

40. Family Stuff:

a. **See my blog** at <https://elmerverigin.wordpress.com/Discussion With My Family at Syringa Creek Campout August 23 through 26, 2013>

b. **Earliest known photo of Elmer Verigin**



Perhaps about 2 years old??

I remember the bathtub was in the family till I was 7. I would be the first, followed by Mary and up to Lawrence. I saw my mom bathe once.

Photo would be in the Canora house

c. **Photo of Elmer Verigin his "World" as he was able to perceive it at that time**



The wheelbarrow was made for me by brother Lawrence. It was a great tool, and I could haul firewood to the house. etc.

I really had no perspective further than my family, dogs, and the agricultural way of life.

I just wanted to grow up fast so that I could be a man and get to do all the things that men do. The photo was at 3 miles NE of Veregin.



This photo was in 3 ½ miles NE of Pelly, behind the barn and where the haystacks were piled in the Summer. This was early Spring, and the hay has been all used up.

My animals:

1. Billy (The Goat)
2. Elmer
3. An "attack cat"
4. Duke as a puppy (black)
5. Gypsy

I was definitely in my "environment".

This chapter is dedicated to personal matters, and it may be of interest of the Readers to know that I was not prompted to academic success except that I should be enrolled at school. If weather was an issue, the family did not concern themselves on how we could get to school. We just stayed home and were given jobs to do. Idleness was considered a sin by my father and mother.

Whenever there was major work that was required, all the assistance required that could be mustered, we just stayed home to help as survival was first on the list of priorities and accepted by all the family.

So, I grew up understanding that the World encompassed our farm and the neighbors. From a short distance away (far as per my perspective at that time), all my relatives were also farmers. So as one can imagine, I expected to be a farmer as well and the aspirations were to learn all those skills that farmers needed to survive. I enjoyed working with horses and when I was about 12, I was permitted to work on the tractor. When that happened, I had risen to a new height in the hierarchy in my world.

I also learned as the youngest in the family, that it was possible to feign sickness when there are chores to do. So, when milking cows was the chore, I suddenly had a stomach-ache that would get better after the milk was separated and the calves fed. This was fine until only sister Mary was at home and then she insisted that I milk my share of the six (6) cows. Then she got married and I was left with all of them to milk. That was probably the best thing that happened as I learned efficiency and so that within an hour; the cows were milked, milk separated, and calves fed with the skim milk. On yes, the cream had to be taken to the "Cooler", a 20-foot-deep hole in the ground (a dummy well) that was filled full of snow before spring. As the summer warmed up, the snow very slowly melted and by fall there was still enough snow to keep everything cool. We used large 5-gallon pails to store the goods that needed cooling and lowered all with a rope unto the snow bed. Every week, we would have enough for a 5 gallon "cream can". We would then take this cream can into Pelly with horses before 4:00 P.M., so that the train would pick it up and transport to the next town West (Norquay) where there was a "Creamery" that would empty the can, wash it, and return to Pelly on the next train East.

The family would receive about \$8.00 to \$10.00 a delivery. This was the "cash" that my mother used for groceries and subsidized the family allowance cheques that were totally used to purchase clothing. Yes, all clothing was ordered through the Eaton's and Simpson's - Sears catalogues (our "on-line" shopping at that time).

I was never sure where all the proceeds from the grain marketing went but there just did not seem to be any left after farmland payments and equipment repairs, even fuel purchases were paid from sale of a hog or calf.

You now have some idea of "survival" on the farm and that is why there was a major exodus of youth and farm families from rural to urban communities. Yes, the farm could provide food and an existence but absolutely no luxury. The usual family farm prior to 1955 was about 320 acres (1/2 section). That has changed so that the average economic farm of today is 8,000 acres so now we have one family living where there used to be 25 families. Tragic but that explains why the prairie towns have fallen into ruin where there used to be thriving communities with schools, community functions, etc.,

Saturdays were for visiting in Pelly and so the sooner I got the cows dealt with, I could leave for town. We had no shower nor bathtub and so lighting the baunya was too big a project and too lengthy a process and so a kettle of hot water into a large basin and I would stand in it wash up after I had

washed my hair first. It was "hard" water and so without shampoo, my hair had no problem crystallizing a "cow lick" for my hairdo. I still had that barn and cow smell but then the girls that I would meet came from the farm as well and they could not differentiate between their body odor nor mine.

Laugh, that is the way it was!

I was left alone in my bedroom on the far end of the house and could see my breath in the winter it was so cold in the house. I used to fantasize that I had grown up and I was somewhere else. I dreamed of what my wife would look like and just how many children I would have. Of course, she would be perfect and that my family would include one son and one daughter. I played with names and that is how I came up with Nona and Kim. Nona was a play of letters as I had never heard of such a name, but Kim came from Kimbal O'Hara, in the Gunga Din story written by Rudyard Kipling. I was infatuated with both names.

- d. Photo **Elmer Verigin 1st Year Engineer** taken on steps of John and Mary Khadekin first house, Benito, Manitoba



I had come "home" to Pelly for Thanksgiving weekend. Of course, I had to brag about my red Engineering sweater that I proudly wore. Sister Mary and John lived in Benito and so I spent most of my weekend at their house as I had a lot of stories to tell my Mentor, brother-in-law John Khadekin.

The stories of my experiences in Saskatoon have been outlined in previous chapters.

What I need to add here is that that Thanksgiving weekend was the last time I saw my father as he passed away late October 1958. When I did see him, he had approached me as I stood by the pond behind the barn watching the ducks with my dog Duke and was reminiscing of many other previous times when I had done that. He lacked confidence as he looked at me and asked me if I would assist him in liquidating the farm so that Mom and he could move into town.

As I looked in his eyes, I noted right away, that he had been drinking and that immediately formed a bad taste in my mouth of all the years where he had traded the bottle, for his family. My immediate response was "no, I have paid my tuition and cannot sacrifice my college effort at this time!" He turned away with hopeless tears in his eyes as I was the apparent "last straw" for his survival.

I was not aware how badly his hypertension was nor how badly diseased his heart was at that moment, and I am not sure if my answer would have been different if I did. It is also true that it was unfair for him to ask me to sacrifice my marathon effort to establish myself at Saskatoon. Unfortunately for him, he would not have been able to comprehend it all even if I had explained it to him.

So, as it was, I turned away and left for Benito.

For years after, I would wake from a frequent nightmare, which would always have my father standing a short distance away with head bowed and tears in his eyes and I would awake absolutely "shaken". This began to bother me as I was reluctant to go to bed as I did not want to face him. I shared my nightmares with my Aunts Polly, Lillian, and mother. Their recommendation was that I must talk to my dad in my nightmare and tell him that he had departed and to leave me alone. That I had to do it "loudly"

I was able to, one night after a few years, but I admit I still get a recurring nightmare where my mother and Father are living in that house. The roof had fallen in, and they were somehow existing under that roof. The property was owned by others, but they allowed them to live there. I would be there for a "weekend" and there are times when I knew that the fields needed working and I just could not determine how I was going to complete it all before I left that weekend. It left me very frustrated and tired. Yes, I still get these nightmares to this day.

My guilt complex is the culprit, and I may die with it and perhaps I can make amends at that time when I get to see all the spirits?

e. Double dating



My roommate a best friend, Keith fell in love with his future lifetime mate Sonia Konkin. He had to see her in the Spring of 1961 at her house in Pelly.

Marilyn and I went along, and we were able to visit Baba and the Khadekins in Benito, Manitoba.

Great times!

f. Photo *Marilyn Verishine*



This photo is of Marilyn before she married me. She loved red flowers and it suited her.

She was educated at Teacher's College in Saskatoon at the same time that I took my first year in Engineering.

She was teaching in Perdue when we married in 1961.

Little did she know that meeting Elmer would be a story of the rest of her life and so it "unfolded" so to speak.

Marilyn wrote letters to Elmer from addresses in Asquith and then from Perdue in the years 1960 and 1961 where she had taught in Dunfermlin and Perdue. All these letters were saved by Elmer and are now preserved in a binder.

Many of her thoughts were expressed therein that also outlined our relationship up to and including a decision to marry on December 23, 1961.

g. A Ring Formalized the Engagement July 1961

So, Marilyn decided to follow up on the verbal engagement at her parents' house in April 1961 and took a bus to British Columbia where Elmer had a summer job with his brothers Lawrence and Russel.

There was no contest once Elmer saw his future bride dressed up like she was on our Sunday drive to see Waneta Dam.

A pose that Lana Turner would have trained for weeks to be able to duplicate.

I am not sure whether Marilyn was wearing her ring, but we can assume that she was because Elmer wasted no time in formalities to get that ring onto her finger so that he would not lose it (or forget what it was for???)

And so, the girl from Saskatchewan "lassoed" her man in British Columbia.



h. Wedding Photo Elmer Verigin to Marilyn Verishine, December 23, 1961



Our wedding took place at the Marigold Restaurant on 3rd Avenue in Saskatoon. This photo was with Brother-in-law John and Mary Khadekin in the background.



We had the Saskatoon Doukhobor Youth attend our wedding and sing a few hymns as is customary at Doukhobor weddings. So, we did have some heritage. We enjoyed everyone who attended. Now we were two united into one future family.

i. Photo Verigin Family Reunion, Tolstoi School 1974

A plan was concocted to have a reunion with the entire Verigin Family emanating from my grandfather Wasyl Verigin. We were able to get everyone together and a pictorial album was assembled and present to the 14 cousins for memory. Every family was assembled into units, and this was our family at that time.



Background is maple trees border to roadway. Back to West are:

Elmer and Marilyn Verigin parents to:

Nona (Kucher), Lori (Woodhouse), Tamara (Verigin-Burk), Kim

j. Family prior to Europe Trip 1980



Left to Right: Nona, Tamara, Lori, Kim, Elmer, and Marilyn Verigin.

This was taken on the East side of the "shop" on Highway 3 A, Trail, B.C.

This was just at the time that we were ready to leave for our Europe Trip in 1980.

Our family had expanded to six (6) now.

k. Elmer and Marilyn enjoying themselves at Allan and Patricia Wedding Night, Lake Louise, AB.



We had never attended such an elaborate affair. We were honored to be invited to this affair.

l. An inspection of our house under construction at 145 - 4200 Grandview Drive



Our foundation is in the background as we pose on a pallet of plywood.

The Columbia River Valley is in the background looking South.

Yes, things were looking good for the Grandview Project.

I was allocating my entire resource capability to successfully complete the project.

m. Marilyn had chosen her Retirement Place at Grandview 145 - 4200 Grandview Drive Castlegar, B.C.



Marilyn and I worked hard with our friends in the DCA to assist other seniors and so it came to pass that the 17 couples in the DCA sponsored the Grandview project under the name of Kootenay Columbia Seniors Housing Cooperative. Shortly after we moved into our bungalow, this natural omen indicated that we had made the correct choice.

n. Photo Taken at Christmas 2014 Rick and Lori Woodhouse Residence, Genelle, B.C.

We always tried to take family photos every time we had a family get-together, and I am posting some of the photos that I have available to identify the strong "family tie" that continues to be enjoyed by all. Perhaps this is one of the most endearing part of a "success" story is how does the family develop with years.

I believe that no amount of money can buy love. My family is wealthy then with abundant love.



Rear left to right: Nona Kucher, Lori Woodhouse, Sean Chahley (Lori's son), Kayla McKinnon (Nona's daughter), Kara Chahley (Lori's daughter), Allie Kucher (Nona's daughter), Kim Verigin, Solomon Burk (Tamara's son), Lora Verigin, Tamara Verigin-Burk **Middle row left to right:** Rick Woodhouse, Abby Verigin, Marilyn Verigin, Macy Verigin, Elmer Verigin, Malcolm Burk, Garrett Kucher (Nona's son), Nigel Burk **Front Row left to Right:** Kyle Burk, Johnny Burk (dog)

o. Photo Take



Left to Right back row: Roxy and Sean (Lori's son) Chahley, Nigel Burk (Tamara's son), Garrett (Nona's son) Kucher, Tyler and Kara (Lori's daughter) (just in front of Tyler) Hlookoff, Solomon Burk (Tamara's son), Malcolm Burk (Tamara's son), Brendan Szmata (partner to Allie), Rick Woodhouse, Allie Kucher (Nona's daughter), Nathan Heddle, son Daxx (on his dad's shoulders), Kim Verigin, Tessa Austad (Solomon's partner), Kyle Burk. **Left to Right front row:** Lawrence Verigin, Lori Woodhouse, Nona Kucher, Elmer Verigin, Tamara Verigin-Burk, Marilyn Verigin, Kayla Heddle (Nona's daughter), Lora Verigin, Abby Verigin, Macy Verigin, Deliha Verigin (dog)

This picture has some interesting notes. This was brother Lawrence's last Christmas on the Earth. During the evening our Great Grandson, Daxx sat beside Lawrence and held his hand without any coaxing. We were all assembling for the customary photo and Lawrence was sitting by himself. Suddenly he just rushed over and sat down, "I want to be in this picture!" Did Lawrence have a premonition?

p. *Granny's Girls*

Once a year our daughters and daughter-in-law have a "girl's weekend" and they take their Granny to Spokane, Okanagan or Cranbrook for shopping and casino. They had a ball, but gramps was not invited.



q. *Family at 50th Wedding Anniversary at Mazatlan, Mexico*

Marilyn and I wanted our 50th wedding anniversary to be a special event with all of our family in attendance. Nona went to work on finding a location that would be economically suitable and at a location memorable. So, it came to be that Mazatlan became the destination.

Work immediately was undertaken so that the entire family could attend. The other stipulation was that Marilyn, and I did not have a Doukhobor ceremony at our wedding and so we wanted to repeat our vows under this type of ceremony. Unbeknown to us the entire family secretly learned a few hymns that they could all sing and Nona became the marriage leader. A video was taken of the actual ceremony.

The hotel was a beautiful design, and the accommodation was excellent all-inclusive. Our grandchildren started running around the hallways and I went to stop them but all they could say was "Gramps we have never been to such a place. We are so excited!" and so I just let them have fun.



Left to Right Back Row: Garrett Kucher, Sean Chahley, Kim Verigin, Nigel Burk, Kyle Burk, Rick Woodhouse, Lori Woodhouse, Nona Kucher ***Middle Row:*** Lora Verigin, Malcolm Burk ***Front Row:*** Abby Verigin, Macy Verigin, Kavla McKinnon, Marilyn and Elmer Verigin, Solomon Burk, Kara Chahlev, Allie Kucher, Tamara Verigin-Burk

Kim herded us all away from the bar and unto the sandy beach. Do we look like we were having fun?
Let me assure you, we were definitely having fun!

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