

Chapter 5

Polson, Montana

In 1936 Dona met with another calamity. This time it was while Jimmy was baby-sitting Dona while they played in the yard. Daddy and Momma lived in Polson at the time. It seems that Dona and Jimmy were playing marbles, and all was well, until some of Jimmy's friends came over to play "follow the leader". Dona followed the boys over a pile of manure onto the roof of the barn, and then over another pile of manure, which was almost as high as the barn's roof. Once the boys made it over the second manure pile they all ran away from Dona. As the boys ran off they didn't notice that Dona had fallen through the roof of the barn, and had landed on the manger. She had straddled it. The fall knocked her unconscious. Later when she came to she could hear Momma calling for her, but as she lay on the barn floor she couldn't speak and she couldn't move. Momma, Daddy, Joe and Florence Ashley, Katherine and Adolph Barnaby, and a couple of young men began looking for her. Joe Ashley finally found her and he soon realized that she was probably paralyzed. The doctors said Dona wouldn't walk again, and after a short stay in the hospital she was sent home. Dona remained bedridden for more than a year. She was put in the care of Grandma Ashley, who was then in her nineties. Grandma Ashley using her Indian medicine made great improvements on Dona's health. After a year of treatments Dona could finally move a finger, and in a year in a half she could sit up, and in two years she could walk.



Standing along side of Uncle Frank Allison's car in a "stair-step" line are left to right: Helen "Dubsey", Dorothy "Tallah", & Charles Russell "Red" Allison, Jimmy Courchane, Lloyd "Gunny" Allison, Dona and Sassy Courchane.

While living in Polson the family would often spend the weekends down near Momma's allotment near St. Mary's Lake which was located above St. Ignatius. At that time Daddy was working at the pump station for Kerr Dam, which was under construction. On Friday's, when he came home from work, Momma would load all of their camping gear, food, and blankets into their Model A Ford pickup; so everything would be ready by the time he had finished eating his supper. All the kids were then loaded into the pickup and Daddy would drive south to their favorite camping place. Sometimes they would stop at

the Ashley place to pick up Auntie Ashley and Uncle Lem Ashley. The usual campsite was either at Shovel Camp or near Twin Lakes, [Aunt Letty's allotment]. The stream by the road on Momma's allotment was always used to fill their water containers. One container was reserved to make Kool-Aid with. It was usually late in the evening before Daddy had the camp set up and a fire made and everyone bedded down. Early the next morning, he would cut a willow branch and put a string with a safety pin attached to it on the branch. He then picked red and orange berries for bait and strolled off to catch a mess of beautiful rainbow trout. He would be back before anyone else in camp had stirred. Once all the family was up Momma would fix a nice breakfast of trout, coffee, fried potatoes, and homemade bread. It was always with sadness that the family would break camp and reluctantly return home to Polson on Sunday.

While working on Kerr Dam Daddy met and befriended another construction worker, Dale Burns. Dale Burns was married to a woman named Mary, and did not have a place to set up his little trailer house, so Daddy invited him to park it at the Courchane resident. This started a long friendship with Dale and Mary Burns.

The Williams family lived in Polson too, while Uncle Jacque drove truck on the Kerr Dam project. Leonard Williams remembered that the house they lived in had a bay type window; with a light socket in it. One day he told his younger brother, Freddie, to stick his finger in the socket (the bulb had been removed) and Freddie did it. Then Leonard would pull the socket chain & Freddie would get shocked and scream, Leonard told him to do it again, and he did. Leonard pulled the chain and Freddie got shocked again and again screamed. I don't know how many times this was repeated. Leonard in later years wondered aloud why Freddie would stick his finger in the socket each time he was asked to. Leonard also fed Freddie spoonfuls of cocoa powder until he got sick. I asked Leonard years later why he did this to Freddie and all he said is "I don't know why."

Kerr Dam construction was started on May 23, 1930 by the Rocky Mountain Power Company. But little construction was done during the Depression and actually was halted a few times. It stopped once on July 1, 1931 and started again in 1936 by the Montana Power Company, and finally finished in August of 1938. It is located 8 miles south of Polson on the Flathead River. It's 204 feet high and 450 feet long at the top and 100 feet long at its base. It contains 85,000 cubic yards of concrete and its total capacity is 190,000 kilowatts. 1,200 men were employed at the peak of its construction. The higher skill workers got a couple dollars an hour while the unskilled workers got around forty or fifty cents an hour. Fourteen men were killed during its construction. (Source: "Kerr Dam: All You Want To Know" by Justin Foust & Benett Kruttoff).

From The Ronan Pioneer, Thurs., 4 Mar, 1937, p1 and 11 Mar 1937, p1:

"Seven Men Killed In Slide at Dam site

Three Others Are Seriously Injured When Slide of Earth and Rock Traps Men on Night Shift Early Wednesday Morning.

The bodies of seven men working on the night shift at the Rocky Mountain

Power Company dam site near Polson are buried under tons of rock and earth due to a slide about two o'clock Wednesday morning.

The dead:

Tony Adams, Evaro

Henry Couture, Arlee

Joe St. Germaine, Arlee

Clifford Gendron, Arlee

Dave Sanchez, St. Ignatius

Jack Anderson, St. Ignatius

Charles Ross, Polson

Three men are reported seriously injured: Wally Rusk, foreman; Kirk S. Booth, and Harold McNeeley. They were taken to the company hospital near the dam site where they are being cared for.

The slide occurred on the right abutment at the dam. Nearly 1000 yards of rock slid on a plane not visible until it was too close to the men to give them time to escape.

The bodies of the seven men have not been recovered and it may be several days before they will be.

It is said a similar slide occurred near the same place several days ago, but no one was injured at that time.

It is reported McNeeley has a serious skull fracture, while Rusk suffered a broken leg, and both he and Booth were considerably bruised."

The outfit that contracted the building of Kerr Dam was the Phoenix Engineering Corporation. The men killed in the mudslide were working in the river bed preparatory to pouring concrete for the dam foundation. About 700 men were employed on the construction of the dam, with 60 of them on the graveyard shift. Other accidents happened during the construction phase. In April, 1937, John Malatare, a Chippewa in the jack-hammer crew was struck in the head by a piece of diamond drill pipe containing part of the core. It had fallen from a ledge 200 feet above him. It fractured his skull and he later died in the hospital. Then in September, 1937, a ditch caved in from the high hillside near the campsite on the camp side of the river. Three men that were digging a trench for a water line were killed, they were: Joe Mathias, Paul Inmee and Baptiste Pierre. A fourth man was covered with debris up to his neck but was rescued. (This from Benny McDonald one of the Nine Pipe Boys was buried up to his waist, his name was "Happy ". (Aug. 9, 2012) It might be the same man referred to here.)

Daddy fell from the high walls one day and landed on a spot where the thick re-bar was sticking into the air like nails. He just happened to land on his back on a bent re-bar thus saving him from impalement. His pant leg did slide over an upright re-bar and as he laid there bruised and bloody he thought he had broken his leg because he could not move it. He was relieved when he realized that he was just hung up on a piece of steel. The

construction crew lowered down on cables a flat board that resembled a door to him. He was loaded onto it and taken up and out of the “hole” and brought home on the “door”. He stayed home for a long while “healing up” before he returned to work. He sure was lucky that one of the re-bar was bent over that day! To keep the family going Jim Grinder would bring them sacks of “grub” that he had procured from the local countryside, such as vegetables that he raided from farmer’s gardens and chickens he had stolen from chicken coops and whatever he could get.

Archie Jamison, Daddy’s nephew worked on Kerr Dam and married Stella Morigeau in October of 1937 while he was employed there. They moved to the dam site village after their wedding. The Charlo family lived there too, in the temporary housing unit in a little old shack.





These two photos of Kerr Dam were taken by me in the late 1990's.



Taken by Greg Schock in 2011

Rainsey was born in 1938.

State of Montana - Standard Certificate of Birth

(1) Lake County - St. Ignatius

(2) Leota Lorene Courchene

(3) female

(6) full term

(7) legitimate

(8) date of birth 11/17/38

(9) Father: Louis Courchene

(10) Residence: Polson, Mont

(11) color or race: Indian

(12) age at last birthday - 40 (years)

(13) birthplace: St. Ignatius, Mont.

(14) common laborer

(18) Mother: Viola Ashley

(19) Residence: Polson, Mont.

(20) color or race: Ind.

(21) age at last birthday: 29 (years)

(22) birthplace: St. Ignatius, Mont

(23) housewife

(27) number of children of this mother (at the time of this birth and including this child) 5 (a) born alive and living:5 (b) born alive and now dead (0) (c) stillborn --- What prophylactic was used to prevent ophthalmia neonatorum? Silver Nitrate 1%

Certificate of Attending Physician or Midwife: I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was alive at 1 A.M., on the date above stated - signed T.A. Matthews, M.D. St. Ignatius, Mont. Dec. 5th, 1938 M. M. Twichel, registrar"

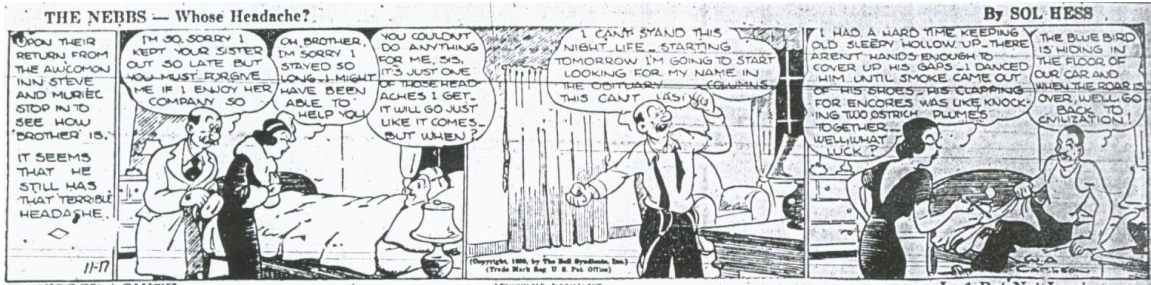
Certificate of Baptism - Church of St. Ignatius Mission, Montana

"This is to certify that Leota Lorraine Courchaine Child of Louis Courchaine and Viola Ashley born in St. Ignatius, Mont. on the 17th day of Nov. 1938. Was baptized in the 23rd day of Nov. 1938. According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church by the Rev. M. A. Dimier, S.J. the Sponsors being Mr. & Mrs. Leo Barnaby and Angela Blood by proxy as appears from the Baptismal Register of this church. Dated: 10/23/85 Gus H. Schmidt, S.J. Pastor." She was always called Rainsey.



The 3 photos above are from JoAnn Blood Roullier, she writes "the Jesuit House, we (the Bloods) lived there in 1939. Dad (Louis Blood) and his mother lived across the street on a corner, Beckwith's store located across the highway/road. The color [photo] Old Barn (Jesuits) Mill, Sister of Charity with lambs and the gov't. house we lived in [right]..."





From The Wenatchee Daily World November 17, 1938 Rainsey Courchane's birthday.

Dona and Sassy both attended the Ursuline Convent School in St. Ignatius and records obtained from Julianne Ruby, Archivist at Ursuline Centre Archives in Great Falls, Montana show:

"I found Donna Mae and Lilly listed in the St. Ignatius file under "Cachene". The following information was listed:

Father: Louis Cachene

Donna Mae – date of entrance Jan 4. Left Jan. 23. Grade 2 Date of b. 9/12/29 (should be 12/12/29/

Lilly – date of entrance Jan. 4 Left Jan. 26 Grade 1 Date of b. 1/30/32

The information was recorded in 1939.” Julianne Ruby

Sassy, Jimmy & Dona went to Valley View School just before the family moved to Washington.



Villa Ursula (or the Ursulines), St. Ignatius Mission, Montana

“We lived in St. Ignatius when I went to school at the Ursuline’s Catholic School in 1938 for the first grade. We then moved to Polson, Montana in 1939 where I went to school for a year.” (Sassy Jones) These school records I was not able to get as the clerk of Polson Middle School told me over the telephone (June 2003) that the records were shredded every 5 years. A shame! Sassy remembered her teacher was a young woman named Earthman, who later married.

“While at Polson Dad worked on Kerr Dam as a blacksmith. Donna and I went to school there for a long time, it seems, and at Valley View School. It was here that I took training at the Smoker's Boxing Club. One year I won the Marble Tournament, also I won ribbons in track events. At the Blue Bay summer school I came in second three years in a row for distance swimming, and two years I came in third for cross-country

running. Let's see, we stayed in Polson until 1940." Jimmy Courchane Sassy remembered that Daddy was a laborer .

Daddy and Momma's last daughter, Mary Theresa Courchane, was born August 10, 1940 at St. Ignatius and was buried in the St. Ignatius Cemetery the same day & in the same grave as Adriane & with no marker.



This photo of Darlene was part of a strip of pictures stuck into the frame of a larger picture at Frank Allison's old log house near the Mission Mountains, a few miles from St. Ignatius. I snapped a picture of it one time while I was therewith Gunny Allison, the place was abandoned at that time.

Rainsey Courchane

The two above pictures were taken at the same place and time [look at the backdrop].



Dona Courchane in center back row in front of and between the two boys against the window, a 1st Confirmation photograph at the Ursulines in St. Ignatius, Montana.

Sassy recalls that a typical holiday meal for the Courchane's during this time was a Chinese pheasant feast. Momma would take her 410 shotgun and a gunny sack and go out into the fields and kill a sack of pheasants. Sassy called them Chinks. And the kids would forage the fields for any kind of edible fruit such as wild plums, wild gooseberries or apples. These would be made into pies or sauces. Momma would prepare the pheasant much the same as a chicken was cut up and then fried it in a cast iron skillet until golden brown. After which she transferred the fried chink to a granite style roasting pan and baked it for one hour in the wood stove's oven. The trimmings were mashed potatoes and gravy, home-made bread dressing, a pie or a plain white sheet cake with gooseberry (or lemon or rhubarb) sauce poured over it. Sometimes she made real whipped cream. Hot dinner rolls were always served too.

They had a big vegetable garden and needed it. Momma canned everything she could get in her oblong shaped double copper bottomed boiler. Fruits, vegetables, pheasant, deer, and elk. The meat had bacon grease poured over them before they were canned. One item that the girls were sent to pick was dandelion leaves, young tender ones. These were wilted with a hot vinegar and grease dressing. Sassy remembers that it was kind of like spinach in taste but had a better flavor. This was in the days before insecticides were used and all dandelions were safe to harvest.

The Courchane clan ate Chinese pheasant regularly, and one time Dona & Sassy read about (or saw in a movie) the rich people of New York being served pheasant under glass. Dona exclaimed, "We eat pheasant all the time! But not under glass!" And then both she and Sassy would laugh.

Momma would make ice cream with the help of the kids. Dona and Sassy would crank the ice cream maker handle until they “played out” and then Jimmy would take over until he tired and finally Momma would crank until the ice cream was done. Sassy remembers that Momma would make evening treats of fudge, or popcorn, or taffy and hot cocoa in the winter.

Daddy smoked roll your own cigarettes made with cigarette paper tissues and Prince Albert tobacco that came in a flat red can with the picture of Prince Albert on it.

Once Daddy took Dona, Sassy, Jimmy and Georgie Glover up above Mission Creek to camp in the Mission Mountains (this would be above Mission Dam). They stayed a couple days and had a ball, fishing, camping and exploring. Daddy would catch and cook fish. Momma packed them a good supply of food so they had plenty to eat. He took them on hikes and they explored the surrounding area.

The Courchane family would pass through St. Ignatius on the way to camp in the mountains. Here they were sometimes met by Momma’s sister, Letty and her husband, John Baptiste Glover, and their son, Georgie Glover. On spying them Georgie would run and jump in the back of Daddy’s pickup and hide, usually the Courchane girls would cover him up with blankets. On detection by his parents Georgie would cry and beg to go. He usually kept it up until Aunt Letty would say, “Oh go ahead and go!” Sassy said Aunt Letty loved the kids and would sit and talk to them when ever she got a chance. She had reddish colored hair that she kept up nice with waves. Aunt Letty died in Grand Coulee of diabetes in 1946. John and Daddy were best friends in those days.

One time they traveled up to West Fisher near Libby to pick huckleberries. The huckleberry camps were two, on one side of the road were the Indians and on the other side the white people. Daddy always told with a certain amount of pleasure the story of Jimmy and the bear. It seems that Jimmy was picking huckleberries from a huge bush and going around in one direction while coming from the opposite side was a small black bear. Well, as they picked and ate their way towards each other they finally came face to face. Daddy said he remembers looking up and seeing the two facing each other for a second and then both let out a squeal of surprise. They both wheeled to the opposite direction and ran from the bush “like a bat out of hell!” The bear off into the brush and Jimmy down the trail headed for camp screaming, “bear!” Coming up the trail was two old Indian women. Jimmy ran between them in such a swirl of motion that he knocked them down and they tumbled down the trail after him. In camp they all had a good laugh at his expense.

“Daddy killed a deer up there and all the Indians helped him skin and dress it out. Momma would set up an oven that she made from metal and rocks to bake bread and pies in. The white people across the road would come to buy her fresh baked bread and pies. Up the road was an old man who had set up a tent with a stove, he would sell stew and meals to the huckleberry pickers. Pretty soon he asked Momma if she would work for him baking bread and pies.” Remembered by Sassy.

From The Daily Missoulian, August 9, 1936 on page 5, column 3 is found: “Gather Huckleberries. Art Clowers reports that he and Charlie Steele came home with 35 gallons of huckleberries that they picked on the Bear lake trail in a day and a half. Clowers says that the Flathead Indians, who have been picking on Geiger lake and Great Northern mountain, have transferred their activities to the Bear lake region. He counted 19 cars of pickers on his trip”.



Aunty Letty and back behind by the open door Uncle John Glover John Baptiste Glover



The Glover cabin located on Aunt Letty's allotment at Twin Lakes, Flathead Reservation. Notice the dog in the doorway?



Aunt Letty Ashley Glover.

John Glover documents:

REGISTRATION CARD

SERIAL NUMBER **168** ORDER NUMBER **771**

1 **John Glover** (Last name)

2 **Delany Hatted Creek** (City or town)

3 **19** Age in Years Date of Birth **July 15, 1899**

RACE **White**

U. S. CITIZEN **Native Born**

15 **Farmer** PRESENT OCCUPATION **John Glover** EMPLOYER'S NAME

16 **Farmer** PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS

NEAREST RELATIVE **Miss Anna Moore** (Name) **Delany** (Address)

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED THESE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE

P. M. G. O. **John Glover** (Signature)

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT **25-25-0**

HEIGHT			BUILD			COLOR OF EYES	
Tall	Medium	Short	Slender	Medium	Stout	Blue	Other
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
						Blue	Dark

23 **None** (Specify)

25 I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read or has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

Wm Louwick (Signature)

Date of Registration **Sept 12 - 1918**

LOCAL BOARD
COUNTY OF FLATHLEIGH
STATE OF MONTANA
KALISPELL, MONTANA

The stamp of the Local Board having jurisdiction of the area in which the registrant has his permanent home shall be placed in this box.

63-071 (OVER)

From Duzzie Glover

421

No. 5981

MARRIAGE LICENSE

STATE OF MONTANA }
COUNTY OF MISSOULA } ss.

TO ANY PERSON AUTHORIZED TO SOLEMNIZE MARRIAGES—GREETING:

You are hereby authorized to join in lawful wedlock and celebrate within this County the rites and ceremonies of Marriage: between

Jim Boyer a man whose color is white
 whose residence is Coburn Mont; whose age is 22 years.
 Born at St. Paul Minn., County of _____, and
 State of British Columbia, and who has not been previously married or divorced.
 His Father's Christian and Surname is Edw. Boyer
 His Mother's Christian and Maiden name was Anna Boyer
 and Anna Boyer a woman, whose color is white, whose residence
 is Wheat River Mont; whose age is 18 years.
 Born at Coburn Mont, County of _____, and
 State of British Columbia, and who has not been previously married or divorced.
 Her Father's Christian and Surname is George Hartley
 Her Mother's Christian and Maiden name was Anna Boyer

Both parties being legally competent to enter into such contract of marriage. And this shall be your good and sufficient warrant therefor.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and official seal,
 this 28th day of October, A. D. 1922
 (SEAL) H. H. Hanna Clerk District Court.
 By H. H. Hanna Deputy.

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

STATE OF MONTANA }
COUNTY OF MISSOULA } ss.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That the undersigned, a Justice of the Peace
 did, on the 28th day of October, A. D. 1922
 at Missoula, in the said County of Missoula and State of Montana,
 join in lawful wedlock Jim Boyer
 and Anna Hartley with their mutual consent.

In the presence of
J. A. Thompson }
Clara Wamborn } Witnesses.

WITNESS my hand this 28 day of October, 1922
Grace Boyer
 Justice of the Peace

Filed for Record this 30 day of October, 1922 at 11:20 o'clock A. M.
H. H. Hanna
 Clerk District Court.
 By Clara Wamborn Deputy.

From Duzzie Glover

"I heard he cut his foot. walked all the way into Mission, got drunk, and walked back! tougher than alot out there!" Shirley Glover 3/23/2014

SAME PLACE	Lake	Montana	No	XOXO	483	-	-	-	1	49		haberman	Dam Const	60	199	V4	2	125	16	33
SAME PLACE	Lake	Montana	No	XOXO						5										34
SAME PLACE	Lake	Montana	No	XOXO																35
SAME PLACE	Lake	Montana	No	XOXO																36
SAME PLACE	Lake	Montana	No	XOXO																37
																				38
																				39

1941 Flathead Reservation - Census

5-128
(February 1939)
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

INDIAN

Census of the FLATHEAD reservation of the FLATHEAD

6-7970

CENSUS ROLL NUMBER		NAME		SEX	AGE AT LAST BIRTH-DAY	TRIBE	DEGREES OF BLOOD
PRESENT	LAST ¹	SURNAME	GIVEN				
1	1(a)	2	3	4	5	6	7
679	680	Cote, Joseph Edward	(Marion)	M	18	Flathead	1/2
680	681	"	Annie Catherine	F	18	"	1/2
681	682	"	George Roger	M	8	"	1/2
682	683	"	John Augustine	M	5	"	1/2
683	678	Courchane, Viola	Ashley	F	38	"	5/8
684	679	"	James Joseph	M	18	"	5/8
685	674	"	Dana May	F	18	"	5/8
686	675	"	Lily Rose	F	9	"	5/8
687	676	"	Benedicta Darlene	F	8	"	5/8
688	677	"	Leona Loren	F	5	"	5/8
689	684 x	Courville, Albert		M	41	"	3/8
690	685	Courville, Alexander	Leonard	M	38	"	5/8
691	686	"	Elsie G. Mason	F	27	"	17/8
692	687	"	Elsie	F	8	"	29/8
TOTAL	16						

¹ Report the Census Roll Number which may be either the "Supplemental Roll" or "Full Census Roll."

In November of 1941 when the family moved to Grand Coulee Dam, Washington, they must have left just after the census was taken. Everyone involved in the move agrees that the Courchane and Williams families were in Grand Coulee when Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941. Leonard Williams said they all were entered in school about three days after settling in. His 2nd grade entrance date was November 3, 1941. Of

course Jimmy had been there two months already. World War Two was looming in the very near future.