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Dorothy Bowers,

"John Seymour Hayes 1884-1957"

It was a rainy day in May, 1952, and the senior boys had put in a full day helping to move 'Pop' and 'Mom' Hayes' furniture to their newly built home at 1561 Queen Street E., just a few hundred feet east of the old stone home they had occupied for so many years. They were glad of Mom's invitation to sit down and have some cookies and milk before getting back to the school. Martin Blackbird, a quiet but deep-thinking lad, looked at Mr. Hayes and asked; "Pop, how did an Englishman such as yourself get to be Engineer at an Indian Residential School here in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario?" Please tell us how you came to be in Canada in the first place."

"This may take some time boys, so make yourselves comfortable while I light up my pipe. Just close your eyes for a moment and try to recall some of your geography lessons.

I was born on Euston Road in that great city of London, England, on January 6th, 1884. My parents owned a Pub in London, but I wasn't to live too long in the city, as my mother and father were having a struggle to make ends meet and to raise their three children - Alfred, Rose and myself. When I was five years old mother died and not too long after I went to live in the little village of Weston, in North Hertfordshire, with my maiden Aunt Beatrice, and her bachelor step-brother George Hayes, in a lovely old brick home on Fore Street. Hertfordshire was beautiful farming country and my boyhood days were much more carefree than those earlier days spent in the crowded streets of London. Aunt Beatrice taught school in the village and Uncle George was by this time a semi-

retired Coachman on the estate of Lord Fairleigh. This estate was for many years extremely prosperous, and as a boy I went to work in the gardens, and then later on in the greenhouses, where we grew beautiful orchids. When our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wise, came to visit us from Tottenham in London, with their pretty daughter Helena, I would make sure there was a fresh orchid for Helena to take home. I don't think she was too fond of me at first, although our families had been friends in London, but I believe the orchids eventually helped to win her over!

Now, around the turn of the century in England, agriculture was beginning to collapse. A series of extremely bad growing seasons had aggravated its initial stages, but the main cause was the development of the American Prairies as grain lands, now within reach of the English market. You lads can imagine that this new country, with its great expanse of virgin soil could produce enormous quantities of grain, which in turn were carried on the new railway systems to the various ports and then shipped on the steamers across the Atlantic. Although our English agriculture was more scientific and more highly capitalized, yet under these conditions we couldn't compete with the Americans. Because England believed in free trade, our government didn't place a food tariff (or tax) on imported goods, as many of the other European countries did. This meant that many of the large farms began to shrink in size and produce less and less commercial crops. And this is exactly what was happening on the Fairleigh Estate where I worked. Farm hands were finding themselves out of jobs, and began to move into the larger manufacturing

centres, or overseas to the colonies. It was a strong characteristic of our people to 'better themselves'. Uncle George, who had been worrying about these conditions for some time, began to talk to me more and more about opportunities for young men in the Americas. He told me that he had read in the newspaper that in just ten years the acreage of wheat in England had fallen by nearly a million acres, and that some hundred thousand farm labourers were no longer needed on the farms. These figures were pretty frightening and I began to wonder what my future might be if I stayed on the estate.

When I was twenty years old I received a letter from a boyhood friend, Herbert Underhill, who had lived with his grandfather, the Miller in our village, for a time and had since emigrated to Canada. In 1897 Herbert and his two brothers had worked logging in or around Georgetown in Southern Ontario. When jobs had become scarce they moved north and found work clearing land for Mr. Rains on St. Joseph Island. Herbert seemed quite happy and urged me to come to Canada and join him. After much soul-searching and many talks with my sweetheart Helena, I finally decided to make the move and emigrate to Canada early in September of 1904.

I travelled first to London where sad good-byes were said to my family and Helena, with the promise that I would come back to make her my wife just as soon as I was established in Canada. Then began the train trip to Liverpool where I boarded the ship for the next lap of

my long journey. I must tell you that travelling third class was no luxury trip, and there were six of us blokes all crowded into one rather small cabin. For four of us, it was our first sea voyage, and we experienced various degrees of seasickness during the next twelve days. Two of our room-mates were from Newcastle and were going to the mining districts of Cape Breton, while another brave soul decided he would set up a homestead and farm in Saskatchewan. He had no knowledge whatsoever of farming as the nearest he had been to a farm in Birmingham was a neighbour who kept a dozen chickens. I wished him luck.

Stepping off the boat in Halifax was indeed stepping into a new land. About 90% of the passengers were new immigrants into Canada, all feeling as I did, very strange, and a great number from the Continent not able to speak the language. None of us quite knew what was ahead of us in this vast country.

The next three days on the train were an experience I shall never forget. The hard, wooden-slatted, bone-shaking seats were our beds at night, and for most of the journey I shared a seat with Tom, who was heading for Saskatchewan. Our meals were sketchy, as neither of us had very much money in our pockets, but we did try to nip out to the station cafe in a few of the larger centres for one decent meal a day. The countryside became a blaze of colour as we passed through the maple-lined Gatineau Hills, and as the bright autumn sun mirrored these glorious colours in the many lakes we passed, my strangeness and loneliness gradually melted away and I began to feel that I had indeed come to a beautiful country.

I said good-bye to my travelling companion in Sudbury, as he changed trains for the west, and once again I was on my own for the last lap of the journey to Sault Ste. Marie. After many stops at the tiny stations my train finally pulled into the little station in Sault Ste. Marie at about 3 o'clock. Upon making inquiries I found a team of horses would be leaving for Richards' Landing, St. Joseph Island, after picking up some supplies at the station. And so at about 8 o'clock that evening my long weeks of travelling had finally come to an end and I was re-united with my school friend, Herbert Underhill, now an established Canadian farmer.

Herbert had helped clear land for Mr. Rains, and consequently bought fifty acres when he had saved enough money. His two brothers had each bought fifty acres on adjoining lots and were busy building up farms of their own. Herbert later bought out one of his brothers and expanded his farming to cattle, sheep and pigs, as well as a number of chickens.

I spent my first year working on Herbert's farm and living with him in his log home. My first winter was pretty hard on me, as I had never been used to snow or below freezing temperatures. Herbert soon had me outfitted in a pair of locally made moccasins and heavy breeches. I was able to keep warm by splitting cords and cords of wood for the stove, besides assisting with the farm chores, and soon began to fit in with the Canadian social life as well. What fun it was on a crisp, clear winter night to pile into a sleigh with a number of other young people

and go for a sleighride over the snow packed corduroy roads. I must admit, I was soon to find out that travelling the roads was a great deal more comfortable in the winter than in the spring! The ladies of the community often held 'Quilting Bees', and it was quite common to see them all gathered around a frame, transforming materials from out-grown dresses or shirts into beautiful, warm, bed quilts. I was the recipient of one of these quilts my first Christmas in Canada and used it for many years.

I must admit that as the winter months dragged on, my thoughts often turned to England, to my lovely Helena and to Aunt Beatrice and Uncle George, as well as to the lovely, comfortable home I had left behind. Had I done the right thing in leaving England and coming to live in these rather primitive conditions? Would city-born and bred Helena ever be able to adapt to this rustic life? Her letters, read and re-read so many times in the privacy of my little room, gave me hope that she could be happy with me in Canada - but still at the back of my mind there was a gnawing uneasiness as to whether I should stay in this small community, or perhaps look for work in a larger centre where the adjustment wouldn't be quite so severe.

After the busy calving and lambing season was over in the spring, I felt that I had been with Herbert long enough and was able to secure work on Mr. Rains' farm as a laborer, earning a small salary of \$18.00 a month plus my keep. The years slipped by, and in 1910, after working first on the Underhill farm, then on Mr. Rains' farm for a year, and then for four years both clearing land and helping on the farm of Mr.

John Tear, I was becoming anxious to make my own way in the world. Sault Ste. Marie appealed to me, as it was beginning to take on the appearance of a good-sized town, with its streetcar service and thriving business such as Globe Clothing Store, Megginson Shoe Store, T. E. Simpson, Furniture, Pinch Groceries, Broughton's Drug Store, not to mention the Gayety Theatre, Soo Falls Brewing Co., and the Soo Business College. After scanning the Want Ads in the Sault Daily Star for some time, I finally answered one for the position of Farmer at the Shingwauk Home, as it was then known. The Principal, The Rev. Ben Fuller, accepted my application and I moved my few belongings to Sault Ste. Marie, and into a bed-sitting room on the second floor of the school, and once again started a new life.

To tell you the truth, lads, I had a little difficulty at first trying to put from my mind the picture of the traditional English Boarding School. Architecturally from the outside there was a great similarity, with its vine-covered stone, but that is where the similarity ended. The school at that time was located in front of your present school, which was built in 1934. The one I came to was built in 1874, through the efforts of the Rev. Edward Wilson, an Anglican missionary, and Chief Buhkwujjenene of Garden River, who had travelled to England to raise the money for a 'Great Teaching Wigwan'. I am sure you have all heard the story of the first school being built at Garden River in 1873, with accommodation for forty students, and how it mysteriously burned down just six days after its opening. Stubborn Englishman that he was -



Mr. Wilson was still determined that the Indian children should have their school, so he immediately wired the news of the disaster to England, and within a week or two £350 had been subscribed to the rebuilding. The funds grew steadily, both from English and Canadian contributions, as well as the insurance and government contributions, until \$12,000. was raised. The decision as to location of the new school was not easily reached. The Garden River Indian Band had been asked if they would surrender one hundred acres of land on the reserve, but seeing that there were both Protestant and Roman Catholic Indians in the Band, they were hesitant about making this decision. The Municipality of Sault Ste. Marie had offered a bonus of \$500. provided the school was built within the bounds of their municipality. As a result, Mr. Wilson was successful in purchasing 91 acres of land, about two miles below the village, for the sum of \$500. In due time the new school, with its main building 75 feet long by 38 feet wide, was ready to accommodate from seventy to eighty pupils. A separate building, called the Infirmary, was erected to care for aged or sick Indians, who could not look after themselves. There were also other buildings for the industrial trades such as carpentry and boat making, and of course the farm buildings at the back. You fellows have life pretty easy these days compared with those young lads. You only have a few household chores, such as making your beds and cleaning up the dormitory and recreation areas and such-like. These boys would rise at the crack of dawn and do their chores from 6 to 8:30 each morning. Some would be

with me, feeding the chickens and gathering eggs, feeding the cattle and horses and milking the cows; others bringing in the fire wood or fetching water from the river with "Muhnedooshish", the little grey pony. I'll bet you didn't know that we even had our own fish boys and baker boys who helped to make the bread in the huge brick ovens. One of the coldest jobs was when we went out on the river and cut the huge blocks of ice and dragged them ashore, to be stored in the ice house, which was just back of the girls' playroom. That is how we were able to keep our meat and perishable goods, apart from the root cellars for the vegetables. Of course the girls were also kept very busy, churning butter, assisting with the meals, and working in the laundry and sewing rooms. I found it pretty strange at first that there were no servants at all in this enormous Home, but discovered that this was done for two reasons; the first being - rightly or wrongly, the school was established for the purpose of making the Indian children useful and acceptable in the white society. Secondly, the Church found itself in a tight financial position and there just wasn't any money at all for servants. As a matter of fact, when the Rev. Ben Fuller, who had just recently been appointed Principal of Shingauk, hired me, he made it clear to me that there would be very little salary available until the school got on it's feet again financially, but I would have my room and board provided. Mrs. Fuller and their daughter Benna, both worked full time for no wages, and it turned out that I put in three years with no salary except my fare

back to England to be married in 1913.

Martin, I suspect that you are wondering how an English man, brought up in an absolutely different farm environment, and accustomed to a much milder climate, adjusted to this completely different life style. Well, to start with, I did have something in common with the children. They, for the most part, were far away from their families and friends, and had to contend with loneliness just as I did. I am sure I found the rules and regulations of institutional life just as frightening and constricting as those children at first, but like the children, I had to put my personal thoughts aside much of the time, and fill my days with the tasks set out for me on the farm. I soon got used to communicating by hand signals with my boys who had not yet learned English, as I knew no Cree or Ojibway, but it was amazing how quickly the children picked up the language. They were so proud when they could come to me with new words they had learned in the classroom.

Up until just a few years ago, we cultivated most of the "back forties" and had good crops of turnips, potatoes, carrots, beets, onions, cabbages and other vegetables, besides our livestock - cattle, chickens, turkeys and geese. So you see, by providing so much of our own produce and meat, the children as well as the staff were able to have a plain, but wholesome diet.

In the summer, those boys who weren't able to go home to their families would help me with the haying, and would receive a small amount of spending money. We had hay lots and a garden, down where the Rankin Location now is, and at one time rented a hay lot in Korah, in the

vicinity of the Third Line. The children put in long hours with me, but we had some fun on the hay rides back into town.

The first three winters were long and dreary, and without the gardening I was given to brooding and waiting for the day when I could get back to England and marry Helena. What did I have to offer her here - just a life of hard work and little money. Would she be willing to accept this, or was it indeed fair to even expect her to leave her home in a large city, to come to this small town, with very few of the comforts of home? Oh how I longed just to see her, and talk to her. This longing eventually became too much for me to bear and I told Mr. Fuller that I simply must go 'back home'. Not wishing to lose my services as Farmer, he finally agreed that on January 1st, 1913, he would provide my fare to England on the condition that I return to work at the school after my marriage.

What a warm reunion when the ship docked in Southampton, after such a cold twelve days at sea, for there to meet me were Helena, Aunt Beatrice and Uncle George. Three days later, on January 18th, we were married in the stately old Holy Trinity Church in Tottenham. Although I had worked for three years without a salary, I had managed to keep enough money from my farming days on St. Joseph Island to take my bride for a short honeymoon on the Isle of Wight...

Arriving back in Sault Ste. Marie on March 30th, with my wife, I was happier than I had been in some years, and determined to work hard and make a good life for Helena. It was not an easy adjustment for

Helena, who had been brought up in a comfortable home, attended Private Schools, and who had a dressmaker to keep her in the latest fashions in clothing - to suddenly find herself in the midst of a struggling institution with its accompanying shabbiness and frugal living, and with all these 'foreign' children with their strange manners of behaviour. She had to work hard to overcome the extreme hurt she felt when the children laughed at her for calling candies 'sweets' and other such typically English expressions, which to these boys and girls sounded so funny. Having only two rooms to keep clean and tidy also left my wife with too much time on her hands for brooding and homesickness, so at one point she went to the Matron, Miss Bottrell, and asked if there wasn't something she could do. In answer, the Matron disappeared and arrived back shortly with a bolt of navy blue cotton and a pattern, and set my inexperienced wife to work sewing aprons for the girls. This launched Helena's sewing career and from that rather crude first apron, I just couldn't begin to tell you how many aprons of all sizes and shapes and colours that she has sewn, both for the use of the girls and staff members, and later for sale at our annual Christmas bazaars. This did help Helena to feel more useful and settled in our new life, and was a means of bringing her to a closer fellowship and understanding of the girls, as she worked along with them in the mending and sewing room. As you realize, she was later to become affectionately known as 'Mom' to children and adults alike at the school.

Shortly before our first child Margaret was born, we moved into larger living quarters, which were attached to the hospital building, and there we stayed until after our second child George was born two years later. When the stone house, which we have just to-day vacated, became available to us we were then able to move in and at long last have a real home for our family.

As the years went by many changes took place, including the building of the present school, and subsequent tearing down of the original Home in 1935; as well as changes of Principal and staff members. Due to some changes in policy, and also to the fact that my back had been troubling me a great deal doing the heavy farm work, I was to spend a period of seven years, from 1928 to 1935, working away from the Shingauk, at the Algoma Steel Corporation, where I received my Stationary Engineer Fourth Class papers. However, during the period of the construction of the new school I did serve as Night Watchman with a salary of \$75.00 a month. In 1935 the Rev. C. F. Hives brought me back to the school, but this time as Engineer in the new building. Of course you fellows pretty well know what this job has entailed, what with the steam boilers, the laundry room equipment, the furnace at the Fauquier Chapel, as well as the general maintenance of the school to see to.

Did we ever want to go back to England to live? Yes, Martin, I would be somewhat less than truthful if I told you we never had misgivings about leaving our homeland, particularly at such times as when members of our families were ill and when deaths occurred, and there were so

many miles between us. However, by the time our children were growing up as Canadians, both Helena and I had come to the realization that, even though there were the lean depression years to contend with, Canada was a young and growing country, with hopefully a great future for our children, and this is where our roots were now firmly embedded. And where else could a lowly farmer or engineer have the opportunity to shake hands with not less than five Governors General of Canada, from the Duke of Connaught to Viscount Massey? Certainly not in England, of that I am sure.

Now fellows, many thanks for all your help to-day, but if you don't get along now you will miss your supper."

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