

stones, and smelling the sweet spring air. I also remember the violets and the trilliums, the wooded trails, and berry picking in summer and autumn, with birds singing all around.

I took 10 years of school at Petersfield and Grade XI at Clandeboye, the next village south. In 1944-45 I attended Success Business College in Winnipeg and in June of that year I started on a series of stenographic jobs. My first was with the Fort Garry Tire and Service at \$16.50 a week. I was there in July and I particularly remember the hot, rubbery fumes from the tire shop. My other employers dealt, respectively in step ladders (and other small wooden items), baby chicks and bad debts (a debt collection agency). I was working for the City of Winnipeg in the Welfare Department when a friend suggested that I should accompany her to the United Church Christian Leadership Training School at Naramata, British Columbia. I had previously attended camps and young people's conferences which had made me feel, somewhat vaguely, that God had something special for me to do, but I wasn't sure what. This opportunity to go to Naramata seemed to be God's way of leading me.

The study and fellowship at Naramata, in the scenic Okanagan Valley, was a wonderful experience. By spring Mr. McLaren, the principal, was talking about summer mission fields. Would any of the students like to apply? The prospect was decidedly frightening, but I felt I should attempt it, so after two weeks on tour with a group of students at the end of the term, I proceeded to Edmonton, and thence to Flatbush, 98 miles northwest of Edmonton. This was my headquarters for the summer. I lived in a barely furnished bunk shack and cooked my meals on a Coleman gasoline stove—whenever I was home. I spent most of the summer on a bicycle, learning to ride the hard way, over bush trails which were crooked, sandy, rutty and any other difficult adjective that you care to mention. In the manner of a pioneer, I lived off the countryside; not shooting and trapping, but simply arriving on my bicycle at a home in time for dinner.

Church services were held in Flatbush and Athabina one Sunday and French Creek and Cross Lake on the next. Two services were held in school-houses, one in a large community hall and one in a small, log church. The people of the Cross Lake community had cut the logs and built it themselves, and they were very proud of it. The school-house in that district was also log.

The folk were friendly and hospitable. As in every community, there were a number of faithful church people, and a large number of unchurched.

I conducted Church Vacation Schools in all four points, with varying success and a good deal of fun.

November found me back at Naramata, taking Grade XII by correspondence. That year is memorable for little else than hard work. When I wrote my final examinations—and managed to pass all but one—I called at the Correspondence Branch in Winnipeg to meet and thank all the warmly interested persons who had marked my work during that year.

July and August of 1952 were spent on another bicycle on the Mount Ida Charge, just a few miles out of Salmon Arm, in the northern end of the Okanagan Valley. It stayed hot and dry for at least six weeks of the time I was there. The roads were very hilly and thickly gravelled, so cycling was not so easy there, either.

In the fall of 1952 I started at United College as a candidate for the ministry. The decision had come in the spring of that year, after much prayer and waiting. I had spent a weekend in the home of Rev. Gilbert C. Johnson at Enderby, British Columbia. In the afternoon we drove out to Mabel Lake for a service of worship. The congregation met in someone's home, the community hall which they usually used, being too cold that day. The folk arrived, some on foot, some on horseback, dressed in plaid shirts and blue jeans. They made me feel homesick for my rural Alberta congregation of the summer before. On the way

back to Enderby, Mr. Johnson talked about what the ministry meant to him. The next day I suddenly found that my "decision" had been made for me: I knew that I was going to be a minister.

My years in college meant many new experiences: more mission fields, including two years in an inter-city mission, new friends (both students and professors), several years as a "built-in baby sitter", as well as the whole range of college experience itself, both social and intellectual.

After my ordination in June, 1958 I was appointed to the Lauder Charge, and I first saw Lauder on June 26. I must have met Herb Roberts shortly afterwards, but I did not really become aware of him until September when he first came to call at the manse to see the minister: object—matrimony. We were married on December 27 in Deloraine with a large number of the Lauder, Melgund and Dand people present and taking part. The headline in the Deloraine Times, to Herb's embarrassment, read: "Dand Farmer Marries Lady Minister". At the spring Official Board meeting I informed the Board that we were expecting a baby in October, and received permission to continue my ministry there, with provision being made for leave of absence. On August 23, twins arrived in the Deloraine Hospital. One of the nurses who had been present went home and told her husband, "The Dand minister just had twins." "You mean the minister's wife, don't you?" he countered. "No," she replied, "the Dand minister is a lady."

Arthur and Owen began attending church at Dand at an early age. Dand was my second service on a Sunday, and usually after the service had started I would see my husband open the door and enter with a small, yellow-wrapped bundle. He would hand this one baby to any convenient worshipper, and go out to the truck for the other baby.

In June, 1960 I ended my ministry at Lauder, and went into "retirement", but finances and my own inclinations led me back into active work on a pastorate, and we moved into Alexander manse at the beginning of July, 1962. By that time we had three children, Christine having arrived in December, 1961. Marcia was born in October, 1963.

Perhaps "commuting and confusion" characterizes our life in the three years I have been the minister of Alexander. We have maintained two homes, and when people ask, "Are you living on the farm or at Alexander?", it is hard to give a clear answer, because our residence has changed, often from day to day, and a good part of our time is spent on the road.

Would I do it all again? Of course! The memories are happy ones, and in the midst of the confusion, we are a family, each doing something worthwhile and satisfying. I could have found simpler, more orderly ways of spending my days, but not happier ways. It has been good, and it is good.

THE WATSON ROPER FAMILY HISTORY

Watson and Norma Roper were married in 1956. They lived for that summer on the N. W. 20-4-23, southwest of Dand. In the fall they moved to the Hartney district. Watson was born at Hartney and took a Diploma in Agriculture course at the University of Manitoba, graduating in 1955.

Norma Roper, the former Norma Philips of Lauder, worked in the Bank of Montreal at Hartney before their marriage.

Watson and Norma have three children: Diane, Allan and Brenda.