

## From My Mother's Memory Book



Percy Kenneth Brock

I never called him Father. I always called him Daddy. He was born in Port Dover, Ontario. He had one sister, Clara, and one brother, William (who died overseas in the 1st World War at the time of the great Flu epidemic), He had one step-sister, Hilda.

Daddy apparently had a rough time in school. The schoolmaster was a sadist who took great delight in caning his students. He was hated by all the pupils, who were terrified of him. It was a bad learning environment and thank God that kind of discipline has been abolished. In any case, my Father did something about it. One day, he was out on the pier in Dover (I think he was about 15 or 16 years old) and the schoolmaster was also on the pier. He and Daddy must have had harsh words because Daddy just got mad and pushed the curmudgeon into the lake. Daddy didn't wait around to face the consequences - he raced home - threw a few belongings into a bag and hopped the first freight train out of Dover.

I don't know what eventually happened to the schoolmaster. Probably one of the many drifters or fishermen who hung out at the pier fished him out of the water. Anyway, my Father was long gone. He rode the rails all the way to Utah, USA In Utah he got a job in a mining camp as chief cook and bottle washer. What happened in the intervening years I don't know - but he eventually returned to Dover.



In Dover, he met the girl named Lena whom he subsequently married. They moved to Detroit - where I was born. Lena's mother was an old harridan of a mother-in-law who made life miserable for the couple. She was always interfering and criticizing and generally raising hell. Lena always agreed and did everything her mother told her to. Dad got fed up with this and delivered an ultimatum, "Lena - either you go with your mother - or you go with me!" Lena chose to go with her mother - so eventually she and Daddy got a divorce. Lena got a job as a dental assistant and, since she was working, her mother took me back to Detroit. Daddy was not happy with this situation. He returned to Port Dover and resolved to do something about it.

A young girl had me out for a walk in the perambulator. Dad snatched me away from her and took me on the train to St. Thomas, to his sister, Clara. There were big headlines in the papers - "Father Kidnaps His Own Child!" Subsequently, there was a court trial and my father gained custody of me. He then took me back to Port Dover and my grandmother took care of me.