

You all know the stories of Irene's adult life. But I would like to tell you of the young Irene that none of you knew. We met after the family had moved from Beaverlodge, to Faust on Lesser Slave Lake.

Irene was SO like her dad, eyes on the horizon - the impossible looked easy. She walked (and I use the word lightly) with a spring in her step and often ran just for the fun of it. Full of love (but easily HURT) she could cry all morning over a fancied hurt. She loved to play softball on the school team and I say especially because her brother Eddie (my future husband) coached third base.

NOW, the family home was beside the railroad tracks which crossed the only road to the lake. So, the train had to stop at the whistle stop and blow 3 long blasts to warn travelers on the road. In those days, the train was the main connection to the outside world. And everyone came out to wave at the engineer and train crew, who kindly threw out magazines and city newspapers. It was this source that the girls, Irene and Marion, got their magazines.

NOW, mother was very strict about reading materials for her girls. There was "thunder on the mountain" when she discovered the girls' stash of True Romance and Movie Life in the barn under the hay.

In those days of no electricity, coal oil lamps, and no phones, home life was very good. We played cards, had picnics, and mother at the piano had us all singing.

There again, Irene marched to her own drum. She wrote poems and made up songs. There are 99 verses to the Old Chisholm Trail, always beginning with: "Come along boys and listen to my tale. I'll tell you of my troubles on the old Chisholm Trail."

These 2 lines were followed by all kinds of disasters that happened along the cowboy trail. (eg) "It's cloudy in the west. And it looks like rain. My darned old slicker's in the wagon again".

BUT Irene wrote her own verse in her school book:

"If you want to be happy, all your life to enjoy.

For HEAVENS sakes, don't marry a Beaverlodge boy."

This was the young Irene as I knew her. Oh yes, and one other thing. She dearly loved her baby brother "Georgie." She was like a little mother to him.

In memory of my sister-in-law Irene

Alice Kenny

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