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Glenn McPherson Fonds Draft manuscript of The Man from under undercover, Ch 1-], [1944]

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THE MAN FROM UNDER UNDERCOVER

The Untold Story of Glenn McPherson,

Intrepid's man in Canada

by

KAY ALSOP

CHAPTER 1:

The plane was approaching Montreal when the pilot's voice, high-pitched with excitement, crackled over the intercom: "Ladies and gentlemen, we've just been informed that the Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor."

The lanky passenger in seat 12A stiffened, but kept his face impassive. Glenn McPherson had been well trained by his boss, the legendary spymaster Sir William Stephenson, to reveal nothing. But that didn't stop his mind from racing.

"So now what?" he thought. "What am I going to do about the commander?" (Involuntarily he glanced sidewise at the man beside him.) "The minute we land in Montreal I'll have to phone Bill and find out."

2)

He'd been given this assignment only yesterday. Bill Stephenson, head of British Intelligence in New York, had called him into his office in Rockefeller Center. One other man was already there, and introductions were brief: "McPherson? Cort." Other than that, nothing. McPherson was not told how Cort fitted into the operation. Cort was not told that McPherson was Stephenson's special assistant. Stephenson's code was simple: "You don't know if you don't have to know."

"One of our agents is in trouble," Bill Stephenson told them, his voice quiet, his eyes serious. "He's a British navy commander who's been working for us on the West Coast. The F.B.I. have broken his cover. Now they'd like nothing better than to throw the book at him. And they could do it, too. As long as America is neutral anyone caught spying here hasn't a chance. So we can't let them nab the commander. Fortunately, at the moment he's in safe hiding. But we've got to get him out of the country as soon as possible. Any suggestions?"

3)

Cort spoke up. His voice was metallic, his eyes hooded, his suggestion blunt: Arrange for the agent to be run over by a taxi, or dumped into the East River, and then let the F.B.I. find his body. Stephenson heard him out, then gently reminded Cort of the commander's valuable service to British Intelligence. In this case, he said, elimination was not the answer. He proposed an alternative.

Glenn would pretend to have an urgent mission in England and invite the commander * to go with him. They'd fly to Halifax, then board a liner bound for London. Once Glenn had seen the Brit safely aboard, he'd give him the slip, go ashore at the last minute and head back to New York, with nobody, especially the commander, any the wiser.

**Even today, a half century later, McPherson refuses to name the British navy commander, out of loyalty to Stephenson.

It seemed fool-proof and, like most of Bill Stephenson's plans, would probably have worked like a charm, had not this news about Pearl Harbor changed the ground rules. Now McPherson needed to know if the assignment was still a "go". And the only way to find out was to phone Stephenson. Usually phones were suspect. Communication with the New York office was by "safe hand" only. But in this case, clearly, there was no choice.

"Glad you called, Glenn," came the familiar, though unidentified, voice at the other end. "And you're right. We've had to alter our plans. I've already been in touch with Ottawa and we've switched your assignment. You're to go immediately to Vancouver. In view of this latest development, the number of Japanese who live on Canada's West Coast may represent a threat to security. You're to find out. An agent will contact you there."

5)

As for the commander, Stephenson had further instructions. Glenn was to say nothing about his own change in plans except that they were to go to Room 613 in the Windsor Hotel in downtown Montreal. There they'd be met by someone who'd take over Glenn's escort duties.

McPherson followed Stephenson's instructions to the letter. He and the commander took a cab to the Windsor, rode the elevator to the sixth floor, knocked on the door of Room 613 and were admitted by a man in civilian clothes. Glenn quickly assessed the man as a member of the intelligence department of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They talked for a few minutes. Then Glenn shook hands with his erstwhile companion, and left.

"I never heard whether or not the commander made it safely back to England but I assume he did," McPherson says. "In any case, he was no longer my responsibility. I had been given other duties."

Back at the airport he caught the next flight to Ottawa where he phoned his old friend and mentor, Dr. E. H. Coleman, former dean of the Manitoba Law School, now Under Secretary of State in Mackenzie King's Liberal government. It was Dr. Coleman who had loaned Glenn to Stephenson's New York office. Because of that, Stephenson agreed to their continued close contact. When McPherson briefed him on the Vancouver assignment, Dr. Coleman was immediately interested. The "Japanese problem" was a political hot potato in Ottawa, he told Glenn, so his first-hand assessment of the situation would be helpful to Mr. King.

McPherson flew to Vancouver December 8, 1941, and booked himself into the new, but only partially completed, Hotel Vancouver. (His room, No. 707, cost $6 a night.) Although work on the top nine floors had stopped, the lower nine floors had been fully occupied until the news about Pearl Harbor triggered a sudden exodus of frightened guests.

Stephenson had told Glenn that a British agent would contact him and, sure enough, within hours of his arrival, a Mr. Young phoned up from the lobby. Young was a Eurasian who lived in the Japanese community. He gave Glenn an insider's overview of its residents, listing those he said might prove to be helpful allies.

But McPherson never accepted anything, not even another agent's assessment, as foolproof.. He did his own sleuthing, quietly, doggedly and meticulously. Facts, figures, impressions and intuitions - he stockpiled them all. He picked the brains of the few people he knew, interviewed others whose names popped up in conversations, newspaper clippings or reports. Douglas Dewar was one. The former head of the chartered accountancy firm of Peat, Marwick and Mitchell in New York, Dewar had retired to the West Coast and was now the dollar-a-year head of the Foreign Exchange office in Vancouver. Glenn liked and respected him.

From his determined digging Glenn gleaned a lot of background in a short time. He learned, for instance, that some 23,000 Japanese were living then on Canada's West Coast. Some were Issei (born in Japan and still maintaining close ties to that country), some were Nisei (born in Canada and thoroughly Westernized). They tended to cluster in areas like Steveston on the Fraser River south of Vancouver, on Powell Street in central Vancouver, in the northern port of Prince Rupert, and on the Gulf Islands. The Issei clung to the old ways of their homeland. The Nisei, on the other hand, made an effort to blend into "white" ways.

Both Issei and Nisei visited Japan frequently. Some sent their children to be educated there. Others made arrangements either for themselves or their elderly parents to go "home" to die, or sent their ashes to be buried. Did their loyalties lie with Canada or Japan? Hard to tell.

McPherson learned more - that a fleet of Japanese-owned fishing boats, each equipped with radio and nautical charts of the Canadian coastline, worked regularly out of Steveston and Prince Rupert. True, starting December 8th, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had begun to round them up. But that job would take weeks. In the meantime it was anybody's guess whether or not those boats had been, or were being, used by people taking their orders directly or indirectly from Tokyo.

Agent Young claimed to have inside knowledge that a fraternal organization of local Japanese businessmen, the Black Dragon Society, was in reality a fully operational spy ring. Certainly sabotage was on everyone's mind, and rumours were rife around every street corner.

****"I was never that impressed with Young," McPherson recalls now. "He'd come by and tell me underground stuff, but you know how some people are in wartime - they'd sell their uncle. Besides, Young was a somewhat difficult guy. He disappeared eventually."**

Drop into any downtown cafe, for instance, and you'd hear that submarines had surfaced off the west coast of Vancouver Island, that the cable station there had been shelled, that Japanese planes had been sighted off the Aleutian Islands. If that were true, and the Japanese used the Aleutians as stepping stones into Alaska, they could cross over to the Mainland and down the Coast. And who could stop them? Not Canada's Navy which was already on duty in the Atlantic. And not America's Pacific fleet which lay shattered in Pearl Harbor. As for transporting troops from British Columbia, that was impossible without a highway north - and there wasn't one.

The Fraser Canyon presented another potential hot spot. If a couple of bridges there were bombed, the umbilical chord of the railway connecting the Lower Mainland to the rest of Canada would be severed. The scary thing was, any amateur could do it.

11)

Each day's newspaper reports told of new disasters in the Pacific - the fall of Hong Kong and Singapore, the sinking of the Repulse. Fear, panic, terror - all these were reflected on the faces of people in the streets. But the West Coast's "Japanese problem" hadn't sprung fullblown overnight, McPherson discovered. As far back as 1902 "white" Canadians had complained that Japanese immigrants were underselling them because they were " more aggressive, energetic and willing to put up with a lower standard of living". And these complaints had evolved into out-and-out racial prejudice. Even before Pearl Harbor the Army's Pacific Command was recommending (in June '41) "positive action against the Japanese in the interests of national security." A top Canadian newspaper, the Toronto Star, had declared that "The 40,000 Japanese in Vancouver pose a serious threat to Canada's security". And the Vancouver Sun was saying that "the Japanese do not properly belong to this country."

By December '41 while California's hostility against Japanese-Americans was demonstrated in shattered windows and hate mail, vandals were attacking Japanese stores along Vancouver's Powell Street. And Harold Winch, head of the C.C.F. party, and Vancouver alderman Halford Wilson were demanding the removal of the Japanese from the West Coast.

McPherson's roundup of information pointed to one conclusion: The Lower Mainland was a potential powder keg. The day after he arrived the RCMP ordered blackouts, the silencing of coastal radio stations from dusk to dawn, the interning of all "undesirable" Japanese. Japanese language schools were closed, and Japanese language newspapers were banned, "to avoid trouble if the white population saw a Japanese paper which they couldn't understand, " according to the R.C.M.P.

From his arrival in Vancouver on December 8th to his departure on the 22nd, Glenn worked 'round the clock, trying to come up with as honest and objective an assessment as possible.

He felt the responsibility keenly. Just 29 years old, he operated under the old-fashioned ethics and noncompromising principles taught him by his father, Chief Justice Ewan McPherson of Manitoba's Supreme Court. ("If you have to ask yourself whether or not a thing is right," his dad told him, "it probably isn't.")

After two exhausting weeks McPherson had reached a painful but obvious conclusion: For their own protection the Japanese must be moved out of a 100 mile-wide buffer or safety zone along the West Coast of Canada. He sent word to Stephenson that his report was ready.

Toward the end of his last day in Vancouver, he'd finished interviewing and writing notes and was sitting chatting with Bob Ray, a man from the local Custodian's office with whom he'd become quite friendly. Ray noted that Glenn looked physically and emotionally drained, and said he knew

just the cure - a night off. Nothing outrageous - he already knew Glenn wasn't the type to party. What he had in mind was just an innocent evening of dancing at the local Commodore Dance Hall. Glenn's immediate response was predictable - he couldn't round up a date. He hadn't had time to meet any girls since he'd arrived in Vancouver. No problem, said Ray. His own date would bring a friend.

As it turned out, that night changed McPherson's life. Although he wouldn't have believed it could happen, he met the woman who'd be his wife within a matter of months. He wouldn't have believed it because four years earlier he'd vowed he'd never marry. Oddly enough, his maternal grandfather had made the same vow a hundred years earlier. Francis Finn, an Irish Catholic priest, had every intention of spending his life saving souls for the Church. Then he met Susannah.

CHAPTER 2

Glenn's grandfather Francis Finn, a Catholic priest, emigrated from Sligo, Ireland, to Upper Canada in the mid-1800s with one mission in mind - to win converts to Catholicism. He had his share of successes until he ran into Susannah Willoughby's mother, a staunch Methodist who totally rejected his Irish blarney and his conversion arguments. Her daughter Susannah, however, didn't reject the little Irish priest. Quite the contrary. Father Finn was enchanted. He gave up the Catholic church and made her his wife, thus becoming a Methodist by marriage.

While he gave up the priesthood, Father Finn evidently took to fatherhood with gusto. He sired twelve children. The first, a boy, he grandly christened Philander Andrew Levinus Timothy Marcelin Augustus Caesar Agripus Festus Ribald Briden Finn - Phil for short. The second, another boy, was named Theophilis Oscar Sheridan Grant Finn - nicknamed Theo. By the time his twelfth child, a girl, was born he'd run out of names and enthusiasm. He called her Winnie. She would be Glenn McPherson's mother.

With a brood like that a job was essential. Father Finn became an itinerant outdoor revivalist, and he was good at it, too. His fame spread. At that time in Upper Canada there was bad blood between Catholics and Orangemen (extreme Protestants). One of these Orangemen, obviously aware of Francis Finn's recent Catholic background, took a potshot at him right in the middle of a hell-raising sermon. Fortunately somebody yelled a warning and the little Irishman ducked in time. He wasn't hurt, but he got the message.

He moved his family to Carman, Manitoba, intending to take over the vacant Methodist pulpit there. But the manse that went with that church was only a tent - and 12 kids and two adults in a tent in the middle of a bitter prairie winter didn't sound like Paradise, even to Father Finn. However to the west, at Portage la Prairie, another Methodist congregation was needing a preacher, and a proper manse was available. In 1880 the Finn family settled in Portage la Prairie.

Peter McPherson moved his family to Portage la Prairie that same year. Peter and Ellen McPherson, their sons Ian, Peter and Ewan,* and their daughter Ellen, had come from Missouri, after ten disillusioning, heartbreaking years there.

Scottish-born Peter had met and married Ellen, daughter of Scottish parents, in Upper Canada. They were faithful members of the Presbyterian* church in Aire, and quick to respond with a dozen others in the congregation when the preacher, a Dr. John McGuire, entreated them to follow him to the veritable Shangri-La he dreamed of establishing in St. Joseph, Missouri. The year was 1870.

But the dream turned to dust. Despite back-breaking effort they couldn't make their homestead profitable. Worst of all, three of their children**died there - two little boys of infants' diseases, their oldest girl, Agnes, in a tragic housefire. Ellen took it as a sign from God that they should never have left Canada. So in 1880 they moved back, following relatives to Portage la Prairie.

***Peter broke with the Presbyterian church in Missouri and the family followed Agnes when she joined the Methodist church there.**

****Another son, Ernest, was born the year after they arrived in Portage la Prairie.**

*4)

A good carpenter and hard worker, Peter McPherson provided a reasonably good living for his family until his untimely death fourteen years later. The two older boys were working by then, but Ellen, Ewan (later to be Glenn's father) and Ernest were still teenagers at home, and Peter had left no savings nor insurance. Just 15, Ewan had to quit school and go to work at the town's Hudson's Bay store. It wasn't what he wanted to do with his life - he'd dreamed of being a lawyer - but there was simply no money for university.

At that time, however, it was possible to get a law degree extramurally and eventually that's what Ewan did. He was admitted to the bar in 1903, and went on to become one of Portage la Prairie's most illustrious sons. When he died in 1954 he was Chief Justice of Manitoba with an honorary LLD from the University of Manitoba - a singular feat considering that he'd never attended university. But Ewan was a man of uncommon purpose and principle. When he died the Winnipeg Free Press said of him that he "was a very sound lawyer, never known to deviate from what he considered to be right, no matter what others said."

He and Winnie Finn were married in Portage la Prairie in 1904, and they "lived happily ever after, " according to Glenn. The family of six (Glenn had two older brothers, Donovan and Wallace, and one sister, Peggy - the last child, Dickson, died an infant) lived in a big brick house at 150 Broadway Avenue in the centre of town. And the kids did what most kids did in the Twenties - skated, snowshoed, played ball during the week. But never on Sundays. Ewan and Winnie went to church (Ewan sang in the choir) and the kids went to Sunday School. ("Because of Mother, we had quite a religious household," Glenn says.) The McPherson kids weren't particularly close-knit. Donovan, Wallace and Peggy were chummy - Glenn felt left out. But they all adored their little mother Winnie (under five feet in height, she weighed less than a hundred pounds.) * And Glenn and his father had a special bond from the beginning. They hunted prairie chickens together. They played chess together. And over the chess board they indulged in many memorable father-and-son conversations.

***As the boys grew older, Ewan often introduced interesting legal or political problems into the dinnertime conversation. Discussion would get hot and heavy. Suddenly they'd notice their little mother, tiptoe on her chair, trying to make herself heard over the din: "Will someone please pass the salt?"**

Ewan and Glenn were not only kindred spirits, but they looked alike, strong features, penetrating eyes, prominent noses. As a youth, each was tall, handsome and rangy. Each bulked up with maturity. The similarities were so striking that, when Glenn made a return visit to Portage la Prairie in 1994, and was regaling a crowd with one of his famous anecdotes, an old family friend said: "My god, Glenn, you're the spittin' image of your father. You not only look like him and talk like him, you even have his sense of humor."*

That pleased Glenn. His pride in his father is obvious even today. It's not just the fact of Ewan's achievements which are impressive enough:

***When people ask how long he's been a Liberal, Glenn tells about his father bursting into the delivery room of Portage la Prairie General Hospital just after he was born. "Winnie!" cried Ewan. "Give me the boy. There's a Liberal meeting tonight." That, says Glenn grinning, is how long.**

7)

a) Liberal MLA for Portage la Prairie from 1914 to 1921;

b) Member of Parliament from 1926-30 (with the distinction of unseating Prime Minister Arthur Meighen in the election of 1926);

c) Manitoba's Provincial Treasurer from 1932 to 1937, during which time he introduced a 2% wage tax (the first in Canada) thus saving the province from declaring bankruptcy;

d) appointed Chief Justice of the King's bench in 1937, and

e) Manitoba's Chief Justice in 1944.

It's also the fact of his father's rock-solid principles, his personal disdain for anything phoney, and his "horse-sense" logic**, all qualities as much a part of Glenn as they were inherent in his father.

**** "Son, a good lawyer is a man who knows something about everything and everything about nothing, " Ewan told Glenn, when his son decided to follow in his father's footsteps.**

When, on his first day of school, Glenn decided to leave minutes after arrival, it was his father who left his office, took him by the hand and lead him back, impressing on him, quietly but firmly, that school must be a first priority. And again, when Glenn was expelled from Grade 10 for a minor misconduct, it was his father who engineered his return. Ewan had refused to accept the opinion of the principal that Glenn would never amount to anything, that he was best fitted for farm labour. He quietly negotiated a truce for his son. And great was his joy when, in Grade 11, Glenn was awarded the Governor-General's medal. That was 1927, and Glenn was seventeen years old.

Glenn had a job each summer. One, still vivid in his mind, took him to Northern Manitoba as a member of a survey gang. He spent July and August out of doors, "cutting the line" (hacking trees ahead of the ' instrument man'), drilling rocks, living in tents, canoeing, fishing for sturgeon in the swift Winnipeg River. After sundown when the older, seasoned workers collected in a tent to gamble, Glenn, who didn't smoke or drink, went off by himself to read poetry. He was there to earn money. Why risk it in a poker game?

9)

Money was tight in the late 1920's and a country lawyer like Ewan McPherson was among the first to feel the pinch. He'd be asked by clients to barter, to take out his bill in trade - scribblers for his kids from the book store, flour from the grocer, bread (forty loaves for a dollar), eggs (eight cents a dozen) or potatoes (fifty cents a bushel) from a farmer. And he did.

The McPhersons could afford to send only one son to university during 1927-28, so Wallace, two years older than Glenn, and already into first year Law, got the nod. Glenn stayed in Portage, taking First Year Arts at the Portage Collegiate.

That summer, 1928, was the year he went to London to see Madame Tussaud's. For years he'd hankered to see London Bridge, the Old Bailey and the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and Madame Tussaud's. He'd saved enough money, he told his father - $35. All he needed was to work his way across Canada on a cattle train, then across the Atlantic on a cattle boat. Ewan was skeptical, but finally gave in, and drove him to St. Boniface (across the Assiniboine River from Winnipeg) to the stockyards where the cattle train was loading.

First, though, he insisted that Glenn have his $35 converted into a bank draft which he was to keep in a money belt worn, at all times, under his clothes.

The four-day trip was no picnic. Glenn helped load the cattle (750 bawling head of them), watched them constantly, watered them regularly. At Hornpayne, the halfway point, the train stopped long enough for the stock to be unloaded, put into pens and fed, before being reloaded for the rest of the journey to Montreal. Some of the men went into the village for a meal at a cafe. Glenn's money was "tied up" so he asked a kindly housewife if he could chop kindling in return for a sandwich. She didn't need kindling but she gave the lanky teenaager a sandwich anyway.

He rode on top of the freight cars when he couldn't stand the stench of manure, and when his tired body ached for a little shuteye or a cup of hot tea he climbed into the colonist car at the end of the train and made use of the wooden benches and the pot-bellied stove.

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At Montreal he signed on as a cattleman aboard the freighter Manchester Brigade, then spent an afternoon shoving those same 750 smelly, protesting cattle up a ramp and into corrals on each of the ship's decks. Each beast had to be roped, then hitched to a crossbeam. This prevented them from stampeding., and kept all heir heads facing all the same way, ostensibly to make feeding easier.

They were twelve days at sea, and every day those cattle had to be fed and watered - the hay pitched to them by the forkful, the water carried by hand in buckets. And every day the manure had to be collected for sale later to the Liverpool "shitters" whose customers were English farmers. It was hard work at the best of times, but in rough seas it was brutal. Some of the men got seasick. Glenn didn't. "And if you don't get seasick on a cattleboat in mid-Atlantic," he says wryly, "you'll never get seasick."

But he did get hot and stinky. So he was grateful when some of the men suggested showering on deck. Simple enough. You stripped, stood under an overhang while

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somebody sloshed a pail of cold water over you. It felt good - until later, when he discovered his $35 bank draft had been lifted out of his money belt. But he wasn't entirely destitute. As he left the ship he was given his pay - one shilling - for those twelve days of backbreaking work.

On the way over he'd told one of the cattleman - a brawny little Scot - about his dream of seeing London. The Scotsman said, well, now, he'd go along, too. In Liverpool they caught a bus to London. The minute they arrived Glenn walked to the nearest branch of the bank whose name had been on his $35 draft, and asked to see the manager. The manager, he was informed, was in conference. Glenn told the clerk his problem. The clerk protested: "But, sir, you have no bank draft to show us. We really can't pay up in that case."

"But," Glenn's voice rose in exasperation, "why do you think I bought a draft in the first place? For a safeguard in case my money was stolen. But, look, here's my I.D. and see? Here's my picture. Now where's my money?"

By this time the frock-coated bank manager had emerged from his "conference." He'd heard the disturbance and demanded to know, from the clerk, what was the

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matter. The clerk explained. Glenn waited. The manager repeated what the clerk had said. Glenn stood his ground. Finally, conceding defeat, the manager directed the clerk to pay up, and Glenn left in triumph, his money in his money belt.

For a week he and the Scotsman explored London on foot - except for one short trip on the tube just to get the feel of it. They saw Madame Tussaud's, then London Bridge, the Houses of Parliament, the Old Bailey - and a lot more. By week's end the $35 was gone, but he still had busfare back to Liverpool. There he signed on with the freigher Manchester Citizen as an able-bodied seaman and "chipped paint" all the way back to Montreal. Again his pay was one shilling.

Except for that he was broke. But he had an ace in the hole - the Montreal phone number of his Uncle Ian, his dad's older brother, to be used in case of emergency. He called Ian.

"Glad to hear from you, Glenn!" his uncle said. "Your dad wrote and said if you called I was to buy you a coach seat on the railway and send you home."

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Coach seat or not, he felt positively pampered on that three-day train trip home. Clean, comfortable cars, no cows to clean up after, nothing to do but sit there on those padded seats and watch the country roll by. It had been a great summer but now it was time to get serious about his future.

He took Second Year Arts at Wesley College in Winnipeg, living in a rooming house close to the college. Then he came back to Portage to start First Year Law, articled with his father's law firm, McPherson and Porter. (It was still possible to take Law courses extramurally.)

True to his code, Ewan didn't go easy on him. Glenn served as janitor, caretaker and fireman for the whole building, as well as office errand boy and student for McPherson and Porter. His monthly take-home pay was twenty dollars, out of which he was expected to pay his law fees and buy his clothes.

He studied every week night. On Saturday nights, though, he knocked off at eight o'clock and hurried across the road to the skating rink where, at half time, he cleaned the ice, in return for which he was allowed to skate the last half of the evening for free. (As a son of a director of the rink he was actually entitled to a

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season's pass. But his father frowned on "freebies" so, to save on the admission, Glenn cleaned the ice.)

He wrote his Second Year Law exams at the Portage la Prairie Collegiate, and passed. Like father, like son. He was going into Third Year Law - and he'd yet to attend a single class in the Law School.

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FOOTNOTE:

Research reveals differences between McPherson's Family History and facts recorded in United Church Archives regarding Glenn's grandfather, Francis Finn. Here's what the Archives say:

Francis M. Finn - born in Sligo, Ireland, Feb. 9, 1832 - died July 21, 1907, in Stony Mountain, Man. Came to Canada in 1848 at the age of 16, taught school for two years before entering Theology. Brought up Roman Catholic, converted in his early youth, was ordained a minister of the Methodist Episcopal church in 1855, served 27 years in Ontario, came west in 1882, and preached for 10 years. Retired in 1892 and was appointed Chaplain to Stony Mountain Penitentiary in 1897 and held this position until his death in 1907. Married Louise Willoughby, of Newmarket, Ont. in July, 1857.
Was a presiding elder of the Colbourne District for four years, chairman of the Brandon District for two years, grand chaplain of the Grand Lodge British North America Orange Order.

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CHAPTER 3:

In 1932 Premier John Bracken melded his Progressive party with the Liberals and appointed Glenn's dad as Manitoba's Provincial Treasurer. The McPherson family moved from Portage la Prairie in to Winnipeg, and Glenn was able to take Third Year at the Law School. He articled with McKenzie, Campbell and Driscoll, whose offices were upstairs in the old CPR ticket office at the corner of Portage and Main. Pretty Peggy McQuarrie worked downstairs in the same building. She and Glenn met one windy September day at the bus stop, a year later. Before long they were dating, then "going steady".

Glenn's next two years were extremely happy. He had a gal, Peggy, and a pal, fellow student Ozzie Sorflaten. He and Peggy often double-dated with Ozzie and his girl, Bea Gislason. He and Ozzie shared a common interest in law, and a common commitment to the Young Liberal Association - Ozzie was president, Glenn was secretary. Glenn was also active in the politics of the Law School, which brought him to the attention of the Dean, Dr. Ephraim ("Eef") H. Coleman, and senior law students like Locksley McNeill, class of '27.

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McNeill remembers him well - "a big, handsome chap, quiet, reserved, very sound and strictly business, but a nice sense of humor. An all-round gentleman. You know where it says in the Bible about Nathanael, 'Behold, a man in whom there is no guile'? That could be said of Glenn."

In whatever spare time he had, and with whatever spare cash he could scrape together, Glenn took flying lessons at the Winnipeg Flying Club. His dream, as a kid, was to be a bush pilot but, on his dad's advice, he had put that dream on hold to first pursue a law degree.

In 1934 he graduated in law. A year later he was called to the bar and, that same year, he also got his flying licence. The month of September, 1936, was a milestone. He and Peggy became engaged, and Glenn was hired by one of Winnipeg's largest law firms, Aikens, Loftus, Williams and MacAulay, for the hefty salary of $75.00 a month. He thought he had the world by the tail.

Like the other junior lawyers on Aikens' roster, Glenn spent most of his time preparing briefs and researching for the firm's senior lawyers. Every now and then, though, a junior would be tossed a case of his own to handle - invariably

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one considered too minor or too hopeless for the senior partners to take. Which is how Glenn came to the defence of Miss Amy Myrtle Betts, milliner.

Miss Betts had been charged with contravening the minimum wage law. Since Mrs. MacAulay was one of her best customers, Miss Betts naively expected that Mr. MacAulay would be her legal protector. Instead, MacAulay called Glenn into his office and told him to handle the case.

The facts were simple enough. Miss Betts, trying to keep her little shop open during hard times, had taken to teaching some of the city's socialites how to make hats. They didn't pay her. She didn't pay them. Once in a while she was able to sell one of the hats. Mostly, though, the hats just went home with their makers. But somebody at City Hall took a dim view of this procedure and accused Miss Betts of sidestepping the minimum wage act.

McPherson, like his father, was a stickler for fair play, and this case (his first) smacked of injustice. He buried himself in the company's extensive law library.

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The case came to court - with his good pal Ozzie Sorflaten as prosecutor. Ozzie was confident that the case was as good as won. Earlier that morning he advised Glenn to save himself embarrassment by having his client plead guilty. Glenn just grinned at his pal.

In court Ozzie made his opening remarks to the judge. Glenn, in turn, moved that the case be dismissed. The judge asked on what grounds. Glenn said it would become clear if he could just ask his client a couple of questions. Permission was granted.

"Miss Betts," Glenn said to the timid little spinster, "these women who made hats in your shop, did you ever pay them a salary?" My goodness, no. Never.

"Your Honor," Glenn said, " the Minimum Wage Act clearly states that a person can be charged for paying less than the minimum wage. Nothing is said, though, about a person paying no wage at all. The charge against Miss Betts has no basis in fact. I therefore move for dismissal of this case." And the judge concurred, to Miss Betts' delight, and Ozzie's chagrin.

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In an interview afterwards, Glenn brashly suggested that this legislation had been poorly written and should be changed. But that wasn't all, he said. He'd uncovered another instance of faulty legislation - the Consolidated Statutes of Manitoba - in which a reference to "unsound minds" was incorrectly indexed to "the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba." The way it read, he pointed out, it intimated that the Legislative Assembly was a bunch of lunatics.

The press had a field day with the story, all the more so because the father of this young upstart, Glenn McPherson, was none other than Ewan McPherson, Manitoba's Chief Justice.

Manitoba's Attorney General Bill Major phoned the Chief Justice to protest. That night the Chief Justice chided his son. Did he realize that he'd embarrassed the government? But Glenn was not at all contrite. Ineptly written legislation could not be condoned, he insisted. Mistakes must be corrected when found.

(His dad said nothing more about it.)

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Glenn and Peggy were to be married in the Fall of '37. On August 29 they drove to Grand Forks, North Dakota, with Ozzie and Bea, in Ozzie's car, to bring Bea's mother and sister back to Winnipeg. On the way back they were in collision with a farmer who was suffering from insulin shock. The farmer was instantly killed. Peggy, Ozzie and Bea were badly hurt, and Peggy and Ozzie died later in hospital. Glenn's injuries - fractured neck, crushed ribs - weren't life-threatening, but he was absolutely devastated by grief at the sudden loss of both his fiancee and his best friend. It was his first experience with death and he honestly didn't think he'd ever recover from it. He withdrew into himself, vowing never again to care deeply for anyone, certainly never to marry. To avoid such pain he'd rather walk alone. He avoided old friends, stayed away from haunts he and Peggy and Ozzie had known. But nothing helped. There were too many memories. He was desperate to leave Winnipeg, to make a new life for himself. But how?

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It was Dr. E.H. Coleman who came to his rescue. Coleman, formerly Dean of the Law School, had been recruited by Prime Minister R.B. Bennett to be Canada's Under Secretary of State and was living in Ottawa. But he hadn't forgotten young Glenn McPherson, the likeable, hard-working Winnipeg law student. When he heard of the accident, Coleman phoned Glenn's dad. Would Glenn be interested in coming to Ottawa and working for the Secretary of State on a special six-month assignment? Would he? It was the answer to a prayer.

He requested six months' leave of absence from Aikins, Loftus, Williams and MacAulay and arrived in Ottawa on October 6, 1937. He was immediately appointed Legal Counsel for the Custodian of Enemy Property by Secretary of State Fernand Rinfret.

His salary of $200 a month, almost three times what he'd been paid in Winnipeg, seemed to the 27 yr. old McPherson to be a veritable " gold mine". On impulse he burned his bridges, sent his resignation back to Aikins Loftus, and set about to make Ottawa his home, for whatever time he was allotted.

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He plunged headlong into his new assignment. Basically, he'd been told, he was to "wrap-up" the office of the Custodian, a leftover from the First World War, and to dispose of the backlog of longstanding claims on the Custodian's books. First, though, he'd have to know more about the position of Custodian of Enemy Property, and about his own duties as its Legal Counsel.

The Custodian's office, he discovered, had been set up in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles to administer enemy assets seized during the First World War and turned over to Canada under that Treaty. The office was run by the Custodian (the Secretary of State), and the Deputy Custodian (the Under Secretary of State) with the help of an Assistant Deputy Custodian who looked after the administrative side of the office. The Legal Counsel handled all legal matters.

Before he could begin to settle the backlog of claims, Glenn realized he'd have to become totally conversant with the Treaty of Versailles. So he spent months studying it, fine print and all, until he knew it inside out. Then in September '38

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he and Coleman left for Europe. They were to visit several countries whose claims against the Custodian were still in dispute. Their main target, though, was Holland and the Amsterdam Stock Exchange. During World War I Canada's Custodian had seized certain CPR shares which, ostensibly Dutch-owned, were suspected by the Custodian of actually being possessed by German interests. (Those shares had then been cancelled on the CPR's books.) In retaliation, the Amsterdam Stock Exchange had banned the trading of Canadian securities and government bonds. This must be resolved at all costs.

Coleman and McPherson met with Exchange officials and discussed the ways and means. Eventually they agreed that McPherson would return later to investigate the ownership of the shares at the time they were seized.

By month-end (Sept. 30, 1938) came the infamous Munich Agreement signed by Hitler and Britain's Chamberlain, giving Germany the go-ahead to take over Czechoslovakia. Coleman was called home - Ottawa didn't want its Custodian roaming around Europe in case war erupted. Glenn left for London.

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He was standing with the crowd in the rain outside Buckingham Palace, October 1st, when Chamberlain returned from Munich and appeared on the palace balcony with King George VI and Queen, he recalls in his journal:

"Chamberlain waved the piece of paper in the air and the crowd screamed and yelled when he promised them 'peace in our time.' I turned to an Englishman next to me and said that Chamberlain was out of his mind, and it was clearly time for this Canadian to head for home."

The following April he was back in Amsterdam, accompanied by A.H. Mathieu, Assistant Deputy Custodian, ready to begin his investigations as to the rightful ownership of the CPR shares. He was carrying an impressive red-sealed "open-sesame" document from the Secretary of State declaring him to be *"an officer of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada" whose diplomatic mission would require him to "travel in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Hungary, Switzerland and other countries."*

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Again his journal records his vivid impressions of Europe at that time:

"Hitler was now in Austria, had taken back the French Alsace-Lorraine area and had occupied the Sudetanland of Czechoslovakia, which he was claiming as a part of Germany. There was very little evidence of any war preparation in England. Chamberlain was following his appeasement policy. Most of the people I talked to there were convinced that Hitler now had all he wanted, and there wasn't going to be a war in Europe.

"When I got to Amsterdam, however, I suddenly realized that the Dutch were preparing for war. They were erecting anti-tank barriers and barbed wire along their canals, on bridges over the rivers and canals. The airports were surrounded with barbed wire, and everywhere you went people were talking about war."

By June, 1939, he and Mathieu had successfully resolved the dispute with the Amsterdam Stock Exchange and the Dutch Bourse had agreed to re-open the Exchange to the trading of Canadian Securities, including Canadian Government Bonds. During a post-negotiation dinner, the Secretary of the Bourse, Arnold

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d'Ailly, said there was very real danger of war. If that happened, and if the Netherlands were occupied and their financial institutions seized by the Germans, what would the Canadian government do? Would they repeat the policy of World War I, seize assets in Canada that were held through Netherlands banks?

Glenn answered, his conviction based on the fact that he'd devoted a year to studying the Treaty of Versailles and the work of the Custodian's office following that Treaty. If the Netherlands were occupied, he said, Canada would certainly seize German-owned assets in Canada. But, as the Custodian's Legal Counsel, he'd also be recommending that Canada seize the assets of all of the people living in occupied countries and all of the financial institutions and corporations that had assets in Canada. This would be a protective measure taken to assure that these assets would be held and returned to their rightful owners after the war. It would also prevent the Germans from forcing the owners to transfer their Canadian assets to German interests during the occupation.

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Then it was time to go home but via separate routes, Mathieu by way of Paris, Glenn by way of London, then aboard the Duchess of Richmond. She sailed in the wake of the ship carrying the King and Queen who were about to begin their 1939 Royal Tour. Travelling as escort to their Majesties was the battleship Hood. What the world didn't know, however, was that the Hood was also transporting all of the gold bullion and government securities from the Bank of England to Canada for safekeeping.

"I'm not sure what the transfer point was," Glenn recorded in his journal, *"but I know that under cover of the Royal Parade through the streets of Montreal, the authorities were frantically moving the bullion and securities off the ship and into the vaults under the Sun Life Building. Later on I found out that the gold bullion was transferred again to the Bank of Canada vaults in Ottawa. Needless to say, it was all top secret."*

That summer of '39 Mackenzie King was openly downplaying the possibility of

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war. But, behind the scenes, he was following a different script. He'd already set up a War Committee to prepare legislation for the war. Glenn, appointed to represent Coleman* on an inter-departmental committee established by King, was assigned to draft the Economic Warfare Regulations - later known as Trading With The Enemy Regulations - because he had the legal background and also because he had studied how the same type of regulations was enacted during the First World War.

"I knew where the pitfalls were," he says in his journal, *" and what protection Canada required. Also I had some new ideas about how to get control of property in Canada that belonged to the enemy. I'd also figured out how to prevent other governments from contending, as they had done after the First World War, that the assets in Canada had been vested prior to their seizure by the Canadian Government. "*

All during the summer of 1939 this Committee was hard at work - Glenn himself put in eighteen-hour days, weekends included - but it was all very hush-hush.

***Coleman was (Royal) Touring the King and Queen across Canada.**

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On Coleman's return from the Royal Tour, he and Glenn and Controller General Watson Sellers had back-to-back meetings. And by September 2nd, when the British declared war on Germany after the occupation of Poland, Canada's Trading With The Enemy Regulations were inked, stamped and ready for action.

Sunday, September 9th, at midnight Glenn was still bent over his desk on the Hill when Dr. Coleman phoned to ask if his car was handy. (Coleman didn't drive.) If so, could he give Coleman a lift? Like, now? He'd be waiting on the steps of the Centre Block.

Glenn grabbed his keys, raced down the stairs, gunned his car to a stop beside the smallish man standing in the driveway, waited while he got in, and took off again down the curving roadway.

"Where to, Doctor?"

"To Government House, Glenn," said Coleman, puffing on one of his endless cigarettes.

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The streets were quiet at that time of night. Glenn made it to Rideau Hall in less than five minutes, rolled in through the gates and up to the porte cochere. The doorman had been expecting them. They were ushered into the handsome foyer, and at that moment His Excellency the Governor-General, Lord Tweedsmuir, came down the stairs in his dressing gown. He'd obviously been roused from bed.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said the Governor-General. "Let's go into the study." Coleman pulled a piece of parchment out of his briefcase and handed it to the little man behind the desk. Tweedsmuir adjusted his glasses, reached for a pen, read the document quickly, signed it, blotted it and handed it back to Coleman. It was all over in less time than it takes to tell it, McPherson recalled later.

Back in the car again, Glenn's curiosity got the better of him: "Can you tell me what that was all about?" he asked.

His lighter flared in the darkness, then Coleman answered, his voice dry and weary: "That," he said, " was Canada's Declaration of War against Germany."

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In his journal McPherson has written about the work he was doing in August, 1939:

"I discussed with Superintendent of Insurance Finlayson about how a Custodian would get control of enemy insurance policies in Canada, and any benefits that might accrue therefrom. Also, after my thorough study of the Treaty of Versailles and the regulations of the Custodian of that day, I realized that there was a great weakness in the Canadian position. We had to make a prima facie case that any vesting orders we applied for were based on facts indicating an enemy interest. I felt that this was wrong, that in wartime the English rule that you are innocent until proven guilty should be waived. I knew that this was a real departure from British jurisprudence, and I knew that some of the Cabinet would probably object.

"However, in drafting the regulations I put in a clause that, in effect, said that all German-owned assets in Canada automatically vested in the Canadian Custodian as of the date of the issuing of the Orders-in-Council (Sept. 10, 1939 CHECK!) This became known as the Canadian Automatic Vesting Provision. We didn't have to prove anything. The law said that, if the assets were enemy- owned, they vested.

"I also had a provision that all a Custodian had to do was to advise the holder of such assets, or the party controlling same, that he had determined that the assets were enemy-owned, and it was up to the other party to prove that they were not. Obviously, with a war going on and no direct communication going on with the enemy, there would be no way for a chartered bank to get evidence out of Germany that the assets were, or were not, German-owned. The only information they might have would be from a Swiss bank, and that would customarily be that the interests in Canada were either owned by unknown parties (numbered accounts) or they were owned in Switzerland.

"I recognized another major problem: When Germany occupied a country in the First World War (i.e. the Netherlands or Belgium), it gained control of the banking and financial structure in those countries, and tried to take over that country's assets held outside the country (i.e. Canada or the United States.) I was determined that we should have a provision preventing Germany from taking action in Amsterdam to transfer assets or shares in Canadian companies held by Dutch banks for German or Swiss parties. Of course I was anticipating that Switzerland would not be occupied but would remain neutral. If so, Germans could run their companies through Switzerland. I therefore included a clause that any country or territory occupied by Germany would be considered, for the purposes of the Regulations, as enemy territory.

"There was an obvious political danger in this. For example, if France were occupied, as it subsequently was, all French assets in Canada would be considered as enemy assets - and French Quebec would not like this terminology to be applied to France, nor would the French Ambassador. But it was the only logical thing to do, since the purpose of the Regulations was to protect the assets of occupied countries from being seized by Germany.

"The British Custodian later admitted that our automatic vesting provision was excellent, and he he regretted that Britain hadn't thought of it and put it in place before declaring war."