

Jean Anne Blaney McWilliam McDonald (1877-1969)

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Blaney Family – Background

Being Irish, there is always the penchant for enriching stories and extending some small issues to make them large, or making mountains out of molehills. This story will attempt to give an honest and direct assessment and try to address truth for truth's sake but being Irish, I will attempt to limit any conjecturing or hyperbole, and remain content with presenting the truth.

Jean Blaney was born December 19, 1877 at Waterside on Ayr, Ayrshire county, Scotland, of Irish parents. Jean Blaney was likely a highly intelligent child and what people refer to as precocious. She no doubt asked her parents (in particular her father – he was her pride) many stories about the family and its past, and retained what she had heard religiously. I am not going on record to say all the family stories are completely historically correct but when one looks at the record objectively, a person can not help but marvel that some of these old Irish stories make sense.

Case in Point: Jean stated that there had been past trouble in the family and that there was a curse put on the family. There was rumour of a diamond in the family's possession that was forfeited in London for settling a debt, perhaps for gambling. This account would have the Blaney family residing at Blaneycastle [Blayney Castle], County Monaghan, Ireland until the mid-19th century, then the property was turned over to the Hope family for which the Hope Diamond is named. How did the Hope Diamond come into their possession? Was it to settle a London gambling debt owed by a member of the Blaney family?

Subsequent to this, the land at Castleblaney [Blayney Castle] and estate was lost, and there was a battle on the Irish Sea; the Blaneys were dispersed. They were mostly driven to Scotland but other family members resided in County Antrim, perhaps near the Giant's Causeway. Later, Jean McWilliam became a giant in Calgary Labour, so perhaps there is some element of truth in either or both accounts.

However, whether it was the loss of the Hope Diamond and land estate in County Monaghan or alternatively being from the peak on the Giant's Causeway at Antrim, Jean Blaney was convinced there had been a curse put on her family as a result of past behavior and even the family coat of arms has three horseshoes pointing downward, meaning luck is running out. Pointing upward, these three cups would be capturing luck and happiness and of course good fortune.

Blaney Family: From the peak and zenith to the nadir. The particular case for the latter is that majestic ship *Titanic* (it was stated that God could not sink this ship) on its maiden voyage. The last stoker to board the *Titanic* was an experienced man who was to have waited for another later scheduled ship to cross the Atlantic but he impulsively jumped the queue, got aboard the *Titanic*, and perished with its sinking – his name was James Blaney.

Stories Retold – Jean McWilliam McDonald

Mac (her husband William Alex McDonald, whom she had married in 1937) died in 1948, and according to my mother, Jean never really got over it. Just prior to his death, Jean McDonald was awoken to what she thought was a cat screeching but once fully awake and cognizant, realized it was Mac; his breathing was labored and his wheezing was similar to the sound a cat makes while pleading.

After her husband's death, Jean McDonald developed a habit most people used to acquire in their latter teens – smoking. Jean McDonald began smoking at 71 years of age and she continued smoking until she entered the Good Samaritan Nursing Home in Edmonton in 1962 and did not smoke again either at Calgary's Bethany Old Folks Residence from August 1965 to March 1968, or later at the Brentwood Nursing Home from March 1968 to her death on August 15, 1969. However, it was also the case that when Jean McDonald began smoking, it was not a light cigarette such as Belvedere or Matinee, or those heavier men cigarettes like Buckingham, Export A, or Players that she chose, but a REAL cigarette – Kool Menthol. These cigarettes were strong and my earliest remembrances of 313 15 Ave SE, Calgary, where she lived involved opening the front door and being met with the strong aroma of Kool Menthol cigarettes. She had an assortment of ashtrays resembling little cups made of porcelain and they were located in the front living room, the centre sitting room with fireplace and hearth, and even an ashtray in the kitchen. For emergency sake, she had an ashtray in the main bedroom off the kitchen. She stated that smoking gave her a daily reason to leave her house and converse with [Nathan] Sanofsky, the local grocer and proprietor whose Pleasant Confectionery was located at 2 St East between 17 and 15 Avenues. She enjoyed her cigarettes; she only smoked Kool Menthols and they were strong.

Smoking Has its Positive Aspects – Believe Jean McDonald

Jean had likely just run out of cigarettes one day in July 1957 – it was a great Calgary blue sky Monday. The Calgary Stampede had just begun. No doubt the earlier morning parade was a memorable event, featuring marching bands like the Calgary Police's Bagpipe and Drum Band, and no doubt there were several floats, more marching bands, a Stampede Queen, the Mayor (who at that time must have been Don Mackay) and several others riding horses (both cowboys and Indians) and everyone in a most festive mood.

Late that afternoon Jean McDonald ran out of cigarettes and as Mrs. May Barber, her helper, was not present to dash to Sanofsky's, located next to Crown Cabs and Pete's Popcorn, Jean McDonald headed out to walk to Sanofsky's and get her Kool Menthols first hand. Jean purchased her cigarettes (perhaps a couple of packs, it being Stampede week) and coming home, decided to check out the Stampede Grounds Main Entrance at 17 Ave and then take a stroll down 17 Ave to 3rd Street East. She walked to 3rd St and something was not right. She attentively crossed the avenue and checked out things further. A couple of men were motioning cars to enter a parking lot and collecting what appeared to be dollar bills.

Jean then hustled home to 15th Avenue and before she could fire up a Kool Menthol, she lifted her phone receiver and frantically started dialing. The call was placed and a voice comes on the line saying "Howdy City of Calgary Police. Good afternoon Yahoo! and how might we help you today?"

"Yes, this is Jean McDonald and I am red hot. Since when are the Victoria Park children losing their playground so cars can occupy where they should be playing on the swings, monkey bars and teeter totters? These kids need a place to play all summer and the Stampede Board has no right to take City of Calgary property paid for by Calgary taxpayers such as you and I to be a revenue generator, even if it is the supposed Greatest Show on Earth!"

Voice: "Oh Mrs. McDonald, I sure agree with you and will send someone over immediately to check out matters. Trust me."

One hour later there was a constable at the front door, introducing himself. He stated that all cars parked in the playground had a notice that they were not to park in this lot again, and should they try, a fine would be levied. Likewise, the two gentlemen collecting the dollar fee parking charge were placing the warnings on the car windshields and they knew they were to refrain from allowing any more parking. The police would return on the hour until all cars were out, and then close and reset the playground fence, securing it.

The next day, Jean McDonald took a mid-morning stroll to the Victoria Park Playground and saw many children playing in the area which just the prior evening had been a parking lot earning revenue. Jean McDonald likely then returned home and lit up a Kool Menthol, thinking that without those cigarettes, those kids would be stuck home for a week! For certain, Mrs. Barber phoned Mollie La France long distance in Edmonton and could hardly tell the story for laughing! Who says smoking doesn't have short term benefits?

Jean McWilliam Never Drank

Usually they are twins, the habits of smoking and drinking. A person who smokes is likely to drink but in Jean McWilliam McDonald's case, it was no smoking until 71 years of age and no drinking alcohol ever. She was adamant about not drinking but her second husband Mac (Alex McDonald) loved nothing more than a drink and a laugh, and although his better half might be upset seeing Mac have a drink, she never scolded him publicly and actually enjoyed how Mac was very witty. The beverages fueled more stories and jokes, making him a real personality.

Total Abstainer

Jean had her own reasons for not drinking. It went back to the time of her mother's death and this particular period was to affect her for her remaining life.

Her autobiography states that she had a hard childhood and this began when she was 8 years of age. Jean was very fond of her father and states in her autobiography that this daughter-father relationship was very close; she idolized her father. John Blaney was an ironworker at Damellington Iron Works and was likewise respected by his fellow workers; when these workers (their hours of work and working conditions were inhuman) formed a union, John Blaney became its leader and was the individual responsible for calling the Strike at Dalmellington in 1886.

The strike was long and during this time union organizer Keir Hardie arrived on the scene from Edinburgh to encourage these men to continue their strike, but once it entered its third month, it was clear there was no intention by management to improve working conditions or increase pay. John Blaney was concerned that these men were becoming restless, irritated and arguing amongst themselves if the strike was worth the effort when if they returned to work, they would at least be earning an income.

After one union assembly and meeting for rallying these men, John Blaney returned home to the long row of houses where the family dwelt. His spouse Clara was in the process of winding up the clock situated high on the wall and this height required her to use a stool for reaching the windup mechanism. John Blaney wanted to discuss the events of that day's meeting and daughter Jean Anne was home and in the process of setting the table for supper. John was talking to his spouse but she had her back to him and in order to have her face him and discuss the issue, John took a small tin cup from the table and with an underhand pitch, struck the wall next to where Clare Blaney was winding up the clock and not aware the cup was being flung.

However, when the small tin cup struck the wall, she jumped in alarm, fell backwards, struck her head, and went into unconsciousness. John Blaney then tended to Clara and ordered his daughter to get moving as fast as she could get to the church to fetch the priest for the Extreme Unction. About the time that she was leaving their house, her two older sisters (they were partially blind and nearly deaf) were arriving from their menial jobs at the local mill but Jean was on her way to the local parish which was a

couple of kilometers away.

She got there in record time and knocked on the church door. Father Lynch opened the door and Jean Anne stated “Father, please come. Mother has had an accident and is in very bad condition and she needs Extreme Unction (the last rites). Father Lynch immediately knew she was John Blaney’s daughter and then he countered her with the following:

”Is your father at home?”

Jean replied, “Yes, Father is home.”

“Has your father been drinking?”

Jean replied again, “Yes but he is not drunk - “

Father Lynch then stated that he had better things to tend to that particular evening and closed the rectory door. Lynch was related to mill owners but how was a good question. Jean Anne walked back home alone and her father was upset the priest was not present and then they sat the night, waiting. The next morning, Clare Blaney died and the long night vigil held by Jean, her two older sisters and father came to its conclusion. It was 1886 and Jean was only eight years old. But they had waited all that time, from supper hour of the evening before until 6 AM the next day, and the Devil had not arrived for her mother’s soul. This was very meaningful to young Jean, and from that moment forward Jean Blaney had no use for any organized religion. It was no consolation to her when her father died two years later, nor when it was decided that her sisters were not able to care for her. This challenging childhood led to her social activism; the more she saw of the unjust conditions under which women, children, and the poor struggled, the more committed her activism became.

Although she had no use for any organized religion, she was extremely spiritual and knew the contents of both the Old and New Testament. She went directly to “Headquarters” when she encountered problems and knew that her God was All Being and that his only Son was sent but we crucified Him and mankind continues killing Him each day when one person exploits another. This was her faith, to act on life’s injustices and bring relief to the poor, elderly, and infirm. The orphan, widow, and widower were to be comforted and her many lifelong campaigns were on behalf of those who could not or would not speak out injustices. She became their vanguard.

Exceptions to the Rule at Large

Earlier I stated that Jean McWilliam never drank alcohol but in all fairness and truth, I must confess to the reader that Jean McWilliam did drink a better part of a bottle of whiskey when her daughter Mollie (her actual name was Mary Jane) was 7 years old,

so circa 1912. The next morning that she summoned Mollie to ask "Tell me what you thought of me last night." Mollie refused to answer. Again Jean McWilliam asked her daughter Mollie to tell her what she thought of her mother the previous evening. Again, no answer. Jean then asked Mollie if she liked how her mother was, and wanted the truth.

Mollie replied, "I was scared of you!"

Jean Anne then thanked Mollie and replied, "I simply wanted to know how others would see me but I will now promise you, Mollie – your mother will never drink again." And that was it. Jean McWilliam never imbibed from that time forward and frowned on anyone making a fool of themselves drinking.

Another Exception of the Rule of Abstinence

This earlier time was on occasion of travelling from Montreal to Ontario and a tipsy Scot spied Jean Anne and her two children in the train station. Seeing her burdened, the Scot suggested a tiny sip would give her some long deserved comfort and again she obliged. But apart from these two experiences, she was an abstainer.

The Caller – A Racist

Mollie McWilliam's job at 313 15 Ave SE, Calgary, during her elementary and junior high school days at Victoria Park School (located at 12 Avenue and between 2nd and 3rd St. SE), was to clean the front hall at the main front door facing 15th Avenue and likewise, the upstairs staircase leading to the second floor on the east side of 313 from the side door entrance to the second floor where her tenants resided.

However, Mollie was eight years old (this was about 1913) when one Saturday, she was cleaning the front door hallway. Someone knocked on the front door. Mollie then glanced up, and noticed a man at the front door. She rose to meet him and she noted this man was carrying a long script of paper.

Mollie then approached the front screen door and the caller asked if her dad or mother was at home and if they were, could they please come immediately to the front door. Mollie stated her mother was home and that she would have her come to the front door and then she retreated into the house where Mrs. McWilliam was in the midst of baking. Mollie told her mother that there was a man of importance at the front door and that he wanted to speak with either her father or mother and it must be quite important because he was attired in a suit and was likewise carrying a long piece of paper and there were many names on this paper.

Mrs. McWilliam was in the midst of rolling dough but nevertheless stopped, dusted off the flour, and went to the front door, with Mollie faithfully following her mother to

see first hand what this call was all about. Mrs. McWilliam arrived at the front door and asked what the intentions of the caller were. The response was as follows:

"Yes, good day, ma'am. I am here with a 'Petition to Remove the Coloreds' from the Victoria Park Community and am hoping that you will oblige in signing this prepared petition."

Jean McWilliam opened the front door to meet this man face to face and Mollie assumed her mother was going to oblige and sign this important document. However, once Jean McWilliam was outside facing this man, her anger was suddenly in high gear and her hostile response including some straightforward salty language was as follows:

"You can put a N***** in the house on my right and you can put a C***** in the house on my left and we'll get along a lot better than if you remain on my porch for another second. So take your petition and git!" and she meant business.

Mollie now ran to the front door and Jean was pointing and directing the Petition Man – he was going to head right and continue down 15 Ave but Jean yelled again "Go back to Second East and don't show your face around here again!" Mollie could feel her mother's anger and when Mrs. McWilliam re-entered the house, she went straight for the telephone and placed a call to the Calgary Police Station on Seventh Avenue and 2 St SE – there was a reason to keep this man walking down 2 St East as a troublemaker and do what must be done – and they were happy with her call.

Mother laughed when she later re-told this story – it was one of her favorite memories of her mother losing her temper. Each word was pronounced slowly, with each syllable emphasized and describing how while giving this tirade, she was rolling up her sleeves as if to take on a combatant's stance. And her tone of voice! Mollie said that her mother had that knack of really raising her voice because there were times when her mother was addressing a Labour gathering and she would raise her voice to summon silence and attention. This petitioner got this blast within inches of his face and enough to deafen him and awaken her neighbours.

It was meant to happen. Down 15th Avenue at the end (it was a T-intersection at 3rd Street East) was a row of houses and in one of these houses resided the Gideon family. Mr. Gideon was a porter with the Canadian Pacific Railway and worked passenger trains in Calgary, in all directions, but during this time was working Calgary to Edmonton on the "Midnight." The "Midnight" was a passenger train which departed Calgary at 11:30PM and arrived at Edmonton at 7AM the next morning; its counterpart departed Edmonton likewise at 11:30PM, arriving in Calgary at 7AM. Passengers riding these trains but sleeping in the sleeping cars had that additional leisure to rest until 8AM when the porter would request that they dress and depart.

The Gideons were Blacks and they were initially from Oklahoma. Later it became clear that when Jean McWilliam lost her temper that Saturday, it was the case that Mr. Gideon was in Edmonton. Had that man arrived at the Gideon home with his petition, Mrs. Gideon would have been alone with her two young children (Russell and Sylvia), both then pre-school age, and overwhelmed. Mr. and Mrs. Gideon were very thankful to Mrs. McWilliam and they remained good friends. Their children really liked Mrs. Mac. Russell became a good football player in his latter youth and played football for the Calgary Junior team, while Sylvia had a good singing voice and was the main thrust of the local church choir in Victoria Park. Russ later studied pharmacy and went back to the US and opened a drug store in Seattle. In 1961, Jean McDonald was in Seattle and placed a phone call to Russell Gideon, and accordingly they met and Russell treated Jean McDonald like a Queen; nothing was too good for her.

Those Races and Canada's First Nations People

Jean McWilliam had boarders over the years and being in close proximity to Victoria Park, it was the case during the 1940s and 1950s that many jockeys following the racing circuit resided at 313 15 Ave. Content to find one of the basement bedrooms for a place to lodge for the night and appear upstairs for breakfast, Johnny Longden, Billy Hartack, and Willie Shoemaker were three who resided there periodically as they followed the racing circuit.

It was on going over to Victoria Park to watch the races, circa late 1920s, that Jean would pass by the teepees the Sarcee and Blackfoot Nations had erected. She had chats with the residents and was always invited inside for a more in-depth chat. She enjoyed these visits very much for the insight she gained into Canada's First Nations Peoples (she referred to them as Canada's Native Sons) and their past traditions and values. She learned that land was be shared – the concept of private property and self-sufficiency being foreign. Likewise, when old, like in a buffalo herd, you lag behind so as not to impede and burden the tribe. That race will continue without you. Most importantly, and this made a huge impression on her, act now for tomorrow may never arrive. Make today, possibly your last day, count or otherwise you will indeed hear the wolves at your heels and fear not others.

The Weir Family in Ontario – their advice was that this land and country properly belonged to the Native Peoples. Mr. Weir's comments were elucidated while speaking and learning of the First Nations People's values, social structure, and relationships to others. Not all Canada First Nations saw eye to eye and Medicine Hat came to mind. Blackfoot, Blood, Sarcee, or Cree, Jean McWilliam found each branch had a unique history and she valued this to write her poem "Red Man." It is her last line that is very appropriate today – "Back to your heritage – your Canadian land."

Advice to an Eight Year Old

When her grandson was eight years old, Jean asked him what he was going to become. She listened to his response and then added the following qualifier and demanded that he try to live his life following this prescription:

“Dare to be a Daniel - dare to stand alone!”

The Last Shall Come First

Calgary pre-Great War had many residents from the British Isles, as Jean herself was, but she maintained to her dying day she was Irish. Regardless of being Irish, Scottish, Welsh, or English, Jean enjoyed Scottish music and was an avid enthusiast of Scottish Sword Dancing.

On one occasion she took her daughter on a Saturday morning to witness some Scottish girl contestants ply their dancing skills at a location in downtown Calgary, close to the Hudson's Bay. They spent the better part of that 1913 morning watching 4 young contestants dance over crossed swords with nimble feet, one arm placed at their side and other arm aloft in the shape of a crescent above their head, attired in a kilt and long stockings. Jean McWilliam's daughter was very attentive to this competition as there were 3 or 4 types of dancing the performers were being graded on as the competition progressed.

After the long dance routines and dances were completed, a panel of judges took their time to arrive at their decision to award the placements. The top competitor was awarded a red ribbon for her dancing, the second place competitor a blue ribbon and the third place dancer, a white ribbon. The three top dancers and parents were happy and in a celebratory mood but Jean McWilliam was focused on the remaining contestant. She was the youngest and had tried her best but was not as skilled as the older contestants and was awarded nothing. Realizing that the others had been awarded something while she was denied any recognition, she began silently crying and biting her lip.

In a flash Jean McWilliam grabbed her daughter Mollie and ran into the Hudson's Bay Main Floor. Jean therein spied something which would make a young lass happy. She bought this gift and quickly returned to the competition, giving the item to the fourth place dancer. The child's eyes opened and she was in shock – she was being awarded something, and she expressed her thanks to Jean McWilliam.

Daughter Mollie was proud of her mother and understood from this experience that anyone who tries their best should not be overlooked. The judges had used poor judgment in this situation. While walking home, Jean told her daughter that it is important to realize that someday the least shall come first and contrarily, the first will come last. Jean McWilliam could be so very kind and considerate to outsiders but was often hard and demanding on family, with no exceptions.

Some Apt Sayings of Jean McWilliam

- “He has Larry on his back” He/she is not performing to expectation
- “What a load of malarky” Nonsense
- “I don’t care if he has a gold mine up his ass and 10 men picking at it”
Corrupt and rich
- “Don’t go picking farleys” Something later regretted, don’t waste your time
when it's not worth it
- “Until pigs fly and sparrows grunt” Never will happen, impossible
- “If they were not married, two homes would be ruined”
Pair of misfits who deserve each other
- “The road to hell is paved with good intentions”
Work not done
- “Aggrandizement” Self Importance, pride, arrogance
- “Make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear” Not quality, inferior
- “Little etten and shettin” Insignificant person
- “Go ask your teacher why $2+2=4!$ ” Reality is not idealism
- "He’s from Eckenfecken" man of ignorance professing knowledge

Workman Worthy of His Labour

Jean McWilliam’s boarding house was initially filled with tradesmen and they were good since they were employed, provided an income stream, and were dependable. My grandmother really did not like women as boarders since there would be petty rivalries, jealousy and likely the bathroom would be occupied from early morning to late at night with countless hours spent reflecting. Grandmother preferred working tradesmen and her first group were primarily carpenters who were building the Palliser Hotel. Furthermore, these carpenters were Scottish and provided good hours of conversation, tales of the old homeland, and on weekends, some would play violin and with their girlfriends would have a dance and reel. Sometimes the sound of bagpipes could be heard emanating from 313 and Jean McWilliam would be doing the

Highland Fling with her children enjoying the performance.



Jean McWilliam and Mollie at 313 15 Ave
1912

They liked Mrs. Mac but prior to WWI, the tool kits were slowly coming home and work was finished; there was no future jobs awaiting them and the issue was what to do. When Jean McWilliam purchased 313 15 Ave at the princely sum of \$5,000, these very Scottish carpenters were the ones who rode her, stating she should have her head examined for paying out such a fortune. But the front of the house had a porch and veranda, and suddenly a new idea was hatched. They presented Mrs. Mac with their plan. They were upset that they were low on funds and because they were soon not going to be able to pay for their keep, they volunteered to work at 313 and reward her with work equivalent to what she otherwise would have to pay out. Their plan was set as follows:

1. They would expand the front of 313 to the very front of the veranda and build an extension which would increase the square footage of the first and second floors. The first floor would be an extended living room, about double its original size and would likewise extend the second floor outwards; this second floor extension would now be converted into a suite containing a kitchen, sitting room, bedroom, and front den overlooking 15 Ave. Being tradesmen they knew how to build this extension and they even had access to building materials for completing this job. They likewise had been shortchanged on their final paycheques and had to settle for construction supplies instead. They suggested that since there would be ongoing noise and heavy work for a few weeks, it would be best if Jean and the children slept on the main floor at the back of the house and isolate the front area for a week so that they could work with no interruption and no accidents.

2. With all the noise and board pounding outside and the extension being built on the first and second floor, the materials were coming and going, and the front of the house was like a warehouse of materials, tools, supplies and all organized but not open to the public.

3. Things were moving in and moving out and the hammers were swinging and saws

working and workers shouting, and finally there were a few painters working the exterior. Inside the extension were plasterers, electricians, and plumbers getting the first floor extension and upstairs suite into condition.

Finally, the work was completed and they asked Mrs. Mac to be the first (accompanied with her daughter and son) to enter the front area which had been sealed off for the past few weeks. Jean McWilliam opened the door. Her carpenters and other tradesmen who had completed other work were the audience and when she opened the kitchen door, she was in shock. The house was indeed larger from first glimpse but it was the floors – they were different!!

The floor of the sitting room where her fireplace and hearth were located, the floor of the new front living room, and the floor of the long extended hallway to the front door were all done anew – in Bird’s Eye Maple! Her children were in awe and Jean became emotional; it was one of those moments that confirmed “her boys” were wonderful and what they did was beyond generous. Bird’s Eye Maple was expensive, very expensive. One of the carpenters had quite a temper and apparently went down to his former worksite and threatened to crowbar his work if he was not paid cash (he knew what he was doing – they would not pay him) so he took the equivalent in Bird’s Eye Maple.

Years later, in June 1969, the house was again re-done in the living room and front hallway. This required sanding the floor and applying acrylic and those floors were absolutely beautiful. In 1970, Georgeen Barrass was very taken with these floors and how they came to be while visiting with Mollie La France and realized that the fireplace, hearth, and fumed oak cabinets were going to be donated to Heritage Park. The Bird’s Eye Maple floors however were on their last sanding and it was regrettably decided that their removal would cause more trouble than the floors were worth should they be donated. However, it was that very surprise of having these floors installed without any fanfare which had Jean McWilliam fight for tradesmen – she knew them from first hand experience.

Tradesmen Pecking Order – Her Carpenters

These carpenters working on the construction of the Palliser Hotel took their apprenticeship in Scotland and were themselves artisans. Of course they had a toolkit and could pound boards with a hammer, saw a piece of board ("measure twice, cut once"), measure a corner, bury a nail, and use an awl but this was simple stuff. The top tier of these carpenters had actually done art in their apprenticeship and could design, chisel, cut, and shape an ordinary block of wood into a flower, tree, leaf, portrait, fish, fowl or anything else, and some of them could do a person’s portrait with a series of chisels, time, and patience.

There were a couple of these Scotch carpenters who would chat and at same time be

carving a block of wood while conversing with Jean McWilliam and this was another reason why she enjoyed having her carpenters, her artists, en-suite.

Of course those returned tool boxes were in some instances never to gain employment again since the bugles were calling and they joined the forces at Victoria Park.

The Epitome of Carpentry

Both 313 and 315 Ave SE houses were built by the same contractor and originally 313 was the residence of a Baptist Minister. Both houses had the same initial layout with front veranda but over the coming years, both houses were extended to gain more footage and have an extended upper suite. Both likewise featured some great finishing carpentry. The hearth and fireplaces both had etchings of a Dutch boy and girl. The boy had his wide pants, buckles on his shoulder straps, a peaked cap and the girl was attired in a bonnet, and a wide skirt. Both were wearing wooden shoes.

Later when the tradesmen (carpenters) were living at 313 they were impressed with the skill used to chisel both these portraits and stated that this was the work of a real carpenter and not someone who simply pounded boards. Years later Jean McWilliam's daughter stated that the primary reason in spring 1965 not to sell 313 but to return it to Calgary was that hearth, fireplace, and of course, the Birds' Eye Maple floors.

One Man's Treasure is Another Man's Bane

Years later following WWI, the Goodmans moved into 315. The family was comprised of Jack (Jacob) Goodman, his wife Annie, and their children Lionel, Sarah and Nathan. Jack Goodman worked for Canadian Northern as a mailman/baggage man (Calgary to Saskatoon) on the Goose Lake run and was a Labour man. This immediately had him enamored to Jean McWilliam, his next door neighbour.

Every Saturday morning, Jack would punctually arrive at 313 to discuss the Labour scene, politics, the weather, and of course enjoy a cup of coffee, and freshly fried eggs accompanied by ample sides of bacon. He really liked to hike next door to Jean's to discuss politics with her and perhaps have an argument with my uncle Johnnie. One time, Johnnie got into a hot discussion with both Jack and Jean – he arrived in the kitchen and said something about "the Jews and the White Man." They took great umbrage to this comment. Jean could be hard on family when it came to racism, no question. Anyway, Jack's spouse Annie was Orthodox Jewish to the K for Kosher and every Saturday night the curtains were drawn. She lived the life of a committed Jew. Jack was different however.

One weekday Jack was not home and Annie called for Mrs. Mac to immediately come over and view her "dakorayshun." Jean arrived at 315 and entered the center sitting room and there indeed had been a major restoration and masterpiece completed.

The Dutch boy and Girl were now sporting pink faces, matching yellow wooden shoes, the boys pants were blue, the girl's dress was red, his cap was red, her bonnet was orange – a kaleidoscope of colors – and Annie wanted Jean McWilliam's opinion. To keep harmony Jean stated that the intention was well meant but when returning home looked at her son Johnnie and when he asked her what she saw next door, Jean shook her head and sighed, "John 11:35" (Jesus Wept).

Labour League Personality – Help

Jean McWilliam had her Calgary Women's Labour Council and she was on very good terms with Andy Little (I confess that I have really nothing to say regarding Andy Little) but he was a very important figure in her Calgary Labour League. Andy was the representative of the trades working in the Ogden shops, the boilermakers, carpenters, tinsmiths, plumbers, ironworkers, millwrights, electricians and likewise. Around 1917-1919, they were working 6 (or was it 7?) days per week, and were the shifts 12 hours? Andy was close to Jean McWilliam and they both had great empathy for the workers at Ogden and likewise, the Weston and Transcona Shops in Winnipeg. The One Big Union was gaining strength and the CPR was not happy about these trades becoming organized; even workers' spouses were becoming involved in this swelling movement, with the thrust being for better working conditions, fewer hours, and a living wage. These concessions later would be won and the workers would be content but there was an injustice here because Andy Little lost his pension regarding this movement and no one came to Andy's assistance. Jean McWilliam agreed with Andy Little later when he told her the best way to get rid of a good union man is to place him into management. Andy was referring to a Calgary mayor who earlier was good as Labour representative but later lost touch with the workers, and was not a good mayor.

That Other Influence – South of the Border

Calgary had its own branch of the Canadian labour movement and one personality who was a model for Jean McWilliam and who likewise corresponded with her over this time period was another person of note.

This correspondent was involved in the Labour scene in Seattle, Washington and was the first female PhD "Philosophy Major" graduate (at 23 years of age) of the University of Chicago with a thesis titled "The Power of Prayer." This woman was from Friend, Nebraska where her father was a Congregationalist Minister, but moved to Seattle and became involved with the Labour situation there. It was again that ribbon of steel, from Winnipeg to Calgary and then westward to Vancouver or South at Kingsgate, and terminating at Seattle or Portland.

Chicago had its meat packing plants and railyards and Carl Sandberg. Winnipeg was

not to be outdone; its “railyards” were the largest in the world and those North Winnipeg Shops of Weston (CPR) and Transcona (CNR) employed most of the North Winnipeg population. Many of these workers were tradesmen who in turn were from Eastern Europe.

Consequently, 1917 to 1919 was a time of labor activism and Jean McWilliam was right in the thick of matters and getting advice and inspiration from a variety of sources. But her quest for social justice was founded on the basics of what the Book reads.

Her Women Organized - Labour League

Jean McWilliam and her women members were quite large in number and represented Calgary labour. In 1919, a woman’s proper place was thought to be at home, raising a family and taking care of her husband. Women were not encouraged to work following marriage and in most cases were not welcome into what were traditionally men’s domains.

She had many members in her Labour Council and these women were married to workers and tradesmen, and raising families. Many of these women were from East Calgary – Ogden and Ramsay – and their husbands worked at the CPR shops at Ogden and Alyth in many different trades.

However Jean’s group was necessary because if the breadwinner was killed on the job or injured, who was going to pay ongoing support for spouse and family? When a pensioned tradesmen fortunate enough to have a CPR pension died, their pension became null and void. The widow was stranded, with no means of support and if she had no family to depend on, who was going to tend to her?

Apart from these above mentioned conditions, Jean McWilliam became interested in the plight of young people and their rightful future entitlement. She became involved with Calgary’s Council of Women and later served it 35 years working in the capacity of Children’s Convener.

However, back to Labour, it was then a man’s world and many thought Jean McWilliam and her band of followers were a nuisance but they soon found out otherwise.

Speaking to Labour Groups Throughout Alberta – Crowsnest Pass and Drumheller

Jean Blaney McWilliam McDonald was the force who spearheaded the Canadian Security Pension. She and Lillian Clarke (or was it Dorothy Anderson?) paid their

own return fares to Ottawa and met with an appreciative Prime Minister McKenzie King in 1950 [1951?]. Jean was by then in her early 70s.

Despite her lack of formal education, Jean was regarded by J. S. Woodsworth (Labour-Winnipeg) as an authority on Robert's Rules of Order. Likewise Stanley Knowles took Robert's Rules of Order to heart, emulating what Woodsworth stated and was an earlier correspondent.

Jean McWilliam gave labour rallies throughout the Crowsnest Pass (in Coleman and Blairmore) and in the Drumheller Valley (East Coulee, Dorothy, and Drumheller). Gordon Taylor's father was a great admirer of Jean McWilliam. Gordon Taylor (1910-2003), years later, was the local Social Credit MLA and then Progressive Conservative MP. Provincially, he was the Minister of Highways under Ernest Manning and Harry Strom, holding that position for 20 years (1951-1971). Under his watch, Alberta had the best highway network. Gordon Taylor really liked Jean McWilliam McDonald. Likewise, Don Mackay (1914-1979), elected as Calgary's mayor in 1949, was a great admirer of Jean McWilliam.

Since that blistering argument and heated exchange in the law office of eventual Prime Minister R. B. Bennett (1870-1947), those two supposed foes became kin, strong friends both admiring the other's character.

Jean's relationship with Bennett began inauspiciously. In Calgary in 1917, MP R.B. Bennett was speaking during a War and Next of Kin meeting downtown. "(Secretary of State) Arthur Meighen," Bennett told his audience, "was...emotionally upset while reading the casualties coming in from Flanders and other places." Suddenly, a woman took the floor and buttonholed him. "Mr. Bennett," she said indignantly, "did you see any tears flowing from those same eyes when he read about the pittance the wives and next of kin were living on?"

Jean McWilliam's abrupt question ended Bennett's speech and the meeting ended. But Bennett was fuming and a week later, McWilliam received a letter that requested she visit Bennett's office at the Palliser Hotel.

Upon her arrival, Bennett exploded: "Do you realize who you were speaking to and that your words are slander and I will not stand for it?" McWilliam fired right back at him: "You might be God Almighty to all the women in Calgary, but to me, you are plain R.B. Bennett, and you do not frighten me one bit!"

Bennett was completely in temporary shock (no one had ever addressed him in this tone) and he then accepted Jean McWilliam into his inner confidence. They were firm friends for the remainder of their lives. Jean voted for Bennett because she liked CBC Radio!

My mother Mollie had a women's wristwatch given for her 17th birthday (October 26, 1922) with wishes from R.B. Bennett. He really liked my mother and in the late 1930s Mother was in Brandon, Manitoba when the funeral train of Mildred Mariann Bennett (1889-1938, R.B.'s youngest sister) was heading east for burial. Mollie had a timely lay over in Brandon, where Ira McNaughton was the railway Superintendent (and a great friend of my father's). McNaughton told mother (their guest from Calgary) to be at station at a certain time, and as mother arrived, a train pulled in. There was a rope separating the many people arriving to see Mildred Bennett's funeral train and Mother was in that crowd at the rope. R.B. Bennett walked from the train up the platform and mother waved to him. R.B. shouted "Why Mollie! Come here to me!" He pulled the rope up and took my mother by the arm and the two of them walked up and down the station platform with the crowd wondering "Who is that woman?"

During this walk however, R.B. confided in my mother that he was distraught at Mildred's death but her husband and R.B. had not said one singular word to each other since the train journey had begun a couple days prior. So seeing Mollie La France (nee McWilliam) was a God send to him. My mother thought the world of R.B. Bennett. He was a supposedly a "cold" person; in reality, that was just a front and underneath lay a wonderful person of warmth and human emotion.

Another Robert

Jean McWilliam was raised at Waterside on Ayr, Ayrshire county, Scotland, not far from Alloway where the renowned poet and philosopher Robert Burns once resided in his cottage. Burns wrote in the poem "Man Was Made to Mourn" (1784) that "If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave/...Why was an independent wish/E'er planted in my mind?" R.B. Bennett more highly prized the works of the Englishman Robert Browning, who wrote in his poem "Andrea del Sarto" (1855) "Ah, but man's reach should exceed his grasp/ Or what's a heaven for...?"

Robert's Rules of Order – Meet Jean McWilliam and Her Meetings

Jean had another Robert. Men sometimes believe that women are always chatting, focusing on gossip, carrying spurious slights, always quarreling and killing time talking rather than producing. But Jean McWilliam knew Robert's Rules of Order (200 pages?) "by heart" for quick direction and her meetings proceeded with a focused and direct agenda, and followed a regiment of steps to fast pace meetings, get the objectives written down and then acted upon.

Many newcomers to Jean McWilliam's Labour meetings were impressed that there was an objective being raised and there would be concrete action moving forward. Many women were converted when returning home and informing their spouses they had been out to a Labour meeting and when the breadwinner listened to what his wife was telling him, he was in a state of awe and sometimes pleasant shock. "You mean

that there will be a presentation to the Province-City-Federal Government and it is listing the same things our Labour Council talks about but nothing somehow ever gets done? You women are going 'to bell the Cat'?"

Robert's Rules of Order were likewise needed when there were disagreements in procedures, new items for discussion, or alternative methods for solving issues. It was in the heat of those moments, when the proceedings veered towards open conflict, disgruntlement, disagreement, or stalled endless arguing that Jean would take the floor and point out "According to Roberts Rules of Order, we shall..." These women really enjoyed that these meetings were focused, addressed issues, and had a plan for making a presentation. Again, time was of the essence and things were being accomplished.

In later years, Winnipeg Stanley Knowles would be a stickler in the House of Commons, likewise referring to Robert's Rules of Order and in their correspondence had many situations where Robert's Rules of Order had sped things up, kept the meeting on track, and had a solid tangible action plan as to what was to transpire when.

I do not know how Jean McWilliam received her education in the Robert's Rules of Order but since she was a child, she was self educated and had a passion for Labour, writing, and making things happen.

Some of the ladies were married to CPR Employees. Jean McWilliam, as earlier stated, had members in her organization from all trades but many were from the railway operating and running trades. A few names come to mind:

1. Mrs. Otto Flegal Locomotive Engineer- CPR
2. Mrs. Jack Klapstein Locomotive Engineer- CPR
3. Mrs. B. McGoldrick Locomotive Engineer- CPR
4. Mrs. W. Hunt Train Dispatcher- CNR
5. Mrs. J. (Eva) MacDonald Switchman- CPR
6. Mrs. Harry (Dora) Isenstein Locomotive Engineer- CPR
7. Mrs. Jack Goodman Mail Handler- CNR

Just a few words here about Harry Isenstein (1891-1982) and his family: A Russian Jewish immigrant who arrived in Calgary in 1907, Harry married Dora Ashkenazy in 1913. The family of seven resided across from Victoria Park School at 3rd Street SE and 11th Avenue. He started as a labourer for the CPR but eventually became a train engineer, retiring in the mid-1950s. Isenstein's house was a convenient walking distance to the Victoria Park CPR roundhouse at 3rd Street SE and 10th Avenue. His route was Calgary to Edmonton on the northbound Eskimo, returning on the southbound Stampeder train. Harry was known for being on time, regardless of conditions and any other occurrences he might experience en route between these two

cities. One time in the early 1950s, my father (he was rules instructor for the Alberta District CPR) caught up with Harry and his 3001 at Lacombe heading north. Harry was 10 minutes late departing from Red Deer but he could move, and while passing through Hobbema, Dad ventured from the fireman's side of the cab to chat closer to Harry and get a glimpse at the speed – it was 100 miles per hour. Harry's train was on time arriving at south Edmonton and the Edmonton stop was only seven minutes from there.

What was important at this particular juncture for the labour movement was that the OBU was making ground in organizing rail workers and in particular those workers at Winnipeg (Transcona and Weston) and Calgary (Ogden and Alyth Shops).

Jean McWilliam held meetings both at her residence and rented labour halls and on various occasions leading up to 1919, there were some full houses and believe it or not, some husbands were in attendance and pleased how these women were not gathered to gossip and kill time but were there with a plan and purpose.

The Conservative and the Socialist

R.B. Bennett was then becoming “involved” but by no means was Richard Bedford Bennett out on some picket line carrying a placard or raising havoc at some union rally, railway or otherwise. No, R.B. Bennett was quietly applying his legal talents to the law of the land and this oftentimes required signing off on Search Warrants issued by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

R.B. would sign off on these Search Warrants noting who they were being issued to and bingo – Mrs. Jean McWilliam at 313 15 Avenue SE came up: probable cause – Bolshevik literature and socialist pamphlets. Warrant's premises to be checked. R.B. would then call Jean McWilliam stating the RCMP were just at his office and he had to sign off on the Search Warrants and her name was there. He would say "Please get any literature out of the living room or whatever upstairs and get it out of sight – please!" Jean did what R.B. told her to do (they were now in reality good friends and both liked the other very much) and hid whatever she had to hide. Funny thing – the RCMP never came to her house. Why?

This very question has often puzzled me over these past years. Why did the RCMP not arrive at 313 15 Ave SE in the year 1919 when all pandemonium was happening in Labour circles? Jean McWilliam was surely guilty of having this literature and willing and ready not only to preach it but to distribute it to all and any interested parties. Jean McWilliam was in reality a cop, a female cop who earlier worked as Police Matron City of Calgary Police Force.

Think about that one. How I wish R.B. Bennett were here to discuss this matter!

How would it look on the headlines of the *Calgary Herald*, *Calgary Albertan*, *Winnipeg Tribune*, and *Ottawa Sentinel* – "RCMP BUST CALGARY COP!" Think about this one. It makes more sense when you consider how the upper echelons of the RCMP operated; they must instill the law but can not risk losing face. If they arrested Jean McWilliam (the Calgary Police Matron) then what did that say about the Canadian Police Force? Canadian cops hire criminals? Women criminals at that?

I rest this case but still wonder if was this the real reason all those search warrants signed by R.B. Bennett were not acted on or was there some other moral suasion?

Grandmother, Chester Ronning, and the Chinese

Chester Ronning (1894-1984) resided as an adult at Hythe, Alberta, in the Peace River country. His heart, though, was in China where he had been born to American missionary parents and where his mother was buried. Chester became head of Camrose Lutheran School/College, had a very nice personality, and was quite brilliant. My maternal grandmother had no use for any organized religion but she liked Chester Ronning because he was an anti-imperialist. They met on one occasion when Ronning was speaking and she was taken with him – he was a great MLA, and diplomat in later years. Ronning appeared on television around 1963 and Grandmother was reminded of meeting him, and of the plight of the Chinese in Calgary.

About the same time period as she met Ronning, she went down to a City Hall meeting in Calgary, arriving deliberately late to hear the discussion about the prohibition against white women working in Chinese cafes and laundries. Jean entered and then deliberately made some noise to announce her arrival and presence before she addressed this assembly:

"You intend on barring the Chinese cafe owners, Calgary taxpayers, from hiring white women. I have worked as Police Matron and can hereby attest to the fact that I have spoken at the police station with many prostitutes following their arrests on the weekends and none were in the employ of a Chinese boss. However, earlier today and to confirm my suspicion, which is the reason for my late arrival, I checked over the property tax rolls for Nose Creek (Calgary's red light district) and it appears there are members sitting at this very assembly who own property along Nose Hill (laughter and derision rising). It seems there is a conflict here – who exactly are the real pimps of Calgary?"

Pandemonium and calls for order erupted. City Hall chambers were again in an uproar. Jean McWilliam had scored her points and later, Chinese business owners were allowed to hire white women as waitresses. Her presentation was very much appreciated by the Chinese community at this juncture.

The Counterargument With Her Grandson

I confess – I was 8 years of age September 1, 1958, when Jean McWilliam came to stay with us in Edmonton following a horrible fall down her basement steps at the house in Calgary and I remember that day well, because I was entering Grade 3 and Mother was not home. I walked to school and later that afternoon my mother arrived from the Royal Alex hospital and stated that they took Grandmother by ambulance from the North Side CPR station after their arrival from Calgary. I remember her saying that getting Grandmother on the train required the assistance of two porters and one of them realized whom he was assisting and became very obliging. Mother fell asleep early that day (4AM) and was awakened by hearing someone say, "The lady is in a berth in this car." She realized in a flash the train had not only arrived in north Edmonton but the time was now 8:00AM and she had slept in. More worrying was that Jean was still not fully conscious.

Recuperation took a long two months and finally Jean was discharged and took residence with her daughter's family in the Strathearn District of Edmonton. Arrangements were made to have a main floor bedroom set up adjoining the kitchen for Grandmother to reside in. No sooner had Grandmother arrived than she made a demand: "I need some cigarettes – Kool Menthols."

Jean and Her Menthols

Grandmother was a hard woman and had expectations for family. I learned this first hand the hard way. It was December 1958 just prior to Christmas and it was the last day of school before the holidays and there was an afternoon concert. I returned home for lunch (my parents were working and Grandmother had heated up some prepared food for lunch) but prior to leaving for school at 1PM, she barked out her demand for "Kool Menthols" and I was the chosen party.

I am going to be late. So I hurried as fast as my legs could carry me to Lee's Grocery a couple blocks away but returning home, well, it was interesting. The Wilsons resided four houses south of our house and they had a garage equipped with a door which could be used both ways for a dog to enter and exit the garage – they had a Golden Lab whose name was Gunner. Gunner was out in his pen adjacent to the garage but in the alley and making contact with Gunner was a yellow small dog. I was amused seeing this. As I passed by these two, the puppy began following me and I was happy to have that dog follow me. I put the dog in our backyard and secured both side and back gates before going into the house with Grandmother's Kools and dashing for the school. I was only slightly late and during the afternoon school concert thought little of the stage presentations, instead thinking about our backyard and that yellow dog.

School out, I ran home those seven blocks and went into the yard via the back gate – there were paw prints in the snow but no dog. Frantically I looked throughout the

backyard to no avail; I checked the gate and it was secure and finally I gave up. I entered the house and Jean McWilliam quickly asserted herself. "What are you upset about? What, are those tears I see? Why are you upset? That mutt came in the front door with the CP Expressman delivering the eggs from Olson's at 2PM and is now under the Christmas tree sleeping. Leave it alone!"

Later that day: My Introduction to Charles Dickens

Jean McWilliam was not a great TV viewer. She said something about a Jewish comedian, who had commented that "TV is very educational. Anytime anyone turns it on, I retreat to another room and read a good book" (Groucho Marx).

She made her retreat to her bedroom but this was my first viewing of "A Christmas Carol" and I was happy my new puppy was present. During this feature, I was struck that there was the return of Jacob Marley and later those three ghosts. The first ghost was dealing with things the way they happened, the second ghost about today, and that third specter, it frightened me. It was the silence, the pointing, opening his coat to those children, the ignorance and want. That scene hit me harder than seeing Scrooge reading his name on the tombstone. That scene riveted into my sub-conscience from that time forward. Next morning Grandmother said something about how the book would be better – drama is not the same. There was that challenge however, how to resolve those twins of poverty and ignorance. It was a personal challenge to find a way to act.

Her Three Marksmen

However, I had an earlier Marx experience at Christmas 1957 when I had a large present lying under the Christmas tree and kept thinking about what was in the package and what Grandmother had given me. Sure enough, Christmas morning I opened this present to a large model Marx Train set with steam engine and 8 freight cars and I was the happiest boy that morning. A Marx Train set!

High School years then, and having a visit with Grandmother with not much to say but very curious about her convictions seeming being in direct conflict. I confronted her directly how she could possibly maintain that she was a Christian and a follower of Karl Marx and she gave me an irritated look and chided me "Look it's there. Look it's there!"

I did not continue – it was not in her room or on the road.

However, years later I was reading what a doctor had written regarding earlier times and I was surprised that the conclusion of the Communist Manifesto which reads "From each according to his ability and to each according to his needs," were Acts 4:35 and Acts 11:29 from the Bible. The same words, the same prescription. Jean

McWilliam had a Scottish brogue and what she was telling me was correct. It was there!

That it took Jean McWilliam's grandson 45 years to find what she was pointing out has him now shamefaced. It is there indeed. Likewise, the scholarly Pope Benedict correctly points out that Marx's social justice can not be understated. It concerns me again that the Wide Gate leads to where but the Narrow Gate alternatively leads to – ?

Horrible Time

Jean McWilliam was always a person of action but she had two major setbacks which easily could have had her giving up or simply withdrawing from her quest for social justice. Job says “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life!”

Jean McWilliam no sooner had her own house, two young children, an Icelandic housekeeper, and a household of carpenters, in the spring 1912, when it happened. She awoke one morning and was blind. Jean blinked and rubbed her eyes but was blind. She again closed her eyes tight and re-opened them to no avail. She then summoned her children and housekeeper to state that she was blind but not to mention anything to the boarders as a reason for not appearing at meals other than she was ill and was confined to bed. Meanwhile however, Jean was determined to regain sight and tried many things (organic and medicinal). Finally after two months, some headway was being made. Jean was then taking grapefruit skins and swabbing her eye corneas and was claiming she could now see what appeared as gray shadows. Her daughter Mollie was present at one Saturday morning session when Jean took a large grapefruit skin rind and applied it to her eye. When it was removed what appeared to Mollie as fish scales was on her mother's eye. The same thing was done on the other eye and again, the scaly substance was removed. Jean now was ecstatic – her eyesight had been restored! To celebrate, she penned a letter to the grapefruit marketer in California thanking them and explaining its medicinal qualities. Within three weeks a huge box of grapefruit arrived “Special Delivery” and a letter of congratulations. Mollie laughed at this letter.

About this same time, and having her eyes in such horrible shape, someone recommended Mentholatum as being great for the sinus cavities but Jean McWilliam applied it to her eyes following the film being removed and it became a nightly staple – a large blob of Mentholatum. Could this likewise be why she chose to smoke Kool Menthols following Mac's demise?

Another Case Arises

About 1918, medical advances had radium front center. This new element had medicinal qualities but was still at its experimental stage. However, doctors were ready to prescribe it for curing ailments. Jean McWilliam had a small cyst (a growth

on the inside of her cheek) and went to see the doctor and he suggested that rather than lance and physically cut this growth out, radium would do a superior job. Jean agreed and the radium was applied to the cyst. All was OK until that evening when Jean became very uncomfortable, with the inside of her mouth aching with a real painful burning sensation. Mollie's bedroom was directly upstairs from her mother's and Mollie could hear her mother walking up and down the kitchen floor all hours of the night. As time progressed, the pain eventually subsided but Jean felt uncomfortable and years later an unintended consequence was revealed.

The radium application indeed removed the cyst inside her cheek but at the same time burnt out her thyroid gland, which affected her personality and disposition. In later years, she was clearly suffering from Myxedema [severe hypothyroidism]. Her grandson glanced through a medical text and found others suffering from the same condition. Then a doctor reviewed Jean's physical appearance and conducted tests for thyroxine; the results proved the grandson was correct and thereafter Jean McDonald had to take thyroxine pills and later, around 1959, her appearance changed back to normal and her disposition improved.

Contrast in Personalities – Jean and Her First Husband

Jean McWilliam and William were married by the time they left Scotland in 1907. As the pair were boarding the ship to Canada, Jean's two sisters arrived at the port and gifted Jean a frame picture of their father (it now hangs at Fort Calgary). The couple separated in 1909 under the guise that the children would get a better education in Calgary. William and Jean need not have been separated had they had proper direction homesteading in Canada. Ayrshire people are farmers of milking cows and the ideal property for dairy farming would have been either Southern Ontario or the Fraser Valley (including the Upper Okanagan for raising milk cows). However, the assistance they were provided was low priced land (you clear the land and it converts ownership) but the land they were going to choose at Lacombe was hailed out and consequently William chose land at Munson, Alberta, above the banks of the Red Deer River near the Bleriot Ferry.

This was a grain farming area. Both had been accomplished milkers in Scotland and had received ribbons and medals for making butter but you need Guernsey, Ayrshire-Jersey cows for this type of milking. Hence life became a game of planting in spring then waiting until harvest. Winter was a game of waiting until spring for planting. Sowing took a couple of weeks then another session of waiting. After one year of waiting, Jean's patience had worn out and in 1910 she took the children into Calgary for their education and advancement.

Jean first rented a house near the Anglican Cathedral close to the City Police Station and then in 1912 bought the house at 313 15 Ave SE. Her income was derived from her boarders and part time work at the Police Station as Matron. Most times she

worked late hours on the weekend (Friday and Saturday nights), and was picked up and dropped off by the Black Maria.

The children were nevertheless affected with this transition. Mollie had a deep affection for her father while her older brother Johnnie later became indifferent towards his father and more accommodating to his mother. However, had Jean and William been directed to a geographic area where dairy farming was in vogue, would their marriage have succeeded?

William Returns From War – Injuries

William McWilliam was wounded October 30, 1917 at Ypres. The doctor report reads that there was a superficial injury. However, after William returned to his land at Munson, his neighbours (the Grasses) became alarmed and concerned because William would not be seen for days in succession and as this extended itself, they decided to investigate and found William in a severe state, undernourished and anemic. They contacted his spouse in Calgary and Jean arrived and took her husband back to Calgary to the Colonel Belcher Hospital. William was operated on and a piece of shrapnel (by Mollie La France's account, who claimed to have seen it) the size of a fifty cent piece was removed. This shrapnel evidently was pressing on his spine and consequently he became anemic and lapsed into sleeps extending days on end. Following surgery, William applied for a War Disability Pension based on what had transpired but Ottawa replied with a letter to the effect stating that the removed foreign object could not be proven to be the result of war injuries. His case was summarily rejected.

This again caused reason for William and Jean to not be compatible. William was absolutely incensed and stated (in Mollie La France's version) that "Ottawa can shove their pension right up their ass" and he started making arrangements to return to Scotland. Jean on the other hand was upset with both the injustice of this situation but more incensed that William elected to quit rather than fight his case. The key point again – Nellie McClung in her book *The Stream Runs Fast* (1945) portrays one of her characters, "Jean McCalmon," as a person who religiously attended weekly city council meetings and kept everyone on their toes. McClung wrote that McCalmon "wrote letters to the paper on many subjects, for Jean had the gift of words, not always pretty ones. To Jean McCalmon, any fight was better than no fight." This was my maternal grandmother to a T and I could give McClung a huge hug for the portrayal, although Jean herself was not entirely pleased with it (even though the character in the book solves a problem for a young Hungarian woman when McClung was unable to). In fact, Grandmother was going to sue McClung but in the late 1940s she phoned McClung while visiting Agnes in Victoria and McClung invited her over. McClung expressed her deep sympathy on the loss of Jean's husband Mac McDonald and then the old grudges were tossed aside. They became strong admirers of each other's efforts.

Anyway, she was always ready for verbal combat and wrote missives about the myriad of injustices of her time while her spouse was quite introspective and content reading books in the evenings on the prairie above the Bleriot Ferry with coyotes howling during the night's passing. This was their situation – opposite personalities, together in the wrong place at the wrong time. She maintained the bald headed prairies were not her idea of a place for raising children. For his part, William was never bothered by the isolation of the homestead. Jean, on the other hand, had to have someone around to converse with and then balance it with reading and writing. Their personality types were very different.

Jean was able, angry, willing to fight, and wanted a fight over her husband's disability pension rejection. R.B. Bennett likewise said he would take the case but McWilliam wanted an agreement and consideration for his service and not to be seen as an encumbrance. Furthermore what really ate at him was while in Flanders, his combat unit was in close proximity to the Scottish Black Watch and on one meeting, they suggested that William join them but William refused, stating "I am now a Canadian and proud to be Canadian." Mother took both this injustice and his eventual departure to heart and was very disappointed that he returned to Scotland. He departed and Jean McWilliam remained in Calgary and took on all cases and incidents of injustice affecting the underdog. Confronting her was perhaps done at one's own personal peril. McWilliam took work as Groundskeeper at Castle Douglas and later died of cancer in 1941.

Prior to his departing from Munson in 1923, a paleontology team headed by Levi Sternberg explored the Red Deer River valley for dinosaur bones and were quite pleased with the specimen of half an Edmontosaurus lying about 150 metres above the Red Deer River and just below McWilliam's homestead at east ½ of 22-3-21-W4. William gave them permission to remove the dinosaur; this was about the last transaction prior to selling the property at Munson and heading back to Scotland. Today, when viewing the banks on the northwest quadrant from the Bleriot Ferry, a person can see an indentation where the dinosaur resided. My mother and uncle loved to play there as kids during their summer school breaks (they spent from September to June in Calgary), and it would be ideal if the dinosaur specimen could be returned to Alberta from Ontario, where it has been since the late 1990s.

Just a few words on the Bleriot family in that area: Louis Bleriot (1872-1936) was a famous French aviator, the first to fly across the English Channel from France to England. His brother Andre came to Alberta and was the first to operate a ferry crossing the Red Deer River just west of Drumheller. Andre Bleriot lived west of my grandfather's property.

Of Mice and Men

William entered service during WWI, at 38 years of age in 1915, and surprised the

enlisting officers with his shooting ability. From childhood, he used to practice with tin cans from a distance. He supposedly was awarded a Medal at Mons (his wife was not impressed) and being among the oldest of these men and being a good shot, had one more duty added to his itinerary.

Mother could never watch John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" without crying. Her explanation was that her father was "George Milton" and that there were indeed rabbits at Ypres and elsewhere, and when the young man stood to view the rabbits, William released the trigger. The enemy's trenches were quite close in proximity and if someone in the trenches became emotionally excited or hysterical (shell shock, throwing fits, etc.) their position and location would be known and perhaps an entire platoon would be at risk. Consequently, when such cases arose (usually they were young recruits with no combat experience being tossed into these front line trenches close to enemy lines and distant from medical aid), they would become the sacrificial lamb. Daughter Mollie understood and this likewise affected her regard towards her father. Her final living words were repeating his enlistee number, 808624.

Months September to June

Johnnie (1903-1944) and Mollie (1905-1980) were raised by their mother Jean and she was not easy on them. Jean had a rather strict Code of Conduct and was quick to react. One such "NO" was never to play on the Bow River. Of course being told not to do something is perhaps the easiest way to suggest someone should do it and they did; the children would go down to the Bow River and the Langevin or Centre Street Bridge and go stone hopping. Johnnie was near expert and could go out a fair distance while Mollie being two years younger was less venturesome. However on returning home too soon (before allowing his trouser legs to completely dry out), Jean would dole out the punishment.

Other activities warranting punishment was playing a new type of sport which some older children were playing; Mollie and Johnnie tagged along and enjoyed this new venture. The nature of this game was to collect some larger rocks and toss them down the laundry chute of the local launderers located along either 1 St East or Centre Street 15 to 12 Ave. Someone would open the chute and then the gang would release a handful of stones, making a loud noise, and then they would run from the scene. On one such occasion, Johnnie was slow in getting away from the scene and the laundry man caught Johnnie. Mollie saw Johnnie being apprehended and hauled back to the establishment.

Mollie went running home as fast as possible and in an excited voice pleaded to her mother that Johnnie was caught and was going to die unless they went immediately and saved him. Jean listened to this plight and then grabbed Mollie's arm tightly and they both proceeded to the location of the laundry. When they reached this establishment, Jean entered the door with Mollie in tow (her arm was now aching as it

was being squeezed tighter with every step to the laundry) and there was Johnnie. Dear God in Heaven, Johnnie was not dead but was sitting on the ironing board eating a variety of cookies and cakes that the Chinese proprietor was feeding him and likewise there was a small songbird singing happily. Jean profusely apologized for her children's absolutely disgusting behavior and paraded them back home for a tune up. Prior to departing, Jean asked the proprietor about the cost for doing sheets and linens and struck up a business deal which would ensure Jean could save time at home doing laundry.

Back home, Mollie and Johnnie were to go to the backyard and bring in a willow switch, the longer the better. The switch would be brought in for inspection and then Johnnie would have to remove his overalls but Mollie was okay – she was wearing a dress. Jean snapped that willow switch on the back of their calves and both were soon howling and screeching from the whirls of that willow switch. That was the last time they followed the gang in mischief.

Hard Discipline

Jean McWilliam's son John was one time as a lad of 9 to go to the shoe repair shop and return with a pair of repaired shoes. Johnnie returned with the shoes and obligingly handed them over to his mother. Jean then asked "Where is the change?" To which Johnnie responded "There was none!" and Jean furiously lost her composure, grabbing her son forcefully by his arm to the backyard. She then picked a choice willow branch and again yanking him by the arm back into the kitchen and demanded he remove his pants. Mollie was summoned to witness Johnnie dance a Highland Fling. Jean was furious and Johnnie was punished, crying and whining and then sent to his room. Mollie was frightened.

Later, Mollie asked her mother why she knew that there was change and her mother stated, "When Johnnie handed me the shoes I could see the shop keeper had written 20 cents but I had given Johnnie a quarter."

Perhaps a harsh penalty but in later years, Johnnie appreciated this punishment as a first hand inducement to tell the truth and never steal or lie. Johnnie likewise knew his mother was "on to him" if he was going to be dishonest.

The Arbitrator

Raising children is not only doling out due punishment but sometimes the ability to make reason of mayhem. Such occasion arose when Johnnie was 10 and Mollie was 8 years of age and the issue was how to spend a productive Saturday morning. Jean wanted her children to be busy in their spare time and thought music would be a good choice; consequently Jean decided that Mollie should learn how to play the violin. Saturday morning after Jack Goodman had returned home, Mollie was upstairs

playing her violin and becoming upset and angry. This had been happening for the past month; every time she went to play violin, the sound of the clarinet came full force from the next bedroom and with this sound Mollie could not distinguish notes on her violin.

One Saturday, Mollie had reached her limits and ran down the stairs angry and crying. When Jean asked what her what was wrong, Mollie stated that Johnnie was again bothering her with his clarinet playing. Jean yelled upstairs that Johnnie was to immediately come downstairs for a chat.

Johnnie arrived downstairs and by then Jean was really upset. "Do you have to behave like this every time Mollie goes to practice?" Johnnie suddenly became defensive yet co-operative and agreed that he is being a nuisance but in all honesty Mollie was wasting her time playing violin when all the action and potential is with the clarinet and saxophone. "Mother, please let Mollie play clarinet and I will teach her and you will see that she will benefit from it." Jean agreed, as at least there wouldn't be constant weekend quarreling. Mollie then took her clarinet and later saxophone lessons from her older brother and both of them were likewise students of Mr. Pompilio who was their teacher but in his own right an oboe player.

Dealing with the Neighbourhood Bullies

Johnnie McWilliam was not as big as the other boys along the block, like the Elliot boys, Bill and Albert Hart, and many others.

William Hart was 14 years of age and attending Victoria Park school when he broke the Principal Massey's jaw. Hart was to receive a strapping but when Massey wound up to deliver the blows, Bill decked him. Punted from school, Bill joined the forces in 1915. Too young but big for his age, he lied about his age to enlist and died in action. Mrs. Hart then took her remaining son Albert and moved to Victoria.

You get the picture – these boys were tough. They used to taunt little Johnnie McWilliam ("the muscles on his brawny arms stick out like spiders' ankles") and one evening, the taunting became physical and Mollie went running home to "get Mother" while the boys were laughing. Sure enough, Jean McWilliam came down 15th avenue to confront her son's tormentors. One of the older toughs started laughing and pointing at Jean McWilliam, saying "Your face looks like a horse's rear end!" Fast as lightning, Jean McWilliam let go of her daughter's hand and quickly started running at this hoodlum. He was shocked and then turned around and started running as fast as his legs would carry him. He was last seen passing 3 Street and 13th avenue yelling "Help! Help me!!!"

Years later in 1947, Jean McWilliam met again with Mrs. Hart in Victoria and chatted about earlier times in Calgary. Surprisingly, Albert Hart arrived on the scene and

Mollie La France could not believe what a gentleman he had turned out to be. Mrs. Hart was still upset over her Bill's death in the Great War and soothingly, Jean McWilliam quoted Kipling's "If any question why we died/Tell them, because our fathers lied."

Quoting the Bible But Living in Violation of It

Mrs. Elliott (a widow) resided in the terrace opposite the Goodmans and she had a "condition." Wherever she went and whatever she did, she was quoting the Bible! At any place at any time, she was quoting the Bible. At home she played the piano which stood at the front window, singing religious songs evenings while in the backyard her two sons were busy stripping bicycles. Years later ca. 1960, Jean McDonald was residing in Edmonton and we were watching Elliott Ness on *The Untouchables*. The feature program was "Ma Barker" and as soon as Mrs. Barker appeared, very plain, dressed severely, deploring swearing and quoting the Bible, Grandmother and Mother both burst out laughing, simultaneously shouting "Mrs. Elliott!!" And then when Ma Barker's sons appeared, the laughing was high decibel. Ma Barker's boys are going to rob another bank "Praise the Lord!" and if someone gets shot and dies, "It is God's Will! Halleluiah!"

Seldom Missed Tuesday Night City Hall Meetings

Jean McWilliam was always there and not exactly quiet. I have often chuckled about her attending these meetings, attentively watching the body language, reading the Council Agenda, and waiting for her moment to suddenly fire a question, opinion, or criticism to keep those Aldermen and the Mayor on their toes. Einar Starr (who lived next to the Goodmans) and owner of Star Ambulance was one Alderman who really enjoyed Jean being present and Don MacKay (Calgary's Mayor in the 1950's) really liked Jean and stated that while he was the supposed leader of Calgary, the real leaders were in shadows, such as Jean McDonald, keeping Calgary and Calgarians on course for a better future.

Satan Can Quote Scripture

Jean McWilliam oddly enough retained some traditions of her early Catholic childhood. She never ate meat on Fridays, ever. She likewise fasted during Lent but never made an issue that she was eating less food during those 40 days. But Jean McWilliam had little use for any organized religion and was skeptical of anyone claiming special privilege for being openly pious.

On one occasion when asked if her children would like to attend a church outing with the church group and accompany the minister along the Bow River, her response was that "I would never trust anyone with a grown man alone along the river, let alone a minister!" and on another occasion stated that "the best way to ruin something is to

join and destroy within." That was one reason why she was hard during her Labour Meetings; they had to keep to the agenda and Robert's Rules applied because who indeed are these new members? Wheat or chaff?

A Last Farewell?

Johnnie McWilliam was a very good clarinet player and his sister was likewise talented. They had both advanced under the guidance of Mr. Pompilio and were now listening to the radio and playing renditions based on listening.

Mollie was then 18 years of age and working at Heintzmann Music downtown – store clerks worked 6 days per week and the shop was open Saturday mornings. One Saturday, Mollie was to work alone until joined by other staff at noon hour. A customer entered the shop and seemed excited. He told Mollie that he was Mr. Gibson and wanted to speak to her manager since he had an urgent request; he needed a female saxophone player. Mollie then stated, "Relax. I am a saxophone player," and she then took down 3 saxes from the rack (a tenor, bass and alto) and gave a demonstration on each. She was hired on the spot to join "Gibson's Navigators" and play on the Pantages Circuit, including San Francisco, Chicago, and all locales in between. Mollie however would have to leave Calgary that night on the 7PM train for Spokane. In quick succession, she phoned the manager (he was happy) and then went home to pack and tell the news at the home front. Jean was not happy.

Johnnie could overhear the argument and then entered the fray, telling his mother "That is what I tried to tell you ten years ago - playing violin takes you nowhere but play Sax or Clarinet and the offers come flying!" Jean reluctantly agreed that Mollie would leave home that night with "Gibson's Navigators." Mr. Gibson was a Mormon from Salt Lake City and had 5 daughters playing in his band and it was the case that one player became ill while traveling and had to be replaced on short notice. Mollie played 3 saxes and played bassoon parts on the bass sax - Johnnie had taught her well. The Spokane Flyer departed at 7PM and Jean was morose while Johnnie was happy. Jean was upset; she was never able to realize that you cannot hold children forever and that control does not work.

A Great Example of Why You Shouldn't Believe what the Newspapers Pen: Jean McWilliam's Daughter's Write Up

I honestly believe Fake News started in Calgary with the following *Calgary Herald* article about this young woman joining an American Ladies Band and playing Saxophone-Clarinet on the Pantages Circuit.

News article reads: She left on a train Sunday night.

The truth was: She departed Calgary on a Saturday night.

News article reads: Her mother was pleased to see her depart.

The truth was: Her mother was angry as blazes and was upset at train station. Her brother was the one who was pleased. He backed his sister against mother, saying "let her go" while her mother said "she will go nowhere playing violin."

News article reads: This happened over a week – she joined the band, had a quick rehearsal, was hired, and then quit her job.

The truth was: It was done Saturday, with a fast rehearsal in the morning, being hired, quitting her job and going that night!

News article reads: Her mother was proud of her.

The truth was: Later, perhaps, but at the time her mother was very upset and angry at her son as well.

News article reads: Her last name appears as McWilliams.

The truth was: Her real name is spelled McWilliam.

News article reads: The replaced saxophonist was Gibson.

The truth was: The replaced saxophonist became ill and had to return to USA but she was not a Gibson.

News article reads: McWilliams did not work.

The truth was: McWilliam was working at Heintzmann Music when Gibson arrived distressed, saying he needed a woman saxophone player.

See? News a person reads is not what actually happened and anyone reading it might take it as either Gospel or the wrong way!

Pete Knight: "Midnight" and Jean McWilliam's Daughter at Heintzmann's, Calgary

Mollie McWilliam was at working Heintzmann Music in 1923 or 1924 and awarded the great and revered cowboy Pete Knight his trophy for surviving a ride on the unbroken bronc "Midnight." Many cowboys met their fate attempting to ride this beast but Knight succeeded at Stampede and was awarded the trophy by Heintzmann's representative, Mollie McWilliam. Stampede was started circa 1912 when Mother was five and her older sibling Johnnie seven) and was located just around the corner from 313.

Grandmother went to either the first or second Stampede and, you guessed correctly, she "lost her temper." That year, she took her children to all the exhibits and rides, and finally to the horse races. The gun shot and off the quarter horses bolted toward the finish line. Once all were across, one horse kept running and running until it dropped dead. Jean was puzzled, angered and in shock. Mother recalled that race horse travelling at full speed long after the race, ten or fifteen minutes, until it died and Jean left the Park fuming with her two children in tow.

Jean McWilliam took this matter up first with the police, who stated that it was doping, done to speed the horse up. She insisted that they go to the Stampede grounds and investigate, and she followed up at both City Hall and with the Stampede Board

(A. E. Cross in particular). After that, all horses competing had to pass a dope test prior to racing. Years later, jockeys

During the 1920s, Jean McWilliam enjoyed going to the Stampede Park and chatting with the Natives in their tee-pees and get their version of past events and later penned her poem "Red Man" from these interviews and personal insight.

Jean and the Supernatural: A Protector

In earlier times back in Scotland, Jean took residence with an aunt when she was ten years old and this was the result of her mother dying when Jean was 8 years old. However, her aunt died and Jean was forced to find work elsewhere and one location was with the family when she wrote about her direct contact with HIM, and she implored HIM to do HIS will. Later, she went to another farm site and it was the case at this location that one of her responsibilities entailed having to go to another location in the early morning and late evening (milking perhaps?) but to get to this other farm location, she had to pass an estate and the locals were frightened of this locale. There had been murders and suicides there and the family had a bad and sordid history. The place was haunted and no one went beyond its fenced walls.

However, Jean had to walk past this estate to get to where she was required to work; alternatively she could take a much longer route and be "safe." Jean chose the shorter route but she had been cautioned to never go past there alone as her very life would be in peril.

Now Jean had had the earlier experience at eight when her mother had died and contrary to what she had memorized and was told repeatedly, that night the Devil did not come for her mother's soul; it was nonsense. Consequently, she reasoned, these old wives tales about a haunted estate were likely malarkey. So the next day she was taking the shortcut route and fast approaching the estate when it became foggy, with visibility very low. She could not see very well and it was becoming cold while the ambient temperature was warm. She was starting to think "this is a trap" and furthermore she could "feel" something was not right. There was something very sinister, cold and supernatural.

She paused and considered turning back to take the longer route when suddenly she made out a figure in the fog that was approaching her. As it got closer, Jean realized that this was not a beast but a large dog, a phantom dog.

The dog came to her side and got between Jean and the estate fence and slowly began walking while Jean kept pace. When they both had made it past the estate fence, Jean turned to look at the dog but it had gone. Jean later told the family she was working for about her experience and they were frightened, saying "You must be crazy!"

However, later an elderly family member hearing the same story said that when he was a boy, his grandfather told him a story about a massive family fight at the house in which they all died by sword and when the neighbours went there, the dog was the only thing living. It was a mastiff!

The Deaths of Jean's Children in Scotland

Jean and William McWilliam had 5 children but only Johnnie and Mary Jane (Mollie) survived. These losses took their toll.

Jean Anne was particularly fond of one child, also named Jean, but this child died in Glasgow. The child's death struck Jean very hard and she was a long time recovering from it. However, she later had a dream and a vision in which she was listening to music and then saw a very long procession of small children walking in pairs up a beautiful staircase, each carrying a candle in a small candle holder at mid-breast. These children were singing a beautiful hymn while ascending this staircase and Jean McWilliam was most happy witnessing this jubilant and sacred procession. But then she saw her late daughter Jean, not in the procession but standing aside, alone from all the others, her candle extinguished. Jean immediately rushed over to see what the problem was and the young Jean had advice for her mother: "Every time I attempt to light my candle, your tears keep putting my candle out and I can not join the other children in our procession."

Jean sprang out of her sleep and came to full consciousness. She then stopped weeping for her loss, because she knew for certain that HE had other plans for her daughter.

Jean's Meeting at the Graveyard

Jean lost another couple of children and one time was at the local cemetery when the local Catholic priest passed by. He knew that she was a lapsed Catholic and began haranguing her. "Do you know that you have just condemned your child's soul to hell?" he told her. And then Jean erupted with "I would not be too certain about the health of your own soul, sir. Remember the parable of the man gaining favor and the poor man striking his breast asking forgiveness? You just interrupted the latter, only it is a woman!"

Jean and Her Ability to See "Beyond"

Jean McWilliam had had Scottish carpenters residing at 313 but likewise had others. One of her favorites was Billy Burton. Billy worked as a print setter at the *Calgary Albertan* and drove a big motorcycle. He was a good athlete and Johnnie McWilliam was fascinated by Billy, his motorcycle, and his outgoing, happy personality. One of Billy's remarks to Johnnie McWilliam was "Go stand on your head in the corner!"

1914 came and as her unemployed carpenters were enlisting, Billy Burton returned to 313 15 Ave to give his notice and Jean McWilliam was very upset. "Stay and work the press. We need to read what is transpiring and you are providing a vital service," she told him. Billy disagreed and told Jean McWilliam that he was going overseas to fight to make sure that she, Mollie, and Johnnie remained safe and likewise his parents, who I believe were farmers from Barrons.

Anyway, Jean McWilliam wept with Mollie a couple months later when they heard the bugle playing "The Officer of the Day" and saw Billy Burton's unit marching up 17 Ave to board the train heading East.

Jean had other boarders take occupancy after Billy joined in early 1915 and it was the latter part of 1915 when Jean sprang awake from one of her short sleeps (she never slept more than 2 hours at any setting. She often worked and read during these early morning hours but had a series of short sleeps in the day and night.) Anyway, Jean snapped awake from her sleep screaming and the entire household went running to her bedroom to see what the commotion was about. It was about 11 PM and both Mollie and Johnnie were alarmed. Was their mother being attacked?

Jean looks at them and states, "Billy Burton is dead. I saw it." And someone responded, "No, Mrs. Mac, you had a bad dream, a nightmare. You are tired and you have been working too hard. No, you are simply overtired." However, Jean snapped back, "NO! I saw it. Billy and another man are crouched in a trench, a trench filled with mud and water and they are talking. I saw it. Billy took out a pendant and told this man, the other man, to take it in case anything happens. 'The address is on the envelope. Only promise you will do this.' It was at this moment a piece of shrapnel came flying into the trench and struck Billy on his head and shoulders. No, Billy is dead!" The bystanders tried again, "Oh, settle down. Everything will be all right. You are overtired and Billy is ok."

Two weeks later, the local posting of casualties was printed and there was a very somber atmosphere at 313 15 Ave as everyone read the posting and saw that Billy Burton was dead.

Jean's Later Supernatural Experiences

Jean became quite interested in the supernatural following World War I and the subsequent flu epidemic and the Winnipeg General Strike. During the early 1920s, she had a group in for a weekly séance. As earlier stated, Jean McWilliam had insight into the veil beyond this world.

Now, a person must be careful when dealing with this aspect of life and it is not encouraged in the Book but sometimes it is better to ask forgiveness than to ask

permission.

Jean had a Scottish cousin arrive Calgary circa 1923 and she was the same age as Johnnie McWilliam (18). She was Agnes Blaney from Waterside on Ayr and Agnes was in many respects like Jean; she had a high intelligence, and was a great writer who loved drama. Agnes was really a clever person and great wit (more on her later). But Agnes of course was interested in table rapping and I must admit that her cousin Jean McWilliam was a medium who could see the other side.

Johnnie McWilliam was also a person of busy enterprise. He was a great clarinet player and likewise an accomplished electrician, fascinated with electricity and would have been first rate electrical engineer but for his health issues (he had Rheumatic Fever as boy and relapsed again at 14). Johnnie was self-educated, away from formal classes and then worked for the City of Calgary Electric Department.

The rules for conducting a séance were to never do it alone, like a Ouija board, because you never know who is lurking, and always start a séance with a prayer requesting any and all evil spirits to depart. Agnes and Jean had their own personal séances and there was one such occasion when it was just the two women sitting for a session.

The ladies sat placed their hands on the small séance table, said a prayer, and placed their hands into the same swooning motion over the table to energize the table's capacity (prior to joining both thumb and little finger) and jumped sky high!

Johnnie McWilliam was sitting in the basement of 313 with an electric circuit panel board and was wired for action! He had configured the table in such a manner that when the ladies commenced their séance, he would then start this machine and when the table started to have motions, a sensor relayed to Johnnie that that was the time to pull the switch to close the circuit!

Both women received a great unexpected shock. Johnnie was down in the basement laughing and it was not known for some time who did this and how. Mollie laughed when Johnnie told her and promised not to tell.

Her Cousin Agnes Blaney and Agnes' Son Jackie

My second cousin, Jackie Gallagher, was from Carbon. Jackie's Irish-born father, John Francis Gallagher, was quite a character – he owned the Gallagher coal mine, was a Great War veteran, and a former member of the North West Mounted Police. There was a big court trial in 1921-1922 in which Gallagher was the defendant, charged with shooting to death a mine owner named John Coward. Intrigues involving a planned merger of the Gallagher mine with Coward's mine, and whether Gallagher would remain on as manager after the merger, made him a suspect. No murder weapon was

brought into evidence, but Gallagher was found guilty and sentenced to hang. Shortly before the sentence was to be carried out, he was awarded a new trial, and eventually acquitted.

Jackie's mother Agnes left her husband and then moved with Jackie and his younger sister Jeanie to Revelstoke, British Columbia, where Jackie excelled in school and was the youngest student in Grade 12. He passed with very high grades on the BC Departmentals exams. In his last year of high school, he had either the highest overall grades for Grade 12 or was it the highest grade in Math, Physics, or perhaps Chemistry?

Jackie went to work for at the CPR shops on the PM shift and his foreman was Norris Crump, who later retired as President of Canadian Pacific Railways. (This is what his mother told me in the summer of 1966, while I was visiting Agnes in Victoria.) Jackie was well liked by Crump and Crump told Jackie to apply to Purdue University on a CPR Scholarship. Jackie wanted to support his mother by leaving school and working, and hopefully picking up his education later.

Jackie Gallagher went again for a compulsory medical and there it was - TB. Jackie was not going to Purdue but to the sanitarium. Later when Jackie was released, he went to East Van and drove taxi but TB again struck him down and he returned to the sanitarium where he died on January 5, 1949.

In the aftermath of his death, Jackie's mother Agnes (cousin to my maternal grandmother) began drinking very heavily and became almost a possessed person. One Sunday she called for another bottle from the cab company. The driver was Angelo Sposito and his daughter claims that they spoke a long time in the cab. Angelo returned Agnes home to sleep and later that night took both of them for a late supper and her daughter was won over by Angelo Sposito and his insightful personality – a saint attired in a driver's cap – quietly tending to what was his mission.

The next summer, she became Agnes Sposito and her drinking ended. However, Angelo was Italian and still made his wine in the garden shed, out of sight of Agnes. The shed was his sanctuary, along with his garden and flower garden, and a source of pride for him and his neighbours. Angelo was like an old force from some distant time and place and became the bedrock of their marriage, a patient spouse bearing the plight of Agnes's sorrows and being a productive force.

Angelo had no parents but as orphan in Italy prayed to leave Italy. Later, Angelo arrived in the US and worked in San Francisco, driving and bootlegging and he knew everyone. He eventually wanted a change and headed to Victoria by accident and started driving a cab. It was in his second year of driving that he arrived on a cold rainy Sunday for a trip to the bootleggers and met Agnes, who was in a fit of rage regarding Jackie. Angelo calmed her down, something her own daughter had failed to

do since Jackie's death.

Jackie Gallagher. What would he have amounted to had he not had TB?

Another Séance: Full House

Johnnie was not wired for the big table and Jean often had a full crew for evening séances in the mid-1920s. New arrivals were the Smiths and their son Walter, and along with others, sometimes there was up to 12 or 14 at a sitting.

At one séance Walter, then a boy of 6, started speaking out of turn and said, "Mrs. McWilliam, there is a man now standing behind you and he has a funny looking jacket and is saying that Johnnie should go and stand on his head in the corner!" The others sitting around the table were upset the boy was speaking out of turn and at his parents (they had just moved to Calgary) for bringing him to their meeting. Jean was not upset – she motioned to the others that all was OK and the séance continued and later concluded.

A week later Jean McWilliam handed young Walter Smith a photo of the Hillhurst Football team and Walter exclaimed, "Mrs. McWilliam, this is the jacket that man was wearing and there he is," pointing to Billy Burton.

Coincidence? Mollie McWilliam claimed it was impossible for young Walter Smith to have knowledge of Billy Burton. His death had happened years earlier and in this séance circle, no one had knowledge of Billy Burton before he died in 1915 in a trench.

When Not Wiring Séance Tables

Johnnie McWilliam (1903-1944) had rheumatic fever as young boy and likewise again fell ill at 14 years of age and missed school. The first session with rheumatic fever weakened his heart (which explained his early death) and his second illness affected his education. Johnnie was housebound recuperating but was bright and interested in both music (Clarinet and Saxophone) and Electricity. Had Johnnie not been ill and missed so much school time, his knowledge of electricity would have had him graduating as Electrical Engineer. He showed his skills in the wiring of the séance table and the entire front of 313 with flickering, handmade lights in Christmas season. Yes, Johnnie McWilliam made those light bulbs in the basement by applying knowledge from *Scientific American* to make oscillating Christmas display lights. The neighbours were very delighted and surprised and one of the carpenters who installed the wires really enjoyed this Christmas venture.

Jean McWilliam had been out at a Labour Meeting while this hanging was transpiring and could not believe it when she arrived home. Now what had Johnnie been up to?

She didn't believe attending school was necessary for a productive life – the school of hard knocks was perhaps the best teacher. Consequently Johnnie entered the labour force early in life and did not attend university.

Believe it or Not

The doorbell rang in 1919 and Mollie McWilliam opened the front door to a gentleman attired in an army uniform. He asked Mollie if Mrs. McWilliam was home and she stated that she was and went to the kitchen to summon her mother. Jean McWilliam approached the front door and let out a wail. This person was the man who Billy Burton gave the envelope to the night he died.

The man was from Vancouver returning home from Europe and only had limited time in Calgary. He was assured by Billy that if he moved he could get to 313 and back to station within an hour's time; he gave her the envelope and had no time for conversing.

Within the envelope was a short note expressing his love for Jean as his "second mother" and thanks for all she had done for him. He was thinking his time was becoming short.

Being Kind to All: Those Boarders Require Justice

Jean McWilliam had an assortment of many characters at her boarding house over the years. The early years with those Scottish carpenters, the officers convalescing during the war years and following the Winnipeg General Strike and Flu Epidemic. They were the supposed Roaring Twenties, which gave way to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Mollie McWilliam was lucky to be employed at Western Steel (1929-1936) and during this time was living at home at 313 15 Ave with her daughter Alice (who was born in 1929) and the crew who was then residing at 313.

Giving Your Enemy Consideration

Jean McWilliam hated the British colonial Empire with every molecule of her body; the supposed superiority, the colonialism, their ability to draw arbitrary lines on territory demarcating nations, and the ability to flout the Almighty - His way was the British Empire way.

However, just because the head is bad doesn't mean you can label all Englishmen as bad and again Jean was a very complicated person, for her greatest admirers (supporters, boarders and servers and in one case, lifelong attendant) were British to a fault.

From the Ridiculous to the Sublime

Jack and Belle Halliwell - what a couple. Belle was a very quiet cultured English lady who enjoyed needlework and was unassuming while others were discussing politics, religion, City Hall, the province or nation. Belle was quiet and unassuming but she came from a very rich family in Yorkshire where her parents, and grandparents and those before, had operated a very lucrative Inn and Hotel near Bradford.

Her husband Jack Halliwell was from Lancashire. He came from a home of iron workers, hard thankless toil and at life's end, a wooden carpenter's coffin. Grandmother liked Jack Halliwell and treasured quiet but resourceful Belle and the Halliwells liked (enjoyed and respected) their Landlady.

Of Empire and King

Jack Halliwell enjoyed a series of non-stop stories but his tale was the time Jack Halliwell was serving King and Country in a far distant land called "Mess-oh-Pot-Tame-E-ah." "Yes, it was during that dastardly time fighting them Mohammadens that we were all there in this desert shooting at people. They had never done anything to me, so what was I doing there? Anyways we had a real son of a bitch commanding officer, always barking orders and strutting around like a stuffed peacock commanding us men. One morning he begins barking and shouting at me and I had had enough. I raised my rifle and pulled the trigger and that bastard dropped - thud dead! I shot him square between his beady eyes!"

First time listeners would always be in a state of frantic shock hearing this account and then later would perhaps test its veracity. Each person would naturally counter such an account with "Hey Jack, what happened to you? Military court, short trial or escaped execution?"

"Nothing," he would say.

The listener, now intrigued, would reply, "What do you mean, nothing?"

Jack Halliwell, clearing his throat and facing his listener, would slowly state, "Why, I put on that I was balmy. The sun had made me poor head play tricks. That was a God-damned Mohammaden that I shot point blank! Jesus man, they had me on their first boat heading for England. Next day in the hospital section and as they say I slowly recovered when I was back home in Jolly England. Isn't that right, Belle?"

"Yes, Jack. You were there some time and then we met, and came to Canada in hopes of great opportunity."

Within a year, the Halliwells moved to Vancouver and wrote Jean McWilliam often, inviting her to come to the coast.

Some Great Arguments

Sometimes there were some real heated quarrels when Jack Halliwell and Cusack got going. Now Cusack was originally from Ireland but landed in Montreal and earned his coin as a machinist at Ogden. He supposedly was a good millright. Anyway, he and Jack Halliwell loved to "argue for argument's sake." At the end of some blistering arguments, both would burst out laughing for what the topic was and what they were supposedly proposing.

Cusack, however, being labour and hard-skinned was dedicated to his Mrs. Mac. His famous line was "In this world of foxes, there is no place for rabbits."

On one occasion, Jack Halliwell and Cusack started arguing religion. Cusack was standing up for his Pope while his opponent Jack Halliwell was representing the Church of England. Jean was simply shaking her head. About an hour into this heated cross exchange, someone stated that one of the boarder's uncles at Airdrie had his big bull fall into Nose Creek and drown the previous week. Both men fired back "Was it a Catholic or Protestant Bull?" The reply came, "No, but the bull's name was 'Kosher.'"

Jean McWilliam Liked that Exchange

On another occasion, both Halliwell and Cusack got into an argument about Calgary being safe from invasion because the Germans could never get a big boat up the Bow River.

Cornish Family

The Cornish family likewise resided at 313 15 Ave and later moved to White Rock, BC following the Second World War. The Cornishes were very close to Jean McWilliam and her daughter.

Jean McWilliam: What is a Person to Do?

Life presents a wide assortment of problems and difficulties and one of Jean's favorite expressions was "And how would the Jews solve this problem?" She'd then start getting texts and reading up what might be an optimum solution to the problem at hand.

However, her neighbour Annie Goodman was Jewish and her husband Jack (Jacob really) was on the road working weekdays while Annie was in charge of operating 315 15 Ave. One hot summer's week, Annie got a flock of chickens and penned them

between the adjoining houses. In a few days, it was the gathering place for blue bottle flies and the aroma was becoming overwhelming so Jean went next door. "Come on, Annie! Get out there now and clean up that mess! I mean it!"

Annie reluctantly agreed but then told Jean McWilliam that she had only recently been released from the hospital and some other person had taken care of her children because she was recovering from her "apparition." As she was speaking, her son Nathan came down from upstairs (he was perhaps 3 years old) and had some toy and Annie said "Nathan, don't drop that glass. Nathan, you are just like your god damned daddy!"

Jean was not phased and within the hour the chicken area was getting cleaned.

What also made this a fly trap was that the chickens had to later be bled and this was another session of going to 315 and raising Cain. Mollie McWilliam could do a perfect imitation of Annie Goodman and Jack Goodman often asked Mollie what had happened during the week so Mollie could do her imitation of Annie. Jack would howl in laughter. Jack liked Mollie and her improvisations; likewise Mollie was a great fan of Myron Cohen and his accounts.

Jean McWilliam's Greatest Servant and Worshipper

During the 1930s, times were hard financially and upstairs tenants the Barbers were short of money and things were very tight. Jean McWilliam allowed Jim and May to miss a couple of rent installments during this time and they never forgot this. They did of course catch up later on rent but during that short bad spell, Jean told them there was no way she was tossing them and their son Jimmy on the street over a few dollars. She said to stay and pay when things improve; things couldn't stay bad forever.

Grandmother kept the Barbers during the Depression years and following World War II. James Senior by then had saved enough funds and bought a house at 3rd Street East close to 14 Avenue. James had a shoe repair shop at the front of the house and residence behind his workshop.

Jean McWilliam never again paid for any shoe repairs and his wife May Barber was the right hand lady for her "Mrs. Mac," being attentive to house cleaning, overseeing the upstairs tenants' needs, going to the bank for Jean McWilliam and doing any and all errands. She was Jean's godsend.

The Barbers remained very close to Jean and after they moved to their new quarters on 3rd East, young James Barber became a Pressman with the *Calgary Albertan* newspaper and worked this job until his retirement. When he was a teenager, many young women were not taken with James Barber but what they missed was later Marjory's gain. James was smart, had class, was charming, had a pleasant personality,

and his hobby and interest was not stamp collecting, rock sorting or sports but music and stereo phonic systems to make that music come full force. He was another genius. Johnnie McWilliam died in 1944 and sometimes it seemed James Barber was the recipient of that electricity, making harmony and perfection.

Aside: I was present at the Barber household in February 1960. It was a 4-day vacation from school for teachers' convention, so we went to Calgary, my mother to check with Mrs. Barber regarding the house at 313. Jimmy Barber invited my mother and I into the house behind his father's workshop to sit down. Soon the quiet tones of Ravel's Bolero filled the room although there were no speakers sitting on the floor. Jimmy stated that he re-wired the house and the speakers were within the walls. All 4 corners had a speaker set and from our seats we could hear the music from all directions.

Bolero over, we were to listen closely. Soon the sounds of a steam engine was heard in the far distance, then the whistling, then the sounds of the drive wheels came louder and faster and I am a ten year old nervous boy. Good thing my eyes were open and then the engine goes thundering straight through the living room to the other side of the house, moving away from us but the cars being pulled are going clickety-clack as we sat there! It was a very touching experience. Jimmy Barber Jr. was cutting edge in terms of music appreciation and unbelievable effects. Later Jimmy gave me the very record, titled "The Last Sounds of A Dying Era." It became my prized possession.

Again after 1958, Jean McDonald was not living in this house and without Mrs. Barber's conscientious efforts, 313 would have had to be sold. It was too distant from Edmonton to check matters on a daily basis.

There was also one tenant who did not like Mrs. Barber but the three residing on the second story liked Mrs. Barber.

Good to Her Tenants Following 1958

Jean McDonald had a serious fall down her basement steps August 1958 and it was Mrs. Barber who found her in the morning when she came to see how things were and to have a chat. At this time "Gopher" was still living in the basement at 313 in the North room at the bottom of the stairwell but he was at the hospital himself. Gopher was a nickname, of course. In reality, his name was David Rutherford. He had been born in the US and was a carpenter who came to 313 during the 1930s and stayed. He never wanted to be upstairs – he liked the basement as it was cool in summer and warm in winter.

With Mr. Rutherford not in the basement and Jean McDonald lying on the basement floor landing, if not for Mrs. Barber, we would have been attending Grandmother's funeral in August 1958 versus 1969.

Time moved onwards to 1965. Jean McDonald missed her house and daily was worried about her tenants, always concerned about their welfare. David Rutherford died in the summer of 1961. This was sad news for her, as they went back some 35 years. However the remaining tenants were loyal in spite of the old house beginning to show its age and slipping slowly into disrepair.

Donald Moffat, another very English gentleman who arrived at 313 in 1944, remained until 1970. Moffat occupied the back upstairs suite on the West side, a lovely three room suite with living room, kitchen-dining area, and bedroom. It was very cosy. Moffat was an accountant/bookkeeper and ate his meals off premises. He was a very quiet, articulate man, and very upright. He had gone to a private boys school in England before leaving home. He stayed at 313 after 1958 - he easily could have moved but he later told Mollie, "How could I do that to your mother?"

Jimmy Cahill

James (Jimmy) Cahill was born in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts and was a very nice personality. He was very well liked and respected by Jean's family. Jimmy worked at Colonel Belcher Veterans Hospital as an orderly on the wing and particular ward that was not open to the general public. Here were those who were horribly disfigured from war combat and likely some had serious deformities and/or desperate mental states, while others likely had only a small remaining semblance of a face. All were tended to by Jimmy.

Jimmy was a favorite and had the upper back two-room east bedroom and had suffered during this time (1958-1965). He retired in 1961 but was content to remain at 313. In the winter of 1964, he awoke and frost had accumulated on the inside of his balcony door. In August 1965, Jimmy was transferred to the large one bedroom suite at the top of the stairs. He had a fold out bed, table, a small television and on his wall an old calendar from earlier years retained with a picture of a pre-teen boy and girl kneeling in prayer.

Tom Healey

Tom Healey lived in the front second floor suite at 313 and was a social worker. He had previously worked in Ottawa and then had been transferred to Calgary and was from the Caribbean. Tom moved to Calgary in 1955 and had lived at 313 since his arrival. He later, in 1960, moved to Vancouver. Tom was well liked by Mrs. Mac and he very much appreciated that she did not slam the door on his face when he appeared personally to rent the upstairs suite. Jean McWilliam was glad to hear that Tom was a social worker and she informed him that her 35 years as Children's Convener with the Local Council of Women was her school of hard knocks.

Tom was a happy natured person and his Persian cat was really a nice animal. About this time there was some upsetting news. American folk singer and lawyer Paul Robeson arrived in Calgary to perform but the Palliser Hotel would not allow Paul Robeson to stay - no blacks allowed. Jean was fired up hearing this news but I am not sure if Paul Robson took temporary lodgings at 313 or with another of Jean's associates.

A Man of Mystery

Living on the main floor in the rear suite with its separate back entrance was Rupert Frost. Frost arrived at 313 during 1953 and was German. Very intelligent, he was educated at the University of Heidelberg, and was fluent in English. He once corrected Mrs. Barber on her grammar; after making the grammar correction, he exclaimed "and English is NOT my first language!"

He shared the back bathroom and refrigerator on the main floor and was an orderly at the General Hospital. However, he and Jimmy Cahill (the orderly at Colonel Belcher Hospital) never had much contact. Frost worked midnight shift at General Hospital and was a learned man. One time, Jean's grandson was visiting in February 1957 (again for Teachers' Convention) and Mr. Frost showed him how to divide fractions, as he was good at math.

Later a lady arrived from the Baltic states and Jean prayed this beautiful woman and Frost (he was handsome, with flaxen hair, a straight nose, and steel grey blue eyes) were going to marry, but Frost said that this woman was in reality a Baroness and staying at Palliser Hotel and was only giving Frost his stipend for work earlier done in the Baltic states.

The Chain of Events

Grandmother had her fall down the basement steps in August 1958, and were it not for Mrs. Barber, she would have laid on the basement floor - forever?

Jean McWilliam then moved to the Royal Alex Hospital in Edmonton on September 1, 1958.

Sometime after this event, neighbour Albert MacIsaac, who was a conductor for the CPR residing next door at 311, got his call Sunday evening for a Northbound Red Deer Freight 77 ordered for 23:00. MacIsaac left from his side door and was surprised to meet Rupert Frost carrying a garden hose. MacIsaac asked whose hose it was and Frost stated it belongs to the "old lady" and MacIsaac informed Frost to return the hose to the backyard of 313. When he went to the avenue, he saw Frost had a pick up truck loaded with items. MacIsaac was concerned.

New Policy

MacIsaac informed Mrs. Barber and she called Mollie La France in Edmonton and it was decided that the upstairs would be locked. Frost would have access only to the bathroom and a fridge would be moved to his suite; the doors leading to remainder of downstairs would be locked.

Frost moved from Calgary soon after and when all was done an inventory shows many items disappeared. There were pots and pans, dishes, a couple of tables, and most importantly, boxes of correspondence Jean McWilliam had retained in her basement, all gone. Frost had moved to an acreage at Sundre, Alberta and no doubt decorated his acreage with effects from 313 and in particular those three monkeys which used to adorn the Fireplace – "See no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil."

History and Truth

What puzzles me is why Jean fell down those stairs. Frost's birth certificate states West Germany but this is not correct. His real town of birth was Schmeigel Posen (South Prussia) and his father was Mayor. Frost later attended Heidelberg University to study Engineering and graduated 1934. He immediately joined the forces. Rupert's younger brother Dieter Frost joined the German Army and was a Berlin coffee trader prior to 1939 and following WWII emigrated to Alberta and resided at Olds, Alberta. Rupert later followed from Ireland in 1953.

American records show Rupert Frost as being Luftwaffe based in Italy. However, Frost never said anything about flying. Instead he once stated that he was with the crew who went through the Baltic states and wound up at Leningrad. When they later were forced to retreat, he had to make certain it was going to work because in his own words "Had the Russians got me, I would have been executed on the spot without a Trial!"

The crew who operated from Poland to Leningrad was the Einsatzgruppen A and their statistician was Stalher. By his accounts we gain insight into their usual activity, which was to enter a village or town, take a census and next morning summon who is on the list and "execute" them. Rupert on more than one occasion boasted of his prowess with a rifle and stated on some occasions there was need to change rifles often as the one he was using had overheated from the action. This is not the testimony of a flier in the Luftwaffe over Italy.

Frost supposedly got out of the Baltic states and arrived in Canada in 1953 but the time from 1945 to 1953 was spent in Ireland, supplementing what? What was "The Quiet Man" achieving in Ireland?

This is conjecture but Frost must have been running from something. When he first

arrived at 313 with his intelligence and punctual habits, Jean McDonald was pleased and of course both carried a deep and resentful grudge towards the English. The Baroness arrived and then he wanted to move. Perhaps Jean McDonald was asking too many questions.

Did she fall down the stairs or was she shoved? She never said what happened.

From 313 to Edmonton in August 1958

Grandmother lived at 313 15 Ave SE Calgary from 1912 until August 1958.

I was entering Grade 3 and Mother had to head to Calgary in the last week of August because Grandmother had had a serious fall down her basement steps and was found later by her cleaning lady Mrs. Barber, a tenant from the 1930s who later moved down the avenue. Her husband Jimmy operated a shoe repair-skate sharpening business, and the couple was very good to me as a boy and youth.

Now as for Frost, he moved shortly after Grandmother had her bad fall but in Grade 2 I arrived in February with my older sister Colette and Mother for a visit. We three were singing "Frosty the Snowman" in the small back bedroom when suddenly the door flew open and Frost went "BRRRRRR!"

Later he asked me to come to his room and he showed me how to divide fractions.

Anyway, there is much more to this man. He was not what and who he said he was and even today, they have listed him as being a pigeon over Italy, not as Einsatzgruppen A heading to Leningrad via the Baltic states.

When Mother went to Calgary, she later returned to Edmonton with Grandmother and Grandmother recovered over the next 4 or 5 months at the Royal Alex hospital, far from where we were living in Strathearn. Mother used to go at least 6 times a week to visit.

John Page, Blacksmith

John Page lived in Victoria Park at 316 15 Avenue SE and operated his blacksmith shop opposite City Hall at 7Ave and 2 St SE. Page worked at this site until the late 1930s and then made a change. He relocated himself to San Diego and became a horseshoe maker for the California racing circuit. Page was knowledgeable about Calgary conditions and its racing park and places to stay close to the Stampede Grounds.

Prior to Jean Anne's death on August 15, 1969, Jean McDonald's granddaughter from Edmonton (Jeannine Green and her 5 year old daughter Michelle) came for a visit.

One day Mollie La France and her "helper" Michelle Green were busy cleaning the upper steps on the stairwell when the phone rang. Mother went down and the call was short. Mother returned to stairway and could hear the voice of Jimmy Cahill saying "Now you should go downstairs and see how your grandmother is doing." Mother was moved. Jimmy was a special person.

Jean Anne McDonald would be very happy to know that in August 1970, Jimmy Cahill finally departed 313 to reside at a new Old Folks Residence at 6 Ave between 2-3 St SE, adjoining St Francis Church and behind the downtown Canadian Main Legion.

Strathearn, Edmonton: 1958-1959

John Under the Covers; Avro Goes Kaput; the 1950 Canoe River Train Crash

No one is perfect but some who claim they are perfect suffer from an exaggerated sense of being. Case in point: My father was CPR and one day came home from the office in a rather foul mood. It was February 1959 and he stated that the Division Engineer (Mr. Thompson) earlier that day was quite upset because his son had phoned Edmonton from Toronto to say that he had been fired that morning.

Grandmother's ears picked up hearing this and she wanted to hear more regarding this account; full court was to be held.

The Division Engineer's son was likewise an Engineer but chose Electrical Engineering whereas his father had studied Civil Engineering. Both father and son graduated from McMaster University in Hamilton which in earlier years had a good reputation.

Anyway, my dad was in a foul mood and stated that it was another calamity hitting Canada. Thompson's son was employed by a company no longer in existence, Avro; it had made jets and had extensive plans for submarines, tanks, and all things that move. 8,000 were dismissed that day. Later Thompson surfaced again south of border and began working for NASA.

Dad barked about this boneheaded decision being the second time the person leading Canada had seriously messed up but this character was a "darling" to the voting electorate.

On November 21, 1950 a troop train heading West to Vancouver from Shiloh, Manitoba had a head-on collision near Cedarside-Canoe River, British Columbia. Contrary to what was said theatrically at court, the case remained that the train dispatcher issued train orders for two trains to meet and issued them to 4 stations. The operator made an error typing the train order and re-typed the train order but didn't

repeated it to the Dispatcher – re-typing it, he substituted another locale for where this train was to meet the opposing train.

Deja vu again: In 2020, a man died who very much resembled John Diefenbaker and in the same article, there was mentioned another son who was fathered by John Diefenbaker and residing near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. DNA is virtually foolproof. This man had a rather sad and lonely life and surely he must have suffered from low self-esteem.

What if all those earlier fanatic Conservative types had the truth presented to them? They were deceived and all was hushed, the “backroom boys” made sure. Were my father living, he would state something to the effect of three strikes and the Joker is out!

Jean McDonald was moved by this February 1959 (Black Monday) episode and muttered something about Diefenbaker not being credible and indeed Avro’s cancellation was not going to bode well for Canada’s future. She stated that the “brains were going to be drained” and as a nine year old, I repeated her concern but was not completely unaware of its long term implications.

Jean McDonald then stated that during the court trial for the 1950 train crash that killed 17 Canadian soldiers on their way to the Korean War, Diefenbaker’s then spouse was in the hospital dying and she wondered if there was anyone keeping him company. With hindsight, we can see she was correct on both points.

Jean McWilliam only watched 11PM Monday Night All Star Wrestling once and it was horrible. She kept complaining about the brutality and asking for it to stop. I was wishing she would remain quiet as I thought it was good, even great entertainment.

How I used to hate this one man, the professional wrestler named Gene Kiniski. He was on wrestling in western Canada and won all his matches but most of the time would cheat. I hated this man, hated him, and I'd watch wrestling screaming and shouting, wanting to see him lose.

One very, very cold winter Sunday afternoon in December 1963, I was watching TV – it was too cold to play hockey and our game was canceled. At 2PM I turn on the TV and my dad was in living room. Then Grandmother appeared as well.

He was on TV again, Gene Kiniski, but this time he had a little boy and a little girl sitting on his legs and was reading some children's Christmas story. Later it became clear the boy had cancer and didn't have long to live and the girl likewise had a severe disability. Then my father tells me, "Johnnie, this is the real Eugene Kiniski, a real gentleman and I don't want to hear you yelling and shouting and cursing this man." Grandmother concurred and shook her head – it was 2 against 1.

Then I realized Kiniski was a prankster and he became my hero.

Dad told me Al Oeming, the professional wrestler, had a game farm and his money came from him owning the Wrestling Circuit. Gene Kiniski was his best draw. Al Oeming had Master's degree in Biology and was a living legacy for animals – he was crazy about animals. Secondly, my dad's train dispatcher (Harry Vince from Edmonton) was raised as neighbours to Al Oeming. They went to school together at old Scona in South Edmonton.

Many years later, I would meet Gene Kiniski's in-laws and they were great. Also, the doctor who correctly identified my father's early stages of cancer was Dr. Stan Warshawski. Stan had a sister and this sister married a Kiniski; Gene Kiniski was one of their sons.

Again, Jean McDonald was apt and ready with her 3 count!

Parallels: Julia Kiniski is to Edmonton as Jean McWilliam was to Calgary?

My maternal grandmother was very inclusive and had no time for racists; she called a spade a spade. My father was very pro-Chinese and admired how they worked hard and succeeded.

I came in one time from delivering for a drug store after school hours in about 1963 and there was a show on featuring Al Oeming and his pet cheetah. Al had just returned from China and stated he had had a wonderful time and was treated very well because he had gone to assist with the preservation of a Polish horse earlier introduced.

Al Oeming's big draw was Gene Kiniski, a villain and a card draw. Gene Kiniski filled the spectator seats wherever he wrestled and the fans were there to view the action and doing so put more coin in Al Oeming's coffers so his Game Farm could be expanded or feature more additions.

Gene Kiniski (Canada's Greatest Athlete, by his very own admission) would not be fazed (Gene's mother Julia was a tireless social justice enforcer and like Jean, attended her city hall meetings regularly, although in Edmonton instead of Calgary) and Julia would be screaming angry today over these recent past two decades of complete corruption, so bad that even Gene would be scared to return home for a Sunday dinner. He might get a fork in the eye or get spooned over his head!

Gene Kiniski upset people all the time but told the plain truth:

1. Johnny Esaw was host of the CTV program "Sports Hotseat" and Johnny appeared upset that his program that day was about wrestling with a "special guest" and in his

smarmy manner, he started denigrating the sport and likewise asked why it was that women faithfully attended it each and every Thursday at Maple Leaf Gardens.

Kiniski "stared down" Esaw for the better part of a minute and then began his haranguing rebuttal. "Esaw, the reason why all the women in Toronto and anywhere in Canada where I choose to wrestle are in full attendance and fighting mad to sit front row center is because, Johnny Esaw, they are all married to little pip squeaks like yourself, but once a week these ladies have the full opportunity to witness what a real man looks like!"

Esaw turned scarlet and said nothing for remainder of the program but some of panelists had difficulty speaking without laughing.

2. Gene Kiniski was some years later interviewed on CBC by Jim Coleman and the question of CFL football came up and Gene Kiniski stated "Herb Capozzi – everybody knows Herb Capozzi is an idiot!!" and then changed the subject to wrestling. This comment caused a huge disturbance because Capozzi was Commissioner of the CFL at this time and likewise was tied into the CBC as Sports Program Manager or some such title.

Coleman later recalled that "outside camera range" a team of technicians were holding signs reading "Please apologize to Herb Capozzi" but Kiniski was oblivious to them and their signs. Coleman became distraught, wondering if Kiniski couldn't read or take a broad hint.

Finally with a few moments to go, Coleman took the lead and interjected, announcing into the microphone, "Ladies and Gentlemen, when earlier in this program Gene Kiniski made a comment about Herb Capozzi, he did not mean what he said, did you Gene?"

It was a classic: Kiniski put his storm trooper face as close to the camera as possible and for the record said in his now raspy voice: "That's right, Jim Coleman. I never meant to say that Herb Capozzi was an idiot – I meant to say imbecile!"

My father damned near fell out of his chair laughing.

The Advent of Jean McDonald's Death

My father was transferred back to Calgary from Edmonton in August 1965. I would attend St. Mary's, along the Elbow River at Centre Street. I was not too happy living in Victoria Park – having spent many of my younger years in Edmonton, I thought it was miles ahead of its southern rival, Cowtown. But in July 1969, my mother decided to remodel and freshen up her mother's Victoria Park home. Jean McDonald's house at 313 was redecorated so that the original Bird's Eye maple floors would be

highlighted. The original front bedroom facing 15 Ave was now converted into the living room and the back area opposite the bathroom and behind dining room was the new bedroom. The modifications were wonderful and those floors were impressive. The house was looking in A-1 condition.

Company Arriving from Afar

No sooner had the renovations been completed in early July than there was news that an old boarder was intending on returning home to 313 to see his second mother. That boarder was Dave (David Purvis).

Dave Purvis was another of Jean' favorite "sons" from the first part of the 1920s and was then great company for both Mollie and Johnnie. They had great times when Dave was living at 313 as he was a real going concern and live-wire.

Dave departed from Calgary in 1924 and went south to Carson City, Nevada where he originally worked as a professional gambler. He later was almost run out of Carson City (the gambling establishments were fed up with him winning) and then they all came to their joint collective senses and made a huge compromise that served everyone's best interests.

David Purvis would desist from gambling but take gainful employment at any and all such established gambling venues where it was or suspected cheating was occurring, particularly by guests but the House also must be accountable. Therefore Dave acquired a great type of gambling consulting enterprise and was kept busy, enjoying his work serving both customers and businesses.

He could deal a deck faster than lightning and have certain cards "disappear" in a twist and fall out in a flash. It was a most interesting talent and Dave said that some of it was natural and other parts of it acquired.

Dave Purvis was happy to return to 313 15 Ave. SE and visited Jean McDonald several times at the Brentwood Nursing Home. Dave likewise had good friends residing in Calgary who he had met in Carson City and they were happy that Dave was now in Calgary. Ralph and Elaine Armstrong were one such couple; Ralph was a retired but earlier was a self-employed insurance agent with a lucrative insurance business in Calgary. The Armstrongs liked going south for vacations and after meeting Dave Purvis at one of the gambling establishments, they made a fast Calgary connection.

Arrangements were made for Friday August 15 that Ralph Armstrong would drive Jean McDonald's son in law (Bill La France) and Dave Purvis to Field, British Columbia to view the Spiral Tunnels and this was to be a dawn to dusk experience.

On Monday August 10, 1969 Jean McDonald's granddaughter and great granddaughter (Jeannine and Michelle Green) arrived from Edmonton for a visit and the house was happy and full with visiting.

It was indeed wonderful when Jeannine met Jean McDonald. They had not seen each other in a few years and in earlier times had had some verbal disagreements but it was Jean McDonald. She was lying on her hospital bed flat on her back when Jeannine approached the foot of her bed. Jean looked straight at Jeannine and suddenly leapt forward, exclaiming "Jeannine!" and Mrs. McDonald was a happy woman and her roommate Mrs. Rodgers (what a personality she was and her daughters; Rhett was very good to Mrs. McDonald) and stated that she had not seen Jean so happy since a couple of months back, when Mollie (Jean's daughter) arrived for an unannounced evening visit with some Scottish scones.

On Friday August 15, the women (Mollie La France, Michelle Green, and Jeannine Green) spent their time in downtown Calgary, shopping.

This had only her grandson (John La France) at home on Friday August 15 and it was he who answered the phone at 1:13 from the Brentwood that his grandmother had died and they were arranging for the funeral director (Jacques at 17 Ave and 2 St SW) to be notified (this had all been pre-arranged thanks to her daughter) and they were sorry to report this happening.

A Prescience: There were Indications

When the Titanic went down, there were signs from nature; there was no moon, it was a blue iceberg, and record ice flows in the Atlantic. They were going for a speed record and Captain Smith was to retire after completing this voyage while deep within James Blaney was stoking the fires.

At 3 AM on the morning of August 15, John La France was working as the CPR Leverman at 12 St East Calgary Interlocking Tower and was listening in on the East Dispatcher's line. The dispatcher (DWQ - Don Quesnelle) was issuing and receiving a litany of train orders – there were many meets and train order repeats from stations along both the Maple Creek (Swift Current-Maple Creek-Gull Lake-Tompkins-Dunmore) and Brooks (Alyth-Gleichen-Bassano-Brooks-Medicine Hat) Subdivisions.

Operator Tony Stroh at Bassano cut into the action stating that the wind was really stirring at Bassano and there was going to be issues if it continued. Bassano, the "Best Town by A Dam Site," was a nice community with a great diner. One of the patron Saints of Scotland is at Bassano, St. Columba.

Consequently when the later phone call was received at 1:13PM, John La France was prepared.

When the ladies return from shopping at 4PM, he opened the front door and stated, "Is our house in order?" and then gave them the news. Later that evening the men returned and Dave Purvis was affected.

Jean McDonald's Funeral on August 19, 1969

The funeral was rather interesting in that the attendance was not particularly high but there were a couple of surprises. Young Walter Smith ("I see a man wearing a funny suit, Mrs. Mac") was there and a few others who had not been in contact for a long time

Other Events: Newspaper and Calls of Condolence

Jean McDonald's grandson (John La France) was absolutely floored when the phone rang and an authoritative voice asked if Mrs. La France was at home and available. I called Mother to the phone and she was on the line for the longest time. What I could overhear was the recalling of many events from earlier years; she was laughing and then stating how good it was to discuss those old times.

Coming off the line I asked who the caller was and she replied, "That was Fred Kennedy." Fred Kennedy was a featured columnist and later penned a wonderful tribute to Jean McDonald in his *Calgary Albertan* column. "I Write As I Please" and he was very considerate, thoughtful, thankful and giving praise to Jean McDonald. He could write a good article and reading it, I was really moved.

Likewise the *Herald* feature writer Evelyn Reid wrote a nice feature tribute article and had long been a real supporter and fan of Jean McDonald. They went back together many years and she recalled the several campaigns and issues Jean McDonald had fought, and that she was not taking her old age happily; she was too active to be set aside.

The Burial

Her burial was at Calgary North Hill Cemetery and we were there for the Final Prayer, tribute and the lowering of the casket. The pallbearers were Jimmy Barber, Sr., Garret W. Green (Jeannine's husband), Barry Moncur (absent), William V. Page, Allan Fraser (absent), and Richard McWilliam. During the final tribute, I was standing on one side of the grave and Dave Purvis was standing on the other; he became a tad emotional. Without fanfare, the gentle arm of William (also known as Red or Bill) Page reached around the shoulders of Dave Purvis in a most consoling and compassionate manner. I will never forget that scene, ever. Red Page was a wonderful person and great family member, a chosen special member.

The Pages lived along 14th Avenue and 2 St SE. John Page was the father, and the sons were Robert, William V., and Leslie. W. V. Page worked as locomotive engineer for the CPR Alberta district from 1918 to 1965 and met my father in Lethbridge in the early 1920s.

Prior to them meeting, Jean McWilliam held speaking engagements throughout the Crowsnest Pass for the coal miners of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). During this time there was prohibition; Alberta was "dry" and BC was "wet" and the Pass, connecting the two, was the place for bootlegging action. On one occasion in September 1922, bootlegging activities in the Pass resulted in murder. A man named Picariello shot and killed Constable Stephen Lawson in Coleman, then escaped, later being spotted in the CPR right of way ditch on a Sunday evening by a train crew en route from Lethbridge to the Pass. The person who spotted the man lying, crouching, in the ditch was fireman W. V. Page and the engineer on that trip was William Niven. Page informed Niven about what he'd seen and the train was stopped at Pincher Station. A report was given to the Operator who contacted the Lethbridge train dispatcher and Alberta Police made the arrest at this location, west of Macleod.

This was 1922 – A. W. La France (my father) was working as operator in Blairmore, Alberta as relieving agent-telegrapher and Picariello would arrive to unload his car of BC coal (which was really whiskey with a light layer of coal to disguise the load) and gave A. W. La France \$10 (huge money at that time) for arranging the spot on the team track.

William "Red" V. Page was the "uncle" I never had in Western Canada. My mother's brother died in 1944 and my father's two brothers resided in Quebec, so Page was my uncle. He sure was good to me as a child, youth and adult. As Oliver Goldsmith stated about his own father, "even his failings leaned to virtue's side!"

Jean McWilliam's Son in Law (my father)

My father A. W. (Bill) La France worked for the CPR years from 1918 to 1965 and from 1920-1922 worked in the Blairmore-Coleman-Hillcrest section. He had some interesting accounts of his time there.

He worked Coleman and Blairmore when Picariello would arrive enquiring if the car of BC coal had been spotted at the team track and when father stated that it was indeed there, Mr. Picariello would hand dad a five-dollar bill (big coin in those days) and thank him for a job well done. My father liked Picariello, as he had a nice personality and was a generous man. While living in the Pass, my father had a room at the Lassandro place. Florence Lassandro was in the car with Picariello when Constable Lawson was shot.

Another interesting time was dealing with Russians. The Exta Gang foreman was Russian (Nicholas/Nick Resin/Rezin) and he arrived at the station and asked dad if he

wanted some mushrooms. Then the Russian reached into a gunny sack he was carrying and removed a man's head that had long red hair, apparently a victim of the gang.

My father worked the Crowsnest Pass at these locales and then went dispatching in Lethbridge (1923-1928) and Calgary (1929-1950), worked as a Rules Instructor Alberta District (1950-1954), in Edmonton as Chief Train Dispatcher, and retired as Chief Train Dispatcher in Calgary in October 1965.

My father always stated that the Crow (Lethbridge) and Laggan (Calgary) were two hard subdivisions for dispatching. There were passengers and freights running in sections, extras, mine switchers, slow orders, washouts and failures, and track/machine operators but he was a good Morse Code man and loved a challenge. The running trades liked him very much because there were no delays.

Introducing The Gray Family

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the Poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour:-
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Thomas Gray, "Elegy From a Country Churchyard":

Charles Gray, Mayor of Winnipeg in 1919, was a good person. My grandmother was Labour but in today's light, I would have voted for Charles Gray for the honest government! But that labour scene in North Winnipeg, all the shops and eastern European workers, some radicals, rabid radicals. Just because she was my maternal grandmother does not mean that I agreed with her on everything. No, we had some very sharp arguments. I sometimes thought she was saying "What's yours is yours and mine is mine but in Socialism what is mine is my own and what is yours is mine?"

Charles Gray, however, was a person of high principles, interest, talent and intellect (Dulwich-educated, electrical engineer, cabin boy, clipper, round the world – a fantastic life story) and although Charles had only been in Winnipeg a very short time, he was elected because he was a communicator with soft people skills. Charles Gray had only been in Winnipeg since 1916 and was selected by the community to run as Mayor in 1918 and was elected but Charles likely did not understand what he was going to face and the backroom boys did not enlighten Charles Gray as to the real situation brewing. They needed a sacrificial lamb.

Personally, Charles Gray in my estimation would have been a fantastic person to have met, with his plying the ocean as a cabin boy and knowing all about the wonderful world and his joy of knowledge. But he was not aware of the darker side of human nature and quest for power. Herman Melville's Billy Budd comes to mind.

Charles Gray was Billy Budd and Claggart was the dark silent force of the backroom, needing someone to take "the fall" so they could remain intact and run their community as to their own desires. In the playground, this is known as tossing the victim under the bus and it was as applicable in Winnipeg in 1919 as times earlier when a frustrated Pontius Pilate exhaled "What is Truth?"

There are always two sides to every story and being advised by my grandmother "Dare to be a Daniel - dare to stand alone!" have always sought to get both sides of every story prior to making an informed decision.

After Jean McDonald's Funeral: Back at 313 15 Ave

There was a great reunion at our house and it very long overdue and by all rights ought to have happened years earlier. Jean Rosalind Fraser met Richard Bennett McWilliam face to face and had a long chat. They were in reality both children of Johnnie McWilliam. Johnnie was married to Signe Stefa and had a daughter. Signe later contacted TB and died in a sanitarium. John McWilliam married again later to Phylis Moncur (nee Andrews) who was widower with two children, Jacqueline and Barrington (Barry). When John McWilliam re-married, his daughter Jean was to have lived with them but Jean's step mother cast Jean aside.

Jean McWilliam then took custody of the young Jean McWilliam (she was only 5 years old and already had had enough abuse to suffer a nervous breakdown) and took command. Young Jean was talented and later became a long time serving Councilor at Westbank, BC. Politician Stockwell Day earlier in BC had some "disagreement" with Jean Fraser (her husband was Allan Thomas and they married in January 1950) and his comments were "there are some pretty powerful GENES running through that family." I chuckled while reading his thoughtful email.

Anyway, it took a funeral to bring these two siblings face to face and from this event forward, they became close, thanks again to Jean McDonald. That funeral was in 1969, August 15 – over 50 years ago. The Winnipeg General Strike was over 100 years ago. This centennial is important and unbelievable to me personally. Time can change things so much.

All addresses referenced hereunder:
313-15Ave SE, Calgary

1115- 6 Ave SW Calgary
10072- 91Ave Edmonton
10805- 79 Ave. Edmonton

The original structures at these addresses are gone; nothing remains of their physical structure. But some wonderful people and organizations have come their rescue and permanence. Fort Calgary's present day exhibit explores Jean McWilliam's boarding house with some personal effects, photos of Jean McWilliam and family, and large photos of John Blaney and R. B. Bennett.

Heritage Park has the fireplace and hearth from 313 15 Ave, Calgary, in the Colonel Macleod Cabin (sandstone house). At the Park's Prince House on the second floor, the fumed oak cabinets which were once of the sitting room at the same address. Two autumn scenes were donated in the spring of 2004.

The Glenbow Museum in Calgary has the personal correspondence and the Robert Burns Book given from the Estate of Harcourt O'Reilly. In Edmonton, the Old Timers Cabin overlooking the North Saskatchewan River valley has photos of Scona and Edmonton circa 1976 painted by the Korean-Canadian artist Tag Kim.

These societies and organizations have now come to the rescue preserving what has been removed. It reminds me of reading Oliver Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" or that Irish lament "Scenes of My Childhood."

Likewise is the case that many considerate people have been likewise most instrumental and gave more support and encouragement to make these written works come alive.

Special Thanks and Appreciation

It was Dorothy and Pat Molloy's recommendation in the spring of 1981 that Jack Peach be given the Memoirs of Jean McDonald and Peach subsequently wrote articles "Jean Became the Voice of Calgary's Conscience" and "Bugs at the Hotel?"

The Hagel Family in Cochrane and Calgary gave room for the artworks and delivery to Fort MacLeod from Edmonton (Matt and Ken Hagel), while Len and Carol safely handed over the Burn's Book to the Glenbow. Terry McGuire Hagel tended to all and any legal aspects making this project come to fruition.

Jean Anne Hawse was only two months old (she was born in June 1969) when her great grandmother died but has been a wonderful hardworking and appreciative worker preserving the memory of Jean Blaney McWilliam McDonald.

Kathleen Oliver began writing her thesis on Jean McWilliam but never completed it. I

would love to find her as she would no doubt have much information on earlier times and more importantly, I'm interested in what made her interested in writing about Jean McDonald.

Garrett W. Green, during the Edmonton years (1963-1965), conscientiously drove Mollie La France to the Good Samaritan Hospital Sunday afternoons and was so very wonderfully congenial in this regard.

It now concludes a chapter of Canadian life and the hard efforts of a determined campaigner who fought for those who could not or would not speak out and ensure that everyone would be entitled to a better future. This happens each and every month end when the aged pick up and deposit their Canada Old Age Security Pension cheques. It began in 1952 with an enthusiastic Prime Minister McKenzie King meeting with Jean McDonald and Dorothy Anderson who paid their own return fares from Calgary to Ottawa to present their case that the elderly warranted more assistance. Jean Blaney began with a Grade 5 education. What would have happened had she completed a PhD? R.B. Bennett once in passing stated that had Jean McWilliam had a university education, she would have ranked among the top tier of intellects in Canada. As he was a conservative, we can assume that Bennett was objective in this judgment.

Never Came to Fruition

Likewise with Jean McDonald having her fall in August 1958 and separation from the Calgary community, it was in 1960 that the Calgary Public School Board was going to name a school honoring her but the plan never came to fruition and being that Jean was no longer residing in Calgary and communication was not as available as it is today, no school was named after her. In a way, perhaps it is just. Jean McWilliam had no use for homework. Her belief was that teachers were paid to educate their charges in school during school hours and therefore any homework meant what it says. There was plenty of work at home to keep the student busy – vacuum the rug, wash dishes, wax the floor, and generally be productive. I think this just might be the real reason this idea of naming a school after her was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, I did lobby for Jean McWilliam to be the new namesake of the former Langevin school in Calgary.

Some Early Women Leaders

During Jean McWilliam's time, there were another couple of women who lived and made contributions, like Mayor Charlotte Whitton of Ottawa and Edmonton Alderwoman Julia Kiniski. I feel bad that during the time we resided in Edmonton Jean McWilliam and Julia Kiniski never met face to face to have a chin wag. They both did not have a supposed high education but they made up for it in determination and being responsive to the needs of the underprivileged.

Putting Her Life's Work into an Autobiography

Jean McDonald began writing her memoirs in the summer of 1959 after she returned from our Edmonton neighbours in Lavigne (Skunk Hollow) and her directions directed to her grandson were "Get me a pencil and some paper – time is getting short!" She had lots to write about – being a stalwart friend of R.B. Bennett in spite of being on the opposite political side, a Children's Convener for 35 years with the Calgary Women's Council, a great influence in the formation of the Calgary Women's Labour Council (along with Mary Corse), a devoted attendee to all City Hall weekly meetings, responsible for Canada's present supplement to the Old Age Security Pension, Calgary's first police matron (appointed in 1911 under Chief Mackie) and a defender of the marginalized and those who were too timid to speak for themselves. She completed that autobiography and the 70-page document was typed up by my mother Mollie La France in about 1972.

She started her memoir project at 81 years of age and had just returned from our 2-doors-down neighbour, Katherine (Kit) Copeman (nee Devaney). They enjoyed each other's company. Kit used to have Jean come over for afternoon tea and chat. Kit had three older sons (Charles, Edward, and Gerry) interrupted by the Korean War and then a younger complement of Michael, Patricia, Marilyn, and Silvia. Kit was a wonderful personality and likewise Jean admired how Kit had a large family but their house was well organized. In earlier times, Jean McWilliam was hard on women having large families but in Kit's case, she again made an exception. Kit's husband Donald worked at the NorthWest Brewery and their owners were the Devaneys from Dunvegan and when a person says Dunvegan that means Peace River and its Northern Alberta Railway (NAR) and that means the Donlevy family and –

The story simply expands outward.

Ottawa, 1983

Jean McWilliam's grandson (me) was in Ottawa in February 1983 on business and thought that attending the Opening Session of Parliament might be a good idea. He arrived there and took his place in the gallery and there they were, those men. The Conservative leader was Erik Neilson (brother of actor Leslie Nielson) and he was sitting in his chair appearing annoyed. Opposite him on the Liberal benches was Marc Lalonde, confidently chatting with his fellow members, sharing what must have been a joke. There was an unoccupied chair and desk at the centre of the House between the two main opposing parties.

Then the Speaker called the session to order. He said "I now call and bring this session to order. My first point today is bringing to this House's attention the fact that Stanley Knowles, Member of Parliament representing Winnipeg North Center Riding (the home turf of the Winnipeg General Strike and OBU) has been ill lately and also

had missed a few past sessions prior to last Session's closing. It gives me now great pleasure to introduce to Parliament a healthy Stanley Knowles and let us all welcome that long serving Member and conscience of the House to his new position in Parliament, at the Centre of the House. Let us now welcome in Stanley Knowles."

Every member was now standing and applauding and cheering and in walked Stanley Knowles. He came to his desk and then slowly sat down but the din was growing louder. Five minutes or thereabouts later, the Speaker called for order and invited words from each of the Parties.

Conservative Opposition Leader Nielson gave a nice message praising Stanley Knowles and was passionate when he said Stanley Knowles is great in any party and asked "Stanley, when will you join us?" There was much laughter and Knowles smiled. Mark Lalonde then made a very touching speech stating that without Stanley Knowles at the center, there would be no House and likewise no Canada since Knowles comes from the center of Canada. The NDP leader gave his warmest comments and stated that having a healthy Stanley Knowles was wonderful.

I was thinking back to earlier times of Jean McWilliam and it was either Stanley Knowles or Tommy Douglas who stated that Jean McWilliam was an authority on Robert's Rules of Order.

Behind me a woman with a Nova Scotian accent was musing, "The last shall come first..."

Conclusion

Thanks very much for allowing me this opportunity and I have had much enjoyment from writing this account. The Bible's Book of John 21:25 states: "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have enough room for the books that would be written."