

Long separation ends

Area family reunited by Herald story

By **MAGGIE HANNAH**
Herald staff writer

Reporters always hope that their stories will accomplish something but one of The Herald staff writers has a special reason to be proud: through a story published in this paper over a year ago two branches of a family have been reunited after more than a generation of separation.

The irony of it all is that they live less than 10 miles apart.

In March 1978 The Herald carried a story about an Acton lady demonstrating decorating Easter eggs in the Ukrainian way to Acton high school students. Her name was Mrs. Boris Shean.

Orest Shein's wife, Barbara, a former high school teacher, read the story and was struck by the fact that although the names were spelled differently their phonetic pronunciation

would be almost identical.

The Orest Shein's live on the Fifth line at Five Sideroad while the Boris Shean's live in Acton.

SEVERAL ATTEMPTS

Boris says it took several attempts before a meeting was finally set up between the two families so that they could delve into family backgrounds. Last Sunday Orest and his sister Stella from Edmonton met with Boris and his brother Walter from Orangeville at Orest's home and invited The Herald along to take a picture and hear their story.

Orest's father came to Brooklyn, New York, from the Ukraine in 1907 and went to Winnipeg to work in a steel company in 1913 or 1914. He took sick and returned to New York. There he married a Ukrainian girl and shortly after that he returned to Canada to

homestead in Saskatchewan. Orest came to Toronto in 1960 and he and his wife moved to Halton Hills a few years ago.

Boris' father arrived in Canada and was in Winnipeg at approximately the same time as Orest's father yet neither half of the family knew about the other, Boris' father worked on the railway, in lumber camps, on farms and even visited the Yukon before settling in Toronto and marrying a Ukrainian girl.

Barbara Shein says she and her husband were always curious about their family history but could never learn anything about grandfather Shein's background. They knew things about grandmother's Shein's family but grandfather's family and origins were a complete mystery. Through Boris and his family they have discovered several things as well as a number of unknown relatives. Orest's grandfather and Boris' grandfather were brothers.

Walter Shean says his family remembered their grandfather's brother who left the village in the Ukraine to find work but they seem to have lost touch with him. Whether the family actually lost contact with the brother or with his son (Orest's family) who came to Canada no one knows.



Members of the Shein and Shean family who found each other through a Herald article met again last week to continue exploring the families past. Shown from the left are Stella Shein from Edmonton, Orest Shein with his daughter

Suzanne, Boris Shean and his son Alex, Jason Shean with his mother Barbara, Walter Shein with his son Eagle and wife Dorothy of Orangeville.

resulting from the inability to translate the Ukrainian sounds into the English spelling.

"The Ukrainian language is written in the Cyrillic alphabet which resembles Greek letters and therefore there is no way to literally translate the letters in the Ukrainian spelling of our name into the English," he said. "However Polish and Ukrainian are quite similar except that Polish uses the Latin alphabet the same as English. We assume they used the Polish spelling but that would be Szyjan and the look of it would defeat the English tongue just about as quickly as

the serfs were given their names by their masters and how many times do you suppose a serf would have something characteristic about his neck to earn a surname concerning it? If we hear a name that even vaguely resembles ours we're going to look into it in case it turns out to be a relative. That's why I can't understand our fathers missing each other in Winnipeg."

Stella Shein said the family is looking into the possibility of there being another relative in the United States who is equally unknown to them because of

an incident which happened about 15 years ago. Some American apparently visited their old homestead, found a school book of hers while they were there, and mailed it to her in Edmonton. So far no one has tracked down the mysterious visitors but they are wondering who would know enough to come all the way to Saskatchewan to visit the homestead.

FATHER'S VILLAGE

Boris Shean visited his father's village in the Ukraine eight years ago and met some members of the family still living there. His parents also paid a return visit to their

native land before Mr. Shean died.

Orest Shein's parents never returned to the Ukraine nor have any of his four sisters or his brother visited there. They all live in Saskatchewan.

Stella Shein is an elementary school teacher in Edmonton. Boris teaches high school in Acton and Walter teaches high school in Orangeville. Orest is an engineering technologist with Northern Telecom.

Orest and Barbara have not yet met Walter and Boris' sister, Anne Spytowsky, who lives in Beamsville.

Vandalism crusaders call it a day

The Neighborhood Watch program wound up with a luncheon sponsored by the Independent Insurance Agents of Halton Hills last week.

Project leader Ruth Geurts said she hopes the program will continue after she and her fellow staff members are gone, through willing neighbors and friends. She said the program was a success, but four months was not long enough.

Ms. Geurts said the insurance agents would like to see the Neighborhood Watch program and the Operation Identification program continue but the Solicitor-General, who is responsible for funding such programs, may not continue to support them. Operation Identification is the program which assists people in marking their valuables with an identification number.

Support for the project will be continuing after Miss Geurts and her assistants go back to school. Ms. Geurts said the sign company which owns the billboard on Mill Street behind the McGibbon Hotel has donated the billboard to the program for several days in early September. McDonald's is considering setting up a Squawk Squad for children to encourage them to report suspicious things to their parents.

ROAD SIGNS

The Optimists Club in Georgetown was one of Neighborhood Watch's biggest supporters, and provided some road signs to indicate that the

program is operating in Georgetown, Miss Geurts said. Neighborhood welcome groups like Welcome Wagon will be handing out the program's brochures when they greet newcomers to the area, she added. The Halton Regional Police Crime Prevention officer will also have brochures describing the program.

Ms. Geurts said it is difficult to gauge the effect of the program. She said incidents of willful damage were down from June to July, with damage estimated at \$10,926 in June and \$7,218 in July. This is unusual, because July and August are usually the worst months of the year for vandalism, she said.

The staff members of Neighborhood Watch knocked on doors throughout Halton Hills and Milton, telling people about the program. Ms. Geurts said she and her team visited between 12,000 and 15,000 homes over the summer. Response in Milton was the worst, because they were there in August when most people are away on holidays, she said.

"Acton was the most responsive community in terms of listening to us," she said. They also spoke to a number of service clubs and church groups. Ms. Geurts expressed her appreciation, and that of her staff members, to the people who supported the program.

"The program went really well, and we'd like to see it turned into a year-round thing," she said.

FIND WORK

"The Ukraine was occupied by a series of armies," Walter Shean explains. "He may well have left to find work and then again he may have skipped out of his conscription service in an occupying army so he was careful not to be found. After a revolution (the Russian Revolution in 1917) and two world wars any records have been destroyed."

Walter also explained the discrepancy in the two spellings of the same name as

Acton hotel fire underlines need for emergency accommodations

By **LORI TAYLOR**
Herald staff writer

When the Dominion Hotel in Acton burned down a week and a half ago, a number of people who were permanent residents in the hotel suddenly found themselves looking for a new place to live.

Although the former residents of the hotel appear to have found a roof to put over their heads, others are not so fortunate. Representatives from the Ontario Housing Corporation and from family counselling agencies agree that there is a need both for emergency housing in Halton Hills, and for more long-term, low cost housing for rent or to purchase.

Attempts are being made to form a committee to look into the scarcity of low-cost housing in north Halton, but so far the committee only has two

members.

Barb Stephens of Halton Helping Hands, and Betty Hill, who is a family counsellor with the regional department of social services, are the only two members of the committee, which was formed out of a concern expressed at meetings of the different social agencies in north Halton.

Mrs. Hill said the social services department, the public health unit, the Children's Aid Society and other social agencies meet regularly once a month, except during the summer, to discuss common problems and pool information and resources. It was decided that since she and Mrs. Stephens were interested in the kinds of housing available in the area, and the people who need housing, that they form a committee to look into the matter.

Mrs. Hill said that in her role as a family counsellor, she finds the people who need housing, both for short-term, emergency situations, and for more extended periods of time, usually fall into one of several categories.

LOSE HOME

"They're people who lose their home through separation or divorce, or through an extended illness or injury, particularly when Workmen's Compensation is involved and they can't afford to stay where they are," she said. "It happens to people who are in financial need, through bankruptcy, or unemployment. And it happens to young people, who don't have the support of their family. Those are the people I see in the course of my work who need housing."

The kinds of rental accommodation needed cover the complete range from room and board, to small apartments, to apartments with light house-keeping, Mrs. Hill said.

"Women in particular have difficulty in finding rental accommodation, particularly if they have children, and no man," Mrs. Hill said. "I guess the landlords are afraid that the woman won't have enough money to pay the rent, or that someone will come around and disturb her privacy and that of the other tenants."

The choice is also limited for older couples whose children have grown, and who would like an apartment or a serviced condominium, Mrs. Hill said.

There is definitely a need for both temporary and permanent housing in Halton Hills, she said. Once Halton's Women's Place is open, it will provide temporary shelter for women in distress, but it can't offer a long-term solution to the problem of finding affordable accommodation, Mrs. Hill said.

"Usually when women with children are looking for a place to live, the children don't want to leave the community, because their friends are here and they go to school here," Mrs. Hill said. "And at a time when you're upset, you shouldn't leave the community, because you need all the props you can get."

When the regional social services department has to put someone up overnight for an emergency when the person has no place to go and no money, they usually put them up in a hotel, Mrs. Hill said, "but that's not good for a woman with children."

The Salvation Army in Brampton is working toward setting up a hostel, but they are still in the early stages, "and if they're still struggling, then we're a long way even from that."

There is a placement centre in Oakville which handles teenagers with family problems who can no longer live at home, Mrs. Hill said, but it isn't always possible for them to place the teenager in their own community.

"If the teenagers are under age, the agency needs the parents' co-operation, but by the time it reaches the stage where the teenager is sure that he or she can't continue to live at home, the parents are usually willing to go along with the idea," Mrs. Hill said.

Mrs. Hill said she has talked many times with the Ontario Housing Corporation about the housing needs of the people in

this area.

"They say if people don't make their housing needs known, they won't get any action from the government," Mrs. Hill said. "I tell the people who come to me to let the Ontario Housing Corporation know what they're looking for in the way of housing, even if they know it isn't available there, because that way we get a record of the needs that do exist."

"I think we're a nice residential town, and I think there's a concern about putting up housing that might become tenements, all run down and not cared for, and it's a valid concern. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't look at that option," Mrs. Hill said.

HOUSING PROBLEMS

Mrs. Hill said there are any number of resources available to handle the housing problems. She said it can be handled by non-profit organizations such as churches and private foundations. She described the project of a church in Hamilton, where the congregation bought several houses and renovated them, renting them out at cost or at a small

profit.

"I'm talking both about housing which pays its own way and housing which would have to be supported by outside funds," she said. "I think if we can prove a need exists, the private funds would be forthcoming. The people in Halton Hills have been generous in the past."

"It's going to be very important to have the politicians involved in the process of getting low-cost housing in the area," Mrs. Hill said. "It used to be that people were concerned with a new development about how much parkland there would be and where the school would be built. Now it seems to be the mix of housing the developer is proposing."

"I look at some of the houses in Georgetown and Acton, and I wonder who can afford them," she added. "They're lovely homes, but they're too big and I imagine only about ten per cent of the population can afford them."

"We have good family living for people who have a good, steady income, but the rest of it, it just isn't there," she said.



GEMS CRY FOWL

It takes a lot of chicken to feed a hungry crowd like the one that turned out for the Georgetown Grmlins' barbecue at the Norval Community School on Saturday afternoon, and it's easier to handle a lot at once when you have two sets of hands to help with the cooking. Maple Lodge Farms supplied the chicken, and

John Feenstra and Jim Mehlbacher supplied the hands to keep the food from getting burned. Judging by the sounds of appreciation from the people dining there, they succeeded.

(Herald photo)

Local hotels, motels have full-time guests

With a shortage of rental accommodation in Halton Hills, the town's hotels and motels have ended up with almost as many permanent residents as transient guests.

The Cedar Springs Motel on Highway 7 between Acton and Georgetown has permanent residents from time to time, although they have none at the moment, a spokesman for the motel said. The motel has kitchenettes which make the units suitable for small apartments.

The motel is sometimes used

for emergency housing by some of the groups in town, such as the Red Cross, if someone needs a place to stay immediately, and has no place to go.

A number of permanent residents had to find other accommodation after the Dominion Hotel in Acton burned down, a week and a half ago, but only one of the guests ended up at The Station Hotel, which is the only other hotel in Acton.

A spokesman for the hotel said that most of the 16 rooms in the building are occupied by

permanent guests, and are rented by the week or the month.

"Some of the guys have been here for years," he said.

The McGibbon Hotel in Georgetown has seven apartments, all of which are rented out at the moment, owner George Markous said. Of the hotel's 27 rooms, about one-third are rented to permanent residents, about one-third to guests who stay for a week or two, and about one-third to transient guests who stay for a night or two, he said.