

MS 3

THE STORY OF  
WAITAMATA  
THE TOWGOOD HOUSE

Written by Vera Towgood  
Edited by Joyce Bingham  
July 1985

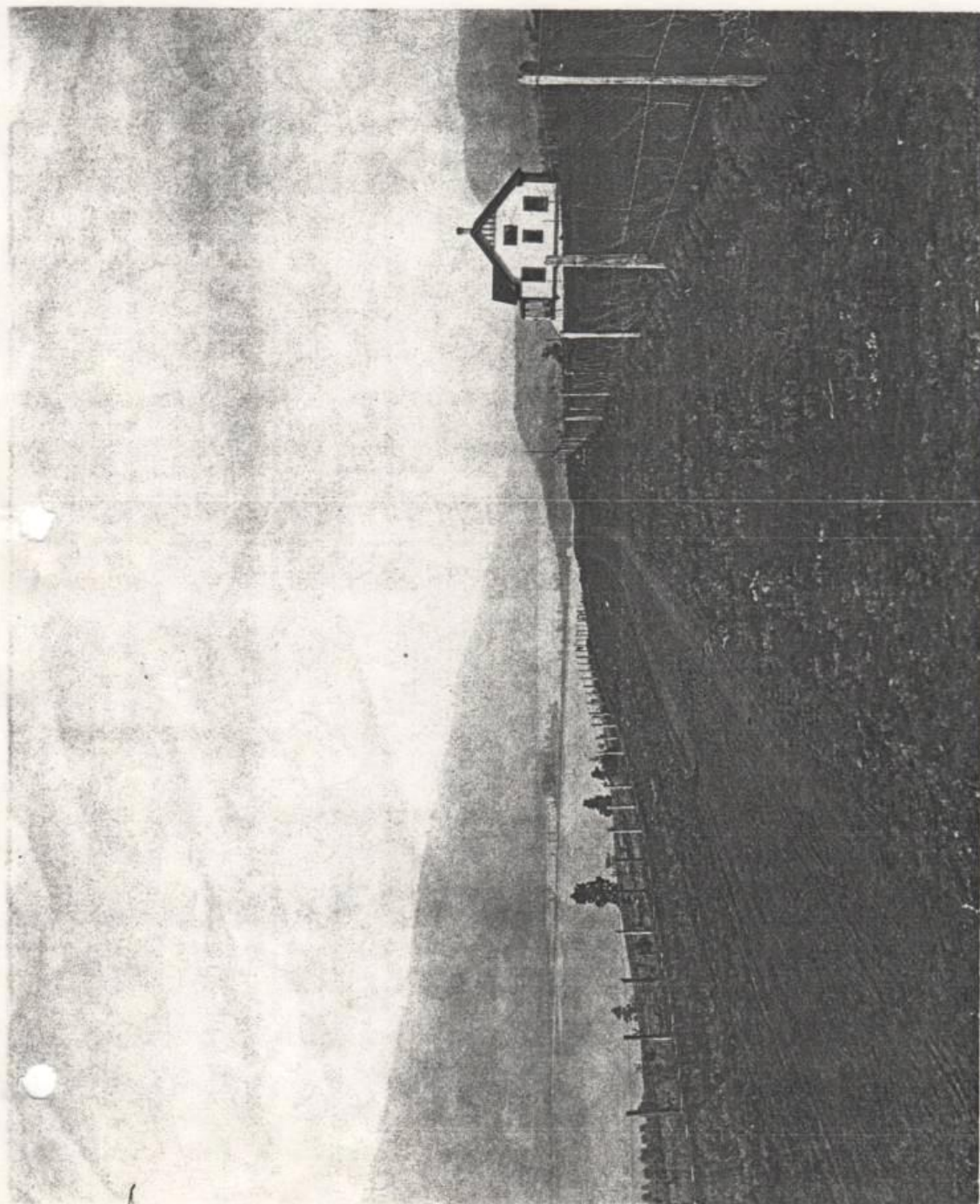
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THE TOWGOOD HOUSE & WAITAMATA  
BUILT IN 1908

THE TOWGOOD FAMILY  
FIRST FAMILY, FIRST GENERATION

Arthur Sebright Towgood was born of British parents who had emigrated to New Zealand in 1851. He was sent by his father at the age of 21 to California, to manage a family grape plantation.

Blanche Mary Ethel Boot, aged 7, left New Zealand in 1880 with her Mother and five other children, to travel for several weeks on a voyage to join her father Robert Boot in California. He had preceded them, and their intention was "to make our fortune in America."

In 1901 Arthur Towgood and Ethel Boot were married and lived in Sacramento on a grape plantation. They worked hard, and picked and dried the grapes on long heavy "trays" in the warm California sunshine. Their two older sons, Jack and Tom, were born there.

Some friends sent them a pamphlet that told in glowing terms of a wonderful valley in B.C. called "The Okanagan", where "the weather was salubrious and one could grow many kinds of fruit." Although Arthur had lived in the U.S. for 17 years, he still felt allegiance to "good old England", and "British Columbia" called.

Here Tom takes up the story.....

"In 1907 my parents sold their farm in California and arrived in Vernon in midsummer, when I was 16 or 17 months old. After looking over land prospects from Penticton to Vernon, my Father decided on a situation on the "First Bench" on the east side of Wood Lake, and bought a lot from the Wood Lake Land Company. He let a contract to a carpenter by the name of Mr. Piercy in Vernon, to build a house on this lot to be completed before winter. This man arranged to ship the lumber and material that he had purchased to fulfill this contract up the lake from Vernon on a barge propelled by the steamboat "The City of Vernon". As he had failed to insure this material, most of it was lost when a sudden squall upset the barge.

Mr. Piercy had taken on a second contract to build a house for Mr. Egbert Trask, on what is now Kaloya Park. The material for this house arrived safely. As the contractor was now in some financial difficulty, he built the Trask house first, using the money paid to finance a second lot of material to fulfill his first contract- my Father's. This delayed the completion of our house until the following Spring, 1908.

My parents, my older brother Jack, aged 5, and I spent the winter, a long one, in a tentcabin with no windows, by a spring near Wood Lake, on what was later known as Stoke's Point. We moved into the house as soon as it was completed, just after my second birthday. The house was situated alone near the crest of a hill overlooking Wood Lake, and with a beautiful view of Kalamalka Lake. There were no trees around it at that time, and no road, until later, when a gravel road was constructed past the front door. The house was finished with clapboard siding, and it was painted white. It did, of course, have the usual glass windows. My Mother told me later that I would go from window to window patting the glass and saying, "nice window", after being cooped up in the tent with no windows all winter. The Towgoods named their place "Waitamata". This name was happily remembered by Mr. Towgood from his childhood days in New Zealand.

A pipeline was installed from a spring far up on the hillside, and water was piped into the house. Cold running water and a sink were great improvements. It was excellent drinking water, as we discovered years later. It contained naturally an ample supply of fluoride. No wonder the children who grew up there had nearly perfect teeth, much to the surprise of our dentist. "Only one child in 200 has such good teeth at age 12 and 13", remarked Dr. Dent.

However, the hard water was not the best for baths and laundry, consequently soft rain water was caught off the roof in rain barrels, or in the winter snow was melted in a boiler on the kitchen range. When warmed, it was carried to the unheated bathroom between the two bedrooms (see floor plan) and poured into the galvanized bathtub that

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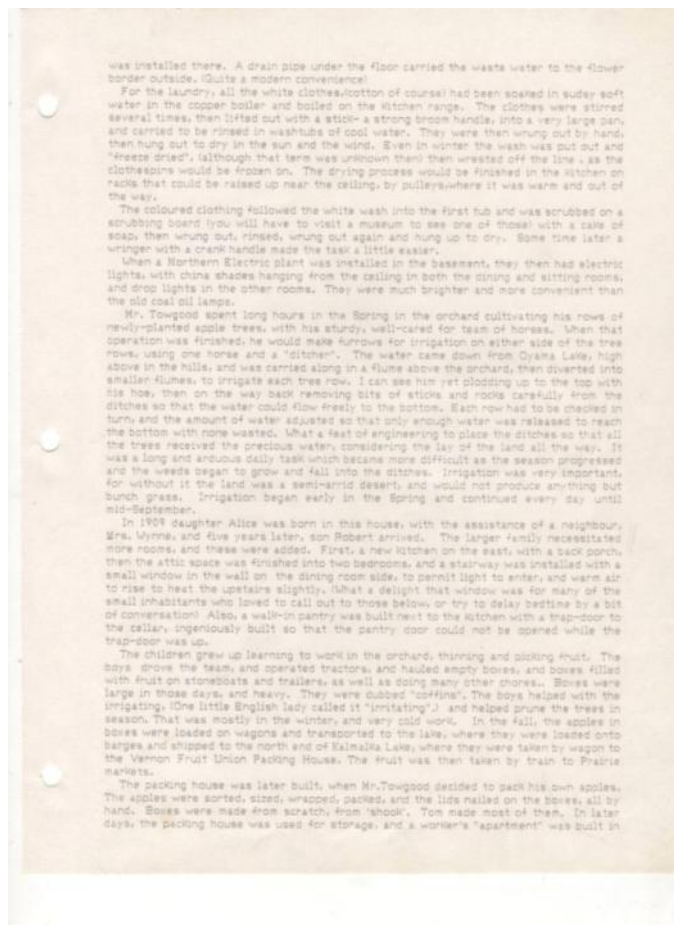
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was installed there. A drain pipe under the floor carried the waste water to the flower border outside. (Quite a modern convenience)

For the laundry, all the white clothes, (cotton of course) had been soaked in sudsy soft water in the copper boiler and boiled on the kitchen range. The clothes were stirred several times, then lifted out with a stick- a strong broom handle, into a very large pan, and carried to be rinsed in washtubs of cool water. They were then wrung out by hand, then hung out to dry in the sun and the wind. Even in winter the wash was put out and "freeze dried", (although that term was unknown then) then wrested off the line, as the clothespins would be frozen on. The drying process would be finished in the Kitchen on racks that could be raised up near the ceiling, by pulleys, where it was warm and out of the way.

The coloured clothing followed the white wash into the first tub and was scrubbed on a scrubbing board (you will have to visit a museum to see one of those) with a cake of soap, then wrung out, rinsed, wrung out again and hung up to dry. Some time later a wringer with a crank handle made the task a little easier.

When a Northern Electric plant was installed in the basement, they then had electric lights, with china shades hanging from the ceiling in both the dining and sitting rooms, and drop lights in the other rooms. They were much brighter and more convenient than the old coal oil lamps.

Mr Towgood spent long hours in the spring in the orchard cultivating his rows of newly-planted apple trees, with his sturdy, well-cared for team of horses. When that operation was finished, he would make furrows for irrigation on either side of the tree rows, using one horse and a "ditcher". The water came down from Oyama Lake, high above in the hills, and was carried along in a flume above the orchard, then diverted into smaller flumes, to irrigate each tree row. I can see him yet plodding up to the top with his hoe, then on the way back removing bits of sticks and rocks carefully from the ditches so that the water could flow freely to the bottom. Each row had to be checked in turn, and the amount of water adjusted so that only enough water was released to reach the bottom with none wasted. What a feat of engineering to place the ditches so that all the trees received the precious water, considering the lay of the land all the way. It was a long and arduous daily task which became more difficult as the season progressed and the weeds began to grow and fall into the ditches. Irrigation was very important, for without it the land was a semi-arid desert, and would not produce anything but bunch grass. Irrigation began early in the Spring and continued every day until mid-September.

In 1909 daughter Alice was born in this house, with the assistance of a neighbour, Mrs. Wynne, and five years later, son Robert arrived. The larger family necessitated more rooms, and these were added. First, a new kitchen on the east, with a back porch, then the attic space was finished into two bedrooms, and a stairway was installed with a small window in the wall on the dining room side, to permit light to enter and warm air to rise to heat the upstairs slightly. (What a delight that window was for many of the small inhabitants who loved to call out to those below, or try to delay bedtime by a bit of conversation). Also, a walk-in pantry was built next to the kitchen with a trap-door to the cellar, ingeniously built to that the pantry door could not be opened while the trap-door was up.

The children grew up learning to work in the orchard, thinning and picking fruit. The boys drove the team, and operated tractors, and hauled empty boxes, and boxes filled with fruit on stone boats and trailers, as well as doing many other chores. Boxes were large in those days, and heavy. They were dubbed "coffins". The boys helped with the irrigating, (One little English lady called it irritating.) and helped prune the trees in season. That was mostly in the winter, and very cold work. In the fall, the apples in boxes were loaded on wagons and transported to the lake, where they were loaded onto barges and shipped to the north end of Kalamalka Lake, where they were taken by wagon to the Vernon Fruit Union Packing House. The fruit was then taken by train to Prairie markets.

The packing house was later built, when Mr. Towgood decided to pack his own apples. The apples were sorted, sized, wrapped, packed, and the lids nailed on the boxes, all by hand. Boxes were made from scratch, from "shook". Tom made most of them. In later days, the packing house was used for storage, and a worker's "apartment" was built in



the south end of the building. The packing house was a great place for young people to play.

They built a barn, which housed Mr. Towgood's well-cared for team, and later a cow, which was tethered in various areas during the day to browse. When the barn was no longer needed because machinery took the place of horses, it too was a great place for children's games, especially the hay loft, as each generation had its turn.

They had recreation too. They had two-day trips to Vernon, in the early days, by horse-drawn democrat or sleigh (with many rugs) in the winter. They would book a room in the Kalamalka Hotel and have their meals there as well. Various business chores and shopping would be attended to, and they would have a good night's sleep. Then they would load up with large sacks of flour, sugar and other staples, ready for the long trip home. The team would have been fed and rested, and they would begin the long drive home. In those days the road was only gravel surfaced, and often rough and full of holes, with steep hills and sharp corners. It was not a comfortable experience, and everyone was happy to reach home. After they purchased a Ford in 1915, the trip was made by car.

There were other recreations that the family enjoyed, such as swimming in Wood Lake in Summer, going fishing and boating, and excursions such as a trip to Sugar Lake with neighbours. Hikes up the hill were often enjoyed. In the winter, when the lake froze, they sometimes skated to school, which was always venturesome and sometimes hazardous. At other times they would toboggan nearly all the way down to the school.

In 1909 the Towgoods made a trip to California, taking the children with them. Tom was a small child, but he distinctly remembers seeing Halley's Comet as they travelled down the coast south from Victoria. He was only 3 1/2, but the memory is very distinct. He is looking forward to seeing it a second time very soon in 1986. Another time, Mr. and Mrs. Towgood went to New Zealand, taking Bob, but leaving the older two boys at home. Tom stayed with the Newalls, who rented the house, and Jack was at Victoria University School at the time. They dropped Alice off in California to stay with her Grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Boot.

A favourite recreation was playing Tennis. With a great deal of hand labour, a tennis court was built by Tom and Jack, very near the house. One fruit tree had to be sacrificed, and they hesitated about that. However, since both Mr. and Mrs. Towgood were absent on a visit to New Zealand, they could not consult them and took a chance....

For some years friends and neighbours gathered for a Sunday afternoon of fun...the older ladies serving decorously underhand, and the younger ones in shorter skirts serving like men. Some of the men of the old school wore white flannels, but the younger ones were more comfortable in shorts.

Mrs. Towgood did not play tennis, but she took the trouble to plant a row of Lombardy Poplar trees along the west side in the hopes of providing shade on the courts. She also served TEA; hot cups of tea, with cookies and cakes, on the lawn in the shade of the snowball bushes and high privet hedge which surrounded the home. It was a pleasant interlude for a number of Britishers who had recently emigrated to Canada, and for others who appreciated the hospitality of the Towgoods at Waitamata. After the children had grown up and left, Mr. Towgood planted young fir trees where the tennis court had been.

For some years beginning in 1910 there had been only one telephone in Oyama on the west side of Wood Lake, an extension from the main line of the B.C. Government Line between Vernon and Kelowna, and that was in Mr. Aldred's little store, near where the present school stands. It was used by the community whenever they needed it.

Then sometime in the early 20's, the B.C. Telephone Company put in a line to serve the "East Bench", including Waitamata. Then the house had instant communication with the outside world, with a handsome telephone box on the wall. It had a crank for one to signal a call to someone else on the same party line. This filled a need in everyone's life. Mr. Towgood told me a story once about the difficulties of being on a party line. He came into the house in a hurry one day to phone to get some information about the spray he was preparing to put on his apple trees. He lifted the receiver to check, and heard women's voices. He hung up and waited a few minutes for them to finish their conversation, then tried again. However, "they were still at it." (I think he said "exchanging recipes" which was, of course, quite frivolous to him.) This went on for some time until finally he listened until there was a pause in the conversation. He then spoke

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Mrs. Towgood was born Mary Ethel Boot, one of nine children. There were older girls in the family who elected to help Mother in the house, while Ethel and one other sister preferred to work outdoors in the California sunshine with her brothers. They had an extensive vineyard, and dried grapes for raisins, on large wooden framed "trays" in the sunshine. These were really heavy and required two men to turn them over. She worked very hard to prove that she was as strong as any of the boys at this work. Consequently, when they moved to the Okanagan Valley she was used to outdoor work and shared tasks in the orchard such as picking up prunings in the late winter and early spring. She also undertook to grow a vegetable garden as well as flowers. She grew everything from asparagus to zucchini, as well as cantaloupe, red and black currants, raspberries, gooseberries, strawberries and blackberries. She picked fruit, preserved and jammed, all on the big kitchen range. She even split wood for her fire when she ran short. She cut and dried apricots on trays on the shed roof, dug and stored carrots, potatoes and squash in the the cellar for winter use. How often she would slip down to the cellar, via the trap-door, to bring up a large pan of rosy apples for the family to enjoy on a winter evening, and there was always a large bowl of stewed apples, flavoured with cinnamon and cloves, in the pantry.

In the summer and fall she would prepare breakfast for her family, then slip outside. "I always give the hens breakfast before I have mine," she would say, and they rewarded her with a good supply of fresh eggs, sometimes more than she needed. She would "put down" the extra ones in waterglass in a crock for the winter. The hens were very tame, but they were also disciplined. When a biddy or two would neatly evade her when she tried to herd them into the chicken house at night, she would run around them brandishing the nearest stick or a broom scolding them fiercely until they ran cackling for cover, and she would fasten the door securely, muttering under her breath.

She was a charter member of the Kalamalka Women's Institute from 1914, and worked on many worthwhile projects, helpful "For Home and Country", as long as she was able. From the time of their arrival in 1907, both Arthur and Ethel Towgood played a large part in the life and development of the community. Mrs Towgood was ever ready to help anyone who needed her, and was ready to listen to and counsel anyone who asked. She was a devotee of hydrotherapy, and was able to relieve her family and others of many aches and pains.

Naturally, they were both interested in the education of their children. According to the records of the School Board's first meeting in 1910, "A.S. Towgood, Dr. W.H. Irvine and A. Geer were elected to discuss the hiring of teachers and to deal with the finances and maintenance of the school." The first pupils were Jack Towgood, Mabel Irvine, Edna and Floyd Whipple, and two Geer children. The first classes were held in a room in the Lloyd's house. (The original building became part of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dobson and family, and subsequently was owned by the Cushing family, and later the Lockes.)

As the school population increased, first a small tar papered shack was built, just west of the Lloyd home, then the "white school house" on land across the road from the present section house, in 1913. By 1916 that too became crowded, and the following year a two room "Oyama Elementary School" was erected, complete with a boy's and a girl's basement play area, and two outdoor "restrooms". Improvements were made in following years supplying indoor plumbing and a water fountain. Mr. Towgood continued his interest in the school. In 1920 Mr. Towgood was noted as making a motion to renew the contract with Miss Elliot as principal for another year at the annual salary of eleven hundred dollars. The four Towgood children attended classes at the school, which provided grades one through eight, terminating in government examinations.

One by one the children left Waitamata. After continuing his High School education in Vernon, and College in Victoria, Jack married Jean Baillie of Vernon. They bought an orchard in Summerland, and brought up a family of three boys, Arthur, James and Robb.

Tom, after High School in Vernon and Oyama, and a couple of years at U.B.C., decided that there seemed to be no future for him in mining engineering, as it was then into the depression. In 1927 he came back to Oyama to buy an orchard, and in 1930 to marry me, Vera Evans, an Elementary School teacher who had lived in Oyama with my family since 1918. I was no longer allowed to teach, as I now had a husband to "provide" for me! Our

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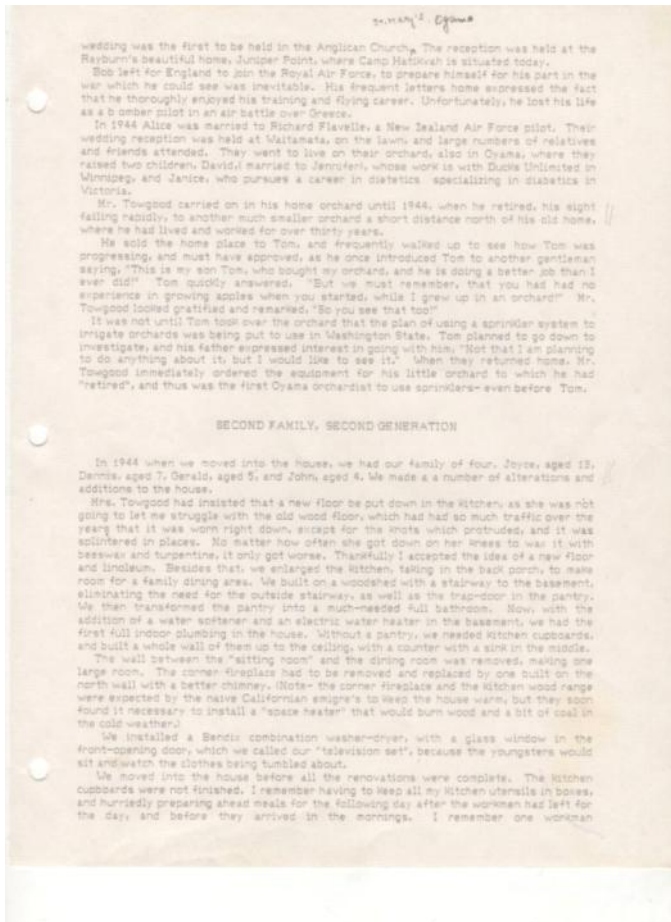
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wedding was the first to be held in the Anglican Church. The reception was held at the Rayburn's beautiful home, Juniper Point, where Camp Hatikvah is situated today.

Bob left for England to join the Royal Air Force, to prepare himself for his part in the war which he could see was inevitable. His frequent letters home expressed the fact that he thoroughly enjoyed his training and flying career. Unfortunately, he lost his life as a bomber pilot in an air battle over Greece.

In 1944 Alice was married to Richard Flavell, a New Zealand Air Force pilot. Their wedding reception was held at Waitamata, on the lawn, and large numbers of relatives and friends attended. They went to live on their orchard, also in Oyama, where they raised two children, David, (married to Jennifer), whose work is with Ducks Unlimited in Winnipeg, and Janice, who pursues a career in dietetics specializing in diabetics in Victoria.

Mr. Towgood carried on in his home orchard until 1944 when he retired, his sight failing rapidly, to another much smaller orchard a short distance north of his old home, where he lived and worked for over thirty years.

He sold the home place to Tom, and frequently walked up to see how Tom was progressing, and must have approved, as he once introduced Tom to another gentleman saying "This is my son Tom, who bought my orchard, and he is doing a better job than I ever did!" Tom quickly answered, "But we must remember, that you had had no experience in growing apples when you started, while I grew up in an orchard!" Mr. Towgood looked gratified and remarked, "So you see that too!"

It was not until Tom took over the orchard that the plan of using a sprinkler system to irrigate orchards was being put to use in Washington State. Tom planned to go down to investigate, and his father expressed interest in going with him, "Not that I am planning to do anything about it, but I would like to see it." When they returned home, Mr. Towgood immediately ordered the equipment for his little orchard to which he had "retired", and thus was the first Oyama orchardist to use sprinklers- even before Tom.

#### SECOND FAMILY, SECOND GENERATION

In 1944 when we moved into the house, we had our family of four, Joyce, aged 13, Dennis, aged 7, Gerald, aged 5, and John, aged 4. We made a number of alterations and additions to the house.

Mrs. Towgood had insisted that a new floor be put down in the kitchen, as she was not going to let me struggle with the old wood floor, which had so much traffic over the years that it was worn right down, except for the knots which protruded, and it was splintered in places. No matter how often she got down on her knees to wax it with beeswax and turpentine, it only got worse. Thankfully I accepted the idea of a new floor and linoleum. Besides that, we enlarged the kitchen, taking in the back porch, to make room for a family dining area. We built on a woodshed with a stairway to the basement, eliminating the need for the outside stairway, as well as the trap-door in the pantry. We then transformed the pantry into a much-needed full bathroom. Now, with the addition of a water softener and an electric water heater in the basement, we had the first full indoor plumbing in the house. Without a pantry, we needed kitchen cupboards, and built and whole wall of them up to the ceiling, with a counter with a sink in the middle.

The wall between the "sitting room" and the dining room was removed, making one large room. The corner fireplace had to be removed and replaced by one built on the north wall with a better chimney. (Note- the corner fireplace and the kitchen wood range were expected by the naive Californian emigre's to keep the house warm, but they soon found it necessary to install a "space heater" that would burn wood and a bit of coal in the cold weather.)

We installed a Bendix combination washer-dryer, with a glass window in the front-opening door, which we called our "television set", because the youngsters would sit and watch the clothes being tumbled about.

We moved into the house before all the renovations were complete. The kitchen cupboards were not finished. I remember having to keep all my kitchen utensils in boxes, and hurriedly preparing ahead meals for the following day after the workmen had left for the day, and before they arrived in the mornings. I remember one workman

complimenting me, saying that he had never seen anyone so good-naturedly trying to cope with all the difficulties and upsets, but why shouldn't I, when it was all being done for my benefit?

We did not make all the renovations at once, but gradually things changed. We had the house stuccoed and a new chimney built on the kitchen roof. Our greatest comfort was the Chrysler Air Temp Furnace. We laughingly remembered lying in bed in our first house in the winter mornings in 1930, and dreading getting out. I said, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could just reach out and touch a button to make the heat come on?" and we laughed at my foolish wish, not realizing that that wish could come true in a few years. Even more amazing, we were told of an acquaintance who had put in a furnace and left it at a low temperature, and had gone to California for the winter, quite confident that his house was safe from freezing pipes, etc. in his absence. This was almost beyond belief to us then.

I had ordered an English walnut tree and a "hardy" heartnut tree to pollinate it from Mr. Gellately, the nut grower in Westbank. Tom and I, with John's help, planted them on the south side of the house. Someone warned me not to expect to get any walnuts, as they took up to twenty-five years to come into bearing. I remember saying, "Never mind, if I don't have walnuts, maybe John will." And that was exactly what happened. When we sold the place it was to John, and for the nine years his family was there they had walnuts and provided us with them too. The tree is still bearing, (1985) although the "hardy" heartnut tree was killed by the frost one winter.

We also planted an Olivet cherry tree. At my suggestion it was planted close to the "well", which is also close to the house. It has born delicious pie cherries for three consecutive families over thirty-five years, and is a large, prolific tree.

At one time when I had been bottling apricots, I threw the pits out into the garden. To my surprise, many of them grew. I hoed out most of them, leaving three, hoping that one would bear good fruit. All three were good but different, and we kept them all. They are now very old, but still bearing.

As they were growing up, our children too learned how to work in the orchard, thinning apples, changing sprinklers, picking apples, changing sprinklers, driving jeeps and tractors, changing sprinklers, propping trees and pruning, and later using the tractor with the loader to move bins, empty and full. Dennis became an expert driver in the orchard long before he was legally permitted to drive on the highway. (He drove the May Queen's float in the May Day Parade when he was about 8.) Gerald and John also drove in the orchard, and John, on his 16th birthday, passed his driver's test, and immediately bought a TR2 sports car with money he had earned.

They had been paid for the work that they did, a smaller amount at first, and Joyce started to pay her own clothing and school expenses etc. when in High School. When Dennis was 15 he said to his Father, "I think I should start paying for my school books and clothes." Gerald, at 12 years spoke up, "I'd like to do the same, Dad." John, only 11, would not be left out, "I will too," he said. Tom answered, "O.K. Then I will give you the same wages I pay the other workers." He reminded them that he did not want them to waste time, if they didn't feel like working at any time, they should take some time off. From then on they worked hard and steadily, and were a good help. John worked extra hard, for he was determined to keep up to his brothers. Once when they were hoeing around young trees Tom gave each boy a row, and he took the fourth row beside John saying, "I'll be able to help you finish your row." As they neared the end, all keeping fairly even, John began to work furiously, and was able to step over to Tom's row and give the last tree a couple of swipes with his hoe. Tom remonstrated with him, and John said, "You insulted me, Dad!"

Long afterward, each of the children said, "We are really grateful to you, Dad, for teaching us how to work." It paid off for them, for they are all successful in their separate lines of work.

Animals played an important part over the years. Mr. Towgood's team, although they certainly paid their way, were carefully cared for and appreciated. The first family had a Labrador Retriever named Sport, that was a hunting companion as well as a friend to all the family. Tom's family acquired a "Labrador" pup, the runt of the litter, but of course, the best. He came to the family as a baby when John was about two, and was with us until the boys were nearly through University. Tim was a good and faithful friend.

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Joyce remembers Tim and a sleek old black cat. One day Tim chased the cat once around the packing house. They started around again but didn't come back. Then suddenly, around the other way came Tim, being chased by the cat! What transpired at the back of the packing house, we will never know.

When they first moved to Waitamata, Joyce persuaded her Dad to bring along her favourite cow, which she considered a pet as it was so friendly, and she milked her twice a day for some time, until her Dad was afraid that she would "smell like a cow" while attending High School. Dennis had his horse Flicka, of which he was very proud. Flicka was well loved. As I have mentioned, there were always cats around as well.

This family too, had their recreation. Tom and the boys resurrected the tennis court that Mr. Towgood had planted little fir trees on when it was no longer needed. Tom, Joyce and the boys had periodic games on it during the summers. In the winter, because of the uncertainty of having ice on the lakes during mild weather, Tom decided to turn the tennis court into a small ice rink. It was a good deal of work, for the court had to be flooded with water, and allowed to freeze. This process was repeated until there was a thick coating of ice, strong enough to support skaters. There were some exciting hockey games, with our boys and their friends and Tom and several young men. Even Joyce got into the act at times! Unfortunately, they had to contend with the posts that had held the tennis nets, and those posts proved to be a hazard. Also, too soon the warm weather came along, and the ice disappeared. After the family left, the tennis court/ice rink was converted by Tom into a loading and storage area for empty apple boxes, and later, bins. The children of that generation and the next spent many happy hours building tunnels and secret rooms in the huge stacks of boxes. Cousins and friends joined in from time to time. Tom was very understanding about the disruption of his neatly piled boxes.

While the children were still at home, Tom bought a boat, and won several races at both the Kelowna and Okanagan Landing Regattas; much to the children's delight, and his as well. He was the first to initiate water skiing on Wood Lake. At first they used an aquaplane, which was a piece of plywood fastened to the boat with a long rope. Later, Tom saw water skis in the U.S., and had a pair made by a woodworker in town. He nailed a pair of his old running shoes to the skis for people to put their feet on! One size fits all! While they were still using aquaplanes, he and Joyce were invited to exhibit their expertise at a regatta at the south end of Wood Lake. They each were on their own aquaplanes, being pulled behind the boat. Both were the same distance behind the boat. When they drew close together, Joyce would step onto the front of Tom's aquaplane, and Tom would kneel so that she could sit on his shoulders. He would then stand. They accomplished this very skillfully.

Very soon skis became popular, and after becoming expert on two, they all tried out single skis, and became proficient, some quicker than others! It was a great way to spend a warm summer day, before the time came when both Wood and Kalamalka Lakes became overcrowded with careening motorboats and too many skiers. Tom taught many young people to ski, including his grandchildren in future days. He later bought a faster, lighter boat.

Through the years from 1930 on, with the exception of the odd times when I was busy having babies, I was very much interested in Women's Institute Work. I used to frequently drive our car down to the Oyama Hall taking several of my neighbours to the monthly meetings. Once I had invited three near neighbours to ride with me. We all wore gloves and hats- some with veils and feathers, for these meetings were special events in our lives. As I went out to the car I was shocked to find a back tire was flat. While I got out the jack, Mrs. Isabel Pothecary took the spare tire to the right side of the car. I said, "The flat is on the left side," but she said, "This one is flat too"... As we had only one spare, we gave up, and decided to take Tom's orchard jeep- with no top, and a couple of boxes for seats. We climbed in and went rattling down the road, in our gloves, and with feathered hats and veils fluttering in the wind.

I had carried on the tradition started by Mrs. Towgood, of canning and bottling fruit and vegetables for the winter. About this time, we purchased a newly invented appliance, a deep freeze, which was a new and excellent way of preserving food. It has seen many years of service, and is still working well for us today.

Joyce joined a local Drama Club, and took part in several performances that went on to be adjudicated at the annual Okanagan Drama Festival. She also took piano lessons from Mrs. Beaton Smith, and worked in the orchard in busy seasons.

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The family all went to the Oyama School, which Mr. Towgood helped to inaugurate, and then on to the Rutland High School by bus.

After Joyce graduated, she went to U.B.C. for a year, and in 1949 she and Earl Bolingbroke were married in the Anglican Church. The reception was held on the lawn at Waitamata.

One by one the boys graduated and went on to U.B.C. in three consecutive years. Dennis and Gerald graduated in Engineering Physics, and John graduated in Commerce (Marketing).

Dennis married Jean Haggert, and they went back east, as did Gerald, after marrying Rosalind Fielder. John married Elaine Buck, and they too moved back east. Joyce returned to University in 1958, to obtain her teaching certificate. We had her three children with us until she completed her year. We and they still remember those days. We enjoyed having them with us, and felt that we were glad to be able to help Joyce attain her qualifications to teach. There is no doubt that those months in our care made us grow closer to them than ever, and we are sure that they feel stronger ties too. Joyce has since completed her B.Ed. Degree, plus her Fifth year, through Summer School and Night School courses. She has been teaching Elementary School since 1959.

#### THIRD FAMILY, THIRD GENERATION

In 1963 John and Elaine returned from Toronto, where John had worked for Proctor and Gamble after graduating. He had decided that... working in an office where everyone seemed to be looking over his shoulder to make sure that nobody below would try to bump him or take over his job, and everyone seemed to be living for the weekend to get away from the job... was less appealing than work in an orchard. Elaine's qualifications for teaching High School earned at U.B.C. were not accepted by Ontario, so they decided to come back to the orchard, and B.C. schools.

We sold the home place to John and Elaine in 1963, and the four of us lived in the home together until we moved out after harvesting the apple crop. We moved to the former Craig place, overlooking Kalamalka Lake. Elaine continued teaching Home Economics in Vernon High School, driving in every day over roads which were winding and narrow, in rain, hail, or snow. She had a favourite story to tell her students about the properties of yeast. In the early days of the depression I was making my own bread. I left the dough wrapped in a blanket overnight to rise. To my horror, when I looked at it in the morning, it had not risen. Not wanting to worry Tom about the failure, I buried the dough in the soft ground by the house. Later in the day, Tom came in to call me out to see the "biggest puff-ball I have ever seen" growing in the garden. Apparently the warmth of the sun had activated the yeast! This story made the point. Elaine continued teaching for five years. Paul was born on April 2, 1969.

John and Elaine made few alterations to the home, except to build a rock floored patio area with a fiberglass roof outside the kitchen door, making a comfortable place to relax in the afternoon, in shade from the sun. Whenever the patio is mentioned, it brings on a great deal of hilarity. The fiberglass roof also served as a carport for the car in winter to keep the snow off it. Unfortunately, one winter when there was a particularly heavy snowfall, roof, snow and all came down on the car! John jokes that he had to sell the car after that. Anyway, that was the last of the car until the Macphersons rebuilt it.

They removed the thin hardboard walls and ceiling of the bathroom, and replaced them with a heavier, more durable material. Elaine, being a skilled "do-it-yourselfer" and Home Ec. Graduate, carefully measured the ceiling, with all its intricate and uneven measurements, marked them on the material and carefully sawed it out, only to find that it WOULD fit, but only wrong side up. That is why the ceiling has a pebbled effect, while the walls are smooth.

The old Bendix served faithfully for many years. Also, it was a favourite place for Paul when he was just over a year old. He figured out how to open the door, and he loved to pull all the diapers and things out of it, and climb in! They later replaced the Bendix with a more modern washer and dryer.

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The storeroom (ex-bathroom) between the two downstairs bedrooms became a nursery when Sara Jane was born on June 2, 1971.

Elaine remembers hearing a tremendous crash above the Kitchen during a thunderstorm one day. When she went up in the attic to investigate, she saw that a window had blown in, and she was amazed to see the roof undulating like a bellows in the wind! Luckily, it stayed put.

Elaine did a great deal of volunteer work in the Elementary School through the following years. Incidentally, Paul and Sara were of the third generation of Towgoods to attend school in that building. (Joyce's daughter Jo Ann also attended school there for one year.) Both their father, John, and their Grandfather and Grandmother had most of their elementary instruction there. Elaine later helped at George Elliot Secondary School where Paul and Sara continued to maintain a high standard of achievement, both academic and athletic as well as musical. Paul has been an excellent Boy Scout earning numerous badges, and Sara has been a fine Girl Guide.

This generation too has taken an active part in community life in Oyama and district. Elaine and John have been staunch supporters of their church, and John was an elected member of the B.C.T.F. executive for two years, following in his father's footsteps. He has also served on the board of the Wood Lake Irrigation District. While living in the house, he had a total of 50 acres of orchard, besides some Real Estate interests. John finally decided that he had too large an orchard, and in 1973 he accepted an offer from the Macphersons to buy 20 acres of it, including the old Towgood home.

John and Elaine built a new home on the northern part of the old orchard, landscaping it themselves very successfully. It is a well-planned, interesting home, largely planned by Elaine, who has a flair for designing and interior decorating.

As they were the last of the Towgoods to live in the old house, John and Elaine had quite a job when it was time to move. They had to move three generations of "memorabilia" from the attic as well as other nooks and crannies. Some of the things they found were an old dress belonging to Ethel Towgood, a wedding dress, books from earlier generations, various report cards, a meccano set, and numerous other items. But finally the Towgoods left the old house.

#### THOUGHTS FROM THE MACPHERSONS...

As with the Towgoods, who had come from New Zealand, so the Macphersons, too, were wanderers. Neil grew up in Wales, and then Jersey, the Channel Islands, where he helped his retired Army Father grow tomatoes and flowers under glass. Angela was raised in East Africa, with five war years in England.

When we married in 1957, it was very difficult for us to settle- as we did in Vancouver- for over 10 years. To dispel the Vancouver blues we made frequent camping trips to the sunny Okanagan, and were never disappointed. It was the nearest thing I could find to Africa- with its lovely brown hills!

However, it was not until 1968 that we actually moved away from the big city and spent an idyllic summer in a small house close to Wood Lake, so Neil could take his time to look for a job. (We were paying only \$70 a month for rent.)

After five years renting there in Winfield, (and the addition of a pony and a horse to our family of cat, dog and two small boys) it was time to find a place of our own.

Oyama was beautiful, and someone suggested that John Towgood might want to sell a piece of his land. Fortunately he did- and we fell in love with the attractive barns and the thought of acreage. In November 1973 we moved into the big old house on the hill. It seemed wonderfully solid and huge after the Wood Lake cottage, but, in fact, there were fewer rooms, anyway, until the upstairs bedrooms could be fixed up and insulated. The boys were back to sharing a room at first.

Later, a new room was added (beyond the wood-storage spot and as far as the apricot tree would allow). This was to house a woodstove, a pool table, T.V. and most of the time, the men of the family. It is a "people" place. At the same time a mud room was

The storeroom (ex-bathroom) between the two downstairs bedrooms became a nursery when Sara Jane was born on June 2, 1971.

Elaine remembers hearing a tremendous crash above the kitchen during a thunderstorm one day. When she went up in the attic to investigate, she saw that a window had blown in, and she was amazed to see the roof undulating like a bellows in the wind! Luckily, it stayed put.

Elaine did a great deal of volunteer work in the Elementary School through the following years. Incidentally, Paul and Sara were of the third generation of Towgoods to attend school in that building. (Joyce's daughter Jo Ann also attended school there for one year.) Both their father, John, and their Grandfather and Grandmother had most of their elementary instruction there. Elaine later helped out at George Elliot Secondary School where Paul and Sara continued to maintain a high standard of achievement, both academic and athletic, as well as musical. Paul has been an excellent Boy Scout, earning numerous badges, and Sara has been a fine Girl Guide.

This generation too has taken an active part in community life in Oyama and district. Elaine and John have been staunch supporters of their church, and John was an elected member of the B.C.T.F. executive for two years, following in his father's footsteps. He has also served on the board of the Wood Lake Irrigation District. While living in the house, he had a total of 50 acres of orchard, besides some Real Estate interest. John finally decided that he had too large an orchard, and in 1973 he accepted an offer from the Macphersons to buy 20 acres of it, including the old Towgood home.

John and Elaine built a new home on the northern part of the old orchard, landscaping it themselves very successfully. .It is a well-planned, interesting home, largely planned by Elaine, who has a flair for designing and interior decorating.

As they were the last of the Towgoods to live in the old house, John and Elaine had quite a job when it was time to move. They had to move three generations of "memorabilia" from the attic as well as other nooks and crannies. Some of the things they found were an old dress belonging to Ethel Towgood, a wedding dress, books from earlier generations, various report cards, a meccano set, and numerous other items. But finally the Towgoods left the old house.

#### THOUGHTS FROM THE MACPHERSONS.....

As with the Towgoods, who had come from New Zealand, so the Macphersons, too, were wanderers. Neil grew up in Wales, and then Jersey, the Channel Islands, where he helped his retired Army Father grow tomatoes and flowers under glass. Angela was raised in East Africa, with five war years in England.

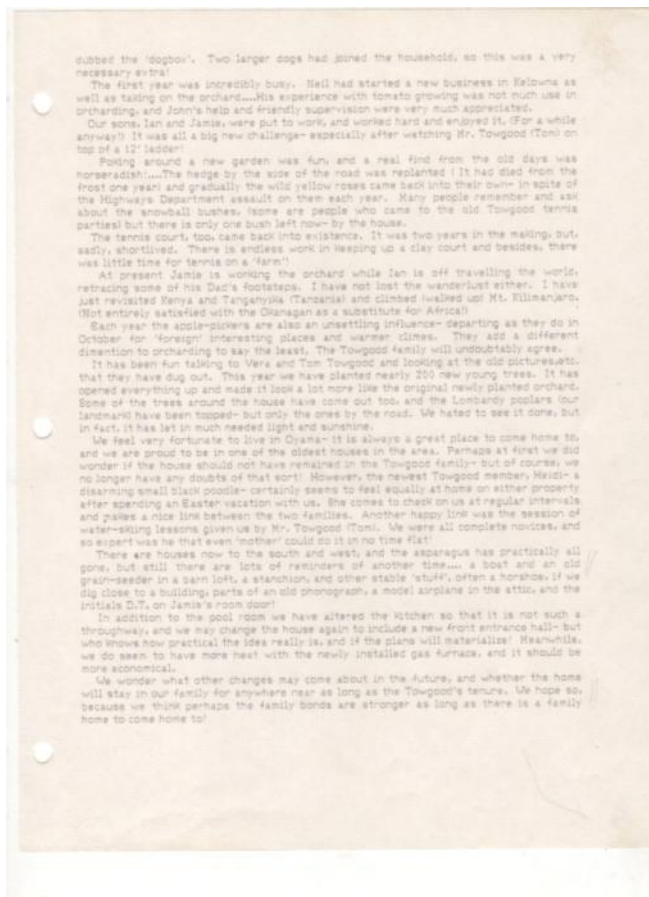
When we married in 1957, it was very difficult for us to settle- as we did in Vancouver for over 10 years. To dispel the Vancouver blues we made frequent camping trips to the sunny Okanagan, and were never disappointed. It was the nearest thing I could find to Africa- with its lovely brown hills!

However, it was not until 1968 that we actually moved away from the big city and spent an idyllic summer in a small house close to Wood Lake, so Neil could take his time to look for a job. (We were paying only \$70 a month for rent.)

After five years renting there in Winfield, (and the addition of a pony and a horse to our family of cat, dog and two small boys) it was time to find a place of our own.

Oyama was beautiful, and someone suggested that John Towgood might want to sell a piece of his land. Fortunately he did- and we fell in love with the attractive barns and the thought of acreage. In November 1973 we moved into the big old house on the hill. It seemed wonderfully solid and huge after the Wood Lake but, in fact, there were fewer rooms, anyway, until the upstairs bedrooms could be fixed up and insulated. The boys were back to sharing a room at first.

Later, a new room was added (beyond the wood-storage spot and as far as the apricot tree would allow). This was to house a woodstove, a pool table, T.V. and most of the time, the men of the family. It is a "people" place. At the same time a mud room was



dubbed the "dogbox". Two larger dogs had joined the household, so this was a very necessary extra!

The first year was incredibly busy. Neil had started a new business in Kelowna as well as taking on the orchard ... His experience with tomato growing was not much use in orcharding, and John's help and friendly supervision were very much appreciated.

Our sons, Ian and Jamie, were put to work, and worked hard and enjoyed it. (For a while anyway!) It was all a big new challenge- especially after watching Mr. Towgood (Tom) on top of a 12' ladder!

Poking around a new garden was fun, and a real find from the old days was horseradish!...The hedge by the side of the road was replanted (It had died from the frost one year) and gradually the wild yellow roses came back into their own- in spite of the Highways Department assault on them each year. Many people remember and ask about the snowball bushes, (some are people who came to the old Towgood tennis parties) but there is only one bush left now- by the house.

The tennis court, too, came back into existence. It was two years in the making, but, sadly, shortlived. There is endless work in keeping up a clay court and besides, there was little time for tennis on a "farm"!

At present Jamie is working the orchard while Ian is off travelling the world, retracing some of his Dad's footsteps. I have not lost the wanderlust either. I have just revisited Kenya and Tanganyika (Tanzania) and climbed (walked up) Mt. Kilimanjaro. (Not entirely satisfied with the Okanagan as a substitute for Africa!)

Each year the apple-pickers are also an unsettling influence- departing as they do in October for "foreign" interesting places and warmer climes. They add a different dimension to orcharding to say the least. The Towgood family will undoubtedly agree.

It has been fun talking to Vera and Tom Towgood and looking at the old pictures, etc. that they have dug out. This year we have planted nearly 200 new young trees. It has opened everything up and made it look a lot more like the original newly planted orchard. Some of the trees around the house have come out too, and the Lombardy poplars (our landmark) have been topped- but only the ones by the road. We hated to see it done, but in fact, it has let in much needed light and sunshine

We feel very fortunate to live in Oyama- it is always a great place to come home to, and we are proud to be in one of the oldest houses in the area. Perhaps at first we did wonder if the house should not have remained in the Towgood family- but of course, we no longer have any doubts of that sort! However, the newest Towgood member, Heidi- a disarming small black poodle- certainly seems to feel equally at home on either property after spending an Easter vacation with us. She comes to check on us at regular intervals and makes a nice link between the two families. Another happy link was the session of water-skiing lessons given us by Mr. Towgood (Tom). We were all complete novices and so expert was he that even "mother" could do it in no time flat!

There are houses now to the south and west, and the asparagus has practically all gone, but still there are lots of reminders of another time... a boat and an old grain-seeder in a barn loft, a stanchion, and other stable "stuff", often a horsehoe, if we dig close to a building, parts of an old photograph, a model airplane in the attic, and the initials D.T. on Jamie's room door!

In addition to the pool room we have altered the kitchen so that it is not such a throughway, and we may change the house again to include a new front entrance hall- but who knows how practical the idea really is, and if the plans will materialize! Meanwhile, we do seem to have more heat with the newly installed gas furnace, and it should be more economical.

We wonder what other changes may come about in the future, and whether the home will stay in our family for anywhere near as long as the Towgood's tenure. We hope so, because we think perhaps the family bonds are stronger as long as there is a family home to come home to!



#### IN CONCLUSION

Each family and each generation throughout the better part of the 20th century has changed and made improvements on the old house. I feel that the home in turn has helped to mold the characters of the people who lived there. It has had a stabilizing influence, first standing solidly alone on virgin desert land, built by pioneers, with hard work and loving care, who wanted a good home for their children.

Through the years it has developed a charming serenity, standing surrounded by bearing fruit trees, large old rowan and walnut trees, and a bank of yellow rose bushes. The Lombardy poplars stand sentry duty nearby, while the large old barn and packing house watch silently.

In retrospect, from its beginnings in 1907 overlooking Wood and Kalamalka Lakes, it has witnessed a great deal of history in the making.

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# Farmers' Holiday

Story and photos by D. W. Long

FARMERS and rural people in general have always been noted for their neighborliness. It is readily evident almost anywhere — at local fairs, field days or other community events. But while near at hand neighborliness is taken for granted, press of everyday chores makes long range visiting a bit more difficult.

Last summer, however, a group of farmers and their wives from Ontario put goodwill on a continental scale. Members of the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, they visited farms and agricultural projects in British Columbia, dropping in for a chat, a bite to eat and an exchange of ideas with their opposite numbers on the West coast. As a member of the tour I found it a most pleasant way to learn about farming away from home.

The farmers we visited on that trip made ideal hosts — they went to no end of trouble to explain their farm operations, show us around their local district, and even give us samples of their produce. One such host was T. S. Toogood, who has a 36 acre orchard at Oyama in the Okanagan Valley. Through him we learned more about fruit growing in the Okanagan than we would have by reading a hundred books.

When we arrived by bus — 100 strong — Mr. and Mrs. Toogood were on hand to greet us. Like all farmers put in such a position they were a little nervous. "Never had so many visitors at once before," Mr. Toogood told us.

Like most Okanagan orchards, the Toogood farm stretches up a side hill and must be irrigated constantly. This area gets about six inches of rain yearly and has two lines of sprinklers that go all summer. Water is readily available from a glacial lake that has been dammed on top of a mountain.

Mr. Toogood told us that along with most other orchardists in the Okanagan, he had taken a heavy loss in the frost of '49. "We used to grow a lot of soft fruit," he explained, "but we lost it all that year. Now, we are inter-planting and re-planting with hardy varieties. We're budding with market-acceptable varieties. We have McIntoshes, Delicious and Winesaps, but we aim at an orchard full of McIntoshes, Spartans and Delicious."

The Ontario visitors remarked on his permanent sod. "Yes," Mr. Toogood explained, "it is more pleasant to work in a sodded orchard. It is less dusty than a clean

orchard." He uses a rotary, gas-powered motor to keep it cut down. The trimmings are left on the soil to help prevent erosion.

"What about fertilizer?" asked the visitors. Mr. Toogood advised them that he fertilizes in a ring around the trees. He doesn't use a spreader as he feels it fertilizes too thin. "I fertilize with ammonium nitrate — my cheapest source of nitrogen."

"How do you sell your fruit?" asked one Ontario farmer. "All through the B.C. Tree Fruits," answered Mr. Toogood.

In the orchard, the Toogood boys were busy thinning the trees by hand. The culls and small fruit must come off in early July to let the others develop size and color. The two boys, home from the University of British Columbia for the summer, grinned at the visitors and went on with their work. There was a heavy bloom this year, but an overdose of blossom spray may have left a rather light setting.

Mr. Toogood explained his inter-planting system. He is culling 35 to 40 year old trees, replacing every other diagonal row with small trees. Many of the new ones are double-worked, Canadian Baldwin on top and Hibernial below.

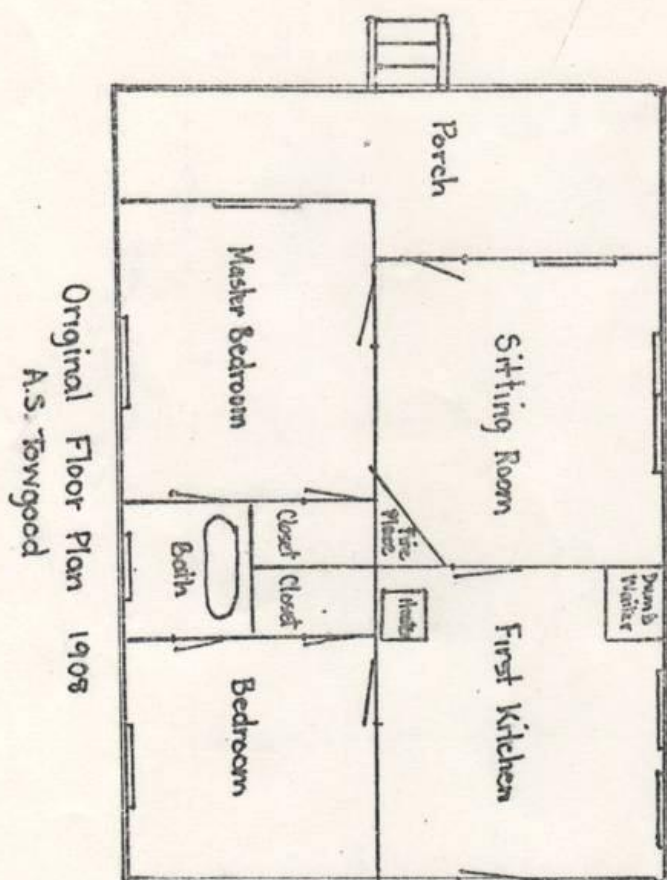
"Now that the codling moth is under control, we don't scrape scale off the trunks," he said. "I feel the scale holds air and so protects the tree from frost damage."

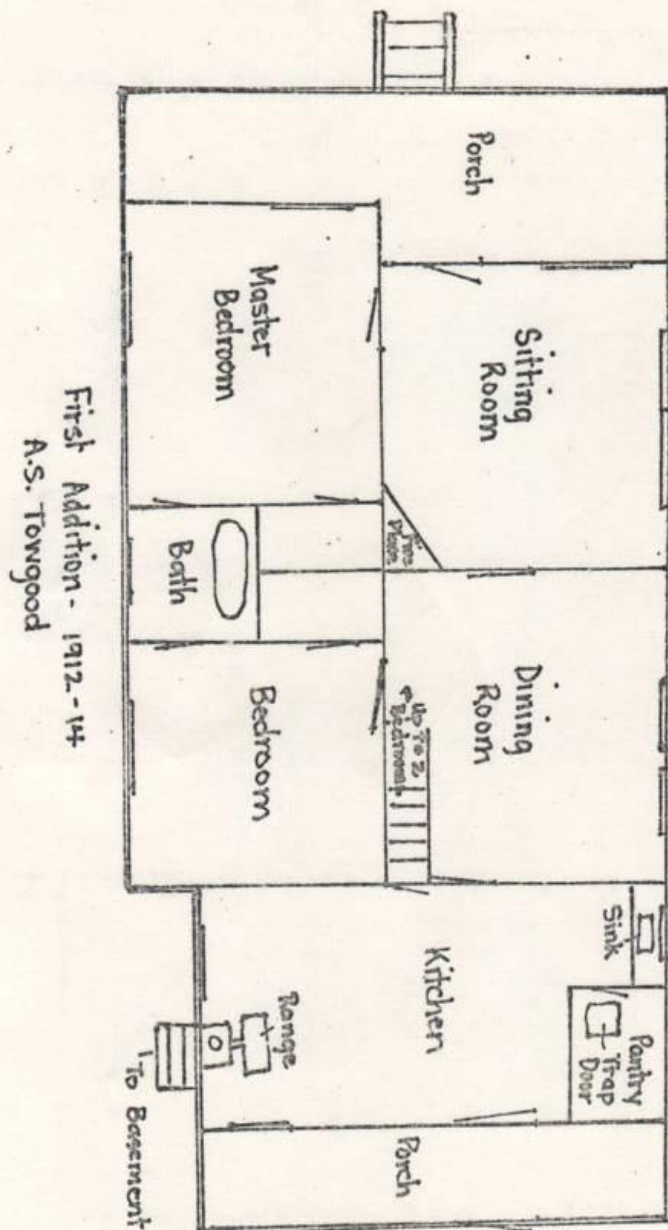
Licking the codling moth hasn't solved all his problems, as the D.D.T., in destroying the codling moth, has left a new problem — mites. All his varieties of apples are sprayed eight to ten times yearly against green aphids, and this is successful. But there is still scab, in spite of spraying.

When the visit was over, Mrs. Toogood still had a job to do — she hurried to the Oyama community hall, where her fellow members of the Women's Institute busily served up a lunch, topped off with big Okanagan raspberries. Everything comes big in B.C. — even neighborliness.

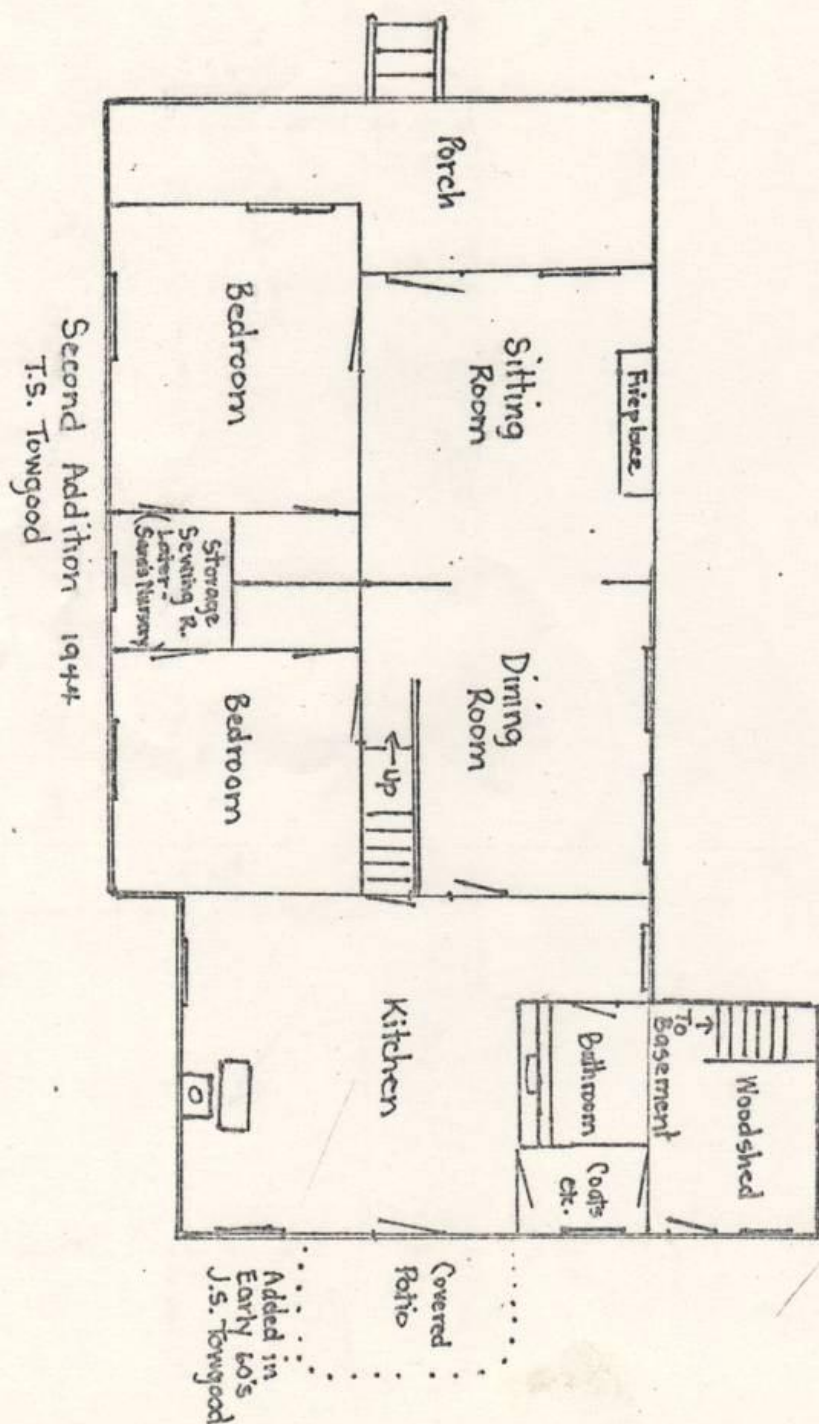
In every part of the country, certain farmers are asked to show their operation to interested visitors. Like the Toogoods, these farms are picked because they run a good enterprise in an efficient and progressive way. Like the Toogoods, most are proud to play host when the "neighbors" drop in. Like the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association members, visitors learn first-hand about the problems and ways of farming of people like themselves in another province.

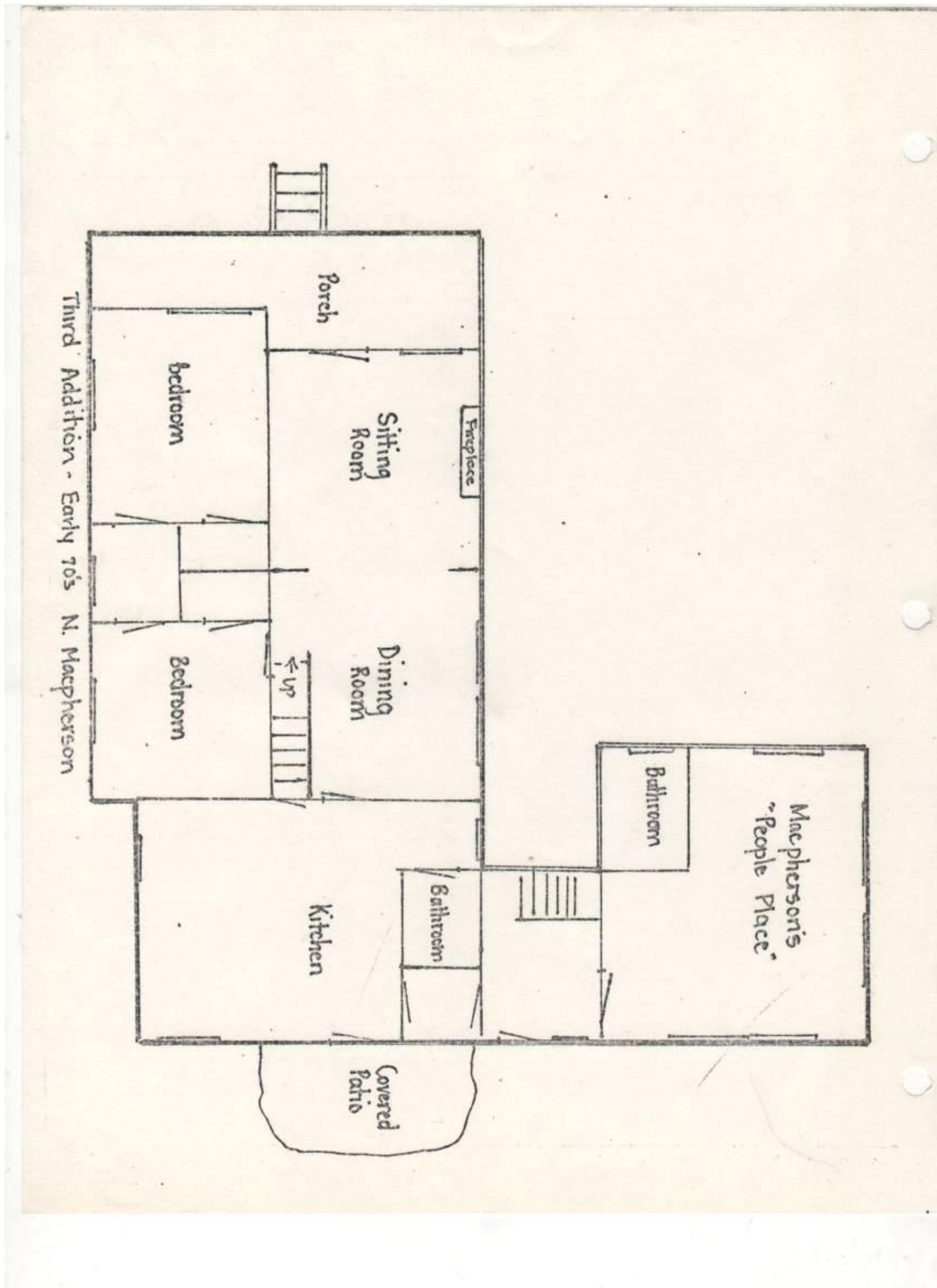
LY HERALD, May 1, 1958













"Never had so many visitors," said Mr. Toogood welcoming Eastern farmers.



Operations in British Columbia's orchard are explained to visitors.





The first Towgood Family in Waitamata -Arthur and Ethel with children Alice, Jack and Tom.



The house nearly completed. Jack, Mrs. T. & Tom



Tennis -tea time on the lawn Waitamata. Front -Jack T, Margery Aldred, Molly Millar, Bob T, Hugh Maclaren, Rupert Eyles Back -Col. McKay, Mrs. T. Harry Aldred, Tony Cliff, Tom Towgood, ??



Front Entrance opening on front lawn.



On the court. Front row, 1 to r. Mrs Cliff Mrs Talbot, Mrs Towgood, Molly Millar, Mrs Dobson, Margery Dobson, Bob T. Vera Evans, Hilda Benwell. Back row--Tony Cliff, Ken Dobson, Tom T. Mr. Talbot ? Jim Tucker.



Alice T. and Dick Flavell, picking apples.





Dennis on Flicka goes for a ride with Dick Hedde.



Tom, off with a jeep load of boys to the lake?



A happy day at Dee Lake Front-Joyce, Dennis, Dear Grammie, Tom, two Weems boys, Jessie Weems (cousins) and Vera T.



John, Dennis and Gerald unloading boxes from the truck.



Joyce and our good Tim (with us 16 years)



Joyce T. with her three little brothers and cousins Norma & Doreen



When the court became a loading area Tom T. with the forklift, loading bins of apples on to the trailer.



Alice's Wedding at Waitamata  
Mr. & Mrs. T. The Bride, Joyce,  
the GROOM, Dick Flavell, Tom T.



Norma, Dennis & Doreen watching  
Joyce on surfboard and Tom on  
skies in Wood Lake.



When the court became a hockey rink.



John, Gerald & Dennis  
ready for anything !



Dennis on Flicka, his own  
horse which he earned  
bought, and rode home from  
O.K. Landing when he was  
eleven.



Back to a tennis court  
Joyce T.



Dennis drove tractor  
Norma, John, Gerald  
Doreen went along





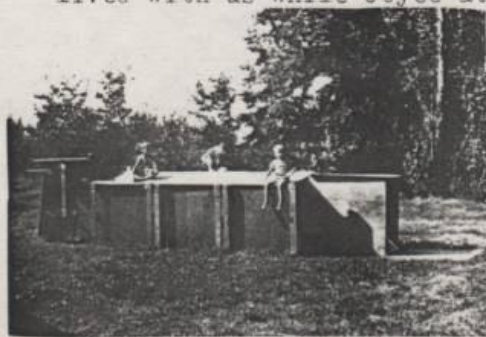
The wedding reception of Joyce Towgood and Earl Bolingbroke



Les Bolingbroke pretending to sit on a doll's chair.



Grandfather Tom Towgood with a lapful of Bolingbroke grandchildren  
This was the Christmas of the year that JoAnn, Larry and Leslie lived with us while Joyce attended U.B.C. She came home for Christmas



Putting on the roof.

These three youngsters built a fine playhouse of picking bins.



They enjoyed many a jaunt in the Jeep with Grandfather.