



*The Zandbergens in Holloway at the Berson Mitts' farm 1953 (now Marsh Hill Road). Left to right are Betty, Margaret (Mom), John, and Lewis. In the back of wagon is Nick Kiers, a cousin.*

from the train station in Belleville and we were on our way to Holloway and the Mitts farm where we boarded for a while.

Dad found work in Belleville at the Swift's processing plant which was across from the Canadian National Railroad station on Station Street in Belleville. He worked hanging chickens on an overhead conveyor; it was a hard and dirty job and paid only ten dollars a week. He sought other employment and began work at McFarlane Woodenware (later McFarlane Gendron) some time before 1954. Dad enjoyed working there and often brought home items he'd helped make; I still have a small desk we kids received back in the 1950s. Life in Stirling was busy. Mom stayed home with the children and in 1956 one more brother, Lambert Paul, was added to the family. By this time we were living at 92 Front Street West, Stirling, in a house Dad purchased from the Stiles family.

In the mid-1950s in Stirling, you were still allowed to keep a few farm animals at home if you had the



*The Zandbergens at a church picnic 1953. Left to right Margaret (Mom) holding John, Lewis, Betty (partly hidden behind Lewis) and Peter (Dad). In behind Lewis and Betty is Grace Elmers (Mom's sister, married John Vandommelen 1956).*

room. Dad decided to raise chickens for meat and eggs; he'd buy the chicks and then spend the summer fattening them up. Preparing chicken for consumption was a fascinating experience for us. Dad would chop the bird's heads off with an axe and then let go. We quickly learned where the saying "running around like a chicken with its head cut off" came from. Then came the smelly messy part—removing the feathers. Unfortunately, the rooster caused a bit of concern to the neighbours; they were seniors who were used to sleeping in. That rooster would crow every morning at daylight; it didn't take long for the rooster to make it into the soup pot.

Saturdays Dad spent a lot of time tinkering in the garage. He kept one old car after another running. We had a 1938 Dodge, a 1941 Dodge and a 1950 Chevrolet "fastback." Sunday drives were a pleasant diversion; we kids would argue over who could stand on the transmission hump and who could lie in the back window as Dad and Mom travelled the countryside becoming familiar with their new home surroundings.

A lot of Saturday mornings found us children at the



*The Zandbergens 1959. Left to right are John, Margaret (Mom) holding Paul, Betty, Lewis and Peter (Dad).*

home of Mrs. Clements at 122 Front Street. Dad had a huge garden out behind her house which in those days still had a woodshed and horse stables attached. We'd be inside watching cartoons or Three Stooges while Dad hilled potatoes and weeded the beans and strawberries. (In 1984 when Lewis, Fran, Peter and Sarah moved to Stirling, they rented that same house at 122 Front Street; they lived there until 1990.)

Life in Stirling wasn't always easy but we never lacked for anything to do. Cowboys and Indians took up good chunks of summer days; picnics were enjoyed wherever we could find a spot to park the car and sit for a while. Fishing in Rawdon Creek saw many hours go by. In winter we tobogganed down a homemade hill in our back yard or visited family friends, the Zuidemas, in the countryside where we would slide down the hill which now makes up the 11th hole at Oak Hills Golf Course (junction of Oak Lake Road and Sagers Corners Road).