

## Armstrong Family History

by Mary Helen Hatch,  
transcribed from Tape by Susan Lake

### TAPE 1 SIDE 1

I have read and reread the few pages of information from my mother, **Mildred Armstrong Mackenzie's** file to try to put together an easily understood history of our Armstrong antecedents, **Samuel and Marry Armstrong** and family who came to Canada from Ireland about 1846 or shortly thereafter. I don't have all the facts but I do have some anecdotes and a mystery or two.

First a couple of jokes. Mother often repeated a family story that our branch of the Armstrong's were sheep thieves. One time they were outflanked by the English and rather than hang, they built rafts and went to Northern Ireland. My father, who was Highland Scotland descent added that these lowlanders took one look at the English women and stole the sheep. This always got a good laugh. Another story mother used to repeat referred to an Irishman who came across a couple of men fighting in the street and asked if this was a private fight or could anyone join in. That got a laugh too.

Now to get down to my task. I have a page about 7 3/4 " by 4 1/2 " that looks as though it is from an important book, quite thick paper now quite yellow and brown, ragged on the two short ends. There are three very precise folds lengthways in this paper which I have straightened out and I have now laid that sheet of paper flat all the time. There is writing on both sides and I will give you the information one side at a time. At the top of one page is the writing in black ink, very good writing, thin nib, **Samuel and Marry Armstrong**, both of Ballahulago, in the County of Fermanagh were married the 12th of March 1829. Then it lists the birthdays of six children: **Isabella**, born Dec. 26, 1831; **Abraham** born Dec. 25, 1833; **Marryann**, born July 5, 1836; **Samuel** Dec. 12, 1838; **Eliza** born Feb. 14, 1841; **William** born Oct. 24, 1843. On one end perpendicular to this writing is this information: Marry Armstrong, their mother, died June 29, 1846. And at the other end in the same direction (perpendicular) is the date July 30, 1848, it appears to be all the same handwriting. The other side has black ink with the name Samuel Armstrong at the top then in green ink but taking all the space and it says: "Isabella Armstrong's book received a

present from her father in the year 1842. A sweet glorious day, Isabella dear."

**Samuel Sr.** came out to Canada and married again. He sent for his children who were taken care of by relatives in Ireland as he could afford their passages. Marryann was 10 and Samuel Jr. was 8 and they came out together. Eliza didn't come to North America until after she was married. She came to NY State and she married a man by the name of Allison who was an Irishman.

Now I'm going to give you a list of information. Mother has this written from Armstrong family bible. And then in brackets she has (my paternal grandfather) **Samuel Armstrong (Jr.)** of Trafalgar and **Elizabeth Gray** of Trafalgar were married in 1861 in Hamilton Ont. by J.G. Geddis, Rector, in Hamilton. They had 7 children. **Willy**, born Mar. 17, 1863, and died Sept. 20, 1864; **Charles E.** born Aug. 15, 1864 and died March 18, 1865; **Annie** born Mar 19, 1866; **Fred** born Oct. 20, 1868; **Charles** born Apr. 22, 1872; **Mervin** born May 30, 1875; and **Edith** Aug. 29, 1877.

The marriages of these surviving children are: **Annie and Herbert Litchfield** on Mar. 17, 1884; **Fred and Mary Andrews** on Aug. 28, 1895; **Edith and Jack Duncan** Jan. 12, 1897; **Charles and Mary (known as Minnie) Ellis**, on Dec. 20, 1899; and **Mervin and Mary Jane (known as Birdie) Black**, married on July 21, 1902. The children from these marriages are listed as follows: Annie and Herbert Litchfield had a daughter **Hazel** and a son **Mervin**.; Fred Armstrong had three daughters: **Myrtle, Madge and Beatrice**. Charles had one daughter, **Marjorie**; Edith had four daughters and three sons,- **Cameron, Shirley, Hilda and Jean; Stewart, Gordon and Jack**. Mervin had **Mildred May, John (Jack) Alan and Mary Eileen**.

Samuel Armstrong died Feb. 28, 1911. Elizabeth Gray died May 24, 1932. The deaths of their children are as follows: Annie Litchfield died Jun. 11, 1952; Charles died Feb. 28, 1932; Edith died Mar, 1934; Fred died Jan. 2, 1940 and Mervin died Nov. 12, 1944. Mother told me that all three male Armstrong boys (Fred, Charles and Mervin) married gals whose first name was Mary although two had nicknames. Kind of a coincidence isn't it.

Now I'm going to read from some letters that are here. The first one is dated April 11, 1969. It's addressed to Eileen, Gordon and Ike and it's written by my mother. "I wanted to tell you that Hazel Litchfield has the family bible (Armstrong ) Hilda told me this a long time ago. I remember looking at it when Aunt Annie was alive but I can't remember all the names. Our father was named for a great uncle Mervin Archdahl or Archdale??" (That's one of the little mysteries.) And mother is talking about her paternal grandmother. "Our paternal grandmother was Elizabeth Gray who married Samuel Armstrong. And Elizabeth Gray was an only child of her mother's first marriage." She (great grandmother Gray) married a Mr. Hamilton and mother thinks his name was William. And this was her second marriage (Elizabeth Gray's mother's second marriage). And mother adds: "and this is the connection with Kathleen Hamilton whose father, I guess, was a half brother. Our maternal grandfather was James Black and they were first cousins." (And this is the second mystery.) I think mother means in this letter that Elizabeth Gray Armstrong and James Black (who is father of our Grannie Armstrong, Mary Jane (Birdie) Armstrong) are first cousins. This is the mystery part.

The letter continues, "Thomas Lurgan Black comes in there somewhere. Could be he was their (Elizabeth Gray's and James' Black's) grandfather. They came from North of Ireland, Enniskillen, I believe. The book I have was signed both Lurgan Thomas Black and Thomas Lurgan, July 10, 1845."

Then mother continues, "Mother's eldest brother (Archibald Black) was born in Dublin, Ireland about 90 odd years ago. Eliza Armstrong, born Feb. 14, 1841, was known as and called Aunt Liza by mother etc. Aunt Liza is the youngest girl of Samuel and Marry Armstrong, who came to NY as a married woman. She married the third son of the Earl of Winchelsea and was Grandpa Armstrong's youngest sister. The Earl had a family name of Allison. I think he was kind of like a remittance man sent out to America to get rid of him."

"There is a second family of Samuel Armstrong Sr.: Aunt Jane, Aunt Anne and Aunt Hannah and Uncle John Armstrong were the second family. Our grandfather's half-sisters and half-brother. All born in Canada. Our grandfather was Samuel." The Samuel that mother is writing about is who I'm calling Samuel Jr.

The next information I have is a letter to Susan Aspinall dated Jun. 14, 1981 by my mother to Susan.

In it she says "Samuel Armstrong came to Hornby Ont. from Northern Ireland as a widower with six children. It is not known why Hornby, Ont. was chosen, perhaps there was family connections but I never heard why this area was chosen. He opened a tavern and first he sent for his fiancé who became his second wife. Then one by one he brought out his children. I believe Samuel and Marryann came together. This was a rugged trip for the two youngsters. In the meantime the second family was arriving. John was the first, then Jane, Hannah and Anne. They were half-brother and sisters to my grandfather and as far as I know, except Anne, these members are buried in the Anglican Church in Hornby. John, whom I never knew, died leaving two children, William and Charlotte. Evidently they were orphans as I never remember hearing their mother's name. William I did know because he was raised as a son by my father's Aunt Marryann who was Mrs. Charles Brown and lived at Drumquin about 8 miles north of Oakville on the 7th Line. I used to spend summer holidays there and at this time Willie was married to Birdie, but not our grandmother, and had a 50 acre farm a mile from Drumquin on the 8th line. Jane Armstrong never married. She promised her dying mother that she'd always look after Hannah, who was very delicate but she had enough strength to marry Robert King. They farmed and Jane lived all her adult life with them. Hannah spent her time oil painting pictures of flowers etc. while Jane did the work. Nice deal if you can get it. Anne married William Hall and they had two daughters, Lily and Hazel who both married. Hazel married Arthur Vandervoort and Lily married William Medforth (his second wife). Neither had any children. They lived in Toronto and when I was young we saw them quite often. Hazel was a stockbroker at Burgess & Co. in Toronto 60 years ago at least. "

Mother continues, "About my paternal grandmother, whose name was Elizabeth Gray, married to Samuel Armstrong. She came to Canada with her widowed mother when she was 5 yrs. old to allow her mother to marry William Hamilton (to be second husband). They lived closer to Milton Ont. Her mother had twin sons, one- William we knew quite well, also Jane, a daughter. William had two daughters, Kathleen and Ruth. Kathleen graduated from Toronto General Hospital School for Nurses a year ahead of me in 1925. Ruth was a stenographer in T.O. and occasionally used to stay with us (babysit) while my mother and father would go to a dance or to the

theatre. We liked her but lost track of her somehow. My father used to take us for Sunday drives through this part of the country (near Hornby, Milton, Streetsville) and show us where he was born on the baseline, Hornby. The house was a derelict and we were not impressed with the neglect of all the buildings, falling apart etc. but he forgot to tell us that 50 or 60 years had lapsed since his birth and I guess it was not new then."

That is the end of that letter to Susan.

Now I have a photocopy of a letter dated Apr. 19, 1989 to Mildred and Mary Helen from Eileen in reply to Mary Helen's letter. Eileen says, "I haven't been able to find out very much about Donald Dickie's relationship to my father but I'll give you the scraps that I remember. We were living on Keele St. (now Parkside Dr) when Donald visited us. She stayed over night and had to sleep with me in a double bed. I was about 5 yrs. old and fell out of bed during the night and was kidded unmercifully. Mildred would be about 10-11 yrs. at the time. I don't know about the 3rd cousin bit between my parents but my understanding is that my grandfather, James Black, was a cousin of my father. I don't know if it was 1st or 2nd. My mother was courted first by father's brother, Charles, or Charlie. She eventually saw the light and married Mervin who was much younger and much better looking."

Eileen continues, "The only other info I have is that my grandfather's full name was James Lurgan Black and his family came from the North of Ireland. It was funny that I picked up a tea towel once and it had Lurgan stamped on it. (At that time I didn't know it was my grandfather's middle name.) It could be the name of a town or a tradename maybe his mother's maiden name. All I remember is it had a little seal on it saying Pure Irish Linen. As you know my father's middle name was Archdale. When Gord and I were in Belfast many years ago I tried to get some information and found that there is a Castle Archdale and also a Sir Mervin Archdale. I'm quite sure your mother (Mildred) has newspaper clippings about that."

Finally, Eileen says, "I was always told Donald Dickie was a cousin of my father. Her name isn't in the Armstrong big family bible."

Now a bit more information. This is in mother's writing on a piece of paper in red pencil. It is headed "Black Family."



"James William, born in Enniskillen Ireland, a Tinsmith, married in Ireland to Sarah (?) He had a business in Halifax. Two children, James William and Jane. This is the **James William Black** who married **Mary Belle McKenzie** in Truro, N.S., Canada. They had some children, **James Archibald** born in Dublin, **Mary Jane** born in Winnipeg Man. , **Mabel** born in Burwick N.S. and **Fred** born in T.O., Ont. and four other children who died in infancy of diptheria."

"Mary Jane Black Armstrong, called Birdie by family and Sadie by some other people in the family. That, by the way, the Sadie nickname was given to Grannie Armstrong by Eileen. The story I heard, I can't remember all of it but Sadie was what my father called my mother's mother.) James Archibald died when he was about 18 yrs. Mary Jane married Mervin Armstrong; Mabel married Hardy Fletcher; Fred died as a young child. Mabel and Hardie had three sons, Irving (Used to work for the Toronto Star, I think.) He married and had some children, one of whom was a girl, Sandra about Mary Helen's age, Jim (James) who married late in life no children, and Jack, married late and divorced and no children." Mary Helen adds: "as far as I know Jack Fletcher never re-married, but I could be wrong."

"The daughter Jane, married a British officer stationed in Halifax, named Studley. When she was a widow she moved to Boston. There was a lot of traffic between the Maritimes and the New England States. There were four children in that marriage Donald Studley, went to California; Stephen died in a car accident; Anthony died; and Bessie married a British officer in Halifax (he had a wart on his nose and eventually went into business- soft drinks etc.) "

On the other side of this paper, still in red ink:

"Archibald McKenzie: born in Glasgow, Scotland and married Ellen Morrison in Truro N.S. (Ellen Morrison was sister of the Hon. Tom Morrison speaker in Lower House of Commons in N.B. Her father had a large farm on the ocean.)"

"Archibald and Ellen McKenzie had Mary Belle; Archibald (who eventually was lost at sea); Donald (went to California and married there); and Roderick (also lost at sea- both brothers were sea captains.)"

"Mary Belle married James William Black in Truro N.S. That's where we get this other information about James Archibald (a bachelor) born in

Dublin, Ireland; Mary Jane (Birdie) born in Winnipeg; Mabel (born in Burwick NS); Fred (born in T.O) and four children who died of diphtheria."

Another story from mother: Mary Belle McKenzie was engaged to a sea captain and he was lost at sea and when he was lost she married James William Black. This first fiancé had made Mary Belle an inlaid wooden jewel box. It has two separate individual trays. He gave this to her after one of his long voyages. It's very pretty. It was mother's pride and joy up to a point.

In Feb. 88 in Mary Helen's writing- "mother gave this to me, one of her prized possessions as a thank you for all the work I had done so far and all the work she knew I would be doing."

Additional information from Mildred as post script to Eileen's letter. " James Black ( our Grannie Armstrong's father- grew up on Henry. St. in Halifax N.S.). He was an herbalist and his last store which they lived over in Toronto was at 525 Queen St. West in Toronto. He had studied medicine for a couple of years at Dalhousie. He quit that and played first violin in the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He was a jack of all trades, master of quite a few things but didn't seem to be able to settle down. When his father died he was left the equivalent (as mother used to say) of a quarter of a million dollars and his sister Jane the same, and he set off to enjoy life with this money. The reason he had so much money, as mother used to say, was that James's Black's father (the one born in Ireland and married to Sarah) had been in the British Army and posted in Canada and when he was to be let out of the army he had the choice to go back to England or stay in Canada and he chose to stay in Canada, in Halifax and started a tinsmith business. Mother used to tell this story that he saved 90 cents of every dollar he earned as a tinsmith and in the same breath without batting an eye she would add "and his wife died very young". and I thought to myself no wonder she died he never gave her any money to keep things warm or feed herself etc. etc. so that's one of these stories. I should add that James was interested in medicine and had observed the natives in N.S. and he used to talk about natives going out into the woods when they were not feeling well and throwing themselves on the ground breathing in the ground and the leaves and ferns and the needles from the evergreens and do this two or three times a day for about a week or so and then they would feel better. It

turns out this was a native cure and it later became known as penicillin, is the way mother used to say, because it was mold on the ground.

I want to say now that I have some confusion over this James William who married Mary Belle McKenzie and yet Eileen's letter says "the only other info I have is that my grandfather's full name was James Lurgen Black." Now, mother doesn't have Lurgen down on the Black family history at all. She's got James William, his father as James William, born in Enniskillen and I don't know where the James Lurgen comes in or a Thomas Lurgen Black, that mother mentions in one of her letters. This Thomas Lurgen Black is in the first letter of Aug. 11/69 where she's talking about Elizabeth Gray Armstrong, who was the only child of her mother's first marriage and then she adds down the way that our maternal grandfather was James Black and they were first cousins (this is what Mother is saying in that letter.) Thomas Lurgen Black comes in there somewhere, could be he was their grandfather, they came from the North of Ireland, Enniskillen, I believe. The book I have was signed both Lurgen Thomas Black and Thomas Lurgen, July 10, 1845. You'll note and see mother has named her grandfather as James William Black, (no Lurgen) and his father, James William also, there isn't any Lurgen at all ... I don't know where this Thomas Lurgen Black comes in. Another mystery.

The newspaper clipping mentioned by Eileen reads as follows:

"Lady Grimthorpe who has had a second son is an attractive young matron (as you may see here) daughter of Col. Mervyn Archdale, late 12th Lancers of Eastborne and one of the goodlooking Irish family whose members include Lady Burrell formerly Miss Coralie Porter. Lord Grimthorpe an officer of a Yorkshire Yeomanry Regiment who has seen a great share of hard service is a wealthy peer and head of the rich Beckett family whose fortunes were founded in the important Leeds Bank. His heir Christopher John Beckett will be 3 yrs. next month."

What a bunch of B.S. A typical social item in the newspaper. It doesn't have a date but looks as though came out of a newspaper but I don't know which one in about 1920's.

### **SIDE 2 TAPE 1**

Just found another bit of information, Mary Belle McKenzie Black was James William Black's second wife. His first wife died, no children.



Now going back to Marry Armstrong, who died in Ireland in 1846 and her 6 children. **Isabella**, born Dec. 26, 1831 **married David Alton Hall**. They had a daughter, **Hannah Hall**, born Oct. 8, 1861 who married William Stewart Dickie (born in Galt, Ont.) on Sept. 20, 1882 in Orangeville, ON. Hannah died May 13, 1887. She had three children. **Donalda James Armstrong Dickie, David Ormiston Stewart Dickie and Thomas Alton Hall Dickie**. This is the Donalda mentioned in Eileen's letter. This family moved West to Sask. and after Hannah died leaving these three young children. A grandmother looked after these children. (William Stewart Dickie's mother.) Donalda was born Oct. 5, 1883. That makes her Grandpa Armstrong's cousin. Isabella Armstrong and Samuel Armstrong Jr. were brother and sister. Samuel and Elizabeth Gray Armstrong had children including Mervin. Hannah married a Dickie and she had 3 children including Donalda. Mervin had three children, Mildred, Jack and Eileen. So Mildred and Donalda are the same generation. When Eileen talks about Donalda staying with them in Toronto, Donalda had won a scholarship to study at either Oxford or Cambridge. Mother felt she had won this scholarship at age 17 yrs., and she had come through by train to Toronto and then was going on to Quebec City to catch a boat to England. She ended up with a PhD. I should add here that when mother was about 10 she thought Donalda was 17-18 at the time. Donalda was as "big as a minute", and that may be part of why she felt she was so young,- but she must have been 30 yrs. !! So that's where mother was a bit out on some ages of people.

Another article I have is a newspaper clipping out of Edmonton, no date, is headed "Dr. Dickie's Retirement." It shows a picture of Donalda, whom I met several times and called her "Auntie Don" because she was my mother's generation.

"Scholar teacher author Dr. Dickie left Edmonton in 1944 to retire to Vancouver after 32 years as a leading educationalist in Alberta. Dr. Dickie studied at Queen's, Columbia, Oxford and Toronto Universities and Toronto University conferred on her the honorary degree Doctor of Laws."

She was an author of books, one of which was **my** history book that I used in Grade 4 in St. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, when we lived there from the fall of 1943- summer 1944. When I brought this book home called "Pages

from Canada's Story" by D. J. Dickie and Helen Palk, mother said "Oh, that's your cousin who wrote it." That's when I got interested in family history. I still have the book. I've kept it for no other reason than a cousin wrote it.

When I came out to Vancouver in 1951 to go to U of B.C. and study arts, mother said to me, "Donalda Dickie lives in Vancouver now. Keep an eye out to see where she lives and if we can get together." One evening I was sitting doing my homework in the dorm, had the radio on and they announced on the radio that Dr. D.J. Dickie and poet Earl Birnie were going to be speaking at 7 p.m. at the Vancouver School Board offices. All people were welcome to come and hear this couple speak. I had 3/4 hr. to find out where this was and how I would get there by bus and roared off and got there in time to hear both speakers. After the speeches I went up and introduced myself to Donalda Dickie as Mary Helen Mackenzie, Mildred Armstrong Mackenzie's daughter. She said "Oh, you must be Eileen." I said no, Eileen is my aunt, I'm Mildred's daughter. She took my name and number, I took hers.. That year my family was coming to Vancouver for Christmas so when they came here, Mother had Donalda over to the apartment they had rented for their vacation and that was the first time Mother had seen Donalda since she was a little girl. Donalda is about 20 years older than mother. We kept in touch and when Mother and Dad were transferred from the NWT to Edmonton, we met people who had been taught by Donalda (she taught teachers in Alta.) They were having a big reunion and mother heard Donalda was coming to Edmonton so mother had her to the house. Grannie Armstrong wasn't living out west at that time, I don't think. It must have been after Janet and I had finished training and we were married.

Another instance of "small world", is I married and was living in Kitimat and worked with a nurse who was a Canadian and her parents had moved out to Maple Ridge (Haney) 30 miles east of Vancouver on the north side of the Fraser River. And that's where Bill's people were retired. This gal was to be married and was talking about her parent's neighbors who were invited to the wedding and their name was Dickie. I found out this Dickie that lived next door to my friend was a nephew of Donalda Dickie's. Donalda never married. David Ormiston Stewart Dickie married and had three children. I have talked to one of them on the phone, this neighbor of my friend's (William Dickie) and been in contact with his sister Elizabeth Donalda

Dickie called "Betty Don". She's now married to a Bill Harris. She's Donald's niece and lives in Maple Ridge. The funny part is I had trouble trying to find Donald through this wife of Bill Dickie (the nephew) who got on her high horse and wouldn't give me any information about her. So it wasn't until after Bill died and I moved down to Maple Ridge to live there myself that I started tracking down the Dickies. Through Bill, I got Betty Don Harris and I have got a lot of information on the Dickie's from her. And I gave her information on Isabella Armstrong Hall. (Betty Don Harris' great grandmother.) Small world.

Another bit of information from this article from the Edmonton paper is "she is the author of more than 40 books including many children's history readers. In 1950 Dr. Dickie won the Governor General's Literary Award for Juveniles with her history of Canada."

I've got a real weird bit of family information that I found out from Betty Don Harris a couple years ago. When mother first came out I had Betty Don up to visit mother and mother couldn't remember all sorts of things and that's when Betty Don wrote to Eileen and Eileen wrote back to her. Donald's father, not too long after his wife died and his mother came out to look after his children, decided to go out with one of his brothers (named Thomas) and an uncle to Australia. So they went and were going to look around there but they separated, which was the plan and were supposed to meet at a certain time and they were all going to come back to Canada. Well, as it turned out the brother and the uncle met but Donald's father didn't show up. They heard he had died. So the brother (Thomas) came back to Canada but the uncle stayed in Australia. So everyone assumed William Stewart Dickie had died. So the grandmother raised the children with the help of some of her children. A couple of years ago, Betty Don, who's active in this family history routine, got a letter from a gal in Australia, calling herself a "Miss Stewart", trying to track down a William Stewart, her father, born in Ontario and finds out that William Stewart's full name was William Stewart Dickie. This S.O.B left his three older children in Canada to be raised by his mother, married a gal, very young, and proceeded to have 10 or 11 children and never let on he was alive to his family in Canada. He died, the mother died and this was one of the daughters writing to find out some information about this SOB.

The famous story about Donalda's visit and Eileen saying she was expected to share her double bed and fell out, the funny part is that Donalda had arrived for a visit and Eileen and mother wanted to see what older cousin girls looked like. And they were anxiously waiting until it was time to go to bed and they expected to see Donalda strip and get ready for bed. Well Donalda fooled them all. She undressed under her nightgown and Eileen and mother didn't see a goddamn thing. So that's what mother remembers about this visit of Donalda and she says "well no wonder, she'd been raised on the prairies, they didn't have central heating, she would be cold in the winter time so you kept yourself as warm as you could so you would undress under your nightgown." Anyway that's the funny story that mother remembered.

The next one on the list that I know anything about is Marryann Armstrong, born July 5, 1836. Marryann Armstrong married a man named Charles Brown. Mother always referred to this aunt as Aunt Marry Brown. They lived on a farm. No children. They had a couple of Barnardo children. (Orphans and poor children sent from England through Dr. Barnardo) They also raised William Armstrong, who was an orphaned nephew. Aunt Marry Brown was my mother's great-aunt. (Grandpa Armstrong's aunt) Marryann Brown had a half brother John who died and left two children, William and Charlotte. That was the William raised by Aunt Marry Brown and Uncle Charlie like a son. Charlotte, I don't know what happened to her but here is some information. She was a school teacher at a girls private school in Kentucky or Virginia. I think mother went to visit Charlotte because some of her post cards were from Virginia so someone had been down to visit. That would be in the early 1920's. The early stories that mother told about Aunt Marry Brown: the one I remember the most was when Marryann was 10 and Samuel was 8 and they came out by ship from Ireland. They were on a ship that was shipwrecked between Nfld. and Labrador. They survived the wreck and they had tags on them and they were tracked down and found and put on another ship and were eventually settled at their father's home in Hornby. That was the horrifying trip they had. From what I gather from mother is that Samuel and Marryann were very close as a result of this trip across the ocean. Aunt Marry Brown and Uncle Charlie had a farm and also a blacksmith shop and they grew grain and they had bees and honey and they were very good farmers and they had people working for them. In those days they had thrashing crews that came around and the woman of the house had to feed all the men. And Aunt Marry Brown was a very good



cook. They shipped honey (they had so much honey and such good honey) to the West Prairies not by the car load but by the train load. So you can imagine how much honey they had. Mother often spent part of her summer holidays at their home. Aunt Marry Brown taught my mother how to sew clothes: on machine, by hand and embroidery. Aunt Marry Brown would knit every evening- a sock or mitt every night. She was a very busy person.

Mother in one letter talks about her parents taking them for Sunday drives through Drumquin, Milton, Hornby etc. Grannie and Grandpa Armstrong used to do for Janet and me also. In 1938 my mother and father allowed Grannie and Grandpa Armstrong to have Janet and me for a two year contract. Mother and dad were living in the Republic of Colombia at Barranca Burmeja where my father was working for the Tropical Oil Company. And Janet's and my health wasn't as good as it should have been. Grannie & Grandpa missed watching their first grandchildren growing up. So I understand that mother wrote to her parents and it was decided the kids would come for two years starting in 1938-1940. My father's contracts were for two year time periods. My family left Colombia for the first part of the holiday between contracts (2 months) and we holidayed in Jamaica. Grandmother Mackenzie came down from Toronto by boat out of New York to have a holiday and bring the girls home to live with Grannie & Grandpa Armstrong for two years. It was an eye opener, as I recall. I can remember lots of that trip but the most important part is Grannie & Grandpa were awfully good to Janet and me. We started school, we saw snow and had lots of fun. On Sundays, Grandpa would put us in the car and he'd ask where we'd like to go and Janet would pipe up and say "lets go up and see the shack where you were born, Grandpa." Which made them laugh. Because if mother said the family property was derelict when she was growing up it was even worse when we were growing up. But we always went for a Sunday drive unless someone was coming to see us in Oakville.

The last one, Eliza Armstrong was the one child of the six not brought out to Canada. She stayed in Ireland and was raised by relatives. She married the 3rd son of the Earl of Winchelsea. She came to the U.S. as a married woman. His family name was Allison. Now Eliza and her husband William Allison had five children. William, Charles, George, Ellen (nicknamed Totty) and Mary. They lived in N.Y. State near or in Portchester, NY and mother used to talk about her parents and Jack and Eileen and mother all driving down to NY State to visit someone. And Grandpa Armstrong had



one of the first cars in the City of Toronto. Grandpa was a rather successful machine tool maker and had his own business. He was quite progressive in his thinking etc. He built a sloop and he also sailed with Grannie Armstrong. She learned to sail herself, run the inboard engine to get the sloop in and out of the dock. They enjoyed their prosperity. Mother said that they would spend the summer on Lake Ontario. They'd sail all weekend and then anchor at some dock in some town on the lake and Grandpa would take the train back to Toronto and work all week and then come back by train and they'd sail all weekend again. Grandpa wanted to teach his children how to enjoy the good things of life, meaning, not for the sake of spending money but how to have good manners, how to meet people, how to eat at a restaurant, how to order a meal. There was always this practice all the time. But good natured teaching and fun.

One of these trips to Portchester, mother would be 10-12 yrs. or so and they were down there obviously over the July 4th holiday in the States and the Canadian visitors to their Yankee cousins were all playing and singing and the tune to our God Save the King, then, was also used by the Americans as some other anthem. The neighbor children and the Canadian cousins with their Yankee cousins trying to drown out "the enemy" and they'd be singing God Save the King and the Americans would be singing the words to the same tune that the U.S. usually uses. She said they had lots of fun. But anyway, these Allison children. Mother writes: "George Allison had two sons, at least. Mary married a man by the name of Pladwell, and Totty married a man named Fenton. They must be in the States but I don't know."

Here's another mystery, or I'm making more of it than it really is. I read the book "Out of Africa" by Isak Dinesen. That was the pen name of the Danish woman Karen Blixen. They made a movie of this book and I was fascinated by the movie so I read the book. Actually the book is a hell of a lot better. In Chapter 5 it mentions in Farewell to the Farm, on the last page it states "Dennis's brother Lord Winchelsea had ...." After she divorced her rotten husband, (Karen Blixen), she had an affair with a man named Denys Finch-Hatton. He was the younger son and didn't get the title but his older brother did. In the 1920s early 30s in Africa, Denys is killed in a plane crash. He requested to be buried in Africa and his brother Lord Winchelsea came out for the burial. That name jumped out at me because Eliza Armstrong married the 3rd son of the Earl of Winchelsea at that time.

But his family name was Allison. I don't know how many Winchelsea's there could be. Denys Finch-Hatton's brother is referred to by Karen Blixen as "Lord Winchelsea". It was always stated that Eliza's husband was the 3rd son of the Earl of Winchelsea. Whether there's any connection there I don't know.

Another clipping this time with the headings. Globe & Mail Friday April 6, 1962. Page 10. Titled "After a Fashion", by Zena Cherry. Talking about the island of Tobago. She's talking about meeting some people there. "Also Sir John and Lady Paget, with that name you'd think they'd go to Bermuda but I'm glad they're here. I'm a pushover for the English anyway, but the Pagets are special. As well as directing many firms he is chairman of the Board of the new Brunel College of Advanced Technology, an inventor and he makes his wife's jewellery. Sir John's mother was the daughter of the 12th Earl of Winchelsea. A book about her titled "Lady Muriel" is being published this month."

So there we are: another Winchelsea but I don't know if they're connected or not. Mother has cut these clippings out.

### **TAPE 2 SIDE 1**

Samuel Armstrong Jr., born Dec. 12, 1838. It is he who married Elizabeth Gray and we've got some info about her. Her mother came out to marry a man named Hamilton and Elizabeth was about 5 yrs. old at the time. Her mother had more children, including a set of twins, boys and a daughter. Mother also mentions this Kathleen Hamilton. William is the one who is married and has two daughters- Kathleen and Ruth. Mother mentions Kathleen graduated one year ahead of mother from Toronto General Hospital School for Nurses. That Kathleen is Mervin's generation and mother is the next generation. So William must have married late in life and had these two girls. Mother talked about when she was in training and there was some competition because this Kathleen Hamilton was ahead of her. Mother used to go and visit her Grandmother Armstrong (Elizabeth Gray) who was not feeling too well at this time so mother would go up and give her a bed bath and have a visit and change her sheets and fluff her pillows etc. and apparently Elizabeth would be talking to her half-brother William. William was bragging about Kathleen and how her training was going. And

Elizabeth used to say of her granddaughter, "well Mildred can plump up a pillow very well."

Of Samuel and Elizabeth Gray's children: I remember very well Aunt Annie (but I don't remember Fred, Charles, or Edith) and Aunt Edith's daughter Hilda who married Doug Wood and lived in Oakville. Mother and Hilda got together in the mid 1940s. They had no children. I remember in the late 1930s or early 1940s that mother took us in to visit other cousins of hers and they would be Edith's children (Edie Duncan). (Shirley was one child's name perhaps who was married and living in the Sunnyside area.) Aunt Annie lived and was married in Oakville and when Mervin was a little boy he stayed with his eldest sister (Annie) and her husband and went to school at the Old Central School (on 16 Mile Creek). He would stay there for the week for school and then go home to Hornby for the weekend. He went as far as Grade 8. Then he went to work and he didn't get much farther in school than Grade 8 but he was no slouch.

Aunt Annie was the first bride in the new St. Jude's Church in Oakville, Ont. In the book "Old Oakville" by David and Suzanne Peacock, on pg. 112 it talks about St. Jude's Church. In the middle column of paragraphs it says "on April 23, 1883 workmen began to dig the foundation and on the 13th of June 1883 the cornerstone was laid by the most worshipful Daniel Spry. The new church was officially opened on Sun. Dec. 16th 1883 by the Rev. Markridge. George Sumner, who lived across the street, wrote in his diary that the first wedding to take place in the little English church was between Herbert Litchfield and Miss Armstrong on Wed. Mar. 19, 1884."

Family records state the wedding took place on March 17, 1884. This was a new building but there had been another Anglican Church that was getting too small. The second couple married in the new church received the bible from the first church, which really should have gone to Aunt Annie. My mother used to say that Annie and Herbert were not "socially acceptable" to a few people in Oakville who decided who were going to be socially acceptable and who were not. And that was why they did not receive the bible from the first church. I don't know who the second bride and groom were but they got the bible.

I remember Aunt Annie very well. She lived on Sumner Street, just off Reynolds Avenue. Her home is now a Heritage Home. I remember visiting

her with Grannie and Grandpa Armstrong and Janet when we first arrived in Oakville. She didn't come to Grannie and Grandpa's place that frequently, we would pop in to see her. She had no car, she was a widow then and her son Merv lived at home but I don't believe he had a car, either. He worked at an accounting firm, I think and travelled into Toronto by train every day. Mother would say that Merv would catch the last train home because she was quite sure ( I think someone followed him or tried to find out what he was doing in Toronto. I don't know what they were suspicious of but they did find out) he would stop off at a couple of pubs or bars on his way between work and the station. I would say he was bordering on alcoholism but that's not for me to say. Anyway I can remember him sitting like a bump on the log in a big old chair in the kitchen in Aunt Annie's house and he really didn't add much to the conversations at all. I don't know when he died. Hazel, his sister, I think married, but I don't remember her married name. She either had her own children or adopted a couple of children. Aunt Annie died in 1952 and I remember her very well at the end of the war and before we moved West, mother, Janet and I would often visit her. The cookies that mother used to make were called Oatmeal Cookies and they were Aunt Annie's recipe. And they were the simplest good cookies to make. I still make them, when I get organized which is not often but I made them all the time when my girls were growing up. Mother said they were good and I haven't found a better recipe than these. It's an old fashioned recipe but damn good.

I am going to try to give you a brief basic information about my mother and father and us. Mother was born in Toronto the eldest of three. When she was 16 her parents built the house on Linbrook Rd. and mother finished high school in Oakville. She always wanted to do nursing. Now grandpa always wanted to live in Oakville after he was financially able to do it. He commuted by car into Toronto every day and came back to Oakville at night. So they built this house and bought 11 acres. Some of it was orchard, some of it was plain and some beautiful bush with trilliums and lady slippers and everything. Mother wanted to be a nurse but she had to be 20 yrs old before she could go into nursing. She had a year before she could go into training at Toronto General Hospital. Apparently her mother always wanted to be a nurse also but she had to give up that and stay home and look after her mother who was not that well. So mother went to Victoria College first year and took Arts, then she went into nursing. She graduated in 1926 and her first job was as head nurse of the 1st Floor of the Private Patients



Pavilion at TGH. That's the old Private Patients that became the West Residence when Janet and I were in training. Anyway she had some friends and they wanted to go into Foreign service nursing. There were 8 of them that were all supposed to go in together but as mother used to say when it came time to sign on the dotted line she was the only one who did anything. So she did private duty. She resigned from Head Nurse after a year and did private duty so she'd be able to leave at a moment's notice to go when she was called. She was called to go to Tropical Oil Company Hospital at Barranca Burmeja, Republic of Colombia in 1929. I've got her letters written to her mother and father which have been saved. She met daddy in Barranca. My father had gone down in 1927. He was born in Toronto. They were born 12 blocks apart in the city of Toronto, one day apart (my father was one day older) and they didn't meet until they went to Colombia. Daddy's people came out to Prince George for 10 yrs when he was 10 yrs. and went back when he was 20 because his father had a stroke and they went back to Toronto. Grandma Mackenzie had to go to work. My grandfather Mackenzie died the year I was born 1933. Anyway they met, fell in love and wanted to get married. They were married in 1930 in Panama and daddy had finished his first contract and came back to Canada to meet mother's family. Mother had just started her contract and wouldn't be finished until 1931. So they were married on local leave in Panama. They took the boat up from Barranca, it was up to the coast. They lived on the Magdalena River and it was boat travel or float plane. The best man went as chaperone. They went down river to the coast to Cartagena and waited for a boat to take them to Panama. The reason they had to go to Panama was because Colombia didn't have civil registration of births, marriages and deaths- only church and the church was R.C. and we weren't R.C. So they went to the closest place with civil registration and that was the American Canal Zone. So mother and dad's marriage is registered in Washington D.C. They went back to Colombia and mother finished her contract and stayed on and worked and waited until my father finished his second contract in 1932. Mother was pregnant with me and they did a fantastic 19 day cruise across to England via the Caribbean, island hopping there. They wired their family to say they would be a month late getting back. They spent two weeks in England then took a boat back to Quebec City and spent the month there. Mother was going to stay in Canada to have me and daddy went back to start another contract. Well, when daddy got back to Colombia, they had a house but there was a shortage of housing for married quarters so a few men that wanted housing for their wives and



children complained and daddy had to either give up the house or have mother go down and have me, which is how it happened. So mother went back alone and I was born in Jan. 1933. Janet was born in 1934. Mother was able to come up to Canada to have her because there was enough married quarters by then. Anyway daddy came up in 1934 also, mother came up ahead, then we went back for another two year contract until 1936. When I say up and down we went by boat from Cartagena to New York and then trained to Toronto. Mother and daddy would split up their holiday time between the two families. They'd be in Oakville then to Toronto for the weekend because Grannie Mackenzie worked and they would quite often hire a nurse maid to help mother and the households with us because we were quite young.

In 1936 my grandfather Armstrong started to really suffer from the depression. Mother and dad knew they would like to return to Canada eventually and they would like to buy some property. My father was neither high enough in the working ladder nor low enough to be fired and he had a salary all through the depression. So they offered to buy Grannie and Grandpa Armstrong's house in 1936. And they started to pay for it. And in 1938 Janet and I came up to live with Grannie & Grandpa Armstrong. And mother and dad went back to Barranca. In 1939 mother had a ruptured appendix, peritonitis, septicemia, and should have died but didn't in the middle of the jungle. She was very sick, they sent her up early in 1940 before father's contract was over. The war was on. She came up by American Fruit boat, as she says, they crossed the Caribbean and up the east coast of the USA with all lights on the ship running and the American flag hanging on as the Americans weren't in the war yet. So she came up to have more surgery. She'd had two operations in Barranca and she needed more surgery. Daddy came for his holidays in 1940. My mother couldn't pass the medical to go back down so daddy was offered the opportunity to go back alone for 2 yrs. or just be transferred to Canada. We went to Sarnia. By this time Grannie and Grandpa were living in Toronto in an apartment and we rented out the house in Oakville. We were in Sarnia for about a year and less than 12 weeks after we were there my father was loaned to the federal government for the duration of the war. He went off to Ottawa. Mother and Janet and I tried to get close to Ottawa. We never got to Ottawa. We lived in Sarnia, north of Sarnia (Corunna), Iroquois, Westmount Quebec, St. Anne de Bellevue and we were finally able to get back into our own house in Oakville in 1944. Daddy was released from the government in 1946 and

he spent a year and a half commuting to head office for Imperial Oil. He was then given the responsibility of superintendent of the refinery at Norman Wells NWT for a one year stint. That was confirmed and he was there until 1954. Grannie Armstrong came out to Oakville look after Janet and me. By this time grandpa had died. Grannie came to Oakville in 1948, when my parents were North. Then when this assignment was made permanent, my parents decided to move Janet and me to school in Calgary. Uncle Jack stayed with us that year and was a bit of a pain in the prat and upset my mother and father and they threw him out in the fall of 1948. Mother was down on a mercy flight from Norman Wells to Edmonton, my father had been down to Toronto on business and they had met in Edmonton and he told mother to go back to Oakville and throw out her brother, which she did. She stayed on, daddy came down at Christmas time to Toronto and they proceeded to get us organized to go to boarding school in Calgary, which we did. (St. Hilda's School for Girls first and then Mount Royal College.) They moved out of the north in 1954 to Edmonton. Janet and I went to school in Calgary. I had a year of university before I went into training at Toronto General in 1952. Janet came in 1953. We graduated in 1956. (I had quit after 1 1/2 yrs of a three year course and then went back after 4 months) They put me in Janet's class which worked out quite well because mother and dad were in the North and we graduated 30 yrs after mother from the same hospital. My father and mother stayed in Edmonton. My father died of lung cancer in 1961. Mother stayed on in Edmonton. Janet and I graduated in 1956 and worked in Edmonton for a short time, then went to Kitimat to work for Aluminum Company of Canada where we met our husbands. I stayed in Canada, Janet married an Australian and went there to live. Then they came back to Canada, to the States then back to Australia in 1964 with three children. I stayed in Kitimat until a year after Bill died when I moved to his family property in Maple Ridge (1983). Sheila was going to go to U of Victoria, Sandra was married. Sheila decided not to go and went back to Kitimat and married her boyfriend. She and her husband and two children moved down to Abbotsford in 1989. Mother took sick at my place in 1987. That changed a lot of things. She could no longer be in her own home in Edmonton. She always alternated her Christmases between Australia and Canada for quite a few years. She made 8 trips to Australia and so she came out to live with me. We built a house and I looked after her physically until 1990 when she went into a nursing home in Abbotsford. Then I sold my place and I moved over here in 1991. Sandra and her husband divorced, no children, she is now living

with a fellow she has known for ages (they were in Kitimat together.) He is a lawyer in Kamloops and she has started her own business up there. Sheila's husband is a co-owner of a grocery store in Abbotsford and they were doing very well. Sheila does a bit of bookwork for the store but stays at home looking after the children. I moved over here to Abbotsford because neither one of the girls wanted their father's family property in Maple Ridge and it seemed ridiculous for me to live over there alone and them to be over here.

I have been reviewing this letter of Janet's written to Mary dated July 22, 1994. She's got something wrong here right from the beginning. She says "it has been a long time since we have seen each other I think it was in London in 1954 when Mary Helen and I drove West to Edmonton with Grannie Armstrong for our summer holidays." It wasn't 1954 it was 1955. And then the 3rd paragraph down she says "we were back to Canada for mother's funeral last month. It was a sad occasion but she had not been in the best of health for a number of years" (which is not that... she's implying for years and years, but it wasn't) "and was very frail" (she wasn't that frail), "she was 91 plus so she'd had pretty good innings."

I've just been listening to all my "verbal diarrhea" as my father used to call it. And I've made some notes to add to my dissertation, if you want to call it that.

Betty Don Harris with her husband Bill were in Ireland in 1990 and took some pictures of the church and the church records where Samuel and Marry Armstrong were married. It shows Mary spelled with one "r". The church is the Church of Ireland in Newtown Butter, Parish of Gallon, County of Fermanagh. Betty Don gave these two pictures to mother.

You probably wonder where I got my name Mary Helen. I just have the two names, they're not hyphenated. I got Mary from Mary Jane Black Armstrong and the Helen from my other grandmother Helen Elsie Moore Mackenzie. I was the first grandchild on either side of the family and mother and dad decided they couldn't outdo either grandmother so they gave me the two names. I stopped that tradition when I had the first grandchild on either side of the family.

Now, James Black, the father of our Grannie Armstrong. The one that had inherited (as mother used to say) the equivalent of a quarter of a million dollars. He took his wife, Mary Belle McKenzie and they went to Ireland for their wedding trip and they obviously had a good time there and decided to stay on and that was when the first child was born and they decided to come back. They were there about two years and came back with this young boy and then started to really travel around the country because Grannie was born in Winnipeg, and Auntie Mabel in Nova Scotia and then these last children in and around Toronto.

Charlotte Armstrong. I don't remember mother saying too much about her at all. I don't remember ever hearing who raised her or where she was raised. All I remember is that later she became a teacher.

Elizabeth Gray Armstrong came out with her mother when she was 5 yrs old. Her Mother had taught her how to read and write because she never went to school one day in Canada (as told by mother) When she married she was able to get her children to school and our grandfather, Mervin, got as far as Grade 8. That generation's children got to University Graduation. So as mother used to say in three generations we had great changes to access and level of education which basically could only be done in Canada with the opportunities which were more plentiful for more people.

I remember in 1939, Auntie Mabel (Grannie Armstrong's sister) and Grannie Armstrong decided to take their granddaughters to the CNE. Auntie Mabel had her granddaughter, Sandra Fletcher, (her father was Irving), and Grannie had Janet and me with her. And we went into Toronto with Grandpa in the car. We met Auntie Mabel and Sandra at the CNE and we spent the day there together. I don't remember too much about going on any hectic rides with Auntie Mabel and Grannie, anyway I think we did do a bit of rides. I think we were more interested in seeing the displays.

Mary Belle Black (nee McKenzie) had a favorite brother. Not one of the two sea captains but the brother Donald who went to California. And she lost track of him and mother said that Mary Belle was always sorry she had lost track of him.

Mother had some other statements she used to make such as this one in particular.



"Shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations." What that means is the first generation who worked hard in their shirt sleeves makes the money (and in this case James William Black, the tinsmith in Halifax) and the second generation usually spends or blows it (and that was James William Black's son, left 1/4 million dollars) (Grannie Armstrong's father)) and mother said that her grandfather Black was so close to being broke when he died it wasn't even funny. The 3rd generation has to start working again wearing shirt sleeves as opposed to suits and ties. That's basically what it was and you will see a few people that have gone through this shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves in 3 generations. There are people who do well like the Rockefellers and the Vanderbilts etc.

Now I can't remember which Armstrong it was but it was one of Samuel Armstrong Sr. sons and his wife and family They went by covered wagon to the USA at some stage. They went there to live and work. Near the end of their stay, (I don't know how long they'd been gone or how far they'd gone), they bought land around Chicago, Illinois before that community became a roaring success as a city. Maybe because the railway came through. But anyway, they sold and came back to Canada. Their land became the cattle stock yards a couple of years later and they kicked themselves for not sticking it out on their farm there. They obviously missed the boat.

I remember arriving in Toronto in 1938, it was in the fall, October, and we had come up by boat from Jamaica with Grandma Mackenzie and she was seasick 99 % of the time and didn't like to eat in the main dining room and she insisted and got a bridge table and chairs put up on deck where the three of us would have our meals. We spent a day or two in NY City visiting friends of Grannie's and then we took the train up from New York to Toronto and she was afraid to let us out of her sight. We had one berth and Grannie slept one way and Janet and I slept the other way at her feet. It was kind of cosy as I recall. I remember getting off the train in Toronto in the early morning, about 7:30 a.m. and apparently Grandpa Armstrong and Grannie were there to meet us. And Grandpa had permission by the authorities to go down to the actual train to assist Grannie Mackenzie with the bags and I can remember walking up this ramp getting up to the major part of the station and looking over to the left and seeing this very pretty woman in a blue coat and a blue hat, she had white hair done very nicely- it was rolled up not in a bun, just rolled up and anchored nicely and a pleasant



smile. And I thought to myself, I hope that's my grandmother Armstrong. And as it turned out, it was. She was a very pretty lady. Anyway that's what I recall about arriving in Canada in 1938.

Mother told me years later that Grannie Armstrong never learned to knit or crochet until after I was born. She felt very guilty about this because she thought that grandmothers should knit for grandchildren and so I think it was Eileen's friend, Eileen Colwell who owned and ran the shop called The Shuttle in Oakville. Now Eileen Colwell did more weaving but she also knew knitting and crocheting. She taught Grannie Armstrong how to knit and crochet. Grannie practically drove everybody crazy trying to learn as an adult but she persevered and did some beautiful work. I have some of her crocheting and it was very nice.

## **SIDE 2 TAPE 2**

When the war started in 1939, I remember listening to the radio and hearing the declaration of war, Mackenzie King saying it. I remember Grannie and Grandpa being quite worried about this situation. It didn't mean that much to me. Part of the follow up information or newscasts proclaimed they were looking for people to knit for the Armed Forces and the Red Cross would offer the yarn free of charge. So Grannie decided she would do some knitting. And Janet and I decided to learn how to knit. Janet wasn't quite so keen as I to start with. We started off knitting 72 inch scarves. One brown for the army, one blue for the navy. I knit one color, Janet knit the other. It was plain old garter stitch. We were using the yarn of that time, which is thinner than you can get now. After about 4 inches Janet and I decided the novelty had worn off and the 72 inches was a hell of a long way to go and we decided to give the wool back. Grannie would not let us do this. She said because she had warned us we might not want to do this whole thing but if we tackled the job we had to finish it. She proceeded to assist us in finishing this. She did not do the knitting. This knitting project became a source of punishment level under control. Whenever Janet and I were naughty our punishment consisted of sitting down right then and there and knitting either 5 or 6 ridges which meant 10-12 rows.(garter stitch.) And before you knew it we had finished the ruddy scarves. Now that tells you two things: Janet and I were needing punishment frequently. The second thing is that Janet and I wanted to get this punishment over in a hurry so we

could get out and play to possibly get ourselves into trouble and need more punishment if we weren't too careful.

I can't remember when the first scarves were finished. But if the war started in Sept. and mother came up in May 1940 then I know that Janet and I had finished our scarves by then. I was quite proud that I had finished this scarf and I decided that I would make the effort and make another scarf so I asked Grannie to get me more yarn. I enjoyed the knitting, I still do. Janet didn't want to do a second scarf or anything else and she didn't do much of any knitting at all until much later. Then mother came up in 1940 and she started to do some knitting for the Red Cross. I finished my second scarf somewhere along the line. Mother was knitting things like sweaters for the Armed Forces or for children in Britain. Anyway, the yarn was given by the Red Cross and mother used to set me up on the plain knitting, she'd do the shaping, I'd carry on, she'd cast off or I would. By the end of the war I was doing all that work myself. Setting it up, shaping, sewing it up. I knitted socks and socks and sweaters and everything. By 1945 I was a pretty well skilled knitter from all this Red Cross knitting I had done.

I think Grannie gave up the idea of trying to teach us to crochet. I don't remember crocheting with Grannie. I think now she decided it was too much on her nerves to teach us. I learned to crochet 20 years ago when I taught myself. I still, though, prefer to knit.

Now this property that Grandpa Armstrong bought in Oakville, which became Linbrook Rd. was an 11 acre parcel. Of those 11 acres when mother started to earn money as a nurse, she had always liked this property and she bought, as I recall, 2 acres. Now this was the old cherry orchard which had died. And that was the major part of the two acres. This was strip farming up to a point, if you want to call it that. It went from the road back to the end of the property which included the old cherry orchard and part of the bush. And so she bought that two acres and she had that for the longest time. She didn't sell it until just before the end of the war or just after the war ended. About 1936 mother and daddy started to help financially strapped Grandpa Armstrong, who lost his business and everything in the depression. They decided they wanted to start buying property because they knew eventually they would return to Canada. They weren't going to spend all their lives in Colombia. So they started to buy

the house that Grannie & Grandpa had built and approximately 5 acres around the house. That consisted of the rest of the orchard, mainly apples and pears, some cultivated land and a good hunk of the woods also butting up to the two acres she had already bought. That left Grandpa & Grannie with four acres. And they always thought they would build a little house and live there. Well my Grandpa Armstrong died in 1944 not long after we moved back to the house in Oakville. In fact he died in our house, I can remember the morning. He had a coronary, a severe heart attack and died. That four acres went from his estate to Grannie and she had that lot for a long time until my father's brother (Alan ) wanted it. Alan was married with one child, was overseas in war and when he came back he and his wife were expecting their second child when they wanted to buy property and they bought two of Grannies' four acres, next to us. The other two acres were sold to a family by the name of Despard. That accounts for the 11 acres.

About the name Linbrook Rd. It was named by the first Mrs. John Hardy. They were farmers who lives across the street from Grannie & Grandpa Armstrong, a bit further east. They had three children. Actually the first Mrs. Hardy had just two. Lillian Hardy who was my mother's good friend, (although she was 13 years older than mother) and Grace. And then Mrs. Hardy died and Mr. Hardy married again and had a son, Ivan. After Grace's step-mother died (Grace and Lillian were both teachers. Grace was a bit of a prude. She taught and lived in Hamilton. Lillian taught in Clarkson and lived at home and kept house for her father. Neither girls married) The first Mrs. Hardy, whom I never knew, named this road. It was called Linbrook because there was a big Linden tree down by the little brook at the corner of this road and the 8th line in Oakville. Now this property owned by Grandpa Armstrong had been part of the Robert McNeil farm. (Old maps of Oakville have it there) Some of this farm was south of the railroad tracks (CN-CP tracks that travelled between Toronto and Hamilton.) In 1919 when they moved to Oakville, Grandpa had become quite used to good roads for his cars and this cow path (McNeil Road or Murphy Road or something). He was instrumental in having this short road paved. And it was jokingly called the Armstrong sidewalk by the locals for a short time. That road later became the Linbrook Road and it was a nice little road.

After my mother and father were posted to Norman Wells for a good length of time, Janet and I came West to go to school (we had been West the summer 1948. My father had arranged for us to fly out on the Imperial Oil

company airplane from Toronto to Edmonton with a stopover in Winnipeg. This was a DC-3 prop plane (prejet) Then we flew into Norman Wells on another company aircraft. We were 5 1/2 hrs. Northwest of Edmonton, 1100 miles north of Edmonton, 100 miles south of the Arctic Circle on the Mackenzie River. Janet and I were away that trip for about 5 weeks. We flew back from Norman Wells to Calgary on company aircraft and then took the train back to Toronto.) I told you about mother throwing Uncle Jack out. Grannie stayed on until we left to go to school out West. Daddy went West first after Christmas then Janet and I flew out on the company aircraft to Calgary to admit ourselves to school. Mother stayed in Oakville to sort through the house, look after the dog, put the house up for rent and she took the train out with the dog, Tammy the Scotty. Grannie went into an apartment in Toronto. Anyway, my parents rented that house from 1949-1962. In 1954, just before I quit nursing, Daddy had a heart attack in Norman Wells, and was hospitalized in Edmonton. He was off work for 8 or 9 months, part of which was spent in Ontario. We were able to get into the house in Oakville for 4 or 5 months over xmas. His health did improve, but the company decided to transfer him to Edmonton, so they pack up the house and moved to the house they bought in Edmonton, and rented the Oakville house unfurnished. It had been rented unfurnished before but our things were in storage in a room in the basement all the time they were in Norman Wells, Tammy had been with them in Norman Wells as well. The 3 of them drove West in early spring which was a trip and a half if I remember mother telling us when we saw them that summer of 1955 in Edmonton-- Janet and I drove Granny Armstrong and us for our holidays -- for 2 weeks. My father died in 1961, part of the settlement of the estate mother sold the property in Oakville. We were kind of sorry to see it go but we knew none of us would go back to Oakville to live at that property.

I have just finished rereading again the papers and pages in this file that I have of mother's family information. I have also included the letters I received from Nana, photocopies of some letters to Mary and Nana from May 1996. I see some more B.S. in Janet's letter addressed to Mary at Christmas 1994. She says, "Mother, who was 91 yrs plus died on June 16 so Ian and I went to Canada to attend her funeral in Edmonton. Arrangements had been made for it to be delayed long enough for us to get there." That's the bullshit, pardon my French, the arrangements were not arranged about this funeral at Janet's and Ian's convenience. This was arranged at my convenience. She was up on a bloody holiday north of

Melbourne. And we had nothing but telephone calls back across the Pacific, third party ones, and I gave her information and she digested it and made decisions. She made her arrangements to get out in time to attend this funeral and burial. Now she and Ian had not seen mother since 1991 when they made their 10 week trip around the world of which a 24 hour period of 3 days that they spent in Canada were spent out here in Abbotsford. And I understand from talking to the staff at Bevin Lodge that they went to see mother twice in that 24 hour period. Anyway they skipped Canada on their itinerary when they went to England for 6 weeks in 1993. I don't know whether they were saving money or decided it wasn't worthwhile to see mother or maybe Janet's conscience was bothering her. But anyway they spent money to come out for 10 days, two days which were flying the Pacific, and I don't know where she gets this impression I made the arrangements according to their time schedule. When I talk to her the next time, if she ever talks to me I will correct her information.

Anyway I hope this has been a help to you all. I have plenty of space here for visitors. I meet planes, trains, boats and buses in Vancouver. So give me a call 604-859-1348.