

4. Family Life at this time

Many farm families in the Veregin and Pelly areas, at that time, experienced alcohol abuse as it seemed to be a cultural part of life with the males. Everyone worked from sunup to sundown as a necessity to meet the obligations of farming. Relaxation was to have a drink of "Harelka" (Home Brew made from Wheat).

So, it was with my father who was a very hard worker and diligently performed all tasks every day. Once it rained, and the fields in most areas were not workable, then the tendency was to relax and a drink with a neighbor. This task was taken as seriously as their work ethic and the alcohol was usually consumed too quickly with the result that I witnessed many a time when all would be passed out within a half hour. I am not sure how to explain this.

My father was a huge man over six feet tall and about 270 pounds and thus would remain mobile when his counterparts would fail. Unfortunately, this did not result in good management too well with family life. My mother obviously would get very upset, and arguments would soon result.

These arguments, at times, would be physical with total loss of control by my mother which would frighten me as I would try and intercede. My older siblings were used to all this and tried consoling me with "look the other way" or plain and simply accept it as a way of life.

Of course, I loved my mother and father and wanted them to stop this which resulted in me suffering serious stomach aches as well as aching knees which would cause me to cry long into the night. The rural Doctors of the day diagnosed that I had Rheumatism and as far as my stomach pains, it was a nervous condition. The overall opinion is that "he will grow out of it".

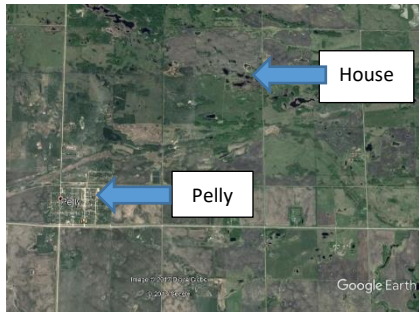
I did, from the physical sense but I am not sure of the lasting emotional affect I may have inflicted upon myself which may explain my character of today.

My brother Lawrence left the farm in 1951 followed soon after in 1953 by Russel. I started to realize that the economics of a small farm became the rationale for governments of the day to encourage larger farms and corporate ownership. With the removal of a very capable family work force on our farm, it became obvious that I needed to "step up to the plate" and contribute although it was impossible to meet the demands of the farm for father and the remaining 13-year-old son. This became obvious when sister Mary left in 1954 to marry John Khadekin.

This meant milking six cows alone and finding that I needed to spend a longer time on the farm which meant not being able to meet the regulatory 200 school days a year. I was very fortunate, that despite that fact, I continued with a low B grade average.

Despite the issues with alcohol, my father did love my mother and all his children. I did experience parental love, but I had difficulty understanding how there always seemed to be a compromise

with my father's habit. After all these years I realize that my situation was not unique as many other families suffered in a similar fashion.



The house was on the bottom left corner of the 320 acres, The North boundary is the road. Our farm was the North half of the 640-acre section.

My "short cut" was approximately in line with the apexes of the arrows.

Attendance at school required a cross country walk of about three (3) miles. Even then I used my mathematical skills that the hypotenuse was shorter than the sum the two sides of a triangle and sighted a straight line between our house and the Village of Pelly where the Public and High Schools were located.

Sometimes I rode horseback and when the dirt roads were passable, I rode a bicycle.

When I was bored walking, I would run and so I participated in Sports and track meets very well.

End of Chapter 4 (Edited October 24, 2021)