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## Tribute to *Fred Helson* on the 100TH ANNIVERSARY of his Birth

by Rose Anna Helson



Image 1: Fred Helson in front of his office in downtown Georgetown.

Image 2: Fred Helson and his brother Don, aka Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

Image 3: Fred Helson in the Navy.

Image 4: Fred Helson's 2011 visit to his former Vancouver home.

Thursday June 23, 1921. A momentous day. Frederick Arthur Helson was born in Peterborough. The beginning of a life well lived.

Fred's early years were spent with a large family and lots of cousins. Summers would find him at an uncle's family-run camp on Rice Lake. Naked hours of running, swimming and playing filled his days.

Both of his parents, Katherine and Arthur, were adventurers so they would pack up and go to Vancouver to visit another uncle who had a tugboat business there. The drive out consisted of many hours of travel through the U.S. because there were no roads that would take them across Canada then. I heard many stories of their travels: Las Vegas with dirt roads and wooden sidewalks, the grandeur of the Grand Canyon, the tricks he would play on his younger brother Don and the faithful dog who rode with them everywhere.

Now how do I tell you about his next 90 years without writing a book? Even the highlights are too numerous to mention all of them.

Fred's dad was intrigued by the tugboat business so he moved his family to Vancouver and changed his career again. Fred came along with his dad on the tug taking food, water and cash 3 miles out of Canadian waters to rum-runners beating Prohibition. Fred told me his time in Vancouver was a delight for him and his brother. Going out on the tug, roller skating, swimming 1.5 miles across the bay to Grouse Mountain gave him full days and many adventures. He learned to navigate by the stars and love the ocean.

Katherine found the distance from her relatives too great so they picked up stakes again and moved back to Ontario. They bought a farm in Paris where they raised dairy cattle and chickens, supplying milk and eggs to Loblaws. Fred and Don managed the farm throughout the week while his father taught high school in Galt. Fred told me this was one of the happiest times of his life.

Fred enrolled at the Ontario College of Agriculture. Here is an excerpt from The OAC Review published October, 1944:

*"In September of 1941, a little, curly-headed, quiet-voiced individual who rubbed his chin and blinked at the bright city lights enrolled as a lowly Frosh with Year '45. Nobody thought this shy inoffensive little fellow would ever have grown into the Fred Helson of the repute and impetus which he now holds. A worthy member of the Social Activities Committee in second year and secretary of his year in third, he brings his course to a climax as Fourth Year president, one of the most coveted offices at college. He has earned it."*

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