

1966

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Golden Honeymoon Memories
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Dear Sir/Madam:

Your request for Golden Honeymoon Memories which appeared in the Calgary Herald newspaper prompted us to recall our first visit to the Falls. Please find attached a recount of our honeymoon at the Falls twenty-six years ago. On our twentieth wedding anniversary we returned to the Toronto area and the Falls to visit all the places that were a part of our early married life. We hope that you enjoy our story as much as we do when we recall that first visit.

Yours truly,

Gary & Lesley Lee

Gary and Lesley Lee

Golden Honeymoon Memories

Gary and Lesley Lee

Your search for honeymoon memories relating to Niagara Falls has prompted us to write and share a somewhat humorous experience on our honeymoon in the capital of romance. At least it has given us a chuckle whenever we have an opportunity to recall our own honeymoon and our first trip to the Falls.

We were married in Calgary on June 18, 1966. Although we were both raised in Calgary, it wasn't until we attended the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Gary studying Engineering and myself studying Chemistry that we finally met.

Our courtship lasted through our final two years until we graduated in May 1966 only to be married a month later. Gary had accepted a position with Bell Telephone in Toronto which would commence the first week in July. It was a hectic time, to say the least, with graduation, the wedding, a move to the East and the anxiety of starting a new career.

While it was widely known where we planned to reside the actual honeymoon was kept a secret. Our plan was actually quite simple as we only intended to drive from Calgary to Niagara Falls via the northern United States. However, we intended to be sneaky and fool everyone by driving west rather than east. That way we could have a diversion and stop in Banff on the way to Niagara Falls. When we were growing up the "only" two places where you honeymooned were Banff and Niagara Falls and we were lucky enough to go to both.

We had made a reservation in Niagara Falls at the Sheraton Brock for two days, July 1st and 2nd. With that target the remainder of the road trip was pretty well made up as we went along, although we did want to detour by Toronto and hopefully find an apartment which we could return to after we left the Falls.

The temperature in southern Ontario during the last week of June and first week of July in 1966 was constantly around 104°F and the humidity could easily be described as "excessive". What a first time shock particularly when you come from Alberta!

Battling the heat and humidity, we were lucky to find a one-bedroom apartment in Don Mills in only one day. We were impressed because the apartment building was higher than the tallest building in Calgary. We had very little money, no furniture and our wedding gifts hadn't arrived yet so we couldn't wait to get to Niagara Falls. All we had was what we could fit into the back seat of our car, mostly casual clothes, although I had one nice outfit in which I could dress up and Gary had his wedding suit which he would need when he started his new job.

We stayed in the apartment for one night on June 30th. There wasn't any furniture but that's a story for another time.

We got up on the morning of July 1st. There was virtually no food, except for snacks, but I managed to make peanut butter sandwiches and a container of Kool Aid so that we would have something to eat when we arrived at the Falls. We left in good time, enjoyed a leisurely drive down to Niagara Falls, located the Sheraton Brock and were able to get checked in by 2 p.m..

The temperature and humidity was something that we had never experienced before and our room at the Brock was a most welcome site when we found that it was air-conditioned. We didn't have a view of the Falls as we were on the "other" side of the hotel with a view of some kind of factory. But we didn't care because we still had air-conditioning.

With this relief we settled into our "honeymoon suite" and proceeded to indulge ourselves in our "honeymoon meal" of peanut butter sandwiches and Kool Aid.

It was about halfway through the second peanut butter sandwich what we noticed a neatly printed card on the dresser that stated something to the effect of:

"As guests of the Sheraton Brock on July 1st you are cordially invited to attend the Miss Dominion of Canada Pageant in the hotel ballroom commencing at 6 p.m.."

What a stroke of luck to have the opportunity to attend a prestigious event such as a beauty pageant. It was a good thing that we had brought everything that we owned with us, including our good clothes as we would have to dress properly to attend the Pageant.

It was at this point that Gary inquired as to where I had put his good suit to which I replied that I thought that he had placed the suit in the car. It turned out that the suit was nowhere to be found and suddenly we both had a vivid picture of the suit still hanging in the new apartment back in Don Mills.

Once we regained our composure (this was also a test on a new marriage) it was concluded that the only way that we could attend the Pageant was if Gary was to drive back to Don Mills and retrieve the suit. But there were less than four hours until the Pageant was to start and it was exactly 90 miles back to the apartment or 180 miles round trip (and no air conditioning in the car).

With time of the essence it was agreed that I would remain in the air conditioned room and Gary would make the 180 mile journey for the suit. Gary left immediately and made a singular decision that speed limits were made to be broken.

The journey was made. The suit was retrieved and Gary was back at the hotel room, suit in hand, in exactly three hours and with thirty minutes to spare before the Pageant was to start. Although he was not familiar with freeway driving, he was not passed by a single vehicle over the entire distance.

We made it to the Pageant on time and it was a gala affair. We don't remember who won and that didn't really matter to us but we do remember having a good time.

The rest of our stay at the Falls was not quite so eventful, but nevertheless most memorable. We did all the tourist things such as ride the cable car, walk the Boulevard, ride the Maid of the Mist, have a great dinner up the tower and of course take lots of photos.

Our honeymoon experience was memorable. We did make it to Niagara Falls and, of course, the story of "The Suit" has been referred to on numerous occasions.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary + Lesley Lee

Gary and Lesley Lee