

CLIFFORD JOHN SIMPSON

I was born on the farm February 4, 1922. All three of we children were born at home, on the farm. Mother thought the time you went to the hospital was when you were ready to die and she wanted no part of that.

I have no recollection of any special events until I went to school. Our school was 1 ½ miles away. One time Dad bought a Chesapeake dog and trained him to pull a sleigh to take us to school. We had to keep a muzzle on him so he wouldn't bite children who used to tease him. In time we had to give that up.

Later on Dad bought us a Shetland pony to ride to school or pull a cutter in the winter. True to her breed, she at times was a mean one. After getting on her she would head for and run along a barbed-wire fence and scrape you off. One time in winter she had pulled us to school in the cutter and coming to a steep snow bank she upset the cutter, dumping us kids out and leaving us to walk home.

Later, when I was able to handle a bigger horse Dad bought me a pony, called Prince, and he was my transportation for several years. On July 1st there was always a sports day at Prongua and I used to ride him in the pony races.

The teacher at our country school with room for about 30, taught all grades from one to eight and tried to help older ones taking correspondence courses for grades nine and ten.

After Grade eight, it was decided I should go to Battleford to High School six miles away. In summer I rode my bike to school and rode Prince in the winter.

Dad was a grain buyer for the Wheat Pool. The year of 1939 was very dry with little grain produced. Dad's elevator was closed and he was transferred to Robin Hood, leaving Mother and we kids at Lindequist. I had two cows to milk and other chores before and after school. Not much time for play.

In earlier years there were many people on the farms. Most farmers had only one, two or three quarter sections so farm chores, being less we kids often got together and played ball in the evening. In the winter we used to flood an area by the creek to make ice where we used to skate and play "shinny". We used a tree branch for a hockey stick and if no one could afford a puck we used "road apples" i.e. frozen horse turds.

The next year the elevator opened again but still the crops were poor and once more the elevator closed and Dad was moved north again. There were no winter roads then as I recall, and Dad never got home again until Christmas.

I was in need of money as everyone else was but was lucky because we had lots of bush close to the house. I used to cut four loads on Saturdays and during the week I hauled them to town as I went to school and sold them for three dollars. One load on a sleigh was three feet high and three and a half feet wide and about six feet long. I had to get up about 5:00, milk the cows, feed and water and harness horses and get on the road by 6:30 to get to school by 8:30. I had lunch at Mrs. Claxton's boarding house. Roast beef, spuds, vegetables, coffee, pie and pudding for 25 cents. I paid her in wood.

Another crop failure in 1937. There was an opening in Unity and Dad was moved there where the Pool provided a house. So the family was together and I took Grades 11 and 12 there. I worked in a grocery store as delivery boy after school. I packed groceries Friday night and on Saturday from 8:00 am to midnight for \$7:00 a week. Big Deal! At least I had a bit of spending money. Now they have trouble getting young people to work for minimum wages at \$8.00 an hour.

1939 brought more changes. Crops were better and Dad was moved back to Lindequist. But I never returned. I had just finished Grade 12 and it was my Grandfather's wish that I go to University. I believe he had died in Victoria the year before but Grandma kept his wishes and gave me \$350 for the next year. Tuition was \$90 for the year; room and board and laundry \$25. per month. I was able to earn

enough to pay the other four years and managed to graduate with distinction from the college of Agriculture. That was in the spring of 1943.

In the meantime, Helen Tucker, whom I met in Unity, she and I were married in January.



She was working at the Bank of Montreal. I had decided to take two more year university and got my Masters degree in Agricultural Engineering. I was able to get a job in the department for the two years and was working almost full time and taking my classes - getting \$90 per month, about the same as Helen was getting. We had a small, one-room basement suite, "fully equipped" with a hot plate to cook on and a tea kettle and toaster. I enjoyed the luxury of a \$15 bicycle for transportation.

I got my Master degree in the spring of 1945. I guess being born and raised on farm, it was in my blood and I jumped at the chance to operate my Father-in-laws farm in Unity, when it was offered to me. The result was that we lived on the farm for seven months and after harvest moved back to Saskatoon where I taught for five months, - a most enjoyable life.

Bonnie was born two weeks after we moved to the farm in 1945. When it came time for her to go to school, she would have to start in Unity for two months then change to a school in Saskatoon for five months, and then back to Unity for the rest of her school year. So good things had to come to an end and we decided to quit my Saskatoon job.

Rural school was not good. The closest one was four miles away with only six students. Also there were no winter roads, which meant I would have to buy a team of horses and spend all day driving back and forth. So --- we bought one-quarter of an apartment block, lived on the farm for the farming season and moved to town for the winter.

Needing both money to live on and something to fill in my spare time I eventually ended up with a contract as agent for Mutual Life of Canada. This was most rewarding in every way.

As a result of the many changes in the financial world, Mutual Life of Canada's most recent change is an amalgamation with Sun Life and is now known as the Sun Life Assurance Company.

Socially I have enjoyed membership in many organizations the two main ones being with the Masonic Lodge of which I have been a Past Master and member since 1952 - 58 years. And the Lions Club which was chartered in 1946 and so it has turned out I am the only living Chartered member.

Family life has also been a rewarding experience. Bonnie, the eldest born in 1945 has been an active, participating school teacher. Teaching has been her life, except for taking time out to raise her two boys, Mark born in 1967 and Brendan born in 1968. Mark has one son, Justin. Brendan has a daughter, Madeleine, born in 2007. Bonnie retired in 2009 and I believe is busier now helping to raise her grandchildren, than when she was teaching.

Son, Bryan was born in 1943. He took two years, at the School Of Agriculture at U. of S. and started farming with Cliff. They sold the farm business in 1996. Bryan is really enjoying being either salesman for John Deere Dealership. He married Beverley in 1969. They have two daughters, Shannon and Darcie,

My first wife, Helen, died in 1984 at the age of 63.

In 1986 I married Betty Tovey, my daughter-in-laws mother.



I had bought a mobile home in Palm Springs to spend winters there. Betty and I enjoyed many winters there until Betty developed health problems, meaning I could no longer get medical insurance after 2000.

An end to another era.