

Christening Gown

Sarah Cameron Lunn used it in
1896.

Mrs Phyllis McCallum - Lunn
owns it today.

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photo taken
by Helen
Van Brant

Growing Up On The Family Farm

This is memories of mine, Louie Hackey (nee) Lunn from growing up on the Archie Lunn family farm. Now means that I'm the 2nd youngest of 5 boys - Leonard - Raymond - Russell - Maxwell - Lloyd and 3 girls Eleanor - Grace and myself - I can only tell from my time on through the depression years and the second world war back in the 30's and 40's.

Now I would say that the most important implements in agriculture at that time were the hands of the people who lived and worked on farms. They repaired machinery, helped bring livestock into the world, cooked and put up preserves, fixed fences, cut wood, worked ground and planted the crops, made quilts and clothing.

Now I would like to capture the skills, strength and character of many working hands of a family working together.

My father Archie Lunn was born on Willy's Sideroad, 1st farm north of Fingal Line on April 23, 1892, and at the age of 27 married Ruby Cameron, who was born at RR3 Lona Station, on Willy's Sideroad next to Shackleton Line. Ruby was born on Oct. 13, 1899. At the age of 20, Archie and Ruby were married on Sept. 24, 1919.

At that time Dad owned 50 acres on the corner of Fingal Line and Willy's Sideroad and also 200 acres across the road and back by the lake. We got to it by going in by Harry Bradt's

(2)

house. It was called the lake farm.

This lake farm had a gravel pit were Dad over the years sold a lot of gravel for the area roads.

There was also a dump back at the lake bank were everyone took there garbage to dump there. This of course had not been allowed for a number of years.

Dad loved carpentering and he built all the buildings on our farm including the house.

He built the back part of the house which we knew as the kitchen - washroom and pantry sometime before he got married and because he had a brother got married and no house, Uncle Will and Aunt Sarah lived for 1 year in this small home and Dad went back home to live. Then Uncle Will bought the farm were he farmed on Willy's sideroad. Dad and Mother were married and moved into this small home. Then Dad built the front part which was a large dining room with built in cupboards between the kitchen and dining room with doors on both sides. So the dishes were washed in the kitchen - put in the cupboard and taken out at meal time from the dining room were we ate all our meals as there were to many in our family to eat in the kitchen.

There was also a hall from the kitchen to the front door and on the other side of the hall was a parlour and bedroom and a stairway to upstairs with 4 bedrooms up and a

(3)

basement under most of the house.

The 50 acre farm is where all 8 of us children were born and grew up.

We had a dairy herd and sold milk. The cans of milk were picked up at the road each day by Roy Kidster and sons and taken to the Carnation Plant at Olymer. Although I guess at one time, Leonard told me they took the milk out ^{the} Willy's Sideroad to No. 3 highway where it was picked up and taken to the Payne's Mill Cheese Factory. I have a cheque which Dad had received for milk for 1 month, which was found when the Payne's Mill W.I. ladies went through all the papers found in the old cheese factory before it was torn down.

We also separated some of the milk and sold cream to the Creamery in Dutton and it was picked up once a week. That meant there was cream to use and some butter and a little money over for groceries. We also made some of our butter, but I always thought Mother put cream in everything she made - like creamed vegetables, pudding, tops and of course whip cream on cakes and pies - really good.

As kids we would get sent to the basement to bring up just the amount of cream that Mother needed at that time.

We always kept about 5 sows to raise pigs, we had 6 horses to do the farm work and up to 800-900 laying hens which we raised

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(4)

from day old. For some years we had an incubator that was set up in the downstairs bedroom (the bed moved out) and set our own eggs for hatching. The day they hatched they were moved to the brooder house (a small building) where we had a coal stove with a hood over it to keep the baby chicks warm. They took a lot of care - to keep the temperature right - especially with high winds, if it got too cool in there then they would crowd and maybe smother some baby chicks. When they were well feathered and warm weather came they were moved out to the field first in the brooder houses and a few years later Dad built shelters for the young chickens to range in.

Come fall when they would start to lay eggs they were put in hen houses - we ^{had} several pens at least 6 pens. Here they had to be fed and watered 3 times a day and their eggs were gathered noon and supper time. These eggs were cleaned every night and put in fillers in - crates in the basement to be kept cool as they were picked up and sold once a week. Now I remember when our eggs went to an egg grading station in Wallacetown, in the house were John and Barb Woolley live. After it quit our eggs went to the Elgin Co-op in St Thomas.

When the eggs were in the incubator they had to be turned everyday until hatching time. As kids we always thought that was an interesting job. In later years we got our

(5)

chicks a day old from a hatchery.

Growing up there were so many jobs that had to be done everyday and some jobs weren't as interesting as others. Like carrying in wood to fill the wood box to keep 3 stoves going.

A typical day on the farm back then, those that milked cows were up early about 5 AM in the morning to milk by hand. That would have been Dad and my 4 older brothers, by the time they milked the cows, separated the cream, fed the cows, and the horses and pigs and hens they were ready for the 1st big meal of the day - Breakfast - so us girls would get up to help Mather with breakfast. ^{but the} table set, oatmeal porridge made - eggs - potatoes got ready on the wood stove - also applesauce or maple syrup or honey and homemade bread, also to make sure there was water in the reservoir on the end of the cook stove so the guys had warm water to wash in.

While we were all at home it meant 10 people around our dining room table as the kitchen table wasn't large enough.

Then after breakfast the boys and Dad would go out to work - whether it was working ground, planting or harvesting time, cutting or raking or drawing in hay, or cutting wood, grinding feed for cattle, pigs or chickens as we had our own grinder - or cleaning out pens or drawing manure, or making syrup or fencing,

(6)

each time of year brought it's own jobs, but they were all done with teams of horses so the horses had to be fed, watered, combed and harnessed - they were very important animals.

Now I never milked cows, although Eleanor did, but my job after breakfast was in the house washing dishes and getting meals and cleaning floors. Each of us had our turn to drive our milk cows to the lake farm all summer after breakfast to pasture and then to drive them back home at 5 P.M. for evening milking.

The dishes were washed in the dishpan usually one would wash and another dry dishes. I always thought food stuck on harder then, and we never had a scraper. In the summertime the dish water when the dishes were all done was poured on Mother's flower beds outside the kitchen door. Those flowers always flowered really well.

Mother made bread 3 times a week with 7 loaves each time. She must have thought that this was a losing battle as we would have fresh bread for supper each time she made bread. And it was really good. Mother started her bread at noon using a little bit of mashed potato and potato water with the yeast, then it was finished the next day.

It was us girls job when we weren't in school to peel a kettle of potatoes everyday. Mother always told us to sit down to peel - save your legs. We would put the

(7)

dishpan between us ^{and peel} until Mother said we had peeled enough.

We grew a lot of potatoes so we had enough to last until the next summer. Mother always hoped the crop was big enough to have some to sell. Often had to take the sprouts off of the potatoes during the winter - that wasn't one of my favourite jobs. It had to be done in the basement.

We always had a big garden - the vegetables were stored in the basement for winter use. We grew turnips, we canned sweet corn in jars - cut the corn off the cob - cover with boiling water and bring to boiling point. Pack loosely in jars with ^{with water} ~~teaspoon~~ of salt per quart, and put it in the big boiler and cooked it for 3 hours. This corn was really good.

We would can about 100 jars of tomatoes, put them in boiling water to get the skins off, then cut the tomatoes up some and cook them ^{and} put these cooked tomatoes in jars and seal - for use until the next summer.

Mother made chili sauce and green tomato pickle and 9 day pickles and mustard pickles which we all really liked.

Plus we would go to the woods to pick thimble berries in the hot summer time wearing long sleeves and long pants because of the prickly briars of the berry plants. Now Mother would can these plus all our own

(8)

strawberries, rhubarb, red and black currants, raspberries, crabapples and quinces as we had a tree of each of these.

There was an orchard at home and also an orchard on the lake farm back by the lake. In that orchard there were snow apples and St. Lawrence apples among other kinds.

I remember Eleanor saying that she walked back to the lake orchard and picked a basket of St. Lawrence apples and walked back home, and she made a pie to show at the Junior Fair which was held in Dutton at that time. She would have been in public school at that time. Well she got 1st prize and she said that it had to be cut so everyone got a piece - she said they were pretty small pieces. Eleanor also said that one time she got 1st prize at the Junior Fair for the best darned sock. That was something else that was very important to know how to do.

Now we always had all the meat we needed because we had cattle, pigs and chickens.

Chickens were killed as we wanted them, so that was another job plucking feathers. The boys would cut the heads off and we girls would pluck them and Mother usually cleaned the insides. It would take 2 chickens for a meal - if there was company expected it would take more.

(9)

Now beef and pork was another thing. Beef would all be canned in jars. Dad killed his own - it would hang in the barn to cure. - Then we would have a bee cutting up beef - a quarter of it would be carried into the house and put on the dining room table - several of us would get a knife and start cutting slices of beef - pack it into jars with 1 teaspoon of salt in the top - then the rubber rings and lids were put on loosely and put in the big boiler with a board that was made to fit - with holes in the board and it ^{was} put in the bottom of ^{the} boiler for the jars to sit on to let the water boil up around the jars and it would cook with a steady wood fire for 3 hours. When done the lids were tightened to keep it sealed. This beef was really good. You always had beef on hand and ^{it} could be heated up in a hurry if company came.

Now the pork - Mother always had Aunt Edith and Uncle John and their family for a Sunday dinner of spare ribs. They would be left the full length, and that was a good meal.

The rest of the pork - well the hams were cooked in jars like the beef - then the bacon was cut and fried and packed in a crock and covered with the grease and it was ^{covered} with a lid and stored upstairs for use at any time.

Now this was a lot of work at the time of killing, but it was our way of keeping our own beef and pork that is until the time that the cold storage building opened in Dutton and you could rent a box there.

In late fall we would dry apples to use late on in the winter when our apples were gone. Now these apples would be peeled, quartered & cored and put on a wooden rack which hung from the ceiling over the kitchen stove. They would be spread out on this rack and left there for a week or more to dry - then packed in brown paper bags and tied and hung in the boys closet upstairs - they'd be used as needed, put some in a Kettle with water and let them soak for a length of time - then cooked and sweetened and you had apple sauce. We liked to get into the bag upstairs and eat some - They were good!

Maple syrup was another busy time. As kids we liked to get to the woods when the older boys were gathering sap with the horses and boiling it down at the woods. Some of the boys would have to stay at the woods all night in the shanty to watch the fire and to not let the syrup burn. Mother would can 60 to 80 quarts of syrup each year and also there could be some to sell. While the syrup season was on we

(11)

had syrup on the table 3 meals a day - Mother would make Johnny cake with corn meal and it would still be quite warm for supper with maple syrup poured over the pieces - The fastest eater got the most pieces - never any over. It was really good.

I remember when we got Hydro - I hadn't yet started to school. It would be around 1936 - We then had a light in our bedrooms. No more oil lamps to clean and fill.

Threshings were another time of years when it meant very busy times in the house and also for the men.

Field threshing was when the grain was cut and shocked in the field and enough teams of horses and wagons and men came to do this job. When I was young Tommy Small had the threshing machine and the tractor to run it and the farmer had to get enough men and teams and wagons to keep up to this machine. Usually 16-18 men for dinner and supper. Dad would go to Dutton early in the morning to the butcher shop to get a big roast of ... beef.

It would be put in the oven until the pies were ready to go in - at least 5-6 pies. At this time the roaster would be put on top of the stove to keep cooking, and then would go back into the oven when the pies were baked. So the wood stove had to be kept hot.

by adding more wood as needed. That meant on a hot summer day we had a very hot kitchen.

The threshers dinner would consist of roast beef & gravy and a big pot of potatoes which we would have dug before hand. Carrots from the garden, Cabbage salad from the garden, homemade chili sauce and cucumber pickles, homemade bread and butter. Cooked fruit and pies and tea, milk and water, some of the guys liked to see who could eat the most pieces of pie.

The supper meal would be some of Mother's canned beef or pork and desert would be fruit and cake. The rest of the meal would be much the same as noon.

Washing up for threshers meals, the wash tub was put outside near a tree with water put in it after breakfast so it could warm up with the sun - several towels and soap were put out for the guys to wash off some of the dirt as it was always a dirty job.

Yet Mother always said that the white tablecloths were to be used and the good dishes used. I always thought that threshers got the best meals ever ever they went to work. But it was a big job done.

Everyone was really tired after a day of threshing but it was a time you looked forward to as you heard all the chit-chat around the table and at meal time you seen the neighbours

So at a very early age we learned to get big meals, bake cakes & pies & cookies - peeling vegetables and fruits for cooking and all summer canning everything as they came along.

Back in those days we had a very closely knit community because the farmers all helped each other with threshing, silo filling, buzzing wood and haying and barn raising. There were card parties and dances in the little one room school S.S. No. 1.

All 8 of us kids attended the little one room school S.S. No. 1 Dunwich which was a mile for us to walk.

The Christmas school concerts were something everyone looked forward to. The children would work for weeks under the supervision of their teacher, preparing dialogues, drills, recitations and all the singing and costume making. Someone from the community would act as chairman usually someone who was good at telling jokes and we would get to go to other concerts at the neighboring schools.

The 1st Friday in May was "Arbor Day" when at school we would really clean inside the school - like housecleaning the library and blackboards and the floor - also raking and cleaning the yard - and planting a garden and then after lunch

we would get to walk back of the school - through the woods - over the big gullies to the lake and walk along the beach to Plum Point fishery and walk back to the school by way of the road. This was always a day we looked forward to - but dead tired when we got home.

These were big times at the little school until the time of Central Schools when our children got on buses and went to school in Dulton. This was a big change in the community.

Now my family belonged to the Presbyterian Church in Wallacetown. Think what it would be like to go to church or any other outing in our old Durant car each Sunday with 4 in the front seat and 6 in the back seat. This was long before seat belts. There was no heater so we had a car robe over our knees.

There were always a number of my brothers and sisters in the choir and I just couldn't wait to be old enough to join. Finally at the age of 12 I was asked to join and sing in the choir. I often sang solo's, duets and trios with my brothers and sisters and duets with Uncle Harold Lunn, I loved singing with him. I considered it a honour.

I always attended Sunday school.

(15)

Some of my teachers were Aunt Mae Graham,
Mrs Neil Robb and Ron Ford. I attended
until I got married, and then I attended
with Don at the United Church where
Mrs Page was the teacher.

I also enjoyed the Young Peoples Society
in my teens. I'll never forget having the
chance to go to Young Peoples Conventions
on Thanksgiving weekend. We travelled by
train to Ottawa and by car to Kitchener,
Woodstock, Hamilton and London and
we were billeted out in homes.

Just being with maybe 700 young people,
enjoying dynamic speakers and the
wonderful sing songs. I would go home
and learn these songs on the piano.

Learning to play the piano and guitar
was always my pastime.

Now it came the time when changes
took place on the farm, I guess this
could have been expected, just part of life.
At the age of 16 Russell left the farm on
Wallacetown fair day 1939, and went by
bus to Brantford and stayed with Dad's
cousin Maggie. Russell got a job at the
Massey Harris Plant there and worked for
sometime. Then sometime later ^{around 1941} Maxwell
left home and also went to Brantford
and got a job on a farm.

Then in March 1942 Leonard got his

(16)

call into the service. He enlisted in the Essex Scottish Regiment and trained at Chatham, Camp Borden, Niagara Falls and in June 1944 went overseas.

Now 1944 was a year never to be forgotten, In January brother Maxwell had a serious accident while servicing a farm tractor - a machine exploded and hit him in the face - and after being unconscious in the hospital in Brantford for some time, he came back home to recuperate and then later he went back to his job.

In August 3rd Dad had a farm accident when he fell about 16 feet in the barn and broke his back. He never walked again. Dad spent 5 months in the hospital - that was before hospitalization - so his hospital room, surgeons fees and special nurses wages had to be paid every week.

We kids, Raymond, Russell, Eleanor, Grace Lloyd and myself had to work hard to keep this paid up and to keep the farm going. Russell was at home for holidays when Dad got hurt, so he had to get permission from the proper authorities to leave a city job in Brantford to come back home to help run the farm.

Then in September word came to Mother by a telegram that Leonard had been wounded in action in France and

and he was sent back to a hospital in England.

I've often thought as I have grown older that Mother had a strong faith to carry on and keep everything going. Mother cared for Dad as an invalid for 23 years.

That summer, 1 week after Dad got hurt we were going to have a field threshing at the lake farm, only that day Russell had to go see a man in St. Thomas about leaving his job in Brantford to come home to help run the farm, so Mother took that chance to go to see Dad at the hospital and Grace and I were left to look after the noon meal for all the threshers. Men were calling and offering to help. Now because they were not working at home we couldn't see how many there were. Now Grace was 15 and I was 13 - so cousin Myrtle Dunn was asked to come and help us get the noon meal ready.

Of course we had pies to make, potatoes to peel - meat to cook and all the rest. At noon 21 men came to eat - we didn't have space for them all to sit down at once. That was a day I'll never forget.

I started high school in Dutton that fall of 1944 and I stayed all week with Aunt Mae and Uncle Mac Graham on their Hog Street farm. Eleanor also picked up the mumps at Wallacestown Fair that

(18)

year and we had mumps at home until into January 1945. One person at a time. Well I got the mumps at Christmas exam time. So I missed exams. Then came Easter exam and I was in bed at home with Strep throat - so my high school days were over. That was the winter of 1944-45 and we were all snowed in from before Christmas to spring. No vehicles were through on the roads from the day my Dad came home from the hospital before Christmas unto near spring. One of my brothers ^{usually take} me to Aunt Mae's ^{on} Sunday and picked me up on Friday by horse and sleigh.

A gang of us went to a dance ^{that winter} at the Wallacetown school by horse and sleigh and the boys tied the horses up in the shed at The United Church.

Eleanor and Grace both left home at different times in 1945 to work in St. Thomas at the Memorial Hospital.

Leonard came home from the war in 1945 but he always had back problems the rest of his life.

Russell went to work in St. Thomas in early 1946.

Eleanor and Russell both got married in 1947. Raymond got married in 1948 and Grace got married in 1949.

During these years of my teens, going

to dances was our entertainment. And we had a lot of good times.

We attended dances at Gungah, Dutton Town Hall, Port Stanley Stork Club, Masonic Lodge Hall St. Thomas, Pinafore Park upper pavilion in the summer - this was open air to Mrs Potts Orchestra on Wednesday and Saturday nights. New Glasgow - summer - open air dance floor to our own local boys "The Lake Erie Ramblers", and Wallacetown Hall after it was built. I think my family all enjoyed dancing.

But - - we knew that we had to get up in the morning for farm work or we wouldn't be going to the next dance.

Somehow I believe that hard work and discipline didn't really hurt any of us. We have all grown up to respect others.

In 1951 Don and I were married and again Aunt Mae was there for me when she asked Mother if she could look after and prepare our wedding meal at Mother's, and later that day Don and I left on our wedding trip and we drove to Cleveland, Ohio to spend some time with Don's great Aunt and her family. On our return home to the Lackey Homestead were my new family consisted of Don and his Dad and Don's 3 younger brothers

My first morning there of course Don

(20)

was up to help milk cows and I was up to make breakfast and lunches for 2 school boys. Clair rode his bike to the Townline at Cecil Browns to catch a bus for Arthur Voaden School in St. Thomas. He was in grade 9. And George who was in grade 6 at S.S. No 1 school just down the road.

This was the start of my new life.
So all I had learnt from my Mother & Dad while growing up was to become my influence and guidance for many years to come and I have good memories of those years of growing up with my brothers and sisters back in the 30's and 40's.

By Louie Mae Lunn Lacey, 2006