

HENRY BERNARD IN HIS OWN WORDS
As related by his son, Richard, at the
French American Heritage Storytelling Show Sep. 15, 2017
Banfill-Locke House Fridley MN

(These stories occur between 1907-27 in Grafton ND, and were written down by Henry Bernard in the early 1980s. They are a small portion of all his stories. During this entire time, the family lived in a house at then-115 Wakeman Avenue in Grafton, ND.)

p. 19 mid-page (this and similar references in memories written beginning about 1981 Bernard family history):

I had...my adult height [6'3"] about [6th grade]. I was called Beanyard, Ichabod Crane, Daddy Long Legs and other such forms of endearment...."

EARLY YEARS

p. 26 2nd para

Dr. Glaspel had been our family doctor since before I was born. He had assisted at my delivery and when the birth occurred he went out into the living room and said to my Dad, "It's a boy". That nickname stayed with me all through the years"

p. 16. 1st para

I started school at the age of seven with none of the English language. (The language at home was French). My teacher had 30 or 40 students in first and second grades and could not take the time to give me special attention except after school.

(in 1994 Henry revealed to we kids that because he had trouble with English he been held back a grade in school. This bothered him greatly. It was at a family meeting in a motel in Dubuque IA. His demeanor was so serious, we thought there was some other family secret about to be revealed!)

FAITH. His Catholicism was very important to Dad, life long. He was an Altar Boy all through school and wanted to be a Priest, but couldn't master Latin. His best friend, Ed McDonald, became a Priest, and rose to the rank of Monsignor.)

p 22. last para

Father Turcotte was a priest of the old school. He had a great deal of compassion for his parishioners but some of the things he did were very odd...He had a large house...he rarely had a housekeeper and sometimes in the winter he would close off all of the house except a front sitting room and bedroom....

P 23. One time a friend of the family was going to get married at 7 a.m....seven o'clock came but no bride. Father Turcotte started saying the Mass and the bride finally got in half way through the Mass. It was winter time and she had to come in from the country..."

p.23 mid page. Whenever Dr. Glaspel made the rounds in the country to visit sick people that he would stop in and take Father Turcotte with him. Spiritual and physical needs were attended to.”

In Chez Nous book, p. 288 Dec-Jan 89

Midnight Mass was always attended regardless of the cold, snow or storm. We walked the ten blocks to the church. Some people had a big meal when they returned home....”

FOOD

In Chez Nous book p. 247 Oct-Nov 87

[when visiting in the country, a common activity especially in the warmer months] “after Sunday Mass we would go to one or another of the families for a typical banquet of just plain farm fresh food, chicken, beef, pork, natural milk and butter which was home-made and perhaps some home churned ice cream with strawberries from the garden. There were potatoes, radishes, lettuce, corn, cucumbers and other vegetables that were grown in the home garden and perhaps just picked that morning.”

In Chez Nous p. 144 Jan-Feb 85

The recipe for French Canadian pea soup [in Chez Nous]...brought back many memories...of the soup that my mother made in large quantities especially in the winter time. She would divide it up in suitable chunks so that it only had to be thawed out to furnish a delicious meal for us. Hot pea soup in the cold country was a welcome treat for all of us.”

In Chez Nous p 210 Nov-Jan 86

[After butchering] mother would make meat pies...lard that came from the hogs...made the pie shells and [she] prepared the sausage and potatoes for the pies. She would make many of them at one time, and stored them on the front porch which was like a deep freeze in the winter. Whenever she needed one she put it in the oven to thaw out. She did the same with the mince pies ...the blood sausage would be cooked and kept in the deep freeze like the others.

TRAVEL

p. 22 2nd para

...we would go traveling in the old Model T. A trip of a few miles would call for much planning...sometimes we would go to visit relatives in...Oakwood and sometimes we would go to the Red River and cross by the Ferry. This was an extended trip and we went as far as Thief River Falls. (75 miles)

In Chez Nous book p. 247 Oct-Nov 87

...during the summer, we could expect a trip or two up to [the] French Canadian settlement [of Leroy, about 50 miles northwest]...We traveled ... over dusty dirt roads with no signs. You either knew the roads or had to stop and ask for directions:. “Go south until you get to the cross road and turn left three miles and then go right” could be a typical direction...the Sunday meal would be just plain farm fresh food.... [see reference in food, above]

PETE

In Chez Nous book p.442 Feb Mar 92

I was four or five [about 1912] when this incident occurred. During the Summer the fellows [at the flour mill] caught a woodchuck (groundhog) and put him in a cage. He was named "Pete". Pete gave a lot of amusement to visitors. His ability to peel and eat a banana was a source of awe to visitors...his ability to eat a soda cracker without losing any crumbs was remarkable...

...in the Fall he became drowsy...Dad decided that Pete was ready to hibernate and took him home and released him in the ...basement...Pete...dug a hole in the dirt wall, stole bananas, apples, carrots...and took them inside the hole and sealed it from the inside.

Dad remembered the story about the groundhog, and on February 2nd told mother to watch [and] if Pete came out to send the "boy"...Sure enough Pete did come out, saw his shadow and went back into the hole for another six weeks...then he came out again but was sickly and died...the veterinarian said it was because he lacked ...things...he would have picked up if he had run wild.

Dad had Pete mounted and kept him for many years...."

GOING HOME

In Chez Nous book p. 541 Mar-Apr 94

"after [30] years in North Dakota, Dad wanted to visit his only living brother who still lived in the Quebec area. This brother had been born, raised and spent all his life there. When my Dad greeted his brother, in French, upon his arrival in Quebec, the brother turned to his wife and said "Cet homme n'est pas mon frère. Il ne parle français" [This man is not my brother. He does not talk French!] Dad had been using the French that he had used for many years in North Dakota. This was full of English words....

OPTIONAL (No time to use during the program)

In Chez Nous book p. 465 Aug-Sep 92

My Dad was on a job as deputy sheriff and was bringing a prisoner down to Minneapolis for the police. We had time to get a ten cent shave at a barber college, and then went to see Foshay Tower. I remember that they were putting gold leaf on the ceiling of the lobby the day we were there.

p. 18 last para

"learning of the questions and answers in the old Baltimore Catechism. I [was] one of the finalists but I was beat out by a girl...I recall the girls name because it was so unusual, Desange Garant. Hers was a French family and the first name translated meant "of the angels"...She did not like her name so she was called "Dee" in later years.

In Chez Nous book p. 288 Dec-Jan 89

The space behind [the hard coal heater] is where we hung our Christmas stockings (one of the clean black stockings we wore). Standard filling by Santa Claus was an orange in the toe, some candies. Usually hard rock candy that was not wrapped, popcorn, an apple, and maybe an article of clothing[and] single toy...I mentioned SINGLE TOY...an erector set one year, tinker toys another year and a windup locomotive, cars and tracks another....

In Chez Nous book p. 144 Jan-Feb 1985

..."I remember the very fine pea soup that was prepared by two husky fellows. I had a bowl of it and it tasted almost as good as what my mother had made...I told my son that it was the custom that if you like the food you were to "kiss the cook" which I did!"

In Chez Nous book p. 210 Nov-Jan 86

Each piece [or meat] was covered with salt so there was a liberal amount between each piece...they felt that if the pieces of meat touched, the meat would spoil. Salt pork was good but when the barrel was nearly empty the bottom pieces would be so salty mother would have to boil the salt out of it before she could cook it.