time. He gave me some medicine for Martin, but did not promise much relief before early evening.

I realized that I could not leave Martin at all, and that John must take charge downstairs and Roger must help. This they were very willing to do, as John got the stove going well and put in a roast of lamb for dinner. The morning wore on and I told the boys that the meat must be done, and they had better have some dinner. Roger had prepared and cooked the vegetables on top of the stove, when our next disaster occurred. In taking the meat from the oven to put it on a dish, and preparing to make

gravy, John spilled scalding hot fat over all his bare knees (he was wearing shorts). There was a ghastly shriek and a frantic cry from Roger, "Mummy, come quick, John has spilled fat on his knees."

For one moment, my heart stood still, and then I started to run. As I did so, Martin vomited again and I dared not leave him. I don't know when I felt so awful. John couldn't come to me and I couldn't leave a child as ill as Martin. I called to Roger to apply tanafax jelly to the burns at once, and to dash for Mrs. Coolen as I knew she could tell whether a doctor was needed. She took one look at John and tore back to telephone and once again Dr. Wheelock appeared.

We were lucky to catch him as he was about to go off to play in a tennis tournament and was dressed accordingly. He bandaged the burns, and told me that the tanafax jelly was not a very good idea. He said that he would have to take him to the hospital next day if bad blisters occurred.

Mrs. Coolen was indeed our good angel that day. She said it would be much too uncomfortable for John to crawl into a sleeping bag with knees like that. Instead, she would take him home, look after him, and put him to bed in nice cool sheets in her guest room. She was as good as her word, and kept him until after breakfast next day. We were relieved to see that the burns were much better and less painful, and were not going to blister.

My husband returned for the weekend soon after the doctor had left, and Roger met him with the news of our troubles. He agreed somewhat wearily that the only thing he could do to help was to sit by Martin and look after him (his leg was still in a cast). Meanwhile, I dealt with the grease and confusion in the kitchen. Martin improved towards suppertime and slept normally that night. The next day he was merely weak and querulous with a normal temperature. Two or three days he was as fit as ever.

The days went by quite swiftly, although the nights on the hard bed were no pleasure to me particularly with aching muscles. Suddenly we realized that three things were about to happen. The Halifax Summer School was due to finish, our furniture must be nearing Halifax, and my husband was about to lose his cast. The last happened first and it seemed wonderful to see him walking normally again. Then he was home for good, and the responsibility that had weighed heavily on me all summer was eased. Finally, we had a letter from Hoyts of Halifax saying that they would deliver the furniture next day. This seemed unbelievable but it happened all the same.

If you have never been parted from your worldly goods and chattels for more than an ordinary holiday period, you will not appreciate what it means to get them back after a parting of 3 months. The sight of my own bed with a proper mattress and clean cool sheets after a sleeping bag, and an armchair gave me the most exquisite joy. I marvelled at the skill of Bendall of Cheltenham in packing everything so well. Everything was safe and sound, even teacups and pictures.

For days we were all blissfully happy luxuriating in carpets underfoot, chairs to lounge in, and books to read. Each boy had a wonderful time arranging his various treasures in his own sanctum. All the children in the neighbourhood came to gaze and admire.

At the end of August, some of the members of the university faculty heard of us and came to see us. I well remember Mrs. Chalmers Smith arriving with a very pretty basket of flowers and vegetables from her own garden, and a very friendly invitation to drop in and see them.

By this time, we were firm friends with the Vernons. Dalton Vernon had lived for some time in England with his English mother. He was a tremendous help in sorting out any problems I had.

Soon after Labour Day, school started for John and Roger. It was very strange in many ways, but the kindness and friendliness of teachers and children helped a lot. Alas, however, they didn't go for more than a week before Martin & John developed unusual coughs which we realized with horror was whooping cough. This caused a tremendous flap in the district and the doctor insisted that we should have a large quarantine label on our door warning all children to keep their distance. I found this a little hard to bear as I had never been one to let my children loose with infectious diseases. However, I reasoned, how were people to know that?

John had a very slight attack, Roger by some miracle escaped, but Martin became quite ill. The doctor ordered one of the antibiotics at \$1.00 per pill. With our shaky financial state, this was indeed a blow as my husband had not yet started work. The doctor, however, persuaded Mr. Ross Cochrane to trust us and we were able to charge \$18.00 worth, shuddering the while and quietly cursing the British Government situation which had caused us to leave the bulk of our savings in England pro tem.

If you have ever tried to give pills worth a dollar each to a child with violent whooping cough, you will know the trials and anxieties we went through ! However, they were very worthwhile and the worst was over in a few days. After several weeks, Martin was free to play again and John returned to school.

This, of course, stopped our getting to know people for a while although some came and talked to us on the porch. I will always remember Dr. Whidden bringing us huge box of the most delicious pears on his son's coaster wagon.

There were so many new experiences that autumn that I cannot remember them all. Everywhere there was kindness and friendliness which warmed my heart. When Hallowe'en came the boys had heard so much about it from the other children. They were very anxious that we should come up to the standard both in the matters of costume and hospitality.

As soon as masks appeared in the stores, John rushed out and bought two of the most repulsive, a very realistic Indian mask, and a ferocious pirate with a patch over one eye. He also bought a mild looking 'old man' mask for Martin. I laid in stores of peanuts and candy, and bought a pumpkin. When the great day arrived, Martin was in bed with earache and a temperature of 104°. Consequently, I had to reroute our 'visitors' to the back door lest the doorbell frighten him.

All sorts of odd costumes turned up and it was pretty hard to guess who they were; I think that night that the local kids decided that we would pass. The next day I was touched to receive from many children a share of candy for Martin as he hadn't been able to share in the fun.

Almost everywhere you go in Wolfville, you are confronted with the imposing and glorious sight of Cape Blomidon, and I grew to love this view at all seasons. That autumn we often used to walk up Highland Avenue to the Ridge, a famed beauty spot with a wonderful view over the Gaspereau valley. Sometimes we called in at the Erskines, an English family, who showed us great kindness in many ways, and gave us apples galore from their orchard.

As soon as you turned to come down the hill, Blomidon lay ahead. When the sun shone, the sea was a brilliant blue and the red Minas mud could be seen it was a picture never to be forgotten.

Jean Vernon persuaded me to go to dressmaking class with her and we both registered to be taught by Mrs. Oliver. I have never known how to sew anything beyond ordinary household mending and felt very difficult about the whole thing. With beginner's foolishness, I bought a pattern and some red wool crepe. When the class started, I realized my pattern was too large and the material unsuitable for a beginner.

Helena Oliver, however, is a remarkable woman. Far from showing me how silly I was and crushing me with one blow, she proceeded with infinite patience and gentleness to show me how to get to work. She checked every tiny step I took, and finally to my utter amazement the dress was finished and I had the courage to wear it to a Faculty tea, where I even received a few compliments on it.

Christmas was now approaching and with all the good food around, I just had to send some to my English friends. For weeks, it seemed I shopped and packed. These things were not necessarily very expensive things, but just little treats I knew they would enjoy. We decided we'd do that instead of buying much for ourselves that year. It made us all very happy particularly when we received really joyous letters of thanks.

It was exciting to think we could have a really big Christmas tree just for the cutting. The boys got me a beauty, but then I realized that any decorations we had formerly had not been brought. It meant that we would have to spend money on more. So we got two cheap strings of lights, a few glass balls, and then John painted a number of large fircones in silver. These decorations with some icicles gave us a really lovely tree which was a bit different from most peoples'. However, I would never part with one of those cones for the world, because they remind me so well of that first Christmas.

Soon after Christmas, Martin went with Johnny Vernon to the Acadia University Nursery School - they used to go off hand in hand singing as they went. Martin loved it and became much less shy and timid. Johnny and he became boon companions.

That first winter wasn't much colder than many English winters, much to our surprise. There was enough snow for the boys to go coasting down our steep vegetable garden on the new sleds they had received for Christmas.

Sometime in January we all got 'flu together, which was a real affliction; but once again our kind friends and neighbours rallied around. Jean Vernon maintained contact by telephone and shopped and cooked for me. Sybil Morse, another faculty wife, cooked one of the nicest chickens I've ever eaten and popped it inside the front door.

Soon after this we had the chance to spend another year at Acadia and gratefully accepted. Of course, we realized that Mrs. Peters might not let us have the house again - that was a dreadful thought ! However we managed to persuade her by offering to paint the outside woodwork in the early spring if she would buy the paint. This seemed an easy task and we thought we had done very well.

Spring came at last. I weeded a neglected flower bed and discovered gorgeous red and white peonies and other treasures. And at the side of the porch I noticed several thick stalks of choice asparagus apparently growing wild and high up on very overgrown grassy bank bordering the vegetable garden. I discovered quite a lot more poking through the long grass - this amazed me!

I had always thought of asparagus as a choice delicacy needing great care, and here it was forcing its way between the boards of my porch and growing as steadily as any weed. We certainly enjoyed it.

We also discovered choice rhubarb in great profusion. We found that this was something most people liked and few possessed. It was wonderful to have something nice to give away.

One day in early April, Rex Porter, the school principal, rang to ask if we had any objection to John being chosen as Rotary candidate for a free trip to Ottawa for 'An Adventure in Citizenship'. We were amazed and delighted, but hastened to suggest that he was very new to the school, and that perhaps someone of longer standing should be chosen. Mr. Porter said no. The candidate had to be well up to date with his work. He had narrowed the choice to three who fulfilled this condition. John had been voted for by the students with a large majority.

We were frankly staggered at his luck. I was a little afraid that there might be some ill feeling because of it. However, I hadn't really even then truly appreciated the true kindness of the people of Wolfville. As I worked in my garden, children passing stopped to say, "Isn't it lovely John can go to Ottawa? We are pleased he has the chance". Many things of this sort happened as people we had never met and only vaguely heard of rang me up and told me how delighted they were. We felt that was really wonderful.

Mr. Seymour Gordon, Inspector of Schools for Kings County was invaluable to us at this time and gave us advice regarding the journey and arranged for John to travel with another boy from Windsor. On Saturday, May 24th, Mr. Gordon took us to see him off on the morning train. John was wearing his Cheltenham School blazer and carefully pressed gabardine pants, with his best suit packed for the more important functions.

The blazer attracted the attention of a sailor going on leave from Cornwallis. He spoke to him and told him that he had attended Cheltenham School in England during the war, but had since returned to

Canada with his parents. My husband easily remembered him when John told him about on his return.

John had four clear days in Ottawa. Mr. Gordon remarked to us, "no matter what happens to him later, this will undoubtedly be one of the high spots of his life." I think this will be true, and I am sure that he will never forget this experience.

They stayed at the Lord Elgin Hotel, and their four days were well crammed with events which were extremely interesting, especially to a boy so new to Canada. They were presented to the Prime Minister and received Canadian citizenship certificates. They visited Lord Alexander, The Mint, the Chateau Laurier, saw the Dominion Experimental Farm, and met many MP's.

John arrived home very excited but somewhat weary. After a good night's rest, he was persuaded by Mr. Gordon to speak to the Boys Club at the United Church. He apparently did quite well, and on the following Tuesday was invited to lunch at the Rotary Club to tell the members about his trip. For a boy of fifteen this was quite an ordeal, but many people told us that he gave an excellent report.

The university term was now at an end and my husband was busy turning our wilderness into a really thriving vegetable garden. John was busy working for his Grade XI examination.

School closed about mid June and we prepared to enjoy the summer. John got a job as a handyman at a small hotel in Grand Pré. He was the only male member of the staff and felt very important. He was superbly fed on all the luxuries designed for the tourists. He was not overworked and earned enough to pay for his books for his first year at Acadia.

Sydney started teaching at the Acadia Summer School in July (mornings only), leaving us free in the afternoon to go for beach picnics. We had a wonderful time at these picnics chiefly with Herb Mosher, the Bursar, and the Morse family, who always seemed to find a corner for four and sometimes five Taylors in their cars.

How well I remember the first picnic. I packed the equivalent of a fairly substantial tea for my family expecting that we would eat at about 4:30 as we did at home. Instead, however, we bathed and played around with beach balls, etc., until about 6:00, by which time we were all ravenous, particularly the Taylor boys. My 'tea' vanished in a flash, and the boys still looked 'starving'. Fortunately, the others had a surplus, and the boys were invited to help finish it. They certainly needed no second bidding, and I doubt whether the seagulls got many crumbs that day!

Jennifer Frances Taylor