

## Introduction

---

*Once Upon a Time...*

*There is a little village, hamlet if you will, nestled off Highway 7 between Marmora and Madoc, Ontario called Deloro. You wouldn't know it was there save a small sign off the highway. And yet the beginning of an adventure of a lifetime takes place in this quaint, nondescript little village. Born out of its gold mining history, the war years between 1939 and 1945, and continuing through 1952, this adventure of life in this little village is captured in the story of two brothers, Jim and Dave, and a host of other players, boys and girls whose lives would become so entwined that even today, some 65 years later, each event is as real as the day they happened. Some of the names and faces you will come to know are names like Beaver, Bucky, Canary (that's me), Davy, Blockhead, Bernard Jimmy, Ally, Bobby, Troy, Jiminy, Billy, Tom, Pat, and others. Then there were the girls: Margaret, Anne, Vera, Evelyn, Jean, and more. And the village of caring people who affected their lives in uncountable ways are all part of the events in the lives of Jim and Dave Dalton. Tumultuous, scandalous, mischievous, daredevilish, desire, hope, and love are just a few words that might begin to touch on the journey of these two boys and a leaky raft, many leaky rafts, sometimes more than two built each summer. Enter this story if you wish. May it be your journey as well.*

So picture in your mind, in the spring of 1939, a 1936 Ford winding its way from Highway 7 along a country road filled with

curves and little tree-lined hills scattered on either side by small farms. Names like Richardson, Henderson, Vanukalem, Dikun, Murphy, and Johnston are etched on weather-torn mailboxes. In this car are four people: Harold Dalton, his wife, Dora, and two small sons, Jim and David, aged three and two. The car winds around a corner past a road that leads to a cheese factory, then over a little knoll, later to be know as Flashlight Hill, past a little white-frame schoolhouse, the Catholic school in town, and on the right across the road, the much larger two-room public school whose teachers are Mr. and Mrs. Hooey. On they drive past a wood-frame town hall and the only local grocery store, operated by Mr. Haike and his wife. It's at this point the road takes a sharp left turn to go through the village and then up a steep hill out of town on to Malone. On this street, called O'Brien Street, are about forty homes, with families you will meet: Hector Boudreau, George Brooks, Sid Cheeseman, the Corrigans, the Browns, the Airharts, Mrs. Koski, the Hooeys, Alphonse Clemens, and many more, all who play a part in "raising a child."

But Harold continues straight ahead past the two town boarding houses on the left, operated by Mrs. McInroe, the Deloro lawn bowling green on the right, and a large, almost opulent home on the right, occupied by Colonel A.V. Yates, the general manager of the Deloro Smelting and Refining Company where Harold has come to be its secretary-treasurer. Straight ahead as Harold turns a small corner is the plant office building and the plant, where during the war years, 1939 to 1945 and beyond, it had become the smelter of cobalt ore and the manufacturer of stellite for the war effort. Stellite for jet engines was made from iron ore brought in from South Africa; its final journey to the plant was on George O'Neil's train, called "the Dinky."

The car and its weary occupants begin village life at their first residence, #7 O'Brien Street. Imagine, in 1939, this little village

has running water, with a pump house right in the centre of the village, and a few still-usable outhouses scattered here and there. Every house has a huge shed at the rear and a large garden plot.

### The Journey Begins

This journey through the eyes and experiences of Jim and David will transport you a time and place where you will build many rafts, pick blueberries on the high rocks, encounter bears (yes, real ones), swim in rivers, and go upstream through the first, second, and third eddy past Terrions' farm, with just a bamboo pole, black line, one hook and a bucket of worms, and fish every eddy. Spear suckers in the Moira River at Ackerman mine. Tap maple trees (on the unknown property of others) and pre-boil sap outside on a huge wood fire. Know just about every farm and family within miles and be a special part of their family. Play "jack-knife" on the wooden steps of the general store and listen to the whippoorwill (magical). Ball games in the summer, skating rinks (two) in the winter, and a ski hill with a barrel jump. Daily visits to the cheese factory, where Mr. Callery would allow us to scoop out of the large vats our cheese curds for the day, much to the chagrin of our mother, who only saw stains of grease on our clothes. All of this with a cadre of many friends who shared along with us, and we with them, on this magical journey. We would spend time with other families on their farms and in homes as they accompanied each of us, as I reflect back on this journey. They were families who cared for us, and in my words, were a village who raised a child.

As we grew in years, Marmora became our home away from home. The village that raised a child was Marmora as well. Our circle of friends grew. Howard Sabine, the Price family, especially Margaret and Margery, the twins, the Lynch brothers, and our

family's church home, St. Andrews United Church. Stories abound around Charlie Crawford's bus line, Sanderson Taxi, Hanna's Dairy, Breen O'Connor's pool hall, and especially the Royal Hotel on Saturday night. One cannot talk about this time in history without mentioning Dr. Hamilton Crawford, that rotund, almost magical doctor who knew everyone, gave us our first shots, and attended to the clinic in the basement of the Deloro Smelting and Refining Company office (how modern was that in the '40s). As well, we remember the building of the first Dr. Hamilton Crawford Memorial Arena. There was Glen Allen Park, Marble Point Lodge, Tipperary House, Braver Creek (where our so-called fishing skills grew), and Bonters cabins dock, where we would watch the sunfish grab our hooks to such delight. Again it felt like we were a part of every family, and every family was our family.

We moved three times in Deloro, from our first house at #7 O'Brien Avenue, to the bungalow, and then finally back to O'Brien Avenue. My greatest recollections come during our time in the bungalow, right next to the Chemical Lab, and across from the company office.

### The Bungalow

This was a simple wood-frame house with three bedrooms and a screened-in porch. Each June when school ended, Dave and I would pull our mattresses from our bedroom and place them on the porch where we would spend the summer. Can you picture two small boys wide-eyed with wonder listening to the sound of the whippoorwill at dusk just before nodding off? To this very day, the haunting welcoming cry of that remembered whippoorwill enfolds me in such comfort and beauty, a sense of peace.

At the back and side of the bungalow, almost attached somehow, is the shed David would take over with his homing

pigeons, the bane of our mother. In the shed, filled with wood for the winter, we could hear the sound of cooing pigeons, at times twenty or more. Dave loved his pigeons, and although this love waned as the years passed, he was devoted to and passionate about these birds. Behind the shed overlooking a hill stood the apple tree whose stories will unfold, and beyond the hill was a land of many adventures for Dave and I. In the kitchen stood a grand old wood stove where our mother would offer up the smells that only a childhood memory can reveal, and above the stove in the ceiling between the roof and the floor stood the cistern. Wow, a cistern, a huge steel vat as it were, that filled with rain-water, which was pumped down by a hand lever pump. We loved that pump; like pumping for gold it was.

Then to the basement—well not really, something just dug out of the sand. A huge wood and coal furnace, a cold storage area, and a place filled with sand where each fall we would bury carrots from the garden. Outside was a wood frame garage, and beside it stood a swing. That swing frame still stands today some seventy years later all alone, as the bungalow is gone. But that swing was the joy of our sister Donna, who came along some five years after Dave and I arrived here, in 1943. Cats and dogs we had, and it is Tippy, a black and white collie, who became the love our lives. Tippy who would, on the stroke of twelve noon and five o'clock in the afternoon stand at the top of the hill path leading to the plant and howl just as the whistle would blow to end the work day for the men in the foundry.

Tippy never missed a day howling, much to the chagrin of the town's folk. Tippy, who some years later would be killed outside our bungalow on the road to the plant by a car, whose wheels, unfortunately, Tippy loved to chase.

This was now home, and from here many stories unfolded.

---

# The Early Years

---

*1939-1945*  
*#7 O'Brien Avenue*

## Earliest Memories and "Canary"

*Most of our recollections and my own glimpses of this time resonated from our mother. It didn't take too long to know that Mother was the disciplinarian in our family. Dad was the strong, gentle, quiet type. In looking back and as the years rolled on, this relationship became, in raising my brother and me, one in which you couldn't get away with anything, yet it was filled with love. Oh, how we must have tested our mom and dad in raising my brother and I. Do you know what my earliest memory of this house was? A telephone on the wall that you spoke into and took a receiver off to hold to your ear to hear. A party line, if you will, with at least three to five families on the line. How did one tell if the phone call was for us? Three long rings, two short rings was our call to answer the phone, and we had to know the longs and shorts of all the others on the line as well. Magic for us...*

There was always music in our house. Dad played the violin, and our radio brought Mother her favourite daytime show at one o'clock each day, "The Happy Gang"<sup>2</sup> with Bobby Jimby and so much more. As I remember, the radio brought us the big band era, Glen Miller and more. Mother's gift of music may not have been in an instrument, but it rested in her conducting, if you will, the rhythms of life within our family. Mother somehow was able to conduct the crescendos, the ups and downs, the managed notes of raising three children into a well-managed symphony, if

you will. Added to this, Mother was wise, something as kids we seemed to have forgotten.

### “Canary”

How would you like to carry this nickname, “Canary,” around with you through your whole life? Many years later I am still Canary in the eyes and memories of the many friends and those who grew up with us in Deloro. As an example, one spring day in 1960 I went back to go fishing on Crowe Lake with someone from work. We set up camp at Bonters Park on Crowe Lake, where as kids years before would catch sunfish off the dock. Sitting outside on the park bench, out of nowhere came this voice: “Canary—hey Canary.” Yes, it was with me then and even today in the annals of this little village. Troy Corrigan in another tent remembered. How could this name bring such an impression in history? Well here is how Mother and Dad remembered it.

Margaret Cheeseman became one of our early friends in Deloro. Her father, Syd Cheeseman, worked with our dad at the Deloro Smelting and Refining Company (DS&R). And the Cheesemans had a canary—always singing, brightly coloured, and I’m sure much loved by the family. As friends, we would wander through each other’s houses as if they were our own, and as my mother recalls, this canary must have caught our attention. Someone, either David or myself, we were told, wanted to see what made it squeak—should I pause here? For it can be classified as “Mature subject matter—viewer discretion advised”—somehow the canary lost its head. True story. Of course it became the village and larger folklore talking point for years. Imagine those Dalton boys doing that. They’re such lovely boys. Well—now the blame name begins—Margaret said it was



David, David said it was me, and because I was the oldest (five years old), it stuck with me all these years.

Well, if you think this was bad enough, our father had to take the brunt of the backlash at work, where, as our mother would recount, Mr. Cheeseman stood on a chair in the middle of the office shouting at our father for this terrible deed by his two sons. Mother would recount, with a smile on her face, this story every time we began to remember our childhood years. Our father never once retold his side of the story but somehow remained silent with this smile on his face as well.

This was our beginning in this little village, as “the Dalton boys” and “Canary”—one that would be remembered years and years later to this day. Today, many years later, there is still the fact that during all of these events, I still felt loved, within those tiny smiles on our parents’ faces in the retelling of this story.

*“We do not remember days, we remember moments.”*

—Cesare Pavese

## Mrs Koski's Gingerbread Men

*Just three houses down from the Cheesemans' house was our house, #7 O'Brien Avenue. The exit from our kitchen led to a small porch, then there were steps down to the ground. From this porch landing, we could see, directly across from the little path that led to the school, Harvey and Hilda Koski's home. From Finland, they were such gentle and caring people. They raised three children: Ina (a doctor), Ruth (a teacher and one of our babysitters) and Bill (university sports coach). Harvey was a very large and strong man who worked in the smelting operation of the plant. Our father always said to us, "Each your vegetables and be big and strong like Harvey Koski." To this day, that phrase still comes to mind as I remember that family with love.*

On many occasions, we would lean over the landing fence and watch Mrs. Koski bring out pans of gingerbread men and set them on their landing railing to cool off. The aroma would find our noses just a few feet away, and soon Mrs. Koski would invite us over to share with her in this truly remarkable delight—Hilda Koski's gingerbread men. I don't think we ever missed a day of her gingerbread men.

What does the Koski family speak of for me during these early years? They speak of tender and gentle moments and are remembered in how a village raises a child.

*"There is no charm equal to tenderness of heart."*

—Jane Austen

### 3

## Vera

*Along with our many new friends at this time was someone named Vera, taller than any of us and, as I remember, with red hair and some freckles. Vera was always around and was a part of our early wanderings and growing up. Underneath our house at #7 O'Brien Avenue was a storage area, if you will, housing everything from garden tools, lumber, and a saw horse to cut wood, old doors and more.*

Does anyone ever know when one's genitalia becomes the object of one's discussion? We were at that age, I suppose, of "I'll show you mine, if you show me yours." Remember that? It seemed that was the topic of this day, as we made our way into the storage area. There was Vera, along with myself and a few others gathered for this grand showing, as it were. I remember Bernard was there along with a couple of the Brooks' boys and, well, a few girls. Quickly the saw horses were moved, an old door flung on top—then—well, who goes first?

After long discussion, Vera said I should go first. Funny how you remember these moments. Up I go, down go the shorts, and there in all of my earthly nakedness lay my worldly genitalia for all to see.

—silence—a pause—snickers from Bernard—and without blinking an eye—and to this day I am sure she knew what she was doing—Vera had a clothespin—the spring type—quickly

and with laughter placed on my worldly genitalia, and she left with haste, laughing all the way.

Well, damn it, this I do remember—did it ever hurt. But even more, I felt as humiliated as one can be at that age.

Everyone else was laughing as well—off goes the clothespin, thinking, as I reflect back—I'm ruined for life. This event became village knowledge, of course, and like Canary, was a moment one never forgets, but soon becomes a moment of laughter in one's exploration of life.

I'm left only with this saying in remembrance of this day.

*"Don't worry, it only seems kinky the first time."*

—Author unknown

## George O'Neil's Pig Pen

*George O'Neil was a very gentle man, as I recall, and was the village policeman and the driver of the Dinky, the little train engine that brought the iron ore from Africa, landing in Belleville, on Lake Ontario, to the Deloro Smelting and Refining Company for smelting into cobalt and stellite for the war effort. Deloro and Poland were the only source of these metals for the war effort between 1939 and 1945. (See *Appendix: A Bit of History 1866—The Founding of Deloro, a Mining Town*).*

Now George also had a pig pen where he kept several pigs. Just behind our house was a small walk right to the garages built for the community, and at the end was the pig pen. We were never sure how many pigs he kept at one time or another, but this time there were no pigs—just the remnants of one, with straw and feed all around.

David and I began experimenting with that usual first time try at smoking—do you remember your moment? We must have had illusions of grandeur as we rolled dried pine needles in newspaper, lit the so-called cigarette—and, well, you know the result.

Climbing up the stairs to the kitchen, Mother opened the door and met two very sick, green-coloured sons—who spent two days recovering. Mother used to love to tell this story over and over again, most likely to remind us of this most horrible experience.

But you know—that wasn't the real problem of that day. In our endeavour to get home sick and all, we must have left a lit cigarette still smouldering. And, yes, there was quite a fire—quite a fire, actually—we burnt down George O'Neil's pig pen. That got around the village—the Dalton brothers burned down George O'Neil's pig pen. To this day, we were never sure if George really knew it was our doing, except on one fateful day we were standing on the street corner across from the town hall, waiting for a ride to Marmora. Guess who should pick us up, oh yes, George O'Neil. As we sat in the back seat, George, with his rimmed glasses and pea cap, looked through the rearview mirror and said (I'll never forget this), "You boys don't know anything about my pig pen burning down, do you?"

If our silence could kill, it did—"Oh no, sir, we don't know anything about that."

To this day, I remember those words—a bald-faced lie, of course, and if anything, a shock to my soul. I held that event and moment in my mind each time I thought of lying—well, pretty well most of the time. George taught us a lesson that day. He said no more on our drive to town, and yet we knew he knew. George in his own way was "raising a child."

*"O what a tangled web we weave, when first we  
practice to deceive."*—From the play *Marmion* by  
Sir Walter Scott

# 5

## The First Leaky Raft

*The Spring Pond*

*Right next door to the public school was a low-lying area that took all the spring runoff from Murphy's farm. A great pond on which to build a raft—our first—and it's as if our souls were called to do so. What a joy—taking cedar rails from the fences around the pond, pieces of wire that held the fence together, strapping each cedar pole together, and throwing on top anything else we were able to find: old doors, anything. A pole would usually be a tree limb strong enough to push the raft—and voila. Day after day, even at noon, before school, after school, and weekends, we would gather with our many friends (especially I remember Jimmy Brooks) and off we would go. Soaking wet as the raft would tip and fill our rubber boots. This would last till about Easter, depending on the weather, and the experience would tug on my soul—this was it, this was my reason for living—what joy! We learned a lot about building rafts as the days and years to come would bring us further joy in larger and bigger rafts to ply the waters above the falls on the Moira River each and every summer.*

Each raft would bring many things to learn, leading to a new raft. Most of all, in binding up the new raft each year, it brought the binding of great friendships and companions who, to this day by name cross my mind: Jimmy and Tommy Brooks, Bucky Mantle, Baldy Brown, Troy Corrigan, Charles (Beaver) Clemens, and many more.



*"Everything you can imagine is real."*—Pablo  
Picasso

## 6

### Flashlight Knoll

*and Winter in the Village*

*Well, by now you would think we would have found something better to do than build rafts. And we did, but not in the winter. What was one to do? Well, I'm not sure who came up with this idea in the first place. Tommy Brooks talks about this—so let's blame Tommy. But we were all complicit.*

As you enter the little village on the Deloro Road, there is a little knoll that rises up and then the road descends into the village. On the side of the road, the knoll provides protection in that one cannot be seen. From here the game of flashlight we played. Have you ever taken a bright aluminium empty flashlight with no batteries, tied a long string around it, and placed it in the middle of the road? You must be thinking, what a weird game to play. Surely, you might say, I wouldn't do that. Well we did—as the cars would approach, an unsuspecting driver might just catch a glimpse on the road and come to screeching stop, thinking it was a good flashlight—run back to retrieve it—and then just as the person was going to pick it up, it would disappear as we tugged the string and pulled it out of reach. Many times it was Mr. Sanderson of Sanderson Taxi from Marmora. As the person would say some nasty words to us, we dove over the fence across the field to Jimmy Dikun's home.

We always wondered why Mr. Sanderson always seemed to stop—we never knew. Again this got our names around the

village—those Dalton boys again. How is it that it was our names “the Dalton boys” included all the others who were complicit? Well, maybe we should leave that discussion here.

### Winter in the Village—Oh What Joy

- Bobsledding from the top of the Malone hill road right down O’Brien Avenue to Mr. Haike’s General Store—what a ride! Some would fall off, others run and jump on. Modern-day luges had nothing on us.
- Two ice rinks—can you imagine that in our little village? One rink was behind our home at #7 O’Brien Avenue. Another rink was on the Mud Flats—waste contaminants from the smelting operation, which lay beside the path to the plant. New skates, hockey sticks, and many friends to play shinny with, day and night. Deloro had some hockey talent as well: Greg Terrion went on to play with the Toronto Maple Leafs for a while. Wayne Brown played with the St. Catharine’s Tepees of the Major Junior League.
- Ski slope leading down to the ball field with a barrel jump at the end. New skis, with old fashioned bindings. Day after day we would ply this hill up and down pretending to be, imagining we could one day be Olympic skiers. No lack of imagination here. It seemed like a magical winter wonderland—and you know what? It was, and is.

*“In seed-time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.”*

—William Blake

## Deloro Public School

*Mr. and Mrs. Hooey*

*How does one describe the first encounter with education and its teachers? Well, I can only talk of my thoughts and feelings as we enter our two-room school, quite a modern brick building for the 1940s. One room for grades one to four, the other for grades five to eight.*

In the basement was a manual training and Home Ec. room where we boys learned to make bird houses. Across from our school was the little one-room Roman Catholic school. What struck me then—and this remains my passion today—is that one's religion, though Catholic or Protestant schooling, had no bearing on our friendship with and caring for one another. It was just some place we went to learn. And learn we did!

What can I possibly say about those early years where both Mr. and Mrs. Hooey touch my life in ways beyond just the ABCs of learning? Both gentle people, soft-spoken and dedicated teachers, who so often delighted us with amazing new learnings, filled with fun and yet developing new minds for greater learning. Can you remember the two empty tin cans tied together with a long string? You would enter the cloak room with one can, close the door, with the other can a distance away in the classroom and speak into it. You know what—I could hear the voice through the tin can in the cloak room—voila, magic! A new simple way to learn about the travel of sound. That little

experiment opened a whole new world of learning. Mr. Hooey was a tall thin man, Mrs. Hooey a soft-spoken gentle person. A real school bell called us to class. Funny the things you remember about learning—it's contagious—and I will always remember the greatest lesson of all—they taught me how to think.

I will always remain indebted to the lessons of learning through Mr. and Mrs. Hooey.

*"I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide  
the conditions in which they can learn."*

—Albert Einstein

And so they did—thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Hooey.

## There Was a War

*In those years, 1939 to 1945, in our growing awareness as a child that there was a World War going on, it seemed so far away, and yet right in front of us as we were reminded through the many happenings in our little village that it was real.*

Do you remember rationing? Gasoline for the car, sugar, butter and more that my mother carefully obtained with the little rationing book that was part of our life during the war. Father put the car up on blocks, and once a week he would don his brown army uniform and travel to Belleville, along with George Brooks and other men from our village, and join the ranks of the Hastings and Prince Edward regiment's reserves. We were never sure if any of our village men and women would be called to active duty.

My brother and I were now part of Percy Eamer's cub pack—Did-Dib, you know—and at least every couple of weeks during the summer he would give us a couple of large empty grain bags and send us off to fill them with milkweed pods, for the war effort he would say. Never really knew why until one day we discovered the silky filaments in the pod were used to make parachutes for the war. Mr. Eamer even got a letter from the government thanking the cub pack for the many bags of milkweed for the war.

It wasn't till years later that I learned that our village's Smelting and Refining Company was the only company producing cobalt

and stellite for the war effort. Belgium lost its capacity to do so when the German army invaded.

The most lasting memory was when V-E Day was proclaimed in 1945. Our cub master sent us off to collect as many bulrushes as possible. We didn't quite know why. In that warm summer evening in June of 1945, at least twelve or thirteen of us cubs with bull rushes held high, lit and consumed with coal oil, marched from the top of the Malone Hill to Mr. Haike's General Store. There was such a celebration in the village.

Did I really know what this war was about? Did this little village and its people help a child to understand the devastation and loss of life in war? A seed was planted through these events in my life, and I am thankful to this day that this seed continues to grow in my understanding of my role in society in the search for peace.

*"It isn't enough to talk about peace, one must believe it. And it isn't enough to believe in it, one must work for it."*—Eleanor Roosevelt

## Other Families Who Raised Us

*(Take a Walk Along O'Brien Avenue)*

*Not hard to imagine, one street, O'Brien Avenue—only forty-two houses up one side and down the other. You have already met the Cheesemans, the Koskis, Vera, George O'Neil, and the teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Hooey. Further along the street toward Malone, we find Grant Airhart's home; Grant would one day become the Reeve of Marmora. Further up the street was the home of Bill and Nora Brown, great friends of Mom and Dad. Their children Wayne, Joan, and Bill Jr. (we called him Baldy Brown) were part of our many childhood excursions, and what a piano player Mr. Brown was. I would sit on the steps of their porch where I could hear Bill play over and over again "Sweet Georgia Brown." To this day, the words and melody ring in my ear as there was so much joy being around and with this family. Funny the little things one remembers that become the most endearing and lasting.*

Now let's meet Beaver—Charles Clemens. The first, only, and last great fisherman, hunter, and trapper—you name it. Beaver was such a close companion through all of our years in Deloro. Beaver was our Leaky Raft Engineer, as it were, as he had such a knack of knowing where things went. We learned how to trap muskrat, where to fish and with what, and how to navigate the many forests, rivers, and streams as we spent so many years together, skipping school in the springtime with Beaver. Charles died in 2005, and his memory is ever with me as a special friend.



Let's cross the road now, down the street toward the General Store.

Meet Alphonse Clemens. If there was any one person, other than our parents, who influenced our lives in so many ways, it was Alphonse Clemens. Alphonse was a tall, strong man who was the village gardener, if you will, but so much more, as we would learn. Alphonse looked after the mowing of all the many lawns and maintaining the Deloro lawn bowling green. Alphonse tended to gardens for the general manager's house and other company officials, as well as the boarding houses managed by Mrs. McInroe. Alphonse had a pet crow that would steal shiny quarters from our mothers' empty milk bottles awaiting Hannah's dairy. Actually, the crow would turn it upside down, much to our mothers'...well, you know.

Alphonse had a Model-T Ford, not sure of the year, with a rumble seat, and when the bags of grass were bagged up, they were thrown in the rumble seat along with as many kids that could fit in as well. Down we would go to the corner of Highway 7 and Deloro road and empty them into a farmer's cow field. Alphonse became a cherished member of our community. Alphonse will appear and reappear in many of the stories to follow.

Let's continue.

Meet George Mantle and Bucky Mantle. Bucky was another one of our cohorts in our many excursions. George Mantle was the projectionist at the Madoc Theatre and at times would take us with him. For twenty-five cents we were in. My very first movie was *Song of the South*,<sup>3</sup> a Walt Disney movie with Uncle Remus, Br'er Rabbit, Br'er Fox, and Br'er Bear. At that time in my eyes it was magic, but later this film would come to be known as racist in its nature, never to be seen again in theatres, locked in Disney's vault.

Ah, let's meet Billy Barnett. Billy's house burnt almost down one day. Their house was next to the water pump station in the middle of the village. There we were, most of us kids, watching the flames come out of the top-floor windows. Just like Dylan Thomas's book, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*,<sup>4</sup> were "Ernie Jenkins likes fires." I suppose that's why we were there watching that day. But on the veranda roof a few feet from the flames was Chuck Loveless. Not sure what he was doing, but in the wink of an eye, he fell and rolled off the veranda onto the cement walk below, squarely on his back. Oh no—but up Chuck jumps and goes on to help. I remember, it seemed Billy always had a smile on his face.

We met the word *death* that day. A new family had just moved into the village a week before this. The father was to work at the plant. The father helped to put out the fire but collapsed and died that evening. As I look back on this, I really didn't understand the depth of sorrow that this family must have felt.

Let's meet the Brooks family. George and Daisy Brooks, our parents' very close friends, had thirteen children. What a feast of friends for my brother and me growing up in this little village. There was never a day when one or several of the Brooks family was not part of our many getting-into-trouble events. Between our mother and Daisy Brooks, they knew exactly where we were and what we were doing. The major Brooks players in our years growing up were Tom, Jim, and Harry, each great raft builders as well. The Brooks family became our family, and we were ever in each other's homes and activities. In so many ways, we were raised as well by this outgoing and loving family. To remember each one is important: Winnifred, Bob, Sid, Stan, Evelyn, Tom, Jean, Brenda, Jim, Harry, Victor, Ken, and Sylvia. Jimmy Brooks would remember Dad playing the violin and Mother giving out hot dogs to all.

The patriarch of this family was George Brooks, who along with my father, Tommy Paraniuk, and sometimes Hector Boudreau and Alphonse Clemens, were the fishermen in our village. Fishing up Crowe Lake to Beaver Creek—now that's where the muskies were. Can you remember the large aluminium washing tub for washing clothes? It was huge and round. After one fishing trip, in the middle of the Brooks yard was this tub, and in it was a muskie that circled the tub one-and-a-half times again. Funny why that sticks in my mind, but it did, and it solidified the lore of the great fishermen of the village.

George Brooks never failed to surprise us kids. A great hockey fan—of course, weren't we all. Foster Hewett, Saturday nights, radio only, a bottle of Coke, and the Maple Leafs. Once a year, it seemed, George would invite the village kids to his kitchen—and what to our wondering eyes should appear: the crests, memorabilia, and pictures of all the six NHL teams. As well, there were glossy 8x11 pictures of the Maple Leafs—Teeder Kennedy and all. We could take one from each team, and this was such a surprise for each of us. George was also very involved in the community, especially in the Christmas Eve activities at the town hall.

There were many others along the street toward the General Store. Mrs. Hempel, our Sunday school teacher in our town hall on Sunday afternoons. Then there was the Barlow family, the Borland family, Pat McRodan's family, the Drews, and the Reagan family. Muriel and Bill Reagan were close friends as well to Mom and Dad. Percy Gray and Joe Judge, who would be our supply of soapstone, to mark the village street to play hopscotch.

So many families who "raised the child" in the lives of Jim and David are now in place as the journey continues to 1950 in the bungalow.