

MAY 2000



ISLAND

HISTORY

Memories of Amherst Island

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Time seemed to slip by until my two year contract was completed. In the Spring of 1931 I received word that my Dad had developed rheumatic fever, and would be laid up for many months, unable to work. While I hated to leave the Island and the healthy farm work that had done wonders for my physique, it seemed obvious that my help was needed more with the family in Toronto. In spite of the drastic employment situation at that time, I was lucky enough to get a job as a junior salesman in a men's clothing firm. For the balance of that year the whole family lived on my wage of \$12 a week. Dad was advised to get to a drier climate, and accepted an offer of work in Winnipeg, so the rest of the family moved West.

Keith left the Island shortly after and joined me in Toronto, taking over my job when I was promoted to another position. On combined earnings of \$27 a week, we rented and furnished a two room flat, and lived like kings by careful shopping and developing our culinary skills. I shall never forget that look on our landlady's face though as she summoned us to her rooms on our return from work one evening, to see a steady drip from the ceiling into her dishpan

on her bed! We had forgotten to empty the waterman under our ice-box frig, and it had overflowed all day! All in all though, we enjoyed our year of 'batching it' in Toronto.

Early in the Winter of 1933 I received a distressing phone call from Becky Hill telling me that Willie was dying of advanced kidney failure, and had asked if I would consider coming back to run the farm for them. With only a few days to make a decision, I gave notice at work, and prepared to return to the Island. As an example of the desperate