Written and Completed by Rene Godin on Nov 28, 2003

THE GODIN FAMILY HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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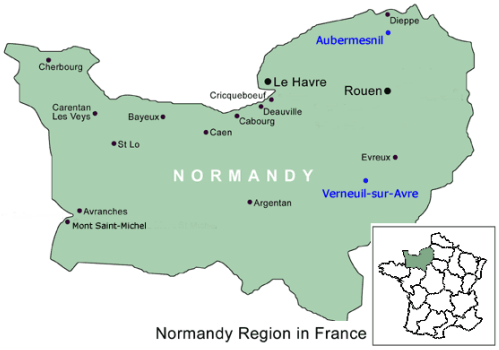
Purpose

The purpose of this document is to record for the younger and future generations, the life of Bruno and Bertha Godin of Domrémy, Saskatchewan. It is written from the perspective of their children: Armande, Claire, Raymond, Laurent (a.k.a. Lawrence), Helene and Rene, as they remember life, the community, the farm, the stories and events that occurred in their lives. We hope to pass along the memories of a way of life, as it existed in Saskatchewan throughout the 20th century and preserve some of our ancestral history.

Early History

Charles Godin was the first of the Godin family to immigrate to Canada from Aubermesnil-St. Laurent de Beamais, Normandy, France.

He arrived in Quebec City in 1653 or 1654, and undoubtedly came to the "new world" for adventure and to partake in the opportunities that Canada had to offer.



Normandy Region in France

Our early Canadian ancestors settled near Quebec City and they proceeded southwest along the St. Laurence River in the area of Trois-Rivieres, Quebec. As the decades went by, the Godins dispersed to the Maritimes, central and western Canada and elsewhere.

Achille Godin, our grandfather, was born in 1867 at St. Anne De La Perade, Quebec. He belonged to the 8th generation of Godins in Canada. Although little is known of his immediate family, he married Emilie Cossette of St. Prosper, Quebec in 1888.

In 1892, Achille moved with his family to a homestead what was later to become Domrémy, Saskatchewan with 3 children: Bruno, born on December 31, 1888, Justine, and Charles. Later on, the following children were born: Alexandrine, Hermas, Blanche and Telesphore. Achille was a carpenter and he helped build the first Northwest Mounted Police barracks and the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Prince Albert. He worked on the Northcote, a paddle wheel steamer that traveled the North Saskatchewan River in the late 1800's.

In 1895, he with other pioneers from Quebec, built the first mission (a Catholic church and school) 2.5 miles north of what was later on named "Domrémy". During this same period, pioneers from France arrived and Achille broke a branch from a tree, wrapped it

with a handkerchief, planted the branch in the ground and declared the name “Domrémy” from a town of the same name in France. The Patron Saint of Domrémy, France is also the Patron Saint of the Catholic Parish in Domrémy, Saskatchewan namely St. Jeanne d’Arc.

The family then moved to Duck Lake where the children could go to school. In 1906 Achille and his family moved to a cattle ranch in Bonne Madonne area of Saskatchewan where they resided for 2 years . Achille became foreman on a bridge building crew while the children assisted on the mixed farm consisting of farm animals and grain growing.

In 1908, the family moved back to Domremy and bought a homestead consisting of 160 acres of land for $960. This land remained in the family until it was sold to Robert Trumier in approximately 1950. Achilles and Emilie passed away while residing on this homestead.

Historical Timeline

The following timeline relates historical world events to occurrences in the Godin family.

1850

1850: Buffalo and bison roamed the Prairie Provinces freely. Indians were present.

1860

1861 to 1865: American Civil War

1867: Canadian Confederation

1869: Land surveying began. This involved surveying the land into parcels of quarter sections, sections and townships.

1867: Joseph Achille Godin born in Quebec

1870

1870: Manitoba joins Canadian union

1873: Sir John A Macdonald created the Dominion Land Act which set up provisions for free homestead land based on a quarter section parcels (160 acres). Federal Government completed the land surveys. Set land aside for eventual Indian reservations. Established the RCMP as the authority to keep law and order.

1875: Telephone is invented by AG Bell

1880

1881: Canadian population is 4.3 Million

1885: Canadian national railway links East and West.

1888: Joseph Achille Godin and Emilie Cossette married in Quebec.

1885: Northwest rebellion in Batoche led by Riel

1888: Bruno Godin born

1890

1890: first mail service to the Domremy area

1892: Achille moves family to near Domremy.

1891: Population of Northwest Territories (includes present-day Saskatchewan, Alberta) is 67,000

1895: Achille worked on mission near Domremy-built first church/school

1894: Bertha St-Arnaud born

1896 to 1898: Klondike gold rush

1900

1901 to 1929: road building started in Saskatchewan

1905: Saskatchewan and Alberta become provinces

1906 Achille and his family moved on a ranch in Bonne Madonne area

1907: University of Saskatchewan created

1908: Achille Godin moved to Domremy area, bought 160 acres

1910

1910: First council meeting of the Municipality of St.Louis

1910: First meeting at Achille Godin log residence

1914-1918: First World War

1915: First bank established in Domremy

1915: Bruno buys first 160 acres of land in Domremy area

1916: Canadian women granted right to vote

1916: Bruno harvested first crop of wheat.

1917: Battle of Vimy Ridge		1917: Bruno buys 160 acres more land.
1919: first phone system installed in Domremy		
1920: Canadian life expectancy is 59 years	1920	
1922: Insulin discovered		1922: Bruno travels east and courts Bertha
1923: The Canadian National Railway (CNR) is formed		1923: House on the farm is built
1924: First local power generated in Domremy		1924: Bruno and Bertha marry
		1924: Armande born
		1926: Claire born
1927: First national radio broadcast		1927: Bruno buys Chrysler car
1929 to 1937: The Great Depression. Wheat prices fell from $1.60 per bushel to 28 cents.		1928; Marie stillborn
	1930	1930: Raymond born
		1932: Laurent born
1934: Bank of Canada is formed		1934: Helene born
		1936: Rene born
1939-1945: Second World War		
1942: Dieppe Raid	1940	1942: Major additions to the house.
1944: D-Day		
1945: Canada joins U.N.		
1948: Transistors were invented. Newfoundland becomes a Canadian province.		1948: Bruno buys an additional 160 acres
		1949: First rubber-tired tractor: John Deere Model G.
1950 to 1953: Korean War	1950	1950: Laurent and Raymond manage farm operations.
		1950: Power plant bought
		1950: First combine bought
1951: Population of Canada is 14 Million		1951: Golden Rod School closes
1952: First Canadian TV. Broadcast (CBC)		
		1954: Permanent power provided to the farm.
1957:Russia launched Sputnik-first satellite		1955: Farm converts to grain-only operation.
1959: St Laurence Seaway is opened		1959: First hog barn built
1961: Canadian population 18.2 Million	1960	
1962: Medicare created in Saskatchewan. Alouette satellite launched.		
1965: New Canadian Maple Leaf flag adopted		1965: Armande bought a car
1966: First color TV. Broadcast (CBC)		
1967: First heart transplant		
1969: First landing on the moon	1970	1970: Raymond and Laurent buy airplane.
1972: Anik 1 satellite launched		1971: Bruno passes away
		1975: Got rid of all livestock

1976: Montreal hosts Olympics. Death penalty abolished
1980: O Canada becomes national anthem
1981: IBM produced the PC for household use
1984: First Canadian in space (Garneau)
1988: Calgary hosts Winter Olympics
1990: Canadian life expectancy is 78 years
1991: Gulf war
1992: Cod fishery shuts down

1997: Manitoba Flood

1980: Bertha passes away

1993: Armande passes away

1995: Raymond and Laurent retire from farming.

Historical Events of the Life of Our Father and Mother, Bruno and Bertha Godin, and the Evolution of Family Life on the Godin Farm.

Dad worked on the Miteau ranch located a few miles North West of the present Godin farm for 5 years. During this period, the ranch supplied beef to the railway construction crews. Mr. Miteau would also often go to Florida in winter leaving Dad to look after the ranch until 1915 when Bruno bought 160 acres of land located on section 35, range 26, township 44 west of the second meridian for $10 per acre. He was 26 years old and this became his start in farming "on his own". The land was fully treed and there were no roads. He built a small house with the help of his father and began clearing the trees with a team of horses. Our father ended up living in this small house for 7 years, baking his own bread and in the winter reading a lot of English books despite the fact he had but a grade 7 education and the language spoken at home was French. He harvested his first crop of wheat in 1916.

Bruno Godin

In 1917, he bought a second quarter of land (160 acres) for the same price ($10 per acre). He progressively cleared more and more land and harvested wheat that initially had to be hauled to Prince Albert by horse and wagon 35 miles away.

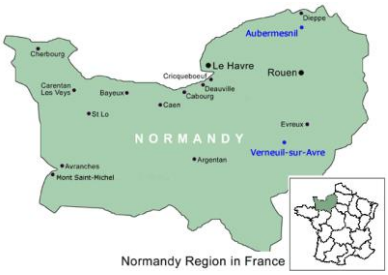
In 1922, Bruno went for a trip to Quebec with his friend living in the area, Mr. Jules St. Arnaud. This was a long trip and would take 3 days and 3 nights by train to reach Montreal from Prince Albert. On this trip, he met Bertha St. Arnaud, his friend's sister.

Bertha St. Arnauld

Bertha St. Arnaud was born in 1894 in St. Genevieve de Batiscan, Quebec. She was the tenth of a family of fourteen and was raised on a farm near this small village. The farm had been the home of 10 generations of the St. Arnaud family, and traditionally these first settlers in Quebec lived along the river which provided transportation to the 'new world' around them. She was a schoolteacher and taught for 10 years, mostly near where she lived. She decided to learn English when she first met Bruno and became a storekeeper for an English speaking family called Wheelers in Windsor Mills, Quebec: a predominantly English community. The deal was that she would teach French to the owners and their daughter, Myrna, and in return she would learn English from the owner and clients. Bertha was very adventurous and her actions proved to be an asset later in her life in Saskatchewan.

The St. Arnaud family goes back to 1661 when Paul Bertrand dit (otherwise known as) St. Arnaud born in Ste-Madeleine, Verneuil-sur-Avre, France, came to Quebec in 1687. He married Gabrielle Baribeau in 1697 and settled in Batiscan, Quebec. The couple had

seven children, two of which were sons; Paul and Jean-Baptiste. These are the ancesters of the St.Arnaud (and Bertrand) family that still resides in Batiscan, western Canada and elsewhere. Paul is the ancestor to our mother.



Normandy Region in France

Bruno and Bertha married on January 9, 1924. Bruno decided to build a new house prior to his marriage and so in 1923 a two-story house was built on the home quarter 7 miles from Domrémy. They lived in this house until their passing having raised a family of 6.

The Farm House

The Farmhouse is still standing as this is written in 2003. This house is where the Bruno Godin family consisting of 6 children, grew up and where the remainder of this story unfolds related to the life on the farm and subsequent years. The house was indeed comfortable and one of the best in the area.


Farmhouse, approx 1936

Bruno assisted by Hormidas Baribeau the foreman and Gregoire Baribeau built the house. The excavation was done using a horse scraper and by hand. Concrete was prepared using a small gasoline engine operated mixer and placed in the forms by hand using wheelbarrows.

The lumber for the house was bought in Domrémy from the North Star Lumber Company owned by Alfred Molstad. Mr. Molstad was a good friend of our father and gave the house gable "trimmings" as a gift to our dad. The original two story, three bedroom house was approximately 45ft. by 45 ft. with a cistern built as integral part of the foundation and measures approximately 8ftx8ftx8ft.

Since there was no commercial insulation available in those days, the walls were designed as follows: 2x4 framing with tarpaper, tongue and grove wood and shiplap on the outside. At the midpoint between the two faces of the 2x4, there was a lath and plaster midwall. On the inside surface of the house, the walls were simply lathed and plastered. What the above achieved was an airtight seal and indeed fairly effective insulation. It was labor intensive but labor was very inexpensive.

In 1942, an addition was made to the house that enlarged the kitchen area.

We understand from our parents that much of the furniture in the house came from early settlers (one in particular) that came from the northern states to settle in Saskatchewan

and during the depression, decided to return to the USA. Dad evidently bought a lot of furniture from this settler, as it was impractical to return to the USA with furniture.

Our father loved trees and shortly after the house was built and via consultation likely from an agricultural representative, he carefully planned the yard layout and planted an assortment of trees in and around the farmyard and garden areas. These trees were esthetically pleasing as well as offered protection from winds and snow. Trees included maples, pine, spruce, caragana, lilac, honeysuckle and others.

By 1924 the Bruno Godin homestead consisted of 12 horses and cows, pigs and chickens. Barns were built to accommodate the animals and a 200-foot deep well was drilled in 1929 complete with windmill to pump water. This well served the farm for over 60 years.

The Barns. Photo taken the summer of 2003

History

Dad told us that the 1927 crop was extremely bountiful and unfortunately, it froze and he got nothing. He claims that if the crop had harvested, he would have paid off all debts accumulated at that time.

Beginning in 1929, a 7-year worldwide depression occurred that combined drought, frost and grasshoppers and these "dirty thirties" became very difficult years for our parents. The Godin farm was somewhat self-sufficient in-as–much as food was supplied on the farm via cattle, hogs, chickens, and a big garden. We believe the depression had a profound influence on the years that followed, as there was vigilance in the way money was managed. This was understandable and perhaps attuned us all to the value of money.

Although Bruno inevitably had some debts, he and Bertha were good managers and in 1947 all debts were paid off: a real accomplishment.

In the years that followed there were 7 children born to Bruno and Bertha. These were: Armande born in 1924, Claire born in 1926, Marie born in 1928 (died at birth), Raymond born in 1930, Laurent born in 1932, Helene born in 1934 and Rene born in 1936.

Starting in 1948 our father agreed to expand the farm, as his family was growing up and better equipment was becoming available. As the years passed, the farm was gradually increased in size from the original 320 acres to 2000 acres.

Laurent, Rene and Raymond

Management of the farm was really taken over by Raymond and Laurent in 1950. The farm became a modern 'going concern' to the point that in 1972 they purchased not only up to date equipment and vehicles but a 4 seat aircraft for pleasure and occasionally for business: something that was only a 'dream' a few years before.

Life on the Farm

Our father and mother were very supportive of their children. They always provided well for us and encouraged all education programs. They participated in school events and took good care of our medical and social needs. Our parents began to travel in the mid 1950's and indeed enjoyed several trips to the southern USA with members of the family and made trips to Quebec to visit relatives. These were happy periods for them and the payback for years of hard work and sacrifices.

As modern equipment, appliances and technological advancements became available our parents were anxious to buy them and thus enhanced their and our standard of living.

It is difficult to span some 60 years in general terms so we herewith deal with specific areas or events to properly and more succinctly describe how we lived in this era.

Food

There were no refrigerators available on the farm until 1950 when we purchased a 32-volt power plant exclusively for household use. Prior to this, the only form of refrigeration was an icehouse.

The icehouse was located adjacent to the house, was a cribbed 'pit' 20 feet deep with a three walled "hut" over the opening. In winter the pit was filled with water and inevitably it froze to ice. A pulley system handled a large box-containing foodstuff to be chilled on the ice below and sometimes we would use a long pole with a hook attached to the end to retrieve items like cans of milk or cream.

Living on a mixed farm from the 1920's to the 1960's we became very self-sufficient related to food supply. Cows supplied milk, cream, butter and beef. Chickens supplied eggs and meat. Turkeys, lamb and hogs supplied additional meat.

The whole family would participate in the planting; cleaning and harvesting vegetables and supplied fresh vegetables all summer. Every fall, we would gather corn, peas, tomatoes; beans, beets, cucumbers and mother would can these in one quart and two quart jars. Similarly, they would buy large crates of peaches and pears and these would be canned for conservation. Strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and Saskatoons would likewise be canned and would provide food throughout the winter. Meat products like chicken, and veal would also be canned. The canning process was basically sterilizing glass jars in hot water, placing the cooked food in the sterile jars and sealing them after boiling for several hours immersed in water.

Carrots were canned but also placed in a sandbox in the basement of the house and preserved quite well for several months. Potatoes were plentiful and stored in a cool place in the basement that was satisfactory storage all winter.


Bruno in the garden

Our father had a particular interest in fruit trees. He occasionally sought consultation from Dr. Seager Wheeler who lived near the community of Rosthern, for the selection of different fruit trees that could produce fruit. He had success with several varieties and indeed we reaped plums, apples, and crabapples.

In the 1940's we would probably not see the need to shop in town for one or two weeks or more due to the self-sufficiency of food supply from the farm. The only things that needed to be outsourced were such things as sugar, flour, coffee, cereal and fruit. Flour was often obtained by having wheat ground into flour at a mill in Prince Albert.

In the winter, a fish salesman would come to the farms to sell frozen fish. These were often stored within the grain in the grain bin to keep them frozen and away from cats and dogs or other predators.

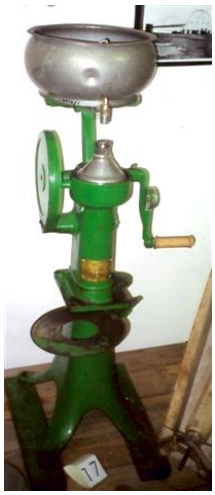
We would butcher a 3-year-old steer, one or two hogs and several chickens each year for fresh meat. In the winter keeping meat frozen was not a problem. Starting in approximately 1950, the village of St Louis had cold storage facilities and fresh meat was delivered there for deep freezing. Once permanent power became available in 1954 deep freezing was accomplished on the farm for all meat and vegetables.

If mother needed a chicken for dinner she would simply ask one of us to kill one. We would usually shoot the chicken with a 22-caliber rifle, then cut off its head, allow it to bleed and feather it immediately.

We had a ‘smoke house’, which was used for smoking slabs of pork to make bacon. The pork was packed in brine until the pork was imbibed prior to smoking. The smoke house consisted of a circular structure approximately 4 ft. in diameter and 6 ft. tall. It had a metal bar near the top where we would hang slabs of salted pork and we would light a fire inside the structure, control the air and thus creating heat plus smoke and after several days in this ‘smoke house’ we would produce bacon. In the later years, curing and then smoking bacon was done commercially and assisted by injecting certain ingredients in the meat to give it the ‘smoke’ taste.

When we butchered pigs, the blood was saved, spices added and this was made into very good blood sausage.

We would milk the cows twice a day. First milking was before going to school at approximately 7 am, and the second milking was at 9 pm. Cows were milked by hand and the milk brought to the house where it was put into a ‘cream separator’ reservoir. We would turn the separator handle and this would activate the spinning of stacked discs. The centrifugal force would separate the cream from the milk: each coming out of their respective spouts. Mother would clean this equipment very well between milking to prevent bacterial growth. Milk and cream were never pasteurized and never caused any health problems.



A Cream Separator

About once every month there was a need to make butter. We would put the sour cream in the ‘butter churn’, agitate the cream by turning a crank connected to an agitator and eventually create butter. This raw butter was placed in one-pound wooden forms for immediate use, storage or sold. The liquid left in the butter churn after making butter was ‘buttermilk’ and this was often used to make pancakes and other uses. Very little was wasted.

The Butter Churn

In the fall of the year, we would pick Saskatoon berries and mother would make Saskatoon pies and sometimes mix Saskatoons with strawberries or raspberries and make excellent desserts. We habitually would put cream on these desserts to add flavor.

Mother would bake bread every week and the smell and taste of fresh bread was exceptional. We remember that we would eat fresh bread with peanut butter and honey and this was a real treat.

During the Second World War food was rationed. Each family would receive ration coupons and this was to control the consumption of sugar, coffee, tea and other basic foods. We decided to produce our own honey to supplement sugar consumption. Raymond became the “beekeeper” and we shared a honey extracting equipment. We would produce more honey than we could consume and some was sold locally.

The Ice Cream Maker

Occasionally, we would make ice cream. This consisted of crushing ice from the ice house, adding salt and placing it around a gallon can and twisting the can back and forth until the cream inside froze into ice cream. The content of the ice cream was indeed real cream, sugar and vanilla or other flavoring. We then purchased an ice cream maker with a "handle" that rotated the ice cream container.

Later years with the advent of electricity and refrigeration, ice cream was bought ready-made.

Sometimes our parents would make special food for special events. They always made a Christmas fruitcake from all the basic ingredients and mother would sometimes add liquor. At Easter, mother would poach eggs in maple syrup. Dad liked suet pie. This was made by adding pieces of beef suet in a piecrust and to this was added brown sugar, vinegar and cooked until crisp. It was good but very high in fat and cholesterol. Mother would also make "tourtières". This was meat pie usually made from a mixture of ground beef and ground pork. It was spiced with a variety of spices and sometimes she would add mashed potatoes. It was always delicious.

Our parents would sometimes make cottage cheese. The process was to accumulate skim milk and let it slowly heat for days until the milk curdled. The milk curds were separated from the whey by squeezing out the liquid using cheesecloth. Sour cream, salt and pepper were added for taste and the cheese was ready to eat. Hard cheese was made in a similar manner except rennet was added to the milk curd and this caused the whole to solidify. It was then cooked for a certain length of time and drained. This cheese was then placed in a wood 'press' and the remaining liquid 'squeezed' out. The cheese was then wrapped in cheesecloth and dipped in wax and stored for several days or weeks for curing.

Our parents would make 'head cheese' by boiling a pigs head for several hours and then discarding the skin and other inedible parts, adding spices and putting the 'mash' in suitable containers where it would gel. The head cheese was excellent tasting.

Sometimes they would make sausages by grinding meat using a hand cranked meat grinder and with a special adapter, would place the sausage casings over this attachment and by turning the crank, (a screw) the casing would fill up with meat. The sausage membrane used was actual pork intestines that were turned inside out and very well cleaned and washed. Commercial membranes were later obtained.

Before 1935, it was quite common for farmers in the area to haul 60 bushels of wheat to Prince Albert using a team of horses to have the wheat ground into flour. Since Prince Albert was 35 miles away, with no roads, it could not be done in one day so the farmers would stop half way, set up an overnight camp and continue the journey the next day.

Before electricity, to make toast for breakfast, we had a 'toaster' made out of wire mesh, which took two pieces of bread. We would take a cover off one of the stove 'rings' and

put the bread in the toaster right on the flames from the wood burning in the stove. It was really quite effective.

Animals

Baby animals such as lambs and pigs born early spring would sometimes be brought the house where it was warm. Helene was particularly attentive to them and would sometimes feed them milk from a bottle equipped with a nipple. We would have them stay in a corner of the kitchen and have them sleep on a blanket. In the spring our father would also buy young chicks from the chicken hatchery in Prince Albert and we would keep them in the house for a few days until brought to the chicken coop. Inevitably, they would grow up and eventually lay eggs and someday became our chicken dinner.

Rene and Helene

Helene had a pet chicken called "choit" that she would feed every day at the steps of the house. She was very disappointed when she found out it would have to be killed for food. Likewise, she had a pet calf and lamb that Dad warned her that someday these animals would be slaughtered or sold.

Laurent

In 1955, it was decided that it would be more practical to get rid of the farm livestock and concentrate on grain-growing activities. The only caveat was that a few years later Raymond and Laurent set up a large modern hog operation and cattle feed lot company exclusively to find a means of getting rid of excess grain. When grain sales became available, the cattle and hog operation was discontinued.

Transportation

The first automobile in the Bruno Godin family was our father's 1918 McLaughlin.

The first car that we can remember was our father's 1927 Chrysler as it was used from 1927 to 1947. This vehicle had a 4-cylinder engine with real leather seats. It became a treat and distraction from the monotony of farm life to take trips to town in this car and a trip to Prince Albert, 35 miles away was considered an all-day event. The roads to Prince Albert were gravel, often rough and one would likely not drive faster than 40 miles per hour.

The 1927 Chrysler

The three miles from the farm to the gravel roads were dirt and if one was caught in a rainstorm, the dirt roads became a real challenge. Many times the car would skid from side to side due to a slippery surface, which sometimes necessitated the installation of chains on the rear tires to enable us to reach the farm. It was a relief to arrive home after these tense moments.

In winter, there were many periods of time that the roads were impassible due to snowdrifts. Often, the roads were abandoned and vehicle traffic was diverted to the fields where the snow was less deep. When the roads became impassible, some of us went to the village of Domrémy and would ski the 7 miles to get mail and certain staple food products.

As the years went by, several things occurred to greatly improve transportation. The main highway to Prince Albert was paved and the 1927 Chrysler was traded in for a 1941 Plymouth. In 1970, the 3 miles of dirt road was built up and graveled thus making it an all-weather road.

The other vehicle that we remember was a 1927 truck that our dad had bought from a Mr. Joe Lynn. The latter had a transport company that delivered goods primarily from Domrémy to Prince Albert. The truck was used to haul grain to Domrémy and animals to the market in Prince Albert. One significant feature about this truck was that it had no heater. To keep warm in winter, engine heat was directed into the cab by an 8" diameter hole cut through the firewall (metal separating the cab from the engine).

In about 1941, the truck was sold to the Heroux Brothers. A few years later, it was replaced with a 1941 International ¾ ton truck that was replaced in 1954 by a brand new one ton Fargo.

In subsequent years cars and trucks were upgraded to larger and more modern vehicles.

Before the use of multi-grade (low viscosity) oil, heated garages and block heaters, it was not uncommon to hitch a team of horses to a vehicle to tow the vehicle so it would start.

Heating and Water Supply

The kitchen stove burnt wood and was stoked continuously in the winter months to keep the house warm and used all year to cook food. Wood was brought into the house daily in winter and stored in a 'wood box' adjacent to the stove. Helene remembers often sitting in the wood box reading a book as this spot supplied serenity and comfort.

A Wood Burning Stove

A wood/coal-burning furnace in the basement heated the main house. It would often freeze in the house during very

cold nights and comfort was to have heat re-established in the early morning. There was no thermostat to control the temperature in the house until 1950 when an oil-supplied furnace became the main house heat source.

Toilet facilities were a real problem until running water was installed in late 1940.The only toilet facilities, before indoor plumbing was an outside ‘outhouse’ or indoors ‘bucket’.

Bathing was a problem before there was shower or running water. Once a week bathing was via a tub of water heated on the kitchen stove.

A Water Pump

Water was supplied for household use from the concrete cistern built below the house. This was good drinking water and used for cooking, etc. Prior to the installation of a pressurized system, a hand pump was used to pump the water from the cistern. The cistern was filled with water from rainwater directed to the cistern via the eaves troughs. This was supplemented by adding water in the early spring when good clear water gathered in the ditches and water tank on a wagon or sleigh pulled by horses, would be filled by hand (later on with a pump and gas engine), hauled to the house and unloaded into the cistern. Since the water supply was rather minimal, we were taught to use water with discretion.

In 1978, a plastic liner was placed in the cistern since the adjacent trees had roots that began penetrating the house foundation and the cistern and it began to leak.

Water for the farm animals was supplied from a 200-foot deep well that was developed by drilling an 8” diameter hole, encased with a steel pipe and placing a 3”diameter pipe inside the casing. A pump was used to draw the water from 200 ft. below ground level powered by a windmill.

The Windmill

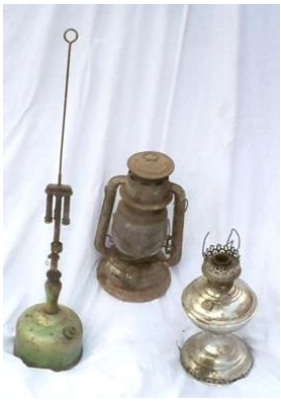
In about 1950, a separate drinking water line was installed from the permanent well to the house with a separate tap and pressure system. Today, municipally treated running water is supplied to the farm via a pipeline from a water treatment plant sourced from the Saskatchewan River.

Lights

Prior to the electricity, the only form of lighting was kerosene lamps (Aladdin and conventional), lanterns, Coleman lamps and flashlights.

Lanterns and kerosene lamps consisted of a fabric wick in a kerosene reservoir providing light with the lantern designed more ruggedly for outdoor use. Coleman lamps consisted of kerosene under pressure and atomized through two asbestos mantles. This provided a rather efficient light source.

It was not uncommon for all of us to be around the kitchen table doing homework or reading with the Coleman lamp in the middle of the table as a light source. Centralized light from a lamp or lantern would also produce "shadows" and this often scared us from venturing alone in other rooms without additional light and another person.



The Coleman, Lantern & Oil Lamp

Power Plant

In 1950, we obtained our own 32-volt power plant and this provided lights and refrigeration. It was a Wisconsin gas engine and generator set that charged 16 batteries. All of this was placed in the basement of the house and, so the engine noise would not be disturbing, the engine exhaust was directed into a drum buried outside. This plant was used 4 or 5 years –until the Saskatchewan Government supplied power.

Farm Equipment/chores

An Oil Pull Rumley

Raymond remembers dad's first tractor: an Oil Pull Rumley that operated on kerosene. The Rumley had superior pulling power –ideal for pulling tree stumps and breaking land. In 1934 the Rumley was traded in for a Model D John Deere with steel wheels and burned distillate fuel. It was used in the field quite extensively for cultivating and disking. Raymond remembers our Dad buying and driving the John Deere home from a neighbor about 5 miles north of the farm.

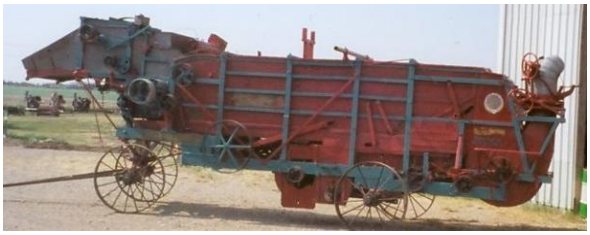
Until 1949, horses were used for some farm operation such as cutting grain, harrowing, and harvesting. In 1949 the first rubber tired tractor was bought and in subsequent years, additional tractors were purchased to accommodate the larger farming operation.

Harvesting was a real challenge and labor-intensive prior to the advent of the combine. Firstly, the crops were cut and bound in 'sheaves' with a binder that cut only a 7-foot wide swath. The sheaves were then manually piled into 'stooks' where the grain was dried and ripened. The final operation was to haul these sheaves to a thrashing machine that would separate the grain from the stalks and chaff. Raymond and Laurent would often miss a month of school in the fall to assist in the harvest. Our father would sometimes hire local Indians and Metis to assist in harvesting and they would go from farm to farm to get work. We can recall our father speaking a few words of Cree to the Indians/Metis working on the farm.

Harvest on the Godin farm

Raymond, Laurent and Rene worked on the harvesting team from age 12. Mother assisted by Claire, Armande and Helene would bring coffee and lunch to the field to feed the men during the harvesting operation. It was always a very joyful day when all was finished just before the snow fell.

In later years, the combines replaced the thrashing machine and of course this was much more efficient. Thrashing crews were made up of 9 or 10 men and they would harvest approximately 40 acres in a day. The modern combines will harvest 160 acres a day with two people.



A Thrashing Machine

The Combine

New varieties of wheat eventually came on the market that combined the advantages of being resistant to fungus, drought, rust and weak stems, but also would ripen much more rapidly and therefore had a better chance of being harvested before the frost or snowfall. Dr. Seager Wheeler of nearby Rosthern, Saskatchewan, did much of this research. He began a process of grain selection from Red Fife but it was slow ripening. He then developed Preston, Kitchener, Marquis and by mutation, Marquis 10b that became a mainstay for western farmers for years until better varieties were developed. By 1918 Mr. Wheeler won his fifth honor of "wheat king" of the world for his work in wheat strain development. With the aid of modern development methodologies, new varieties of wheat were produced successively-Thatcher, Neepawa, Katepwa and Laura. These have optimized the production of wheat in Saskatchewan. The development of grain was important to the farmers in the area. Father would sometimes get a chance to meet with Dr Wheeler in person to discuss grain selection.

Haying was done every fall. This involved cutting hay in the sloughs, edges of the fields, roadsides etc. Firstly the hay was cut with a mower (at first using horses), and then after it dried, it was raked with a horse drawn rake and put in 'piles'. With horse and racks, we would then load the rack with hay by using forks. The hay was put in haystacks behind the barns and fed to the cattle and horses in the winter. Usually hay was supplemented with crushed grain.

We remember the 4 horses that we had and used daily to clean barns and other activities mentioned above. They were called Maud, Floss, Dick and Nigger. Because we used to be around them every day, one got to know their characters and indeed they each had different personalities and idiosyncrasies.

The Horse Team

In the wintertime there was no fieldwork, but we still had to feed the animals, milk the cows and clean the barns every day. We would also gather wood. This was usually from farmland that was still being cleared. By this time, bulldozers were doing the land clearing and the trees were simply knocked down. With two teams of horses, sleighs and axes, we would cut the limbs and load the logs on the sleighs. Sometimes this was several miles from home and to keep warm for the trip, we often would run behind the sleighs. Once the hauling of logs to the farmyard was completed, we obtained a circular saw powered by a tractor and cut the logs into 16" to 18" lengths to fit the stove. When all the logs were cut to size, we would then undertake a wood splitting operation. This was simply splitting the logs in two (or four) pieces so they would fit in the kitchen stove and burn better. The boys would keep the wood box located adjacent to the stove full of wood.

Other winter chores were simply to clear the snow from the front yard for better access to the house. Other chores included the need to crush or grind grain so it would be more palatable for the animals. This was done by feeding grain in the hopper of a grain crusher that was powered by a tractor's power-take-off pulley, which turned the grinder at high speed. The grinder consisted of two serrated discs, one stationary and the other spinning, crushing the grain between these discs.

Helene

In the spring it was necessary to select and clean grain in preparation for spring seeding. This was done using grain cleaning equipment run by a gasoline engine and in later years, electric motors.

Farmland until approximately 1950 did not require fertilizer as the land was rich enough of nutrients to preclude its use. Crop rotation was practiced that involved the following: seed wheat, then the next year, seed barley or oats, and the following year, summer fallow. The latter meant not seeding anything but just keeping the weeds from growing. This practice was discontinued in approximately 1970 when continuous cropping became

prevalent whereby fields are seeded every year and fertilizers used to maintain nutrients and chemicals used to control weeds.

It was a bit ‘astounding’ that the early tractors had no mufflers and no cabs so the person operating the tractor was not only subjected to the elements of sometimes extreme cold or heat, but subject to dust and the fumes from the engine. No one wore protective equipment for the eyes and ears, something that would not be tolerated today and indeed there are incidences of hearing loss amongst the older farmers due to this.

The other activity that seems to have been rather imprudent is the use of chemicals without any protection. We would treat seed grain with mercuric oxide (to prevent diseases in the wheat) without any masks or protection. Our bodies undoubtedly absorbed some of these chemicals and compounds. There were no labels or warning about its use or if there were, they were rather obscure.

The Clamp to Repair Harness

Often in winter Father would repair horse harness and we would help him. The operation consisted of securing the part to be repaired in a wooden ‘clamp’ and repairing the un-sewn pieces with several strands of thread that were coated in tar. An awl was used to make or clear the existing hole for the threads.

Entertainment/Social Life

In the 1930’s and 1940’s there was really little to do for entertainment. We worked 7 days per week but even on Sundays, one had to milk the cows, feed the animals and clean the barns so there was not much spare time.

We used to hunt deer and ducks in the fall and crows, magpies and rabbits all year. In the winter we trapped weasels, skinned them and sold them in the marketplace. Trapping consisted of setting up spring traps at the entry of an opening made out of rocks with bait (usually rabbit meat) on the far side of the opening with the trap at the entrance. We would travel approximately 2 miles in one direction one day to be followed by 2 miles in an opposite direction the next day to check the traps.

Sometimes we would ride a 2-year-old steer as they do in rodeos and they would buck and squirm and we would see how long we could stay on them. Typically, the ram would ‘bunt’ everyone and anytime. Sometimes we would prepare a big snowball and wait for his bunt and just at the right time, we would get out of his way and let him bunt the snowball. This was similar to ‘bullfighting’ and we really got enjoyment out of this-perhaps a bit dangerous.

The Guns

The ram gave other thrills. Armande used to tell the story that when Laurent was about 6 years old, he was playing near the animal-watering trough when unexpectedly, the ram bunted Laurent and he fell into the water. Laurent evidently got out of the water so fast that his underwear did not get wet.

Dynamite was used primarily to blast large stones in the fields so they became manageable and moveable. Dynamite was easily purchased from the local hardware store until controls came into effect in the mid 1950's. For excitement, Raymond, Laurent and Rene thought of "fun" things to do with dynamite. We set a charge under a crow's nest and set off the blast when the crow was settled in the nest. We also set charges in snow banks and in water. This added some excitement to a dull Sunday afternoon.

We would sometimes play Chinese checkers, checkers, crokinole or tinker toys. We made toys like guns, cars, spinning tops, darts (using feathers for the tail) etc. by carving them out of wood. We always made slingshots from a "Y" piece of willow for the handle and elastics from car inner tubes. We became quite proficient at propelling small stones to whatever we were aiming at. If our parents had supplied us with all the toys, we would not have established as much imagination.

Television became available to us in about 1953 when we bought one of the first in the area. It had black and white video transmission and there were initially only two channels. Our favorite (and sometimes only) TV programs were: The Howdy Doody Show, the Ed Sullivan Show and even wrestling (we did not realize it was fake). Radio existed but until 1942 there was only one radio in the house. The second radio was in the 1942 Plymouth automobile. There was no rock music; this came in 1953. The only music or broadcasting were songs of the era and western music. We would listen to "The Shadow" on radio. This was a spooky story that came on frequently. Only AM broadcast existed until approximately 1960 then FM was broadcasted, and inevitably this gave us more options. We had a gramophone that played cylindrical records and this was eventually replaced by a 45-rpm record player.

Whenever there was an opportunity to go away from the farm to visit relatives or neighbors we took the opportunity to go simply for a distraction. We can recall going to uncle Telesphore's place with our parents. Although there were no children, the trip provided sufficient change to be worth it.

We were very pleased when the St.Arnaud's or Hermas Godin's visited (our cousins) as they had children about our age and this provided a welcomed distraction.

When our parents came back from shopping we would play with the cans of products they bought. It was a real thrill around Christmas time when our father would bring home such luxuries as apples, nuts, and candy.

We always spent a lot of time outdoors and indeed enjoyed the four seasons that were each very distinct in Saskatchewan and more pronounced living on a farm. In the winter, we enjoyed skiing, hunting and digging tunnels in the snow. Spring would bring life to

every corner of the farm. We would take out the rubber boots and check them for size and condition and often handed down to the younger children for size. If they leaked, we repaired them using a special repair "kit". If one was lucky enough, there were new boots. We often tested them by seeing how far one could go in the water before getting wet. It was a happy feeling to see and hear the various birds arriving from their summer homes. We would find bird nests and kept them safe. Spring brought new births of animals on the farm, which was a very exciting period.

Summer was enjoyable. We often walked in the garden, ate fresh vegetables, and admired our mother's large flowerbeds.

The fall of the year was also exciting as we had to prepare for winter. This involved gathering the garden products, canning, gathering hay for the animals, and of course the grain harvest. We often made huge pile of leaves and would roll and play in them. Even the first snow in the fall was a bit thrilling. In early winter, the ritual was again to see if last year's winter wear would fit and if not perhaps we would get new ones.

It was not uncommon for neighbors to share tools and equipment and to assist and help each other to accomplish certain farm activities. Hoof trimmers, horn cutters, wood saws, post hole diggers are but examples of shared tools. Neighbors often helped each other for butchering, sawing wood, repairing equipment, repairing wells, harvesting etc.

Our parents welcomed anyone that came to the farm and always served coffee, home baked cookies and exchanged views on various happenings in the world and local events. We would listen quietly. Our Norwegian neighbors would often come over for a visit and drink coffee-something they loved. Our parents got along well with the neighbors-particularly with the Norwegians and believe part of it was due to mutual political interests. We can recall the discussions often the hearing the world leader's names and comments related to them. These included Sigman Rhee of South Korea, Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia, Hirohito of Japan, Adolph Hitler of Germany, Benito Mussolini of Italy, Lenin Stalin and Trotsky of Russia, Chang Kaishek and Mao Tse-tung of China, Franklin Roosevelt and Truman of the USA.

During WW-II, our parents would listen to the CBC news on an old battery operated Marconi radio at 8 o'clock PM to get the latest news related to the war. We had to be quiet so as not to distract them and sometimes we were reprimanded for not keeping quiet enough. When the war was over, in 1945 we recall that there was jubilation and everyone was happy. Rationing of food was over and the threat of 'German domination' was not to be.


The Marconi Radio

Our father did not have to serve in the Second World War, nor did his brothers, due to a special exemption because they were farmers supplying food for the war effort. Uncle Hermas, dad's brother, was a WW-I veteran.

Reading books was a popular pastime and books were ordered by mail and later on, a roving public library. Raymond read extensively and probably read several hundred books on various subjects. He became a very self-educated individual.

Whenever the mail would arrive we were very anxious to see the weekly newspaper's comic section and we had to patiently wait our turn to read them. When the Eaton's and Simpson's catalogue would arrive, a new edition for fall/winter and one for spring/summer, we would review each page to see what was new and imagined what it would be like to have some items. We knew that it would not likely be possible to have many of them. The catalogue was some 400 pages and one could buy everything from made to measure suits to farm supplies. In reality looking over the catalogues was comparable to shopping today in shopping malls (slightly less vivid). We would indeed buy quite a lot of things from the Eaton's catalogue and these included winter parkas, overcoats, shirts, leather mittens, felt boots (very popular foot attire in the 1940's and 1950's), Christmas gifts, etc. These orders were placed by mail to Winnipeg, Manitoba and the mailman would deliver the parcel to the house during one of his weekly mail deliveries. It was always a very exciting moment to receive the parcel and open it up and see what was inside and to try on clothing that was bought. It often became a big decision whether or not to keep the goods or to return them. One had to assess whether the color or size or style was satisfactory and weigh this against returning the product and reordering something different.

In the summer and starting in approximately 1948, our father felt the urge to go fishing. We would go to The Heart Lakes near Waskesiu, rent a boat with engine and would fish all day Sunday. Later on, we bought our own Johnson motor and would rent a boat in the same area and fish all day. Father was always lucky in catching fish and we were pleased he did. We caught mostly northern pike and occasionally, pickerel. Mother and Armande would sometimes come with us and would have a nice lunch ready for us when we returned to shore –always proud of our catch. These were very enjoyable days and indeed memorable events.

Bruno

Claire got married on August 3, 1948 and since she was the first in our family to marry, it was a very momentous occasion for us all. We were very excited-perhaps as much as she was and the event went off very well. The priest that married them was a substitute priest probably from Quebec and he was rather poor at speaking English. We really like Mike, her husband. He's a very good husband, father and grandfather and we always enjoyed fishing and hunting with him. When Dorothy was born in 1950, she was our parents' first grandchild and our first niece. We were so thrilled to see her and watched over her constantly. Lucky for us all, Louise and then Grace followed.

Clothes

When mother was young, she worked on her 'hope chest' as was customary at the time, which consisted of making up embroidered pillowcases, centerpieces and doilies. Her masterpiece was a large linen tablecloth with much embroidery and cutwork. This tablecloth was used for all special occasions and it had special significance when her great granddaughter used it at her wedding in 2002.

Generally, where possible, clothing was handed down from older members of the family to the younger. Mother, an excellent seamstress, made most of the dresses for the girls and sometimes shirts for the men. Claire remembers the story that she made short pants and suit jacket for Raymond and Laurent from dad's old suit. The neighbors were inquisitive as to where she purchased such nice suits. It turned out that she had taken dad's wedding blue serge suit, removed all the threads on the seams and made the two small suits from the pieces.

She knitted all woolen socks, scarves and mittens and even gloves. Our parents would buy large skeins of wool and we would assist in turning these into a large 'ball' of wool. Mother then would knit every spare moment she had. Socks and mittens were repaired with a large darning needle and wool as often as practicable. Work clothes were bought from the marketplace but usually repaired and patched.

Mother would often purchase the cloth for making clothing from a Syrian Jew that would come to the farm from time to time with a team of horses pulling a galvanized covered wagon full of various cloth, buttons, trim etc. He quite often stayed overnight at the farm where he and his horses were looked after. He would then leave a small gift for the courtesy. We believe that there was an incentive to have him stay over as it provided someone to talk to and inevitably stimulating discussions would occur about politics and world events.

Mother sewed with a Singer sewing machine powered by a foot operated treadle. When electricity became available, the sewing machine was operated with an electric motor that inevitably made it more efficient.

A Singer Machine

Mother also made 'siwash' sweaters for some of us. This was made from raw wool that was obtained from shearing sheep on the farm. The wool was washed, carded and sometimes dyed. Mother would roll the raw wool into yarn suitable for knitting.

Hair Cuts

Our mother would usually cut our hair. This was done both for efficiency and likely for economic reasons. This was a bit of a ritual as she started by draping a cloth over our shoulders and for the boys; she would use scissors and a hair clipper that was manually activated. To activate the cutting mechanism, she would pull the handles together and let them go. It often 'pulled' the hair and we would squirm a bit but she persisted and really did a good job. After haircuts, the hair clipper and scissors were carefully wrapped in the special cloth and put away for next time. The scissors were never used for cutting other things − only hair!

Communication

The telephone system was organized in Domremy in 1919 but it was not until the mid to late 1920's that rural phone system was available. The original phone system was not private as there were about 8 different subscribers to one phone line. We had distinctive "rings" to phone each other. Our number was three long rings and two short rings and the "ringing" was done by turning a 'crank' on the phone. People on the same line could actually listen in on the conversations and one had to wait until the line was available to place a call if the line was occupied.

A Candlestick Telephone

Long distance phone calls were accomplished by phoning the operator in Domrémy and she (or he) would physically plug in one line to another to connect for long distance service. This continued until approximately 1955 when more modern rotary dial phones came into existence, although there was still a party line at the farm until the early 1980's. With the party line the caller would have to state their phone number at the start of the call for billing purposes ("423-5396").

In the mid 1950's when Raymond and Laurent increased the size of the farm operation, they set up a quite elaborate radio communication system tying in the home place with various tractors, trucks and cars. Our mother being at home often became the "operator" delivering messages to her sons working in the field or elsewhere. It was rather interesting to see this 65-year-old lady directing messages with modern technology.

Mail was delivered to a mailbox located on the roadside, near the house, initially once a week and later on twice a week. Delivery was by a horse drawn heated cabin (caboose) in winter and buggy in summer. Later on, delivery was by motorized vehicle and only delivered if the roads were kept open. In about 1955 home delivery was abandoned and people went to Domrémy to fetch their mail.

Medication

Medication as we know it today was obviously not available in the early years on the farm. Aspirin was available but little else. If we caught a cold we usually took nothing, but if it persisted, our father would prepare "une ponse". This was a shot of brandy in hot water and honey followed by rest and sleep and it usually worked.

In extreme chest colds, mother would make a mustard plaster. This was simply powdered mustard, mixed with hot water and maybe some flour; this was put on a cloth and then on one's chest. The idea was to keep the chest very warm and the congestion would subside.

If we had a sore throat, we were asked to gargle with salt water. Mother would tie a small "bundle" of camphor around our neck to release congestion due to colds. Drinking boiled flax was used to treat colds.

For cuts and bruises, we would put iodine or sometimes peroxide on the sore and wrap it in white cloth. The iodine really stung but we all felt it was worth it as we were told it would prevent infection. Sometimes we had cuts that really should have been stitched but we usually applied a bandage and it healed on its own.

We would apply unsalted butter on the burns and in later years, ice packs.

Goose grease was applied to sores as it was supposed to have certain healing power.

In winter, Mother would give us a tablespoon of cod liver oil each day and it really tasted bad and in due course this was replaced with cod liver capsules. The immediate taste was ok, but the aftertaste was obnoxious. The idea of the cod liver oil was to give us vitamin A and D to ward off colds and other diseases and it seemed to work.

In the 1930's doctors were hired by the municipality and paid an annual salary to serve the public.

We were all born on the farm. Mother likely had assistance from the neighbors to help with the household chores after childbirth.

The closest hospital was in Prince Albert, which was 35 miles away and perhaps an hour by car. The doctors made house calls if the problem was serious enough and if the roads were too bad for a car, sometimes they would arrive in a snowmobile. This was a machine propelled by an aircraft propeller with runners that slid on snow. The doctor would also came to the school and vaccinated the children for small pox, measles, whooping cough, and later on, for polio. In the early 1900's polio was a curse and everyone was very concerned that children would contract the disease. In 1952 the Salk polio vaccine was discovered to the big relief to everyone. Vaccination equipment was dismantled by the doctor, sterilized in a container of boiling water just prior to vaccinating. The same needle was used for all students.

We very rarely got sick and perhaps this was due to the fact that we ate good and healthy food and worked hard thereby getting good daily exercise. There were no potato chips or any "junk food" available and candies or chocolate was rare or not available during the war. The first soda pop or cola that we ever had was approximately 1948.

There was a fair bit of "quack" medicine available-medicine that would cure all ailments and little control existed by governmental authorities to prevent such medicines from the marketplace. Dad had a rheumatism machine that when hooked up to batteries would induce current through one's body by grasping a metal handle in each hand. It was not likely helpful.

Washing Clothes and Making Soap

Claire remembers the first washing machine was made of wood and a hand lever activated the agitator. There was no ringer to squeeze water from the clothes.

Later on, a gasoline engine operated washing machine was purchased. Due to the risk of carbon monoxide, the exhaust from the engine was directed outside by simply putting the exhaust pipe through one of 3 vent holes in a storm window of the house. For drying mother put the clothes, bed sheets, etc. on a clothesline outside: a daunting task when the temperature was below zero. Eventually, the frozen clothes were brought into the house for drying by placing them on temporary lines, chairs etc.

Soap was made on the farm up to approximately 1945. This was done by dissolving lye (caustic soda) in water, and then adding pork fat and ammonia. It was heated to a boil outdoors in a cast iron pot until it thickened. The mixture was then poured into a flat container and 'bars' were cut to form convenient size soap bars. This soap was used to wash clothes, dishes, etc.

The cast iron pot for making soap

Spoken Language and Religion

Since both our parents were from Quebec and their education was in French it was not illogical that they spoke only French in the home and always whenever there was no one speaking English in the circle of conversation. We therefore all spoke French as our first language. When we attended school, however, all classes were conducted in English and therefore we spoke English outside the house. Our parents were often annoyed at us if we spoke English to our siblings or to them. Today we are very pleased that they held to this as we all understand and speak French. This proves to be assets as one travels or lives or works in other parts of Canada or the world and of course permits us communicate more easily with our relatives living in Quebec.

We were raised fairly strict Roman Catholic and attended the Sunday mass regularly and all other special religious days as well as observed all the rules, and rituals associated with the church. Indeed going to church was an occasion that the whole family would dress up and meet others and became a pleasant distraction notwithstanding the spiritual benefits and fulfillment of the event. We remember the excitement of the whole family piling into the 1927 Chrysler to attend midnight mass. Upon arrival back to the farmhouse, we would have a "réveillon". This was a time for special treats and to prepare for bedtime as Christmas was the next morning! We were always excited to go to Christmas and Easter events as it presented not only a distraction but an air of excitement and special meals, and often visitors ─ up to 15 people. At Easter for example, mother would make a treat of 'poached eggs in maple syrup'. At Christmas and New years were special meals of turkey, meat pies, and of course a lot of vegetables from the fall canning and sometimes even homemade wine.

The farmhouse had an entrance on the east side, below the upstairs verandah, which led into a parlor, and in turn led into the living room. This entrance and indeed the parlor were very seldom used as people usually entered the house via the kitchen. This entrance and parlor was always used when the priest would make his annual 'visite paroisialle' or on the rare occasions of the Bishop's visit. These were special events that required the use of this special entrance.

School

Up to grade 7, we all went to Golden Rod Public School. This was a typical one-room country school and the teacher taught all grades from grade 1 to grade 7. There were some 30 students at peak all from the surrounding farming community. Until a one room cottage was built adjacent to the school, the teachers would stay near-by at the Kusch's residence.

Golden Rod School

There was a barn built near the school to accommodate 9 horses. This was necessary since approximately half the students came to school either on horseback or a horse drawn unit like a toboggan or caboose. A caboose is a homemade cabin or shelter mounted on a sleigh and pulled by horses. It had a stove and indeed provided a very comfortable means of transportation during the cold winter days.

We lived one mile from the school and walked in summer and skied in winter. We brought our lunch and eventually macaroni was cooked on a big box stove in the school basement, which was replaced by a kerosene-fueled stove, and macaroni was supplemented by soup or by cocoa.

It was not unusual for students to miss a month of school in the fall of the year to assist in the harvesting and indeed in the earlier days, the school actually opened a month late to

accommodate. While the academic standards were not as stringent as today, missing school did not appear to be a hindrance to student's careers.

The school supplies were very rudimentary and there were no laboratories and virtually no library books except a set of 'books of knowledge', a large dictionary, a globe, maps and of course large black chalkboards.

At Christmas the teacher would put on a concert for the community which included all students. This consisted of plays acted by students and a choir and, sometimes, marching drills. There was always a Santa Claus in the traditional costume who would present gifts supplied by the school unit to children up to approximately 8 years old. Our father would usually be Santa Claus and since the suit was a bit too small, dad's sweater became visible and Laurent one year identified Santa Claus as our Dad.

Our family would usually go to these Christmas events with a sleigh pulled by a team of horses. This was a big annual outing at the time.

Our sister Claire, an excellent teacher, taught at Golden Rod School in 1949/1950. There were only 5 students left including Laurent, Helene, Rene and the Hamolin girls so the school was closed. The children then went to the school in Domrémy.

At that time, when we were at Golden Rod School, there developed a problem with too many gophers. They would inevitably dig holes in the fields and pastures, which caused some danger for cattle and people but mostly they ate the grain. The municipality decided to pay a bounty of 2 cents for every gopher tail. When we caught some, we would present the tails to the schoolteacher for payment. Similarly, the crows became too numerous and a bounty was paid upon presentation of crow's legs. Crows eggs were initially accepted for payment of the bounty but discontinued due to the handling problem.

A Tribute to Our Mother, Bertha Godin (St. Arnaud)

Mother, coming out west to a new home, found it very different life than she had been accustomed to.

Our father, though, knowing she was a "city girl" had a new two-story house built and waiting for her when they arrived on the farm after they married in 1924.

In Quebec, where mother came from, had been populated for more than 300 years. They had roads, and were close to neighbors: since they lived on farms in long narrow strips along the river, they were within walking distance of neighbors. Also, the family unit was very strong and their lives followed a distinct structure. Language, religion and way of life formed their culture.

Their recreation in summer would include picnics, swimming, fishing, boating and much visiting with family and friends. Winter fun consisted of skating, parties, skiing, and snowshoeing. Christmas was a very special time-the religious celebration, visiting relatives and friends, serving their special foods, etc.

The "sugaring off" in March when the maple trees were tapped for making maple syrup was a fun time and included neighbors-young and old. As a young woman, mother and/or family or friends, would go shopping in the cities of Quebec or Montreal. She also told us about taking a train to New York to go shopping. Mother taught school for several years before she married. Most of her teaching was on the opposite shore of the Batiscan River, which she crossed by boat when possible.

Coming "out west" certainly must have been a "culture shock" for mother. She faced wide open spaces, much land not even cleared of trees, few roads (mostly prairie trails), neighbors far away and an entirely different way of life combined with a language difference. She did learn some English by working at a store in Windsor Mills, in the eastern townships of Quebec. Going to church in Domrémy where most everyone spoke French must have made her feel at home.

Agriculture out west was much different than what she had known in Quebec. Harvest was hard work for the men, but also for her. She knew nothing of having to cook for harvest crews of 12 men or more making huge meals, serving mid-morning and mid-afternoon lunches, which consisted of a large dishpan sized container of sandwiches and a large cake and cookies which would soon disappear. Jugs of coffee and water had to be supplied. One must also remember that those sandwiches were made of bread, which she had to bake, and butter, which she had to churn: the meat to fill them probably consisted of slices of the roast beef, roast pork or ham they had cured. Bread was baked every other day, as were deserts such as pies, cakes and cookies needed to feed so many men.

As her family grew, her workload did not diminish. She cooked, cleaned the house, knitted, mended and sewed clothing, washed and pressed clothing besides other chores such as making butter and the daily cleaning of the cream separator. In the fall, canning of vegetables, fruit and meat was a big undertaking. The above work was made more difficult before the advent of electricity in early 1950. There was only an "ice house" for refrigeration, no convenient lighting, wood burning stove, hand, then gas motor driven clothes washer and no clothes dryer. Mother's house was "her domain" and she managed it well with rudimentary facilities and supplies.

We know she was lonely at times and particularly at events such as Easter and Christmas- as she felt the isolation of the farm and transportation by horse and sleigh was difficult. She enjoyed visiting her sister, Clemence Veillet and family who farmed in the Wakaw area (and later moved to Prince Albert), and her brother Jules and sister-in-law Jeanette that lived on a farm near Hoey not far away. During their visit, they would share news from relatives and friends from Quebec, which brought a great deal of satisfaction to our mother.

Our mother's mother (our grandmother) visited mother in 1926 after Claire was born. This was indeed a very moving event for our mother. Later years, two of mother brothers came together for a visit followed by nieces and nephews and her sister, Sister Emilienne (a nun).

Difficult and sad moments for our mother were when her parents died and her sister Therese died giving birth. Mother was unable to go to the funeral likely due to her commitments at home, poor transportation and perhaps the cost of the trip.

In 1947, mother, dad and aunt Clemence went east to visit with family and friends. This was their first trip after 23 years. She happily relived the memories of the trip for several years and indeed returned to Quebec often in later years.

Mother never learned to drive a car, therefore was dependent on others to take her anywhere. Yet, she never came across as a "dependent" person. She had dignity and a sense of independence about her. She kept up to date on world affairs and always gave her views in a confident, logical manner. She was disciplined in the sense that somehow she made us know what was right and expected us to live by that code.

Mother was indeed a valiant woman! This tribute to her is much deserved.

Brief Summary Of Technological Developments And When They Occurred In Our Life Time

We were in our late teens when:
-FM radio was invented or broadcast
-Automobiles had automatic transmissions.
-We had our first carbonated drinks
-Radios became available in automobiles
-TV was first available
-Movie pictures were available in the village.
-Mail was delivered to our mailbox twice a week
-We flew in an airplane for the first time and were excited about it
-We had thermostat control to heat the house
-We had running water and flush toilets in the house
-The kitchen stove was not wood burning but propane gas
-We had electricity and all its conveniences like refrigeration (our own power plant)

WE were 30 to 40 years old when:
-We had enclosed cabs on farm equipment
-We bought milk, eggs, meat etc. from stores
-We took vacations
-We bought new clothing instead of repairing them
-We bought new cars every years or so
-We started buying luxury items like stereo equipment
-We ate at restaurants more often

We were 50 to 60 years old when:
-We had more than one car
-We had more than one TV
-We had our personal computer(s), fax machines, printers and scanners.
-We had cell phones
-We hired professional investors and accountants
-We traveled for vacations and found flying boring
-We bought CD players and high-powered speakers
-We spent on amusements.
-Cabs in farm equipment were air-conditioned.

What Happened to Us All as Years Went By?

Father passed away on October 21, 1971 at the age of 82. Mother passed away on July 31, 1980 at the age of 86. Both our parents were gone and the end of an era and a generation in the history of this branch of the Godin Family. Their life spanned over three quarters of a century and at the beginning of their career, saw the "Raw Canadian West" with no road, no motorized vehicles, no phones, and very little physical possessions. They raised six children and worked very hard to feed and educate us all. They left a legacy of warmth and taught us the virtues of honesty, intellectual stimulation, the value of money, consideration for others and much more. Mother brought dignity and class to the union. Dad instilled integrity and how to live responsibly. Through this they managed to constantly keep up with technology as it became available. This provided them as well as their family with added comfort and well-being.

We inevitably wish that they were still here to see what we accomplished with their guidance and perhaps more importantly to see their great and great-great grandchildren.

Armande - After completing her schooling at Golden Rod, went on to obtain her ARLT from The Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto. She taught music in Wakaw from 1951 to her retirement in 1984. She was a very proficient teacher and taught many students in the area. Armande helped a lot on the farm with all household duties starting when she was young.

Claire (Kowalyshyn)- After attending Golden Rod School, Claire completed her education by correspondence. She attended school in Prince Albert and then the Teachers College in Saskatoon. (It was then called Normal School). She became a very accomplished teacher beginning at 17 years old and taught for some 18 years in various locations in Saskatchewan. Claire worked very hard on the farm helping mother look after her younger brothers and sister and the regular daily chores. Claire married Michel Kowalyahyn in 1948. They have three children: Dorothy, Louise and Grace.

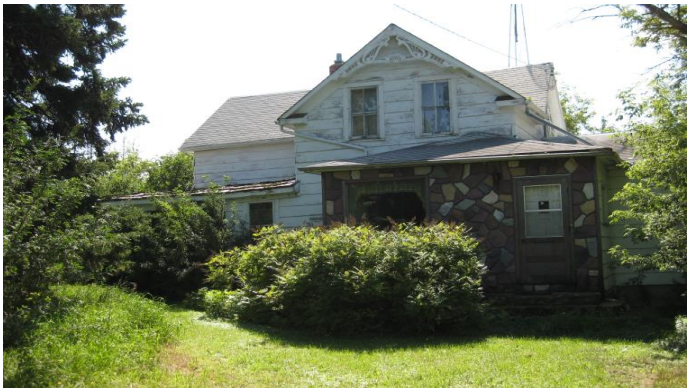
Claire and her husband Michael retired in 1979, after Michael spent 29 years as an employee of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

Raymond - After completing his education in Golden Rod School and College Mathieu in Gravelbourg, he remained on the farm and assisted in its management. Raymond always excelled in determining the complex workings of mechanical equipment and how to fix them. He became a very knowledgeable and self-taught individual. This was accomplished by extensive reading of a multitude of subjects. Raymond married Virginia Howerton in 1980. They have a son Thomas that resides in the USA.

Laurent (a.k.a Lawrence)- After attending Golden Rod School, he finished High School in Domrémy. He decided to remain on the farm and assisted in its management. Lawrence married Luisa Santos in 1981. He was elected reeve of the municipality in 1979 and continued until his retirement in 2000. Most of his terms were by acclamation. Lawrence also served on the board of Norac Systems International and became president of Norac for a period of time. He was very active on the boards of other organizations as his ability to organize and to administer is noteworthy; an asset to the community and the companies he was involved in.

Raymond and Laurent worked hard and managed well to expand the farm to an efficient and successful business operation. They saw the farm grow from horses to modern, efficient air-conditioned equipment. There was a great deal of synergy in their working relationship. Raymond and Laurent retired in 1995. They lived near the original farmhouse and rented out their farmland for several years.

The farmhouse build by Bruno, and the homeland, were sold. In 2012 the Gaudet family from Bellevue purchased the original home quarter following Laurence's full retirement.



Farmhouse in 2012

Helene - like all of us, she attended Golden Rod School and continued her education in Domrémy. After graduation, she attended a secretarial school in Saskatoon. She worked in Saskatoon for a year and then Edmonton for 10 years. She excelled in her work as a reliable, sincere corporate employee. She married Gene Dizy in 1963. They have 3 children: Ron, Carol and Leanne.
Helene and Gene retired in 1987. Gene had a long and distinguished career with Esso.

Rene - Went to Golden Rod School and high school in Domrémy. He obtained a BSc in Mechanical Engineering in 1959 at the University of Saskatchewan. He married Irene Constantin in 1964. Rene worked his way up in the organization to become President and CEO of Canatom Inc.- an engineering and construction company that specialized in Nuclear Power. He retired in 2001 after spending the last 15 years in Montreal, and 8 years off shore. Rene and Irene moved to Calgary in 2001. He served on the Board of Directors of several companies. They have 2 children, Paul and Marc.

Closing Remarks

The Godin Family Historical background will hopefully provide the readers with a perspective of life was in the early 1900's to 1960's. Indeed this was typical of the era. It also shows how the "family unit" in that period operated as a unique and distinct entity whereby all members of the family participated in activities, all shared in work, all went to events together and all found a way to occupy the time available without the use of modern technology that consume our time today.

Acknowledgement

Rene's brothers and sisters acknowledge his initiative and effort in preparing the "Family Historical Document". "The written history of the way of life on the farm and reprinting the old family photos is very valuable and enjoyed by each one of us as it will be by future generations."

Rene acknowledges the pleasure of reliving the events of our life and those of our parents beginning 60 years ago and the input and contribution by all family members to the document making it more complete.

The gathering, scanning, identification, sorting by year and printing of some 400 old family photographs that date back to 1878 required a lot of patience and hard work but are available to those that request them. Please contact the author of this document.

Corrections, Additions

Anyone noting any errors or omissions to this document is kindly asked to contact Rene Godin and changes will be made without delay.
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This document was edited for clarity and privacy. Contact prgodin@gmail.com should you require more information.