

BONANZA

"What do you think was the most significant event in history?" asked Her Nibs the other morning.

"Is there an answer to this?" I asked

"No" she replied, "I was just thinking, if there was a single event or if it has been a multiplicity of historical events that have shaped the world as it is today."

I think it's a lot of events. Look at the various periods the earth has gone through each ending in almost total death of existing life. Including the death of dinosaurs some 3 million years ago with our ancestors apparently surviving and ushering in the age of mammals (rumor has it that some dinosaurs survived until 6000 years ago somewhere in Alberta and fundamentalist roamed the hills with them but I've covered that before.

James Burke in his book *The Day the Universe Changed* poses his theory that knowledge is a man made artifact and that when man's views of reality are changed by knowledge, reality itself changes. He then starts his thesis from the middle ages to today, examining those critical periods in history when the ideas and institutions that have transformed man's understanding were born.

Each of us would probably list events or occurrences that we feel had major impacts - the birth of Christ, the birth of Mohammed, the invention of the wheel, or steam, or nuclear energy and a whole host of others that truly did have a tremendous impact on our world as we know it.

There is one event, however, that I am sure would not appear on anyone else's list but perhaps mine.

It was July 4, 1936 in the middle of one of the worst heat waves Toronto has experienced. In Womens' College Hospital which was not air conditioned in those days, a baby boy was born by caesarian section to his mother Margaret and Father Alexander. He was christened John Alexander Jackson. Hey I hear you screaming - that's you. What makes you think this ranks as a major event in history.

Well without being boring about it - it was a major event to me.

Since I have now qualified by Government regulation to be considered a senior, I feel like reminiscing a bit about life in those days.

While Toronto was a 'big city' in those days it was divided into communities much like other towns around Ontario. Milk, Bread, Ice and Watkins products were delivered by horse and buggy which had the added advantage of ensuring that window boxes and gardens

were fueled with good organic fertilizer. Coal was delivered first by horse drawn wagons then by trucks. Men covered in soot would carry bags of coal on a leather pad on their shoulder then dump it down a chute (which they carried on the truck) into a coal bin in the basement.

Children grew up watched over by the mothers in a society that even then had a multi cultural makeup. Our neighborhood was predominately Irish, Scots and English but we did have Germans Dutch, Ukrainians, Polish and even a black family.

Our family later moved from Toronto to Scarborough (truly scarberia at that time) then to Midland Ontario and back to Scarborough. I went off on my own to Brampton (then 9,000 people) to Whitby (also 9,000 people) then Caledon. But the pull to Toronto was there I suppose and I returned, then to Scarborough again (much changed from my childhood sojourn) then to Milford.

In the course of all this the family grew from my parents and two sisters to 4 nieces, 4 great nieces, 2 great nephews, 2 granddaughters and 3 grandsons - a reasonable group when parents are included, many of whom have inherited some genes from the boy born in 1936. So for good or bad that date was significant to a few people. Before you consider that I'm getting maudlin, let me assure

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