

The Life of Horace Dugald Beach

Horace Dugald Beach was born on March 12, 1919 in the family farm home near the prairie village of Ernfold. Horace was the third child of a family that grew to include seven brothers and three sisters. Horace, the smallest in stature, along with his older brother Dexter, worked on and off the farm to help the family of 13 through the Great Depression.

His life was one of achievement, especially in academia. His first passion was writing as he kept a daily journal most of his life. His first article was published when he was 14 in the Young Co-Op section of the Western Producer. He wrote numerous articles on "stories of interest" and poetry under the pen name Lochinvar. He, like his father, Palmer Beach, had a keen interest in the importance of education to create responsible citizens who could contribute to their community. As the farm family emerged from the Great Depression, Horace (Ace) headed off to the University of Saskatchewan in 1940. Horace paced the floor in the Administration Building considering a career in the Ministry before deciding on Agriculture. He continued his writing and contributed to the University student newspaper, The Sheaf.

In 1942, Ace signed up with the Canadian Army. Christmas Eve, Ace landed in England as a Lieutenant in the Trois-Riviers Tank Regiment. The following January, Ace met a young RAF English woman at a Coventry Gardens dance. By April, they were engaged when Ace's regiment shipped out to North Africa. The Trois-Riviers Regiment was part of the Allied invasion of Sicily and Italy under General Montgomery, British 8th Army. The Canadian Armoured Core suffered heavy casualties as they broke thru the fortified German Defensive Lines in Italy. Ace's writing skills were put to good use as the Regimental Diarist and as an Intelligence Officer. Ace spoke little of his war experience except to lament "the loss of so many fine young men."

In the fall of 1943, Ace received a letter from his fiancée, informing him of the birth of his son, Peter. In 1944, his fiancée broke off the engagement writing that she was going to marrying an American GI who was going to adopt Peter. It was to be 64 years before Horace met his son.

In the early spring of 1945, the Canadian Army in Italy, was transferred to the Allied front in Holland under the command of General Eisenhower. Near the Dutch town Doesburg, the Trois-Riviers Regiment received word that the German garrison it was facing wanted to surrender. "Voluntarily acting upon unsubstantiated information", Ace and Sergeant Roger Huard of Montreal, crossed enemy lines at the Ijssel River and accepted the surrender of the German soldiers. They escorted the prisoners back across the river which was being strafed by Spitfires, to the Canadian lines. For his initiative, "which resulted in the saving of many lives and a more rapid resumption of the advance", Ace was awarded the American Silver Star.

While serving in Germany in 1945, Ace met his future German bride, Maxine (Maxie) Wiechman. While awaiting repatriation home to Canada, Ace enrolled for a term at Edinburgh University. By chance, he sat in on a Psychology lecture. By the end of the lecture, Horace decided "that (Psychology) was for me."

While thousands of his fellow Canadians returned to Canada with English War Brides, Ace eventually was able to bring his German War Bride, Maxie to Saskatoon where they were married in January 1949.

While studying Psychology at the U. of S., Ace was involved in University operettas, was a member of the University Debating and Boxing teams, and Editor of The Sheaf. Ace was awarded the Saskatchewan Rhodes Scholarship in 1949 and obtained his Masters in Psychology and Philosophy at University of Oxford, England. He completed his graduate studies with his P.HD, Psychology at McGill University in 1955.

Ace began his career as a clinical psychologist at a hospital in St. John's Newfoundland. Ace was contracted by the Federal Government to write a book on the Management of Human Behaviour in Disaster. His publication drew heavily on his investigations with other colleagues into the Nova Scotia Springhill Mine Disaster, which just marked its 50th anniversary.

In 1962, Ace moved to Dalhousie University where Ace was Director of Graduate Training in Clinical Psychology and founding Director of the Student Counselling and Psychological Services Centre. While in the Maritimes, Maxie and Ace adopted five children. In 1972, the family moved to Victoria, where Ace was Director of the Counselling Centre. Ace was keenly interested in the process of student learning. Ace was Chairman of Senate's Teaching and Learning Committee which initiated the University of Victoria's Learning and Teaching Centre.

While in Academia, Ace contributed to many associations while Maxie anchored the home. He was President of Canadian University Counselling Association, 1966-1972 and received the Association's Award of Merit in 1977. He was Chairman, Applied Division, Canadian Psychological Assoc. 1974-1975. He was named a Honorary Life Fellow of the Canadian Psychological Association for his "Significant Contributions To the Science and Profession of Psychology in Canada."

Ace lost Maxie in 1979 after a 10 year courageous struggle with cancer. Ace retired in 1984 as Professor Emeritus. Ace remarried and focused his energy on raising a daughter. He also pursued his love of singing with the Victoria's Men's chorus. In 2001 he moved back to Saskatchewan to be near his siblings. His last publication was on Remembrance Day in the Moose Jaw Times Herald in 2004. Later that year, Ace suffered a stroke that impaired his speech. In 2007, he initiated a search for the son born in England in 1943. Peter lives in New Orleans. He was a teacher and now is a pastor, sharing his father's interest in education and the ministry. Their meeting for the first time after 64 years was covered by the two major Saskatchewan newspapers and CBC Newsworld. Upon meeting his son, Horace said "his life was complete". Horace passed away in Saskatoon City Hospital, October 2nd, 2008, at the age of 89. The family wishes to thank all that knew him and participated in his care and life.

(Nephew)

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