

## **Nora's Thomas (Webb, Sylvester) - Recollections**

**Great To Have A July 1st Birthday in Grand Bend!** I was born July 1st,1918, in Stephen Township, to Laura and Delbert Webb. My mother told me that it was very cold that day and men had their overcoats on. There were even a few flakes of snow!\_July 1st was an ideal time to have a birthday because it was a Dominion holiday and everyone stopped working for a picnic. The weather, except when I was born, was usually hot. As I got older, I would always enjoy my birthdays because I got to ride Elsie's merry-go-round which was on the main street across from Bossenberry's hotel. It was 5 cents a ride so I was able to get 5 rides for my 25 cents and then I had an ice-cream cone for 5 cents .....30 cents made a good birthday!

**Grand Bend United Church** My family and I were always members of the Grand Bend United Church and travelled from the farm to attend. There was a white brick building...perhaps a former Methodist or Presbyterian church over on Highway 21,near the cemetery and Pete Eisenbach's home, that became the United Church when the two amalgamated. We attended there while the new Grand Bend United Church was being built on Main Street. We attended some outdoor services in the summer to accommodate extra people and this may have been before the new church was ready, as well as after. When the church was being built, Rev Morley Collins was the minister. I was 9 or 10 years old but I remember the corner stone laying ceremony because they put documents inside the stone. The following day, the minister, his wife and his daughter, who was around my age, came for a meal and our dessert was fresh raspberries and cream.

**My Grandparents** My paternal grandparents were Richard and Jane Webb. They lived on the road that went past the school not far from Mike's Garage. They had a white brick house which was kind of in front of the school and their little barn backed onto the school property. They also had a big garden to the side heading towards Grand Bend. Richard did some landscaping at cottages. Stephen Webb was his brother and lived on Highway 21 near Pete Eisenbach. Richard and Jane eventually moved to a new little house that Pete Eisenbach had built at the cemetery gates. My sister Lillian and I had a week's break from farm life each year, when we went to Grandma and Grandpa's in Grand Bend to go swimming! Grandma would walk us to the beach in her long dresses no matter how hot it was. It was just such a treat to get away from the farm and see new things.

**Pete Eisenbach** When I was about 12, I was asked to help Mrs. Eisenbach during the summer as a little job. Pete was friends with my Grandpa Webb so asked him if I could help out. Mrs. Eisenbach had a heart condition and was not well. I washed dishes, made beds and got some meals on the table too. Pete also wanted me to keep her company while he was on the job...he was a supervisor of road maintenance.

**School days** I went to school at SS#10 on Highway 81...2 1/2 miles from home, which was on the Crediton Rd., off the Mollard Line. Mansell Hodgins lived at the corner of Crediton Rd and Highway 81. We did walk most of the time to school and sometimes drove Min, the horse. By age 12, I was driving Min on my own most of the time and one day, Mansell's dog charged at her and she ran away on me. My brother heard me coming and stood on the road trying to stop her....which he did. When I graduated from Grade 8, I was then supposed to go to school in Grand Bend for "continuation" or Grade 9. That school was 3 miles away and initially I tried to walk that every day but the 6 miles soon wore me out. I spent the winter living in Grand Bend with the minister, Rev. Moore, and his family. They had two small boys who I babysat when needed. Unfortunately, I only attended until the spring and then my mom decided she needed me on the farm so I did not write my exams. In the fall of that year, I went to London to live with the Nickels who had a cottage in Grand Bend and who I had done housework for during the previous summers. I continued to do general household duties for them and was supposed to go to school since I was too young to be out of school but did not really feel they taught us anything in the classes offered so soon did not attend.

These are just a few of my memories from my early years. I married William Sylvester from Thedford and we lived in London until we started to travel the country with the military. My mother, Laura (Webb) Peariso lived in Grand Bend for many years and had rooms and little cottages available for tourists, so we spent many enjoyable times during adult years there too.