

Chapter 10. Decision to enter University at Saskatoon

This was a complicated process to overcome for a teenager whose exposure to higher education was basically his brother-in-law, a Principal in Benito High School, and his own Teachers. Yes, I was aware that Doctors and Lawyers were college-trained but I never aspired to that type of profession. I also could not envision being a teacher.

My previous exposure with writing in my High School environment were enough for me to start the planning process:

1. There was no possibility of funds from the farm, so I knew that funding source was not an option.
2. My marks were in a mid "B" average and so scholarships would not be an option. Our local farm-based economy did not have anyone that would sponsor scholarships which could have been a possibility.
3. I did have a job with my brothers in Trail, but I knew that two (2) months of payroll would not fill the approximate \$1,000 bare minimum for tuition, books and room and board.
4. I heard about Saskatchewan Government Loans and wrote away for an application. To this day I have no idea what criterion I used to complete my application nor the actual amount that I applied for. Obviously, I had no guidance from any source so it was like a "shot in the dark" that can best describe this process. But apply I did.
5. I am not sure about the next sequence of events but keep in mind the following:
 - a. I needed passing grade twelve marks to qualify for the loan.
 - b. I needed a 70 % passing average to enter Engineering which was my choice finally.
 - c. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education marked all grade twelve examinations, and those marks would not be available till late in July.
 - d. I also needed to send in my Engineering entrance application as soon as possible to add to my loan application.
 - e. It was stressful time for me.
 - f. Finally, the marks arrived, and I went through this process:
 - i. Engineering entrance application to the University of Saskatchewan.
 - ii. Application for a loan to the Saskatchewan Government.
 - g. Meanwhile, I worked as many hours as possible and drunken weekends were not possible as I needed all the money that I could hang on to as my bi-monthly paycheck was barely \$200.
 - h. My entrance notification from the University of Saskatchewan came first but approval of the Loan was slow for some reason.
6. "Go or no go" decision to Saskatoon to attend University
 - a. So, I had saved about \$450 and a bit extra to travel to Pelly and see my parents and family before travelling to Saskatoon.
 - b. I decided to take a chance on the Loan approval as I still had no idea what my final budget would be anyway.
 - c. I travelled by bus to Pelly and had a hurried two days with everyone.
 - d. I went to purchase my bus ticket to Saskatoon and this part of my story was hilarious now as I recall:

- i. Charlie Filipowich operated the restaurant where Saskatchewan Transportation (STC) used for their bus stop.
- ii. "Where are you going today?" Charlie asks me.
- iii. "To Saskatoon," I responded.
- iv. Of course, everyone in Pelly were curious people and wanted to know everything about everybody and so the question, "What are you going to do there?".
- v. Without hesitation, I responded, "I am entering the University of Saskatchewan to study Engineering."
- vi. He quickly offered advice, "Elmer, they do not graduate Ukrainians and Doukhobors there! You are wasting your time and money."
- vii. With a confidence that surprised me (as I still had no idea whether I would be able to swing it financially) I countered with "that is what I intend to do....to find out why not!"
- viii. I paid for my ticket and got on the bus and started thinking and reviewing my daring adventure still to unfold. See my blog at [https://elmerverigin.wordpress.com/Yes They do Graduate Ukrainians, Doukhobors from University](https://elmerverigin.wordpress.com/Yes_They_do_Graduate_Ukrainians,_Doukhobors_from_University).
- ix. There was a bus transfer in Yorkton for a bus going to Saskatoon and a waiting time from about 8:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M. the next morning.
- x. To make time pass, and so that I would not fall asleep and miss my bus, I started walking back and forth in front of the Bus Depot.
- xi. I attracted the attention of a RCMP cruiser, and they pulled me over to ask what my problem was and a reason why I was 'loitering'.
- xii. I explained my situation and the two Police Officers spent some time with me as they could see that I was a bit nervous, afraid, and lonely. So, they let me drive around with them until my bus arrived.

7. Arrival at Saskatoon

- a. I recall the time being about 0600 hours.
- b. "What do I do now?" I said to myself.
- c. I bought a city map and found where the University was located and plotted a course there from the second avenue bus depot location across from the Railway station at that time.
- d. With my trusty suitcase (24" x 14" x 8" thick) that had all my belongings, I struck out walking to the University that would cause me to cross the 25th Street Bridge.
- e. I did not plan too well as I had no food, but I was far too scared to worry about that.
- f. I got to the University via the entrance to the University Hospital and followed the street to the heart of the campus looking for somebody to direct me and answer some questions:
 - i. Where would I register?
 - ii. Where can I find out if my loan application was approved?
- g. For Student Loan information, somebody directed me to the Administration Building which was a crowded place by this time, and I made my way to the sign that said "Information", I was desperate at this time.

- h. The counter clerk advised me that only the Controller could inform me regarding a student loan status question.
 - i. Anxious moments (that felt like hours), the Controller appeared. Thank God, he had a good attitude, and he could see I was almost at my breaking point by this time.
 - j. "How can I help you?" he studied me as I mumbled my question, "is my loan approved?"
 - k. Obviously, I neglected to tell him who I was and after a few more stuttering utterances by me, he offered "let me have a look".
 - l. A few minutes later, he was able to advise, "yes..... all \$500 of it".
 - m. At the registration process, just tell them you have a Student's Loan.
 - n. Still not knowing my budget nor what the registration fees were, I at least felt that maybe all would turn out now.
8. Then I took a journey back to downtown Saskatoon, to find the Bank of Montreal which was located on Third Avenue
- a. I stood nervously at the Savings Account counter and inquired as to whether my bank transfer from summer earnings had reached there from the Trail Branch.
 - b. Somehow the Accounts Manager was summoned to the counter that made me even more nervous.
 - c. "Come into my office" he invited.
 - d. "Oh no", I thought something is definitely wrong
 - e. "Are you related to Peter Verigin, the Leader of the Doukhobors?" he asked me.
 - f. I was not sure where this was going but I answered, "if you mean the deceased Leader, then no I am not a relative."
 - g. He went on to highlight a fact that he remembered the many dealings that the CCUB and Peter Verigin had had at branch.
 - h. So, I had to interrupt and ask, "has my money been transferred here from Trail, B.C.?"
 - i. "Oh yes," he responded..." all \$450 of it" I just need to have your address and signature to open an account" he continued. "What is your address here in Saskatoon?"
 - j. "I don't have one as I just arrived, and I am still not sure where I will live at this time" I must have appeared distraught.
 - k. "Oh well, you will need to give us that information when you have it", he explained. "Your account is ready to go" as he passed me my passbook and a cheque book.
 - l. I then walked back to the University to continue my registration experience with no one to consult, but resolute that I was going to succeed in this challenge now that I know I have some money.
9. Registration Process
- a. I ended up back at the University and I am now searching where I am supposed to register, and I am directed to the Engineering Building.
 - b. I found it on my map of the University.
 - c. On the way there, I notice a lineup that seemed to go on forever and I was passing it by to get to the building beyond.
 - d. I find out that this lineup is all first year Engineering students.
 - e. I walk back to the end of the line, where I was told after, there were 700 enlistee's total.

- f. Impressive and intimidating, as I came from a grade twelve graduating class of 13 back in Pelly and we were the largest class ever, but we were all part of the "War Babies" of 1940.
- g. Finally, I get to shuffle by the registration desk and there was no negotiating as everyone got the same classes for 1st year Engineering as I was handed my classroom allocations and Professors.
- h. All I had to do is pay the about \$350 registration fee and with \$70 more for all my textbooks, it was done. At the last minute I relented and bought myself a \$12 red sweater with the initial "E" on it for Engineering. I never possessed a school sweater before.
- i. I was good at Mathematics and added up that \$950 less the \$432 I just paid out left me with \$518 to live on for about 7 1/2 months which meant I had to somehow budget \$69 a month for living expenses.
- j. "No problem," I thought, "now I know it is all possible financially!"

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