

The Pierlot Family Saga

1930-1950

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INTRODUCTION

The following story is all true to fact and has been authenticated by a non-partisan group of experts, namely, my siblings. I regret that the real story-teller of this group, Bud, is no longer with us, as I'm sure that he would have added a lot of color to this saga.

I had gotten up at Lorne's birthday party when asked, like all the other 55 friends and relatives who were there, by Lorne's very able son, Paul, to say a few kind words, and I ended up making a really memorable speech (at least that is what Lorne and Brenda, among others, said afterwards) Due to the fact that I had had more wine than what I normally would have drunk, and was feeling no pain and had no inhibitions regarding what I said, I think I got through it without making a complete fool of myself. I guess I made some humorous comments, but when asked afterwards to put it down on paper, I could honestly say that I could hardly remember much at all. However, I do remember saying something that I can honestly say I've never said before and that was that I loved all my brothers and sisters.

And Now, the Stories...

This is a narrative about a Western Canadian family who worked the land in Saskatchewan and Alberta and now have descendants throughout Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba. Our father, Albert, was brought up with his two brothers on our Grandpa and Grandmas farm near Redvers. Our enterprising father trapped muskrat for their pelts while his two brothers, Fritz and Roger had to stay on the farm to help Grandpa tend to the livestock. Dad objected strenuously when he forced him to share the proceeds of the sale of his muskrat pelts with his 2 brothers. Mom had divulged to one of her granddaughters that dad caught her eye in a café, probably in Wawota, and she shucked the guy she was with at the time and dad was a goner. They were married June 23rd, 1930 and they hardly stopped working until 1979 when dad finally retired and they sold the farm and moved to Kelowna. But I think mom worked just as hard in Kelowna. I'm sure I can speak for most of my siblings when I say that they should have stayed in Rimbey. Mom didn't want to move but she was cautious about opposing the "boss". With dad, there was only one way to do things and that was his way. Don and Bud were both born while dad and mom were still living with mom's in-laws on the farm and I guess we all can see how that would be. Grandma didn't like mom much and the feeling was mutual. Grandma, of course, thought her son could have done a lot better; a girl that he could boss around without suffering a lot of lip.

They didn't stay long at the Redvers Farm and moved to what we called the Kelso Place about 3 miles from the hamlet of Kelso and about 10 miles from the nearest town, Wawota. Kelso also had a store, some houses, a railroad station, some elevators and best of all a 2-room school. I

recall that there was some wooden sidewalk which I remember catching hell from one of the residents for riding our Shetland pony on it. It made such a nice clattering sound that I couldn't resist it. Yvonne, then me and after that, Lorne, joined the family. So now there were five of us and in later years were known as the "Original Five", and note the capital letters. I have this feeling that there was a certain amount of animosity among those last three but they shouldn't feel bad because two of them were born in the greatest of provinces.

Lorne was closer to me in age than any of our siblings. Our mother, God bless her, was overworked with now 5 children when Lorne was added to the litter. She did get some help from some of her younger sisters but it was still a hard life for her. Apparently she relied on me a lot to keep Lorne occupied and hopefully out of trouble (something like getting a coyote to guard the chickens). Here now is a real family mystery which will probably never be solved unless one of my siblings knows more than they are prepared to admit and would now come clean. A few years before mom passed away she was asked why I wasn't enrolled in school at Greenbank when I was 6, in 1941. She claimed that she had no idea why. I can't help but think that she held me back for one or more of the following reasons:

1. She wanted to keep me at home for another year to be a playmate for Lorne
2. Her and dad decided that I was too dumb to go to school yet and would only embarrass the rest of the kids
3. I was actually an alien and they were afraid to have me seen in public
4. As Bud had suggested, "Larry wasn't actually one of mom's babies, that he was born of one of mom's sisters, the father remaining anonymous"
5. Being a rather quiet and unassuming kid, they had overlooked me when classes started in September. After all, we have to remember that by that time, mom had four boys and two girls, one of which was Brenda, and a real handful, I'm told

Getting back to the narrative, when Lorne and I were still toddlers, we were like twins and outsiders thought we were. The two of us did get into a certain amount of mischief and one was what I'll call the "chick incident", and I take full blame for that one although Lorne helped me do it. Mom had bought a box full of tiny chicks just freshly hatched at a hatchery and she kept them safe and away from her two urchins, Lorne and me. But when they had matured she put them out in a small wired-in yard and I guess she must have thought that they were big enough by then.

One day as Lorne and I were out looking to see what we could do next we came across mom's little chicken yard and to me, the chicks seemed to be huddling together to keep warm, so I figured I'd help them out and right handy nearby was a "creamer" can. This, unlike a "cream-can" was a metal can about 6" in diameter and about 18" high. So Lorne and I stuffed as many chicks as we could into that can and then went on to some other mischief, forgetting about the

chicks until we heard mom calling us with that “you little buggers are in trouble” sound in her voice and as soon as I heard her I knew what was up. I don’t remember if dad ever got wind of this but I think mom probably didn’t tell him because she would have been afraid that he might overreact like he was prone to do from time to time. I remember once getting a spanking for some minor mischief so I decided I had had it and left home. All I took with me were some matches in my pocket and I hid in the trees not far from the house and started a fire in a little pile of leaves. I guess this was my version of a campfire. The fire almost got away on me but I managed to put it out before it could become a conflagration and burn the whole homestead to the ground. The family were all out searching for me and it wasn’t long before I was safely back home. I thought for sure there would be another licking coming but dad never said a word to me and actually looked relieved. I thought “maybe he was actually worried about me?”

As Lorne and I got older, we became more enterprising. One summer day we decided we’d do dad a favor and clean up his workshop which stood in the barnyard between the house and the barn. It was a freestanding wooden building maybe 16 feet long and about 10 or 12 feet wide. It was unheated in winter and sweltering in summer and had a dirt floor just like a barn. Dad had a bunch of old wooden boxes which were full of rusty nuts, bolts and washers of various sizes and condition which he’d bought at auction sales in the district that took place from time to time at surrounding farms when the farmer was selling out and either moving away or retiring or both. Some bolts so rusty that it was impossible to get a nut started on them but dad actually did make use of some of them (however, a good amount of these items were still with dad in 1979 almost 40 years and 6 moves later and were finally sold at auction sale at the Rimbey farm when mom and dad retired and moved to Kelowna).

Now, getting back to my story, Lorne and I pushed the boxes from one side of the shop to the other and I remember that dirt was piling up in front of the boxes acting like miniature bulldozers. The dialog between Lorne and I went something like this: “Daddy (none of us called him “dad’ or our mother “mom” until we were well into our teens. It was always “daddy and mummy”) better appreciate all the work we’ve done or it’ll be the last time we ever do him a favor like this”.

Dad had a habit that, when he got excited, he’d start spitting. Not the “juicy, everybody dodge out of the way” type, but he’d purse his lips and eject little balls of air as he went about whatever he was doing and this was a signal to anyone nearby to find a different place to get to. Mum had a very small selection of expletives and the worse one she’s allow herself to go was to call someone that she didn’t like, “that old sucker” and I doubt that she even heard the current four-letter word that was taboo and more or less unheard of back then. Dad used a few cuss words but they were what you might call blasphemies and back in the distant past would

generally be chastised for using and or burnt at the stake because it was known as heresy, an insult to God.

When he got home and saw his shop, he did a bit of the spitting and banned Lorne and me from the shop indefinitely, or at least until he was able to find his things again. Secretly, he was probably proud of his two industrious boys, but never would admit it.

After harvest one year, dad got Don and Bud to help him build a trap to catch wild ducks that members of the family had spotted landing in the yard, on the far side of the barn, to go after grain that had been spilled on the ground. They made the trap out of chicken-wire formed over a wooden frame with only the bottom open. They propped the trap up with a stick and ran a string from the stake to a spot out of sight at the corner of the barn. One day while the family was just finishing supper I slipped outside for a smoke (kidding, of course. Dad was the only smoker in the family and I was about 4 years old at the time).

I saw some ducks come in and land behind the barn so, like James Bond, I sneaked to the corner of the barn and peaked around the corner and lo and behold, there was a duck under the trap, helping itself to the grain that the boys had put there. I yanked the prop out, the frame dropped and the duck was mine! I must have had an awful time getting that duck out of the trap without losing it but was successful and with it held firmly to my chest, started back toward the house. My prisoner was docile and didn't struggle until members of the family had become aware of what I was doing and came running toward me hollering encouragement to me but it only served to frighten the duck and it got its wings loose and began to give me a facial which I wasn't expecting and so had to release my grip and the duck made it's getaway, flying low to the ground to gain speed then, like a Harvard training plane (many of which we saw flying around the farm because WW2 was in full swing and since we provided such nice flat terrain there were pilots from several countries being trained in Saskatchewan) gained altitude so as to clear the trees that surrounded our farmstead.

Later on when I was a lot older, but we were still living on the Kelso farm, I came close to being crushed by our gray mare, Dixie. Yvonne, Lorne and I were visiting some neighbor kids on horseback and were playing Cowboys and Indians, riding pell-mell through trees and brush, chasing after one another. I was on Dixie and we dashed through some trees into a clearing and right there where we entered the clearing was an old well that had been filled in and abandoned without being tamped, so the top had sunk and left a depression about a foot deep. When Dixie saw the depression she put on the brakes and I went right over head and ended up in the depression, but Dixie realized she was sliding and to avoid ending up in the well she tried to jump over it. In that split second that she teetered on the edge I had just enough time to scramble out of that depression to the side, thus avoiding both her back feet and then her front feet when she was unable to clear the depression because her attempt to leap across was a

failure and her hind legs went straight down into the depression and kept going until her belly and front legs contacted the ground on the far side of the depression, thus stopping her there, but she was firmly stuck and unable to move. The kids ran for help and I sat there on the grass and watched while dad and the neighbor, who owned the land, used dad's ½ ton truck to get poor old Dixie out of there. She stood trembling for a while but wasn't hurt at all. That was the end of our fun for the evening.

When the Kelso farm was put up for sale, dad was given "first refusal" by the owner, but dad wasn't satisfied with that because he thought he should get, and asked for, a discount, because having spent 12 years on that land and having cleaned it up of weeds and a lot of rocks, he thought he deserved some consideration. The owner apparently wasn't in a generous frame of mind and refused. So in a huff, dad let the land go to a former friendly neighbor, Cliff Fist. I spoke to Mr. Fist one time when my family and I paid them a visit in 1973, and he gave me the information about the farm that I've noted above. It never came from dad because he never told the kids anything about his dealings or finances. Cliff also told me that dad never spoke to him again after he bought the Kelso farm.

We moved to a much nicer place after we left the Kelso farm. It was known as the Wilson Place and I'm quite sure that the rest of the family loved that farm as much as I did. And we owned this place. A terrific set of buildings, a big 2-storey house, and electric power. Lorne and I loved that place because there was so much more that we could do there.

Roads in those days were a joke, just a strip of land called a "road allowance" owned by the municipality, 66 feet wide every mile east to west and every 2 miles south to north. Some of the roads had ditches on each side so that there was a place to get stuck in if you didn't watch closely where you were heading and they were awfully slippery because most didn't have gravel on them so it was exciting driving on that slippery mud. It was a lot safer to travel by horse and buggy or on horseback. In winter, motor vehicles weren't used much because the roads would be blocked by snowbanks. The snowbanks were higher on the roads because Mother Nature seemed to like it that way. So, in winter we hitched our old gray mare, Dixie, to our sleigh which we called our cutter which was just a flat platform with runners and no side boards or anything to grab onto if the cutter swerved or bumped which of course, it often did.

Dixie had a mind of her own and once when we parked her and the cutter next to the house while we all went inside to have some after-school lunch, she decided to take matters into her own hands (that should read "hooves") So rather than waiting while we had our lunch, what about her lunch? She headed straight for the barn and that was through the nearest gate which was a man-gate and not wide enough for the cutter to get through so it and pieces of harness on the ground was all to be found when we finally got around to getting out to get Dixie to the barn.

Lorne and I loved to play around the buildings on the Wilson Place. There were two huge hip-roof barns, one for horses and the other for cattle where the milking was done. One day that summer of 1945 we were out playing in the yard and liked to emulate the airplanes, the powerful Harvard that was used to train pilots and were seen a lot flying over the farm, a beautiful single-engine plane painted yellow and we were spell-bound by them. Lorne was 8 years old by then and I would be 10 in August. To imitate the planes, we held swather struts across our shoulders behind our necks and held at the ends with our hands thus forming "wings". Then we'd run all over the farm-yard making airplane noises and dipping and diving, but we were destined for disaster because, lacking radar to warn us, we had a head-on crash at the corner of the barn.

Lorne was flying due north along the west end of the horse-barn and I was proceeding west along the north side of the same barn and we arrived at the corner at the same time. To say that there no survivors would be stretching things a mite but we were both incapacitated for a while and for the first time we both saw stars in the daytime.

By the spring of the next year, dad was ready to move once again and I don't think, if dad had asked us, that any of us were on side, including mom. But dad never asked any of us for any kind of advice and everyone in the family was reluctant, if not scared to death to defy him and I will admit that I was both and besides, I was only 10 years old at the time. I'll have to come up with another reason why I never opposed him later on when all of us were older. Bud did when we lived at Rimbeay and that's why he became a Doodlebug.

We had to move to a farm near Fairlight when the Schmutco's, the new owners of the Wilson Place, took over in the spring of 1946, in April, so that they could put the crop in. The house was old, no electricity, running water or bathroom. It was 2-storey and we dubbed it "the Haunted House". It had a balcony jutting out from the second floor and one night Bud moved out to it to escape the heat but a storm came up in the middle of the night. The wind blew the door shut and Bud couldn't get it open. It started to rain and by the time we heard his pounding over the noise of the thunder he was soaked to the skin and mad as a wet hen because he thought that we left him out there on purpose and it just might be that we did. One day while we were still there, Lorne and I went down to a nearby creek and were skimming flat rocks across the water to make them skip. Lorne picked one up and said "look at the size of this one" but he immediately let it drop when a foot suddenly poked out of the side of it giving him quite a fright. When we realized that it was a turtle we played with it for a while. Neither of us had ever seen a turtle before.

Mom even had a garden near the house and one evening we were all working there doing some weeding and picking stuff for the next day's meals. It was getting toward dusk so mom got Lorne to take Brenda, who wasn't 3 years old yet, to the house and put her to bed. A bit later

mom said that the rest of us should head back to the house because it was getting darker. It was a little ways, maybe the equivalent of 2 blocks. I went ahead of the rest and sneaked into the house and heard Lorne reading a story to Brenda, both of them in bed. I slipped into the room without them seeing me because it was dark with only a coal-oil lamp by the bed. I reared up at the foot of the bed and said "boo". I scared the wits out of Lorne and marveled at the way he turned pale but when he saw who it was he let me know that he didn't appreciate the joke. Then we both pulled the covers back to see how Brenda had taken it but she wasn't there! It took a moment to find her. She had wormed her way all the way as far as she could go to the foot of the bed. It took a while for the two of them to settle down and they were still rather shook up when mom and the rest of the family arrived. To say that I was thoroughly admonished for that little practical joke would be to put it mildly and I made a mental note to be more discrete from then on.

Our journey to Peace River has been well-documented in the 1996 "Pierlots 96 - A Book of Memories, Treasures and Untold Stories" assembled by our very able and accomplished sister, Brenda. But there are still some anecdotes that I think are worth relating here.

We stayed for a while at Clairsholm on our way to Peace River and one day Dad took Lorne and me to Calgary where he was arranging for the takeover of the Valley Theatre in Peace River. He parked beside the tallest building we'd ever seen, a skyscraper, we thought - probably 4 stories high and left us sitting in the car with instructions to stay in the car until he returned. We obeyed to the letter until he disappeared into the building, then got out to do a little exploring. We stood around for a while but Dad was taking forever so we decided to just go around the block but when we got back the car was gone! We were now frantic so after waiting there for a while we decided to go around the block and maybe we would see the car. This time when we got back the car was back at the curb again. Apparently dad and the guy that he was dealing with had just gone for coffee. The strangest part of this escapade was that Dad didn't seem to be the least bit concerned about us. When he finally came out to go back to Clairsholm, you'd think that he hadn't realized that we were missing for a while. Go figure.

We started to settle in Peace River and this is when we found out that we weren't really welcome, mostly in school. For the first time in my life I was plagued by bullies. I put up a good fight with the first one that wanted to take me on in the playground at school but then there was a big guy who always had a couple of pals at his side when he challenged me so I tried to get away by more or less ignoring him. He was careful not to hit me though, just shove me around. He was in the process of doing just that when an Indian friend of mine just happened to come by and wrestled the bully to the ground and sat on him. My Indian friend was just as big as the bully. That particular bully never bothered me again.

Lorne and I both joined the scouts in Peace River but I hated the uniforms that the Cub Scouts had to wear. Since we were both under 12 we couldn't be Boy Scouts. We had to wear those ridiculous little beanies with the tiny peak. And I would have given my right arm to be able to wear the Stetson that was just like the Mounties wore and I thought that Mounties were next to God himself when it came to integrity and maybe they were back then but they've lost most of their lustre with their recent behavior as far as I'm concerned.

On Dominion Day, July 1st, we took part in a parade at the Fair Grounds in town and I suffered the most embarrassing event of my life. The mosquitoes were out in full force and the Scout Master passed a tube of repellent around for us to rub on our bare arms, legs and faces and of course I got some in my mouth despite my best efforts not to do so and in very short order I started feeling ill and dizzy and to make it plain, it was a bad time to be wearing short pants because certain reactions to the poison repellent were detrimental to being able to withstand what I'll call a very sudden and devastating evacuation. Being a little slow to "evacuate" the parade-ground I stood there like a ninny, uncertain whether to try to bolt out of there and leave a trail behind me or to just plain die on the spot. By this time the scout master saved me from any further mental stress by throwing a blanket around me and helping me off the field and to our car where Mom and some of my siblings were waiting.

As far as I know, of the rest of the kids who went to school in Peace River, none had any trouble with bullies. Both Don and Bud were good-looking well-built lads and could have handled anyone that deemed to challenge either of them. Yvonne wouldn't have been bothered either because she had or still does have a stately air about her that said "hands off", I'm off-limits, come at your own risk. I actually don't know why Lorne didn't get targeted. Maybe all the bullies were in my classroom.

Dad wasn't happy running a theatre so off we go again. This time he wants to get back farming so he decided that to buy a farm farther south (the season was too short, in his way of thinking, in the Peace River district) he would have to go to a central location and be able to find some land that he'd like without travelling too far from home. So we took up temporary residence on an acreage just outside of Ponoka, which dad bought. We had some fun there. Just down the road was the Argent family. Two quite attractive girls with a rather good-looking brother, or so Yvonne must have thought and he had his own car, a baby Austin. Both of the girls were too old for Lorne or me but just the right age for Don and Bud. I think if we had stayed longer at Ponoka there could have been some romance there but dad had a way of spoiling the plans of the rest of the family because our stay there was short.

One day Lorne and I were out wandering around our "estate" and we came across a dead owl that was still in good shape so Lorne hatched a plan to pull a practical joke on big brother, Don. We set that owl up on a fence-post and secured it there with a stick, some string and duct tape

(forget the duct-tape, it hadn't been invented yet) but it was quite solid there. Then Lorne excitedly ran into the house where Don was doing some studying, to tell him about this owl not far from the house sitting on a fence-post. So Don, the expert marksman, he thought, was out like a flash with the trusty old .22. But that owl was really resilient and he couldn't bring it down and also mystified because that bird wasn't scared away by the noise of the rifle. He was still standing there with an eye on that bird when he heard us snickering behind him and he knew then that he'd been had but he took it in his usual stoic way. Lorne and I took the rifle out to do a little gopher shooting one day in our pasture along with 2 or 3 other boys from school. They had rifles too and we all started peppering away. Lorne and I both knew plenty about gun safety but we soon realized that the other boys didn't appear to, because, as we moved around a bit for better positions one of the other boys fired right past us from behind and one of us could have been easily hit if we'd made a sudden move to the side. That ended the shoot, right then and there.

We found a hotel for sale in Bowden, Alberta, a town south down No. 2 highway and not far north of Calgary. He bought the hotel and then moved us to the place that I loved the best of any place we had been in, probably because I had a girlfriend there. The first year, we had to put up with the usual prejudice against newcomers, but the next two years were mostly fun. This is where I discovered that girls could be more than just a nuisance and could be a lot of fun if you treated them right. A girl my age name Marie seemed to find something worthwhile about me and we hit off rather well. I don't know if Lorne had a girl because for some reason we didn't get along so well at Bowden, especially in the second two years. In fact, whenever we met away from home, as the maid said to Spencer Tracy in the movie "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner", after she saw who Spencer's daughter brought home with her; "all hell done broke loose". This was because we each had our own following of friends and, like big city gangs, didn't exactly cotton to each other. So whenever we met on the street, we had a royal battle, but unlike the big city gangs, none ever got hurt because I was, generally speaking, all in fun. This is when I pulled off my greatest-ever practical joke. One evening Lorne and Joey were playing at a slough which was located about a half mile south of town beside the railroad tracks and me and two of my friends spotted them there and decided that we'd join the just to see what they were up to. We were on our way when we saw that they were heading away from the water, back toward the tracks, so we were about to turn back and go back to town when a plan suddenly came into my head. It was starting to get dark and they hadn't spotted us yet, so I told my two friends to lie down across the tracks and I did the same. We watched as Lorne and Joey approached us and were richly rewarded when they saw us sprawled on the tracks. They both stopped chattering to each other and stood rock still, aghast at what they saw; three bodies of railroad workers who must have been run over by a train. Imagine the relief on their faces when we revealed ourselves. I thought that they would become hostile as soon as they saw how they had been taken in, but in fact we had scared them so bad that they stuck right

with us all the way back to town. I thought that perhaps we'd have no more confrontations, even though they were always in fun, and at least that's what I thought until one evening after supper, Lorne invited me outside and there was blood in his eye. He was prepared to, once and for all, show me who was the toughest, I guess. I wasn't prepared to get into a down-and-out, no-holds-barred fight with him for two reasons: I was afraid that I might injure him, but just as important, he might injure me, and either way, how would we explain all this to mom if we had to show up back in the house with black eyes and bloody noses? So I just fended him off until we called it an impasse and I would I could say that we shook hands and parted best of friends, but they only do that in the movies, and we split up, still somewhat disgruntled.

We had a Costume Ball to commemorate Halloween in the town hall and everyone was supposed to wear a mask, at least, but some folks went all the way with a costume of some kind. I only had a mask but my girlfriend, Marie had a costume made of colored crepe-paper which she had trouble keeping in place. One guy came in dressed like a hobo and was dancing with all the girls swinging them around with abandon and having a great old time. Everybody was trying to guess who he was and no-one had a clue. Then he grabbed Marie from me as we danced by him and took her for a few trips around the dance floor. When the dance was over, every-one removed their masks and Marie almost fell off her chair when we saw who the hobo was: it was not a man at all, but our school teacher, Irene Stuart, who normally was a very astute lady and totally business-like. Irene looked over at Marie and smiled at her but Marie was absolutely mortified because, she told me afterwards, that while she was dancing with the "hobo" she had used a couple of expletives to describe her dress which she was having trouble with. A girl's expletives in those days were awfully mild in comparison to what is heard on the street today but we would never use any kind of slangy words in front of Mrs. Stuart.

This is an anecdote about the Great Bank Robbery in Bowden.

The town didn't have a bank as such, just a sub-branch of a branch of the Treasury Branch, located in Olds, a town just south of Bowden. The Treasury Branch is owned by the Alberta Social Credit government. An employee would travel to Bowden on specified days of the week and take care of local business from a rented building on Main Street. He would bring enough cash with him from Olds to take care of any transactions as required. There was a family of a mother and three boys in town named the Airies. The eldest boy was about 20 years old named Baldy because he had such a well-groomed head of blond hair.

One day there was a great commotion in town. Clyde Barrow, the sub-branch manager reported to the town marshal, Matt Dillon (not his real name but I thought it would be more dramatic than the guy's real name which I can't remember anyway and he wasn't a marshal either only the town policeman) that while he had left the "bank" to go for coffee, someone had gone into the building through a window in the lane and had made off with all of the

money, around \$1500.00, which was like at least \$15,000.00 now. A couple of plainclothes cops came up from Calgary and they didn't take long to make an arrest, probably just a couple of days. So the excitement was short but fun for us but not so much fun for the two culprits, one of which was Baldy Airie and the other, Clyde, the branch manager. It turned out that Baldy had met Clyde on the road the morning of the day of the robbery and Clyde had given him the money then he proceeded to Bowden and staged the robbery. Baldies two brothers were school mates of Lorne and I and the youngest was Lorne's best friend Joey. The other brother was in my grade at school. Both Baldy and Clyde had their room and board provided by the government for a time after the conviction and trial.

Dad didn't have a very good relationship with the grocery store owner, Walter Sick. Since he owned the hotel he could buy all our groceries at the wholesalers in Red Deer or Calgary and didn't go to Sick's store at all as far as I know. So Mr. Sick went to Red Deer to buy his beer. Tit for tat. But Sick's animosity toward dad didn't extend to the rest of the family because he hired Bud to work as a clerk in his store.

I had a paper route in town and rain or snow dark of night or cold of winter the paper got delivered. Once it was 40 below so mom felt sorry for me and took me around in dad's truck, the only vehicle that we had, and it was really lucky that it started. At Christmas I would get little gifts of money at the door. One young woman, a war bride, gave me a 5 dollar bill which was a lot of change in those days and the best gift from a customer by far. One customer had a black Scotch Terrier which started following me on my route as the kids who lived there didn't walk him or care for him. Eventually, Roger, the Scotty's name came home with me so I just kept him at home and for all intents and purposes he became my dog. The hardware man lived in a house downtown across from his store. His back yard was fenced in with vertical boards spaced maybe 3" apart and he kept a huge bulldog in there. So whenever I went down the sidewalk past his place, Roger would tease the bulldog and they would run nose to nose all the way to the end of the fence. The bulldog acted like he could eat Roger without a burp. But one day Lorne and Joey had Roger with them and when they started past that fence a new wrinkle had been added to the scenario. The hardware man had taken down some of the fence to do some repairs and when Roger and the bulldog got to the open part there they were standing nose to nose with no fence boards between. The bulldog just stood there looking at Roger for a moment then took him by the scruff of the neck, shook him a couple of times then turned and walked away with his head held high, nose in the air as if to say "consider yourself lucky you little mutt".

Roger stayed with me until we moved to Rimbey. Then I had to give him back to the owners. The owners moved to Calgary and not long after that they called to say that Roger was biting the kids and asked if we would take him back and we did so gladly because we all loved that

little dog. We kept him at the farm there until he had an unfortunate encounter with a car on the road that went right past the approach to the farmyard. He never chased cars as long as I was there and the mishap happened while I was away working. After I left home the neighbor's mongrel taught Roger how to chase cars and his legs were much too short for that kind of sport.

The war in Korea started while we were living at Bowden and the army was out looking for volunteers. The Reserve regiment, The King's Own Calgary Regiment or KOCR as they were called came to Bowden in the summer of 1950. They put on quite a light show for the public, shooting flares up into the evening skies with mortar launchers. The empty shells would land at a safe distance away and us kids would find them to keep as keepsakes. The flares that the shells carried up were fastened to little parachutes which kept them floating in the sky for a time before they came down. We found a lot of the parachutes and had great fun with them. We'd fasten a weight to them and toss them off of high places. Once, Lorne and I took a reluctant volunteer, our farm cat, rigged a harness on it and then fastened on the parachute and unceremoniously tossed that poor feline off our 2-story farm-house. He landed very nicely but showed no sign of thanks for the thrill and extricated itself from the harness and headed pell-mell for the barn. We didn't see any sign of that cat for some time and when we did it kept at a safe beyond-arms-length distance from us, but it should have felt good since it contributed to the war effort. After all, you never know when you might have to drop a cat behind enemy lines.

Both Bud and I joined the KOCR and we had great fun being what were called "Saturday night soldiers". Headquarters in Calgary sent up some boxing experts and taught us moves. We even went to Calgary on a bus for a parade when a new commander was taking over the regiment and they let us take our girlfriends along. I invited Marie to come and she, as well as all the others, really enjoyed the trip. In a huge barracks we marched in file and we had had some practice but we weren't experts. In a parade like that we were under the thumb of a non-commissioned officer with the rank of Sergeant-Major who, on the parade ground, was in charge of everyone in the parade, even the commissioned officers like Lieutenants, Captains, Colonels and even Generals (if they would ever lower themselves to the rank and file). In this parade we were marching shoulder to shoulder then to make a turn with the far ones in the line having to march the fastest and each man a little slower as the line did a straight-line swing and of course, the guy at the very end of the line, the pivot, was just supposed to mark time in cadence with the rest of the line. So guess who was the pivot man? As the line of marchers swung around, my job was to just mark time in place but instead, I was stepping back just a tad and the Sgt Major stepped over to me and yelled in my ear, "WHY ARE YOU BACKING UP" like the good Drill-Sgt he was. It was a rhetorical question so I didn't answer, but without sinking through the floor, I, being a good and obedient soldier and scared to death, took that as an

order and stopped backing up and things went ok from there. We were all back home that evening.

We went on maneuvers that same summer north-west of Calgary near Caroline in the foothills. We practiced with a Bren gun and tossed a few thunder-flashes. They were shaped like railroad flairs and had a 2 second fuse on one end, just a little blob of what looked like tar but when it was rubbed with a little stick like a girl's nail emery stick, it was ignited and took 2 seconds to set the powder off. They had the same amount of explosive as a grenade but not the shrapnel that the grenade had. But, never the less, they could still do a lot of injury if they went off at close range. I don't know where Bud was when we were briefed on all that but he seemed to think that it was just an oversized firecracker because, he later told me, he had lit the fuse and then tossed one into a Sherman tank that was occupied by two soldiers. Luckily for Bud, it failed to go off, saving the two soldiers inside from serious injuries and saving Bud from a court-marshal

In the spring of 1951, before school was out, we moved to Rimbey and once again we had to finish the grade in a different school. For Lorne it was grade 8, me grade 9, and Yvonne grade 11. I believe Bud had been going to Red Deer to the composite school there so he didn't have to change. I only went to school in Rimbey for about 2 1/2 months but long enough to make a few friends and I wasn't plagued by bullies there. Luba Mishikoff was one of the girls in my class and so was Donna Carlson who I dated for a while after I was out of school. And also Tom Mickey who later on came to work with me and was my helper when I was a shooter for Frontier Geophysical when we were stationed in Lucky Lake, Saskatchewan in 1954 and 1955

Donna and I didn't last long because, as she told Roger Iddings, the guy she eventually married, that I was too immature for her. He was working on my seismic crew for a day or two and seemed to take great pleasure in passing the above info on to me. In fact she was looking for a way to dump me when I was a little indiscreet while sitting next to a really attractive young girl named Jackie Hoagh coming back from Lacombe after playing in a hockey game there. I had missed the fact that Donna's little brother was also on the bus and he didn't waste any time squealing on me when we reached Rimbey. I had a date to meet Donna at the Rimbey town hall as soon as I got back. She was there alright, but not in a receptive mood, so I knew that the jig was up. Roger was in like a dirty shirt, wasting no time at all.

Sometime after that, Don asked me what had happened to my relationship with Donna. He told me that he was in the front seat of a car, I can't remember whose car it was or who he was with, but he said that Donna and Roger were in the backseat and they certainly weren't discussing politics, religion or the country's economy. I told him that Donna and I were just not compatible and left it like that.

When I finished grade 9 in Rimbey, I would have given anything to go to higher learning but Dad decided that since he planned to keep me on the farm I didn't need any more schoolin' or learnin'. Mind you, he never discussed this with me, just told mom to tell me. I was picked because I was too afraid of him to say anything, therefore was able get along better than any of my brothers. Bud had found out the hard way that you don't question the boss' decisions. He had actually planned to stay on the farm and be Dad's partner but Bud certainly wasn't going to be pushed around and besides he was a grump similar to Dad when things weren't going well and was awfully pessimistic, and I can't really blame him for that because the farm at Rimbey was right in the middle of a hail belt. When I saw a hail storm coming I would hide in the basement in the house until it passed. Who wants to see their livelihood being pounded into the ground by hailstones?? However, even though I was expected to emulate him he never revealed any of the business details to me. This cost him one time. He was away one day and a guy came to buy some oats that we had in storage so I sold him the oats at the price that I had heard Dad mention to someone. Dad wasn't happy when he came home and I told him about oats. He then told me that the price that I sold the oats for was only the initial price paid when a farmer delivered the grain at the elevator, so we were out a few dollars.