

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

The Farm Years

Jan had ordered a big crate for shipping our furniture and other belongings. It took us several days to get everything together. I took some books, pictures and some school writings along too. It is amazing how all at once everything has so much more value when you leave your homeland for good. Packing was a long and tedious job. Everything had to be filled with something. We also had an Inspector from the public service in The Hague watching everything that was packed in the box. When our box was shipped we used our last few days to visit our married brothers and sisters, six in all, to say good bye. The day before we left we went to the parents of Peter Lugtigheid, Uncle Philip and Aunt Grietje who was my dad's sister. Peter's youngest brother had also been in the process of emigrating to Canada. It had been a comfort to me that Joe and Jane were going too. Alas, this was not to be. Shortly before we married Joe was diagnosed as having leukemia and died a few months later at the age of thirty. After visiting Peter's parents we also visited Joe and Jane which was very difficult. Before our wedding it had been arranged that 17 year old Winus Sonneveld would travel with them but now his mother asked us to keep close contact with him in Canada, which we gladly did. Winus was going to work for Peter as his mother was a second cousin of my mom. Winus married Joan Nauta a few years later and settled on a farm close to Blenheim Ontario. They have been our friends ever since. Besides raising a good size family, Winus has been for many years representing the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Wealan, traveling all over Canada.

Saturday April 3, 1948 was the day I had so looked against and yet had also longed for. Saying "Good Bye" to mom and dad, brothers and sisters was very hard on me emotionally. Of course we were standing at the beginning of a new adventure; a life in a new land with a new language and culture and a land hopefully with new opportunities. Had we known that so many others were to follow and transportation would change so drastically, it would have been a lot different for us. But we knew that God was the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow. All this made me whisper in my dad and mom's ears, "With my God I can crush a troop and with my God I can leap over a wall." (Ps. 18: 29) and I really meant it. If I ever felt dependent on Him, it was now. Yes, "without Him we can not do anything" John 15:5. This was how I felt about everything including crossing the ocean in our small vessel. Not that I felt courageous; I knew that I had nothing of my self but God would be with us, step by step. My brother Klaas and his wife Annie brought us to the train in

Rotterdam which brought us to Antwerp, Belgium where the boat was waiting for us.

Our Trip to Canada

In a short time we were at the Belgium border where our suitcases were to be checked by the Custom Officers. We had made arrangements with our cousin, Klaas Bijl, who was a Federal Policeman and Custom Officer where we crossed the border to help us along. He saw us immediately and we were free from unpacking anything. Others were not so fortunate. Soon we arrived in Antwerp where our friend Nel Van Atte was waiting for us. Her husband Cor was first mate on the freighter "De Hedel" which was leaving early Monday morning with us on board! It was a quite small freighter (2000 tons). Nel showed us our cabin, one of the 12 on board, where we settled in before supper was served. The next morning we went to a Church nearby and were surprised that we could understand so much of the Vlamish language. When we returned more passengers had arrived. We had dinner like a family on one big table. To have two long nights of rest did us good after all the emotions we had gone through the last weeks. It also gave us a good start before beginning our long and stormy journey. The next morning we were on deck early, seeing Holland's coast disappear. It was like losing something I always took for granted; something beautiful I had not been aware of. Soon England's chalk-cliff rocks came in sight. They looked like painted rocks, white as snow lifted out of the dark waters. Slowly but surely the sea-gulls who had been trailing us all day left us. They joined us again when we were close to Newfoundland. Later we saw whales and flying fish as they were called. They just leapt out of the water, jumping long distances. The first night was quiet and we slept very well. Our cabin was cozy with beds fastened to the wall. We soon found out why this was necessary. I was amazed that the sea was so restless even though there was hardly any wind. It made me hang on to my husband for dear life. My stomach was not willing to digest any of the delicious meals any more. Before long Jan had to go alone to the dining room and brought my meals in our cabin. When I was comfortably in bed, eating went somewhat better and I could keep it in longer. After about one week we were in the middle of a terrific storm. Only water, ice cubes and orange juice was my daily nourishment. Our friend Cor told us that fresh air was a must for sea sick passengers. From then on he came each morning to help Jan to carry me to the deck. I was bundled up in six woolen blankets. I felt like a mummy but it was zero degree weather and less would not do. They always found a place where there was the least wind. Even though I felt like being on a huge roller coaster, it felt better than in the cabin. It was awesome to see these huge waves; one moment we were on top of it and the next moment we were way down in a huge pit. Jan was fascinated by it as well but altogether differently than I was. It was too bad he had

to worry about me. He never missed one meal. He even learned where to place his feet while the boat went up or down and never lost his balance. This way he could keep helping me too for I did not do much else than drinking and vomiting. Needless to say that many prayers went up for our safety. Somehow I could not think of anything else but a safe arrival.

When we came closer to Newfoundland, the wind died down and it got very cold. It was still winter on that side of the ocean. I needed more blankets yet and I think that I aired the blankets of some other cabins as well. Now the huge waves were gone I slowly improved; What a great feeling this was! Soon I was able to go to the dining room and eat three meals again. I felt like a brand new person. Jan had received permission from Cor Van Atte to be on the bridge for a while. It was very quiet and it was a bit foggy for a long time already. While he was there, all at once there was a big tumult on board. Some of the crew started running and the boat slowed down and believe it or not, went into reverse. After that we came to a complete stop for 24 hours because they had spotted the top of an iceberg right in front of us in the mist. The fog horn blew every three minutes. I can still hear the thing when I think about it. We soon found out that we were in the midst of a large ice field with icebergs. Yet for me, these days were enjoyable in comparison with all the others. I could walk around, ate all my meals and even did some embroidering.

For my twenty third birthday the meal was very special and the cook had baked “boter koeken” for the occasion. This was the only birthday I ever celebrated on a boat at sea. It was a day of thanksgiving that our lives had been spared and good health had returned to me. The next day we saw land in the afternoon and early morning we arrived at Quebec City. We could leave the boat after breakfast for a few hours and walked for the first time on Canadian soil. We bought a dozen oranges which was a real treat for us. The next day on the train we enjoyed the rest. When we came back they were unloading part of their cargo and for us it was time for lunch. Soon we were on our way to Montreal where the rest would be unloaded and we would continue our trip to Chatham, Ontario. We stayed on deck the rest of the day. We did not want to miss anything of the beauty of the St. Laurence River and it’s landscape. The next morning we packed very early and after breakfast we came to the end of our boat trip. It was April 24, 1948.

We had thanked God every evening together for His protection and when we arrived safely in Canada we could shout for joy! By taxi we went to the train station and at 9:00 am we were on our way to Chatham, Ontario. Cousin Peter was not at the Station, as we had hoped. Our letter informing him of our arrival time came on

Monday morning. At first we did not know what to do. We then showed the name and address of Peter to some taxi drivers. At last one said he thought he knew where Peter lived. He had other passengers for that area whom he brought home first. Then he stopped at the General Store in Charing Cross and inquired where Peter Lugtigbeid lived. All in all the twenty minute trip became one hour and we arrived at Peter and Edith's home at 1:00 am. The lights were still on and Edith was cutting grapefruits for breakfast. Peter was upset about the extra ordinary high taxi fair that he had charged us; \$25.00 instead of \$6.00 as Peter said it should have been. We were so glad that we found them even though it took a big bite out of our \$200.00 we were allowed to take along. After hugs and greetings we soon went to bed. All was very quiet except for an army of crickets who were singing God's praise. We had never heard anything like it. With that special sound of our "new homeland" we soon fell asleep for 6 hours.

When we came in their large kitchen in the morning, breakfast was ready: grapefruit, eggs and toast with homemade rhubarb and pineapple jam. All was completely unknown to us except the eggs. It was a wonderful feeling to eat a delicious breakfast in the home of family. It was so good to talk with them about his family and ours. Of course Peter had to translate every word for his wife. Soon it was church time and again a whole new experience. The first thing we saw written above the pulpit was, "GOD IS LOVE" and the first song we sang was, "MY JESUS I LOVE THEE, I KNOW THOU ART MINE." It was a comfort to already understand in our new language the truth of God's love. We felt encouraged to be among God's people and trusted that soon we would be able to understand His Word as well.

After lunch and a rest in the afternoon, Peter drove us to Leonard Giffen and his wife where John was going to start work the next morning. They lived 10 miles from Peter's place and we would live four miles south of Blenheim. Our house was a quarter of a mile from the Giffen's farm. The boss had three sons. The oldest was married and lived on the farm yard, the other two boys were still in school. We were glad that we had taken our bikes along because John used his bike every day to go to work. I used mine as well to go there just to see where he was working. Most of my contact was with the son's wife Mary Anne. She was a sweet girl who did her utmost to make herself understood and taught and showed me many things. To settle down in our house took a while. The first three weeks we had to make do with very little since our crate had not arrived yet. We knew that there was no electricity so we had brought candles along. There was a well- water tap in the kitchen but the water was very rusty. It had to be boiled for every use. There was a large gas cooking stove in the kitchen which drove out the chill in the early

morning hours. We lived less than a mile from the shore of Lake Erie. It was always damp there. A table, 2 chairs, and a big tea kettle were provided by the farmer. We also used a hide-a-bed which was standing on the porch. It needed lots of cleaning as did everything else. Mary Anne allowed us to use some of her bedding, pots and pans and dishes until our crate arrived. I remember that from the first money John earned a galvanized tub was bought to do the laundry. Since I had only one kettle to heat water it took all day to get the clothes on the line. Making a clothes line for me was one of the first things John did as well. I did not mind that everything took this long for there was not much else to do in the empty house.

When our crate with belongings arrived, it was pure pleasure to unpack. My parents had given us a carpet and a woven table cloth with matching colors: brown, beige and some orange. With our own table and six chairs it looked very cozy. Our living room was in a T form. In one corner we put John's desk and my chair given by him. On the other side I put our "thee meuble" and our sewing machine which was placed in a ready made cabinet. We still have all these things except the table. Our "coo-coo clock" and the pictures of our homes made it really "home sweet home." With all the things in place it made life so much more comfortable and pleasant. Some things were damaged but not beyond repair, except for Hein's present. He had given us a large mirror which had broken into at least a hundred pieces. We had wrapped it very carefully in all the blankets, sheets, winter coats and sweaters we had; but to no avail. We never pained him with the loss. It had been so hard for him to find a present for us. They had shown their love and that is what counted.

By that time we were sure there were other things to dream about. It was such a joy to realize that our baby was on the way! After our rough trip my stomach had fully settled down. Though I was still nauseated in the morning at times it now felt like very good news to me! It was fun to write letters to home on John's desk, which I did every week. I also started knitting things. I was fortunate that I had one sweater to spare from which I could make little outfits for our baby.

Sometimes there were experiences on the farm that were not as pleasant but some of them were caused by misunderstanding. Immigrants that were not content did not make it and they got homesick for the old country.

I am thankful that I never longed to go back even though I was longing for my loved ones. This disappeared as our family grew; what a blessing. Going to Church was a feast in several ways. On Sunday morning I always helped John doing chores as

much as I was able for this meant that we were together all day! At 9:00 am the church bus was at our door bringing all the immigrants to the Church in Chatham. Each person paid one dollar. It did not make any difference whether you lived far away or close by. We all took lunches along for in between the two Services. The morning Service was in the English language and the afternoon Service was in Dutch. Slowly but surely I began to understand some but in the afternoon I could listen more relaxed and the singing was pure joy in both services.

Having lunch together served more than one purpose. We learned much from each other and were encouraged in difficult times. We also shared things from our gardens. Our garden was not much at first so we were the beneficiaries most often. We also told one another the funny mistakes we made while trying to speak English before we really knew how. Then there was much advice from wise and experienced mothers which I needed, being far from home. All in all, it were highlights in our lives and we thanked God for it. At 4:30 pm we were home and doing our chores or if it was John's day off we had the rest of the day for ourselves. During the week I walked every day ten minutes to a small grocery store. Most of the people I met were Negroes living in the village called Shusberry. The man in the store was most helpful and it was fun to learn the names of the items I needed. If John was not too far away I took the bike and brought him coffee in the morning where he was working. When there was a heavy thunderstorm I went to the farm as well. I was adjusting more and more to our new way of life but heavy thunderstorms still frightened me. John was always working in the barn at that time and the boss went home often. But he did not mind at all when I was there and John liked it when I came. Then he did not have to worry about me. Fortunately most storms came through at night but often I shook from fear.

John's wages were \$80.00 per month. Every Saturday the boss gave him \$10.00 and the rest at the end of the month. We also had two liters of milk each day and we bought their cracked eggs. For breakfast John was home for twenty minutes and fifty minutes for lunch. In the evening he was home for supper between seven and eight o'clock. Needless to say that these times together were very precious to us. After supper John took our moving crate apart and straightened out every nail. From the wood he made a dresser with shelves for baby clothes. On top I could bath the baby and change diapers. Letter writing to my big family and friends back home took quite a bit of my time. I just loved writing about how we lived here. It was a great help to me in this time of transition. When my Mom came to visit us, she told me that she felt sorry not to have kept all those letters. When we went home in 1994 we were presented with many letters which she had kept after her first visit to Canada, which I still have.

One Sunday morning in late November our boss drove in our yard. He accused John of not doing a good job. He said, "during the week you are done one hour later with your chores, than on Sundays." John told him that on Sunday we do chores together in order to catch the bus on time for Church. This brought the boss to the subject that he did not want us to go to the Church in Chatham. He thought we should go to the little Negro Church in the neighborhood. When he went on for a while it became clear that he wanted us to take care of a few dozen yearling cows which he had just bought.

This was the same story we faced in the beginning in regard to his wife's chickens. Then too we were told to water the chickens at noon hour in the hot months and that meant that we could not go to Church. Of course, Leonard was rattling the wrong cage again. I was proud of John. He had only one Sunday off per month and the other Sundays he did all the work morning and evening. The boss did his one Sunday with his three sons. John had always danced to his pipes so to speak but not being allowed to go to the Church of our choice was going too far. He told him so in a very polite way, then added that it would be the last week he would be working for him if we were forbidden to go to Chatham. It seemed to ruffle his feathers even more. "Where would you find work?" "You can't even speak the language yet, winter is almost here and your wife is pregnant," he snapped. John replied, "I have two hands to work with and God will take care of us". Soon after this incident we were on our way to Church sharing out plight to our friends on the bus. Somehow, leaving this place began to appeal to me. I think we had heard too many stories of other immigrants who were far better off than we were. We had never signed any contract like some others had done and so were basically free to go. That day we received lots of sympathy and advice from many of our friends. In the evening we went to an old timer immigrant for advice who lived only a few miles away from us. I can not remember much of that visit but it felt good to have shared what was on our heart. In spite of our problems we still had a good Sunday. It was a day of prayer and we believed that God was going to show us the way, which He did!

The next day when John was home for lunch, a car drove in our lane. The man introduced himself as a son of the couple we had visited the evening before. He was foreman on Broadwood's fruit farm and asked if we were interested in a job there and see the house that was available. There was no time to finish our meal. Before we knew it we were in his car to see the place. The house was big enough for our family. To my great joy there was electricity and also a counter in the kitchen with a tap giving delicious water! John was hired on the spot for the next Monday; our hearts overflowed with gratitude to God. I am sure John has written about these

things as well but I could not resist to tell of the wonderful intervention God displayed again, in this situation as well.

The Broadwood Farm November 30, 1948

I gladly started packing and cleaning up for this first move in Canada. We moved six miles closer to Chatham which meant closer to Church and to the Hospital where our baby was to be born. It did not take us long before we felt at home in our new cozy house down the hill; even though we were told that we lived in a remodeled chicken coop! Our neighbor lived very close by so we shared the same clothes lines in between our homes. I had lots of contact with the Humphrey family. She taught me how to bake and many other things but best of all it helped me to learn faster the English language. I had to laugh when she told me about the chicken coop because we started out at the Giffens with a table and tea kettle that came out of their chicken coop. I thought, now we live in one and that makes it complete. After all I have always loved chickens!

After we had settled down on the fruit farm, toward the close of the year the due date of our baby had arrived. During these long days of waiting I was in the Doctor's office twice a week. But he was not of much help and never tried to answer any questions. I knew that our baby was in the wrong position and I had heard and seen too much not to notice that my pregnancy was different. I had been with my sisters several times when their babies were born and learned a lot from them.

The only answer I received from our Doctor was, "You do not know anything about this." He was right; That's why I was asking. Our trust in him went down rapidly. This Doctor was Giffen's family Doctor. On Saturday night when we could get a ride with the Giffins we went shopping and also to that Doctor. On New Year's Eve and New Year's morning we did not go to Church. We closed the year by reading Psalm 90 and started the New Year with reading Psalm 91 and of course with prayer. This was my father's custom for as long as I can remember. I had always found great comfort in these words and so did we at our first old and new together in Canada. We have kept this tradition ever since.

Waiting three weeks for our baby after the due date made me restless. (Mothers who experienced this know how I felt). On January twelve, I had the urge to work all day; doing laundry, cleaning house and cooking food in advance for John. During the afternoon I felt the first signs of the miracle

which was going to happen. When John came home from work I was ready to go to the Hospital. He went to our neighbor Bill Russink who had promised to bring us to Chatham. I well remember sitting in the back of the car holding hands and praying that all would be well. It was a beautiful clear winter evening with thousands of twinkling stars in the sky. I felt that God's watchful eye was upon us. We arrived at 8:00 pm and it was clear that there were complications; The way the nurses acted told me that story. The doctor arrived at 10:00 pm. I was very relieved when I saw him, The nurse said that I was ready to give birth and he put me out immediately. I do not remember anything that happened further, except that I heard some one calling for a long time. John told me later that I was the one who called for two hours. It must have been terrible for him to hear these two words over and over again "nooit meer" (never more). How beautiful that these hours were erased by Gods grace and mercy in a few days when we held our precious son in our arms. It was only the next morning when I saw John, that it began to dawn on me that our baby was born. I remember John standing at my bed trying to wake me up and to tell me that we had a son but I was not able to react. Later he told me that our little Marinus was born at 1:00 am. He was a blue baby as they called it. We were told the baby came "feet first" and was turned before he was born. On the third day a healthy pink skin came shining through and I began to realize that I was the mother of this beautiful bundle of heaven. Now joy and thankfulness flooded my whole being. Later Dad told me of the great danger we both had been in and about his crying to the Lord during these hours of waiting. How he had "dedicated the baby to God even before he was born and that he promised God that He could have him wherever He needed him, even if it would be in Russia or dark Africa."

A lady and her husband (who had been a midwife in Holland) from our Church, had offered to take me and the baby in their home. We were cared for in a wonderful way for five days by these friends. When Murray was ten days old and gaining some weight, Dad brought us home on Saturday Jan. 23 and "our cup was running over." With Dad home for the weekend I had a good start and was able to care for the baby on Monday and also for the meals. With his new job Dad was home at 6 o'clock already. Now we had a much longer evening together then before. Our baby was content and happy in his own little bedroom on a three hour schedule and in the evenings we kept him in the living room to enjoy. Every day was a feast to care for him and even my homesickness began to fade away. Yet, we so eagerly

wanted to show our baby to our parents and extended family. But that could not be done.

On April 3, 1949 Murray was baptized in the First Reformed Church. Since we did not have our own building yet the Services were held in the St. Andrews United Church in Chatham. He was the first baby to be baptized in our church which was officially organized on October 11, 1949. The reason we began a Reformed Church in Chatham was because more and more immigrants from the "Hervormde Kerk" did not attend the Christian Reformed Church where we had been from the beginning. Neither did they feel at home in the United Church of Canada or the Presbyterian Church.

In May our boss asked me if I would consider bundling rhubarb for a few hours. They grew it in a basement which we had never seen before. It was piecework so I could take care of the baby when necessary. We decided to try it and see how Murray liked our decision. We had bought a second hand Dutch baby buggy where no wind could disturb him. I worked two hours in the morning and two hours after lunch and we both enjoyed it very much. Murray was always close by and got lots of attention from the other workers as well. Later I picked cherries, peaches, apples, pears and plums. The trees were not high so the work was not heavy and I could work at my own speed. The fun was that I made enough money to pay for all the groceries that summer plus a few other things that were needed. It meant that Dad could put all his wages in the Bank. In the fall we had saved \$600.00 which was used to buy a new car. This happened on Nov. 9, 1949. It was an English model called a "Prefect." It was small but it was such a pleasure to have our own transportation. We were so grateful. The full price was \$1200.00. The owner of the garage, Mr. Pook, could not believe that within six months we planned to pay the rest. But we were able. Broadwood's workers were a bit jealous but they spent their money on other things than we did. They had fun talking about it and called our car "the puddle jumper". I was glad that I could help Dad save for a car. It really was a must in this big country. After the work in the rhubarb, I could start picking sour cherries. One tree was so close to our nice little "chicken coop house" that I could pick some through the open bedroom window! We also could pick up all the windfall fruit during the whole summer and fall. I canned at least one hundred liters of fruit. What a blessed bonus! I did miss my four chickens Dad had bought for me at the Giffen's place but on this farm there was no place for them (because we lived in the chicken coop!) Also there

was no need for them because now I had people to talk to; Instead of chickens for companionship.

In the meantime, Dad had made arrangements with his friend, Joe Waardenburg from Holland, to work for our boss as well. A house was promised for them shortly but that did not materialize until ten months later. We just had to make do. Joe and Coby and their baby came when the cherries were ready to be picked. Their baby was nine months older than ours. We lived together until April, 1950. During the summer we took turns staying home with our children and doing the housework. Coby wanted to keep on working in the winter as well. She did housework in Blenheim to keep her busy while I took care of their Arjo. In April the boss informed us that he had bought a big house in Cedar Springs where we would have to move in together. What he did not tell us was that the house was in a very poor shape. We did our best to make the most of it but it did not sit right with us. It was not fair. The first thing that went wrong was that our hot water heater was boiling over. The boss was not in the hurry to see or believe what I was telling him but when he saw the mess he ordered a new one. We began thinking about finding other employment because many things were falling apart. Our little coop had been so much better. It was not only the housing problem but also the swearing that took place by most of the workers that was very hard on John. It was unbelievable how God's Name was used in vain by some the whole day through. Since Dad was doing more and more Church work he came under lots of ridicule since one letter was addressed to him as "Reverend" (we always picked our mail up at our boss' home).

Roy Warwick's Dairy Farm Cedar Springs, Ont.

Dad was hired by Roy Warwick on May 1, 1950. There was no difficulty in leaving the Broadwood farm nor finding a new job. Even before the Warwick dairy farm Dad had been hired by another dairy farmer in the Guild's area next to the United Church. It was on the promise that within a month there would be running water in the house for us. Since the work had not been started he had come up with several excuses. Dad decided that there was no way he wanted me to move into a house without running water. Promises are not always kept and we wanted to keep our promises but this was too risky from the start. Our house at the

Warwick farm was not vacant yet but the conveniences of a bathroom were there. So for six weeks we lived on Roy's other farm just one mile down the road. The bike came in handy again. We only unpacked the necessities. We made only one room ready and it functioned as bedroom and living quarters. Cooking was done on a hot-plate and again dishes were washed on a table and drained on a cookie sheet, just like in the olden days! We had bought a new wringer-washer while we were at Broadwoods so we needed new clothes lines from tree to tree and we were all set for our housekeeping again. But one thing was not so good. There were rats that came to visit us inside our house. Dad placed broken bottles by the pail full inside the holes in the floor to stop them from coming in. At night we heard them chewing a new hole around the sharp bottles. We then banged our chair to scare them away but I wondered who was more scared, the rats or me. At night we took turns holding Murray's hand, just in case. I had heard too many rat stories in Holland. His bed stood next to ours. Otherwise I did not mind living there for a while. During the next year the whole house was renovated and it was a beautiful place to live.

Soon the time came that we could move into our little white palace complete with our first bathroom and hot water in the tap! It was such a comfortable home with a good size gas heater warming the whole house! The lawn was fenced in so Murray could walk in and out the front door. There was also room for a garden which we both enjoyed very much. During this wonderful summer we looked forward to the birth of our second baby, due date according to the Doctor, Oct. 22. In the meantime Dad was enjoying his work to the full. It was so different from the Giffen farm. Murray and I often visited one of our neighbors, the Schalk family. They had immigrated at an older age with their three sons. We called them "Father and Mother Schalk". They were like family to us. When we were there Murray was always fascinated by their Dutch clock. He often stood in front of the clock waiting for the "bim bam" to come. Mrs. Schalk who mothered over me had a special way of expressing herself. For example, when a Canadian came to her door, she would hold up her apron with her hands and say, "Gooi het maar in mijn schort dan zal ik het binnen wel uit zoeken." That meant "just throw it in my apron, I will sort it out when I am inside."

Right after Murray was born we changed to another Doctor. We also heard that our first Doctor's license was temporarily suspended because of drinking problems. We were happy with our new Doctor. He was always

explaining things. We had asked if he would be willing to deliver our new baby at home. He said he was provided there would be no complications. With this of course we agreed. We raised this question because this is how it always has been in Holland. The father was there for every support he was able to provide. Dad felt cheated when we found out that he was not allowed to stay with me in the hospital when Murray was born. He felt that the value of a father's presence was ignored. 30 years ago this silly rule came to an end but it was too late for Dad as he always longed to stay with me when the children were born.

It wasn't Roy Warwick who had hired Dad. It was his herdsman who was basically in charge of the dairy operation. Soon we found out that the only thing he did was help with the milking and feeding some calves. Otherwise, he spent most of the time in the barn office "doing records" as he said. All the heavy work was Dad's. While being at Roy Warwick another friend of Dads' asked whether he could stay with us for a few months while he worked at an architect's office in Chatham. His name was Leen Waardenburg, a cousin of Joe. His intention was to immigrate. Leen was very pleasant to have around but after six months he decided to go back to Holland.

The summer went by fast. I felt very good during my pregnancy. I loved working in the garden right behind our house and we had lots of vegetables for the coming fall and winter. The day before our second baby was born I worked hard all day. I even cut the lawn with our push mower. If Dad had known it he probably would have stopped me doing it, and looking back I should not have done it. During the night I woke up several times and knew that this was the day. All along we had been hoping and praying that this time there would be no three weeks added. I was so thankful that this was not the case. At 9:00 am Dr. Pickering came to the home and watched me for while but two hours later we were in Chatham Hospital. The Doctor felt it was not wise to stay home. He explained the baby was coming face up and he needed additional help. It was a disappointment especially for Dad. At 1:00 pm our second son was born without any further complications. We felt so richly blessed again. What a difference it made with this Doctor. It felt like having a friend this time. We were overjoyed and called our son Cornelis Jacob, after my father, Cornelis Jacob Van Leeuwen. Our Pastor in Chatham, who was an American minister, told us that Cornie was a familiar name in the USA. So this is how he was called until we moved

from Cambridge Ont. to Edmonton, Alberta in 1961. That was the perfect time to change his name to Jack, which was his choice.

As we moved to Roy Warwicks' in the spring, we were delighted with our house. (It had a bathroom!) Dad loved his work as well. But during the summer Dad started loosing weight; up to 30 pounds. In the fall the doctor told us that the lime he used in the stable everyday was the culprit. At that time no thought was given to the use of protective gear. Physically he began to seriously react against this lime dust and he was told to stay away from the lime and also to drastically cut down on all the Church work he was doing. It was all easier said than done. We tried hard for a while but in the end it was obvious that some other job was called for. In the meantime we had come to know by way of Winus Sonneveld of a large family by the name of Nauta. Winus had married one of their daughters. The Nauta farm was located 10 miles West of Cedar Springs. They offered to rent a four room house to us on their farm which often was used for stripping tobacco. We could rent it for \$15.00 per month. Obviously, we had to do a lot of cleaning before being able to move in.

With Dad not being able to get a few days off to help, I was happy to accept Mrs. Schalk's offer of watching our children. Her 14 year old son, Case, was going to help me clean the house. Even though I drove the Prefect, I always felt that I needed a double slate of angels to watch over me while driving; Especially on days when it was snowing and slippery. We accomplished a lot every day but we always made sure that we were home by dark. This was Dads "order" but I could not wait any longer anyway to feed our three month old baby! Case was of great help and we had fun doing the job. I was glad that we had hot water in the house because washing the walls and ceilings needed lots of it. It looked as if we were painting the rooms. We washed it three times and then we scrubbed the floors. We were as proud as peacocks. The first one we showed our results to was Mr. Nauta himself. He was surprised. He never knew he had such a nice little house. We praised God when our job was done and also for the provision of this house in mid winter. Case had been such a big help by keeping the woodstove going and working on all the ceilings that I could never have done this job alone.

So it was time to pack and move again. This closed off another short part of our lives. We always tried to take the good experiences along while leaving the disappointments behind. January 16, 1951 was the day we moved to

our new address at Merlin. Leaving behind what had become familiar has always been difficult for me. I missed my visits to Mother Schalk but I comforted myself with the thought that I would see them every Sunday. One thing we had to adjust to again was having an outhouse instead of bathroom facilities.

Dad could immediately go to work at the Mac Quigan Farm in Cedar Springs and his health was improving! Their fruit farm was larger than the Broadwood Brothers and they also had cattle. Mac Quigan's son Jim, who was two years younger than Dad, practically ran his father's business. His father had spent much time in Toronto as an MLA and Jim had a degree from the Agricultural College. All year round they had about ten people working for them. During picking time it varied from twenty to forty people.

During the end of 1950 Dad's oldest brother Andrew and his wife Nel wrote that they too had decided to immigrate to Canada. And like others, he was wondering whether we would be able to help them do so. Dad talked with Jim Mac Quigan about it. Jim said he would be willing to give him work but no house was available for the family. Mr. Nauta told us that for \$5.00 extra rent they could live in with us. They arrived with their four children on March 31, 1951. Of course, in a small house with only four rooms, it became quite crowded with six additional people and some of their furniture. But with good will from both sides we managed well.

During the year we lived together with Andrew and Nel and family in Merlin we also took in Cor and Nel Van Atte and their two sons. You recall that he was our First Mate on the Hedel when we came to Canada. We had sponsored them the same way as we had Andrew and Nel. Jim Mac Quigan was to be the co-signer again. It took six weeks before the Van Atte family found a house in Cedar Springs. You can imagine how very crowded we were in our four room house but "where there is a will, there is somehow always a way."

Dad proposed that together we should grow tomatoes, on share, at the Lesley farm, our neighbor just down the road. He was able to arrange for a contract with Libby's at Chatham and in the spring we planted twelve acres of tomatoes. We grew the tomatoes on a 50-50 share with Mr. Lesley. Dad and Andrew worked at Mac Quigan and could take off any time for their own work. It was an ideal situation. When the full picking had arrived Nel

and I went along. We took food and plenty of drinks along for the hot and tiring days. This also meant that Jack too had to be taken along. He spent his time in the play pen with Murray taking care of him. Every once in a while Murray came over either to tell us that he was asleep or saying, "I smell the baby." He also gave him the bottle most of the time. Nobody suffered from our busy schedule. But it was appreciated when there was a day of rain and we could stay home to catch up on our house work and have some extra rest.

After the picking was over we had a more normal time together. It was nice to have Andrew and Nel with us during the long winter evenings especially during the evenings when Dad was on family visitations and meetings in the Church. It was often a long way for him to drive to do all this Church work. One evening I will never forget was when we had a chimney fire. Since I never liked thunder storms I mentioned that I saw lightening one evening. This never happened during winter time so it was dismissed as being impossible. I failed to go to the window to see what it was that I had seen and Dad was deep with his thoughts in some reading. A little later Andrew saw it too and did go to the window to see what it was. He did not trust it and went outside shouting that there were flames shooting out of the chimney. What a commotion all at once. In no time Dad was on the roof, Nel and I were filling pails with water and Andrew went up on the ladder handing them to Dad. What a mess we had to clean up afterwards but what a blessing that we still had our house. It could have been so much worse.

Charing Cross

One day in early March, 1952 Dad saw a "For Sale" sign on a house under construction at Charing Cross. He thought it kind of odd to sell a house unfinished. The next day we went down there together. We found out that the man had a drinking problem and was financially stuck. He only told us that he had no money to finish the house. When we saw empty beer bottles around the house we knew what he was up against. We bought the house for \$2,500.00. Very unexpectedly came the end of living together with Andrew and Nel. We never had any regret about this; it was a very good year.

Nel could unpack the rest of their belongings as well and make it "home sweet home" for their own. It made me glad for both of us. We moved in as soon as we were able and stored most of our furniture in a corner so that Dad could

finish the house room by room. The master bedroom was the only room finished. So for a while that became our living room with the mattresses and bedding piled on one side of the room and table and chairs on the other side. In the kitchen was a counter with hot and cold water plus a stove to cook. That was all in place which helped a lot. Most of the work that needed to be done to make the place livable Dad did himself. The bathroom had to wait to be completed because we ran out of money.

April 3, 1952 was a very difficult day for us. Jack came down with a serious illness. The evening before we had noticed that he crawled more than walked. Later he began to cry continually. No matter what we did he kept on crying. We were up with him the whole night, holding him in our arms, sitting down or walking around. We noticed that he was having pain in one leg. First thing in the morning we took him to Dr. Pickering in Blenheim who sent us to the Hospital in Chatham. First they were not sure if it was polio and later they diagnosed it as meningitis. There was much prayer among all our family in Holland and all our friends in the Church of Chatham. We were so glad that we could carry our "heavy" little boy home; in cast from under his arms to his toes. He had lost several pounds while he was in the hospital for three weeks. These indeed were very difficult weeks for us but God was there to pull us through from day to day. We were told that the virus had "settled" in his knee. They also informed us "that his leg might stop growing and that time would tell what to do next."

Once a month we had to go back to the Hospital to see a bone specialist who came to Chatham from Flint, Michigan. He would take off the cast and apply salve to help Jack with the terrible itchiness on his legs. Sometimes sand got inside the cast; being out of doors it was almost impossible to avoid. Murray, Opa or Oma Moerman (who had come over that year) were often pulling him in a little red wagon if he was not napping. Jack's nights were always restless. Each month the bone specialist measured his leg for growth. For five months there was no change. I made lots of trips with him and Murray to the Post Office and to the store to "keep him quiet" and this was the best way to do so. Even Murray, as young as he was, already began to see it as part of his responsibility to help him and us with this. When it was very hot I spread a blanket on the lawn in the shade and there Murray and Jack played many times.

While being in the Hospital, Jack must have become afraid of various things that they used on him. For a long time he would start crying when he saw me

with scissors, knife, vacuum, sewing machine. Anything shiny and noisy scared him. When the bone specialist switched on his small electric saw to cut the cast, it frightened him so much he always screamed. I was glad that we were with him when this happened.

Mother Schalk came to visit us often and would take care of both of our children so that I could take an afternoon nap every once in a while. It also was the day I could vacuum the whole house and not upset Jack by him hearing and seeing it. It were wonderful days of relief when she came to help. She was a Mother to me and a Oma to our kids .

During the month of August, during the full tomato pick, we all went to the field in Merlin to help Uncle Andrew for several days. John and Andrew still had a tomato contract with Mr. Leslie. Actually it was a wonderful break from the trying daily routine. The change of scenery did me a lot of good. Several times Jack would fall asleep in the playpen and again Murray came to tell us what was happening. I picked as close to the playpen as possible. It all worked out well with our good helper.

When we went to the Hospital in October for the monthly visit the miracle we have been praying for was happening! When the specialist measured Jack's leg again he shouted excitedly, "There is growth in his leg!" I had a hard time not to burst out in tears but somehow waited until the evening; Then we cried together in thanksgiving to God for intervening on his and our behalf ! The specialist told us, "this is a thing I cannot understand because when a virus attacks the bone, growth cannot take place." It did! So it was God who touched our baby with "His Healing Power" answering our prayers and those of many others. This time the cast stayed off and our little boy was a lot lighter to carry (and so was our heart)! He had to learn walking again as well as potty training. But all these things were nothing in comparison with what it was before. Now he began to sleep through the night and he did his utmost to learn to walk again and his appetite greatly increased. What a joy it was to see him make all this progress in such a short time. How we thanked God each day for His gift of health for Jack.

As I mentioned before, in this same summer of 1952, Opa and Oma Moerman had come for a visit to Andrew and family and ours. They took turns visiting between us but since our situation was what it was, they spent more time at Andrew and Nel than with us. Andrew and Nel had recently rented a small farm between Charing Cross and Cedar Spring on the 13th Concession.

When Oma was at our home I can still see her standing in front of the window, shaking her head while watching Murray pull the little red wagon with Jack in it. They were so thankful they could be with us and be a witness to the healing miracle and progress thereafter. This was especially so when we realized that Oma's health was not what we had expected it to be. She ate little and was losing weight and often she was sweating very much. Somehow she never was able to talk about anything concerning herself. Opa loved reading his church papers which were sent from Holland. He also peeled potatoes and cut rhubarb or what ever was to be for dinner. Later when he came alone in 1966 for eleven months he helped for many hours when it was time to put vegetables in the freezer. We visited old timers and he loved to hear their stories. In Jan. 1953 they could welcome the fifth baby of Andrew and Nel, who they called John. We could also tell them that we were expecting our third baby. That was a high light for them as well.

In May, 1953 Oma and Opa celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary. The Church had organized a luncheon for them following the Sunday morning worship service, all the people stayed. We had also invited certain people from elsewhere and Peter and Edith Lugtgeid and family (my first cousin). It was such a surprise to them to experience this kind of fellowship in a far away country. They just could not get over it and they really felt in their hearts that the people of the Church had taken them in as one of their own.

In June we brought them to the train where, with a small group of other people, they traveled to Montreal and boarded the ship bringing them back home. It was difficult to say "Good Bye." We felt that Oma's health had been failing during the time she was with us and we knew that we would not see her on this earth again. We were sure she felt the same; The way she hugged us said it all. Soon thereafter by way of letter she informed us that she had stomach and intestinal cancer. After two years of much suffering she passed away November, 1955. We know for sure that she went to be with her Redeemer. Just before she died she had a dream. She was standing before the gate of heaven and knocked. Peter opened the door and asked what she wanted. She answered: "I am coming Home." Then Peter said : "What is in that suitcase you have with you?" "All my good works", she replied. "Go back to earth and come back empty handed" said Peter and she woke up. She also wrote how thankful she was that her son was going to be "een dominee" (a minister). Dad's sister Nel came from Friesland with her baby to take care of her for three month until she went to her Eternal Home. Nel has done this for her Father as well in July, 1968 and we have had great respect for her doing that.

A New Calling

1952 was special in various ways, added to what I have written about Dad's work in our Church. There were many questions that became part of our lives. It came down to the question "was God calling him away from the farm to do other work as a pastor or layman in a Church?"

At last Dad went to talk about all this with our Minister but he was convinced that it would be too much of a hardship for all of us. He said as much as, "try to forget about it and seek to go on with your lives the way you are doing." All I can say is that even with all his trying, it did not work. The desire never left Dad. And so it happened that at our third visit, the Pastor's wife spoke up and said "Herman I believe this is of the Lord; If this man is called by God we can no longer go against it." From there on Rev. Maassen began to do his everything to help us: writing letters to the Board of Domestic Missions, RCA leaders in Canada, Hope College, Seminary and various churches in the USA whom they had served, asking for financial support. Then preparations were made for a visit to Holland, Michigan.

While we lived in Charing Cross Dad worked shift-work in a seed plant in Blenheim. I found it hard to be alone at night during these times. I recall one night when we had a bad thunderstorm. I just had taken both children out of their beds and went to the other end of the house with them, away from where our chimney was, when lightning struck our neighbor's chimney.

To make a long story short, Dad was accepted into Hope College in Holland, Michigan on a trial basis, beginning the first week of September. Funds were received from various churches for our house rent and utilities, while we were responsible to put food on our table. It was a big challenge for Dad to go to College without any high school education and limited English. Talk about a multiple adventure, this was one. God clearly was confirming His call upon our lives.

The first decision we made was that I would stay in Canada until our third baby was born, which was due September 22. Then we got busy finding a renter for our house. To our great joy our best friends, Rien and Rie Veenman, were eager to rent our house by September 1. The beauty of it was that I could stay with them with our two boys until the baby was born and we would be ready to move to Holland Mich. This was two prayers answered in one. It was so much easier for all of us to stay in our own house for these weeks. For one

more week Dad could stay home to help put our furniture upstairs which was more like an attic than anything else. Our beds were all moved into one room. We had no money to move any of our furniture to our new place in the USA and were hoping to get what was needed there, second hand. Everything went so fast that it overwhelmed me. When all was in order, our friends moved in and it was time for Dad to leave. In spite of the loving care we received from our friends all around, it was difficult to go through this alone. But we started with counting the days until we would be all together again, hopefully with our new born baby.

On September 30, I saw the Doctor again who sent me straight to the hospital because my blood pressure was too high. For two days I walked the halls from one end to the other. They did all the things to start the labor process but nothing happened. Late in afternoon, Dr. Pickering came in and said, "Would you please phone your husband to come and visit you tomorrow?" Of course I was all for it and understood very well that he had done all he could. I called Dad immediately. He took the night bus and stepped into my room at 8:00 am Oct. 2. How wonderful to see him again after a whole month. Now we could walk and talk for hours! To make a long story short by noon I could not walk anymore and it made our Doctor smile. He said: "So, to let your husband come was the answer." He was right. I gladly admitted to him that I did not function too well without him especially not when it was time for our baby to be born. At 6:00 pm our daughter Anne arrived with a record weight of 7 pounds 14 ounces. (Our 2 boys were 6 pounds even). When the baby was born the Doctor said, "You didn't even ask if you have a boy or a girl." I said, "Doctor, you have been talking for the last two hours about a big boy so I gave up." He laughed and replied "but you do have a girl!" I could hardly believe it at first; it had to sink in for a while. Our joy was complete with a healthy daughter! God had made all things well again. This was one of those days that were so special to us and was never forgotten. Dad traveled back the next day so that he could have a good rest before starting his strenuous schedule again. I enjoyed five more days in the Hospital, caring for our new baby and resting as much as possible. Right from the start, our little daughter did very well. My heart was overflowing with thankfulness for all God's care and protection.

When we came home our boys were very proud of their little sister. Jack right away gathered some toys for the baby and put them in the crib so the baby could "just look at them" But Murray said, "she can not see them yet." Our friends treated me like a queen; I was not allowed to do anything but care for the baby. But I started thinking about all the things that should go along when Dad would

be coming for us on Saturday Oct.17 if he could borrow a car from one of the students that weekend. (We had sold our Prefect). It was a big job to select everything that would be needed; like clothes, bedding, a few things to hang on the wall, sewing machine, dishes, pots, pans, toys, books and dozens of things that make a home. That Saturday came quickly and we now needed skill to put it all in the car. Dad got it all in but the boys had to sit right on top of it. On Sunday morning we went to our Church in Chatham where we made our promises to God in the midst of His people when our daughter was baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; promises for her to personally embrace when making Confession of Faith. I also must relate an incident here with Jack. In Chatham it was not the custom for the whole family to gather around the baptismal font; Murray and Jack were to stay in the pew with Andrew and Nel but Jack did not think this was right. He must have felt he belonged there too and he took off and joined us. Andrew, however, took him forcefully back to his place and Jack began screaming for all to hear. But just the same Uncle Andrew has always been his favorite Uncle. Jack taught us that the whole family should be together at such special occasions! We felt rather bad that it went this way but it was a minor thing and it was still a beautiful Sunday all around. Leaving a place where I had begun to root was not easy but I was to learn that this was to be a pattern in our lives. Yet, I had looked forward to this very special time of being sent off by friends with prayers, hugs and good wishes.