"-------Ninety Years Ago-------, on the 23rd October 1961.-------"

A boy was born in the seaside resort town of Donaghadee near Belfast in Northern Ireland. It was the day when the sailing ships were still potent competition to the steamships, and hard tack and salt pork were still the sailors' staple rations. In fact it was in a bakery where hard tack was baked that this boy at 13 years began to earn his living and to support his widowed Mother and two younger children, a brother and a sister.

Later before the turn of the century the family were in Glasgow where the young man served his seven years in Browns Shipyard as a ship's carpenter. Steamships then were of wood and merely iron clad, yet this same shipyard later built the "Queens" of the Notth Atlantic, the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. It was in those days that the young man heard the call of the Church and at 19 first began as a "Local Preacher" as well as excelling in elocution contests, and indeed before he left Scotland he knew the vicious kick of the old Martini Henry rifle in Scots reserve army drill at the time of the Boer War.

When that war was over news of the booming times in South Africa following the discovery of gold at Johannasburg lured this vigorous young Irishman to try his fortune as a carpenter in South Africa. There in Germiston he was also active in Male Choruses and in the promotion of the cause of Temperance and other Church work, indeed so much so that perhaps it was a reason why employment was scarce for him among the hard living frontier type of commercial men of the area. Anyway he returned as he came, as did all working men with wanderlust in their souls, by steerage on a cargo-passenger ship to Scotland, England then Ireland again but no where was work easily available.

And so it was to the new world he came, to Edmonton Alberta, about 1902. There he followed his trade, brought his Mother and Brother and Sister out from the old land. Carpentering gave way to the hard life of the Circuit Riding Preacher up the Frazer River Valley of B C to Kamloops and about a 200 mile round trip once a month all by horse back. From that to building again this time for the Women's Missionary Society,- a hospital away up at the end of the railway and beyond, north of Edmonton in the Pakan, Wahstao, Kolakreeka area. By this time he had helped both his brother and sister, settle in their own homes in wedded bliss, which was not to be for him until a little red haired high school teacher WMS worker from Glencoe Ontario met him while at the Mission Hospital job. Edith Annie Weekes became his wife on the 4th October 1910 a date which was forever afterward to be known to him as the "Glorious fourth".

The WMS in Edmonton recommended the young couple for their West China Mission field and in 1912 they set out with their Daughter and Son born to them by that time. It was only shortly after the bloody "Boxer Rebellion" revolt in China when they arrived and the fellow Methodist Missionaries there were still grieving over the death at the hands of the bandits of several of their number. All through the 1914-18 war they served there, the young man as Building Superintendant of the building of the West China Union University, noble buildings that still stand as a memorial to him though now taken over by the Communists. By the time of their first furlough their family had increased with two more daughters and a second son. The furlough ended with their return to the field in 1921 and the work in the cause of Christ continued until the Father came down with malignant malaria as it was known then, and to recover they had to return finally in 1924, to Glencoe, in old Ontario.

After only a year or so in Ontario the Father left carpentering for good and devoted his full time to the Ministry in the United Church. From 1927 on he served in Kelvin, Fairground,- Lowbanks-(near Dunnville) and finally the Dunn United Church Circuits. Poor health then forced his retirement from active work, and the family ----all had left home for their own homes by then but the youngest son---- moved back to the Home they had first bought in 1925 in Delhi.

In 1955 the eldest daughter Mrs ~~Catherine (Mulford) Park~~ died in her home in Minneapolis. WE PARK (CATHERINE)

In 1959 Edith Annie, his loving wife died in Simcoe Hospital.

In 1960 this boy of the "Auld sod", this eager young man, this aging Father moved to live with his youngest son Wesley in a new house on the Plank Road of South Walsingham, R R #1 Port Rowan. His two remaining daughters live in Ottawa (Mrs E P Henderson (Evelyn)) and in Islington (Mrs A M Cowan (Alice)), and his older son lives near Oakbank Manitoba (Etheridge). 2, 4, 5, 3 - 14 grandchildren, 2 step grandchildren with 2 step great grandchildren.

WILLIAM MARK LEONARD celebrates his ninetieth birthday here on the 23rd of this month and for the occasion his son Wesley is holding Open House on the Sunday before that day, the 22nd for these many people who have known Mr Leonard but perhaps haven't an inkingly of what a wide range of experiences have filled his ninety years.

His Mother died in the late twenties, his Sister and brother died in the late 30's or early 40's.