

Jerry Gray is the last living original member of Canada's first iconic folk group, The Travellers.

THE LONESOME TRAVELLER

By Jerry Gray

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A photograph of a banjo leaning against a blue wooden wall. The banjo is positioned vertically on the left side of the frame. The wall is made of vertical wooden planks, painted a deep blue color, with some white paint chipping away. The ground in the foreground is paved with light-colored, rectangular stones. The overall scene is outdoors, with some green grass visible at the bottom right.

The LONESOME Traveller

This Land Is Your Land:
The Life and Times of
Canada's Singing Legends
The Travellers

Jerry Gray

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Ontario Place Forum opening concert, 1971

The Folksinger's Credo

You don't go into folk music to make a lot of money. You go because you have a commitment to the music of the people and their struggles in life. That's why it's also so relevant. It's the music that satisfies your heart, and that's why you do it. It's in your heart and in your blood, and that's why you do it. The music is always relevant, because it sounds like it was written yesterday.

The songs are ethical, and we have to share them with others.

And even if we come from different places on the globe there is a commonality of conditions that we sing out for.

~ Source Unknown

Adapted by Jerry Gray

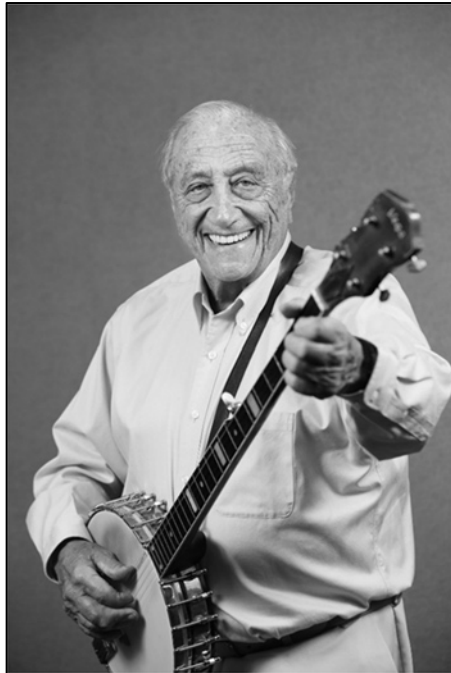


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CHAPTER 4: THE LONGEST ALL-CANADIAN TOUR BY ANYONE

1967

Since our beginning in 1953, The Travellers had now been together for fourteen years. For a variety of reasons, we had replaced all the original members, except for myself. Some of our friends and fans were saying that it seemed the group now mirrored solely my ideas, but maybe that wasn't such a bad thing. With my recent guidance, and by enlisting some replacements, the musical stature of the group was now better than ever. The group had also demonstrated its ability to change its sound as well as its on-stage appearance. We were hoping to go beyond our storied past, and beyond what people thought the Travellers might ever attain. In 1967, Festival Canada chose The Travellers to be the prime attraction in the celebrations being held in every province and territory in Canada, as well as at EXPO 67 in Montreal for this significant year marking Canada's 100th birthday.

The 1967 Tour Begins

On Monday January 2, the group prepared for its first engagement of 1967 in Brockville, Ontario at the Brockville Civic Auditorium. Toronto Entertainment writers, Blaik Kirby, Sid Adilman, and Joe Lewis were there to review the show by Catherine McKinnon and The Travellers.

One reviewer said that The Travellers were there to sell Canadian music, songs, and history to Canadians, noting "the group seems to be up to the challenge."

The first show in Brockville was sold out, ending in a celebratory mood with a reception party following the show. Several days later, on January 6, the group appeared on *The Elwood Glover TV Show* in Toronto, and we discussed the coming tour. On January 11, we

appeared again on CBC TV, the *In Person Show*, for producer Mark Warren.

The next day, we were booked for three days of shows in Orillia, with songs about Canada. We have a lot of friends in Orillia from the first three Mariposas. So, after Mariposa left Orillia in 1963, we were invited about ten more times to do a summertime concert in Orillia—but not as part of Mariposa.

The busy month continued with an appearance at Toronto's Queen Elizabeth Theatre to sing for the Toronto Jaycees and the Toronto Board of Trade. On January 23, I appeared at a luncheon meeting of Hadassah at the Shaarei Shomayim synagogue and, by evening, the whole group was on its way to nearby Port Credit for a celebration and the crowning of Centennial '67's, Miss Port Credit.

On January 26, we were booked to entertain the Ontario Conservative Party caucus before the return of the members to the Legislature. Bill Davis was premier at that time. Even though he knew The Travellers were definitely left of centre, he still invited us to appear at many of his Conservative Party functions.

The next day, we were back on the road to Queen's University in Kingston for a centennial concert. The day after that, we were off to the University of Western Ontario in London, where we did one concert in one location, followed by a second one with Gordon Lightfoot at the Thames Hall concert area. That was the last gig of the month, for Greta and I had booked a vacation in Mexico for the first two weeks of February, before the year got too hectic. Our time in Mexico City and Acapulco was a welcome respite after only the first month of this busy year. My mother looked after our kids back home and, to our joy, the end result of this Mexican adventure was that Greta got pregnant after we had been trying vainly for two years.

It was back to work on February 27 and 28, for two shows in Galt, Ontario, (now part of Cambridge) with jazz singer, Phyllis Marshall, on the bill with us. After a night in a motel, we continued west to the Cleary Auditorium in Windsor for performances on March 1 and 2.

Back in Toronto, we took ten days to record an album of labour songs. This album included some Joe Hill songs and included "Solidarity Forever". This was a new partnership between The

Travellers, The Canadian Labour Congress, and Arc Records. It was the first recording of labour songs ever produced in Canada. Later, when CBC TV planned a TV special called *A Century of Song*, we sang many of these songs from the recording on the show. This was definitely one of the highlights of our year.



The Travellers LP salute to 100th anniversary of
7yCanadian Labour Congress, 1967

Popular Toronto radio station 1050 CHUM rarely invited The Travellers on the air, but we were invited to do a live call-in show with deejay Bob McAdorey, where we talked about the group, and this ground-breaking tour. After a week off, we got a call from the Iroquois Hotel in London, Ontario, to appear from March 27–31. This was our first time there, and we had good appreciative crowds. On April 13, a recording of the *Gordie Tapp CBC Radio Show* followed. We were well into spring now, a fact which was significant, because as part of this Centennial Tour, a lot of appearances were planned for locations in northern Canada and involved flying daily to each area. These gigs

had to be delayed until we were sure the winter was really over and flights could be made safely.

On April 16, the Penny Farthing Folk Club hired Jerry Gray and Sharon Trostin to do a children's program in the afternoon. That was the first time a coffee house had opened in an afternoon for kids under eight years old. Good crowd, good program and well received. On April 19, The Travellers sang at the convention banquet of the Ontario Dental Association in Toronto. It was only April, but already I'd almost forgotten I was still an Ontario dentist on a semi-sabbatical break for this year.

On April 22, The Travellers headed to Chatham, Ontario for a Centennial Concert, and then returned to Toronto to pack. On April 24, we flew to Quebec City to entertain the people from Festival Canada—those who are actually planning many of our upcoming appearances. We then flew to The Lakehead⁸, rented a station wagon and toured daily. At many of the places we visited, as well as an evening Centennial concert in the school auditorium, The Travellers did an afternoon children's concert in the same location.

On May 8, we left Toronto for our flight to The Lakehead. We then proceeded to: Geraldton, Nipigon-Redrock, Atikokan, Fort Frances and Dryden (the black-fly capital of Canada). Our last stop was Rainy River, the farthest point you can go in Ontario before you arrive at Minnesota and Manitoba. Our trip to this remote part of Ontario reminded me of my first tour of that area with the Fagel Gardner Singers back in 1952. After our concert in Rainy River, we returned to the Lakehead Airport, unloaded the rental station wagon, loaded the gear onto the plane and flew back to Toronto where my station wagon awaited us. We loaded the car, and finally, home.

It had not been an easy week of performances, because of all the travel involved and performing two different concerts each day. We

⁸ "The Lakehead" refers to the geographic area at the head of Lake Superior, composed for many years of Fort William and Port Arthur, with a municipal airport in Fort William. The two cities officially merged in January 1970, to become Thunder Bay, and the airport was known as the Canadian Lakehead Airport. In 1997, the airport was handed over to the Thunder Bay International Airports Authority, a non-profit organization.

didn't have a crew of "roadies" to set up and break down our sound equipment. So, when we arrived in town, we unloaded our station wagon, set up the sound for the kids' concert, did the show between 3:30 and 4:30, had a quick rest, found some place to eat, and then showed up for the evening show. After the show, we took down the sound equipment, loaded it back into our station wagon, drove to a motel and slept over. The next morning, we ate breakfast, drove to the next town, and then repeated the process.

For the next group of performances, we travelled along the Trans Canada Highway, from May 22 to May 27. We began by flying again to The Lakehead, but this time we headed south to Manitouwadge, Wawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Espanola, and Sudbury. Many of the towns are mining or mill towns, with the smell of seasoning wood and sulphur warning us that we were getting close.

In one of those remote towns, I met Whitey Myers from Oakwood Collegiate in Toronto— whose team I swam and played basketball against back in high school. After high school, Whitey became a "worker priest" in these northern mines. It was so interesting to meet someone from my non-musical past in one of the remotest areas of the province! Whitey was surprised to see me there. He thought I was still an athlete but didn't know I was a singer and entertainer.

In addition, here in this same area, folk singer-songwriter Wade Hemsworth wrote many of his songs like "The Blackfly Song" and "The Log Driver's Waltz" while he was working for Ontario Hydro. The songs he wrote reminded us of people working in these remote areas and their struggle to survive. As we travelled on, we reflected on how great it was to be Canadian.

The next week, we returned home to see our families, do laundry, and check the schedule ahead. It was now time for the main event. We drove to Montreal and appeared, from June 5 to June 10, for three shows per day at the Canadian Pavilion and Theatre at EXPO 67. CBC radio and TV were there to interview us daily and ask us how our travels had been so far and about the impact that our tour was making on the country. (I have all of the radio interviews on my home tapes.)

Because Greta is from Montreal and had relatives there, she came to spend the week and take in the fun and excitement of EXPO. We

were now expecting child number three in late November. After a week together in Montreal, we returned to Toronto. On June 14, the group drove north to Haileybury, near Timmins, for a one-town concert. That was one heck-of-a long way to drive for one concert. And then home again.

The next segment of the tour we did for Festival Canada 1967 was again ground-breaking. It was the first concert tour ever planned for “North of 60” or north of the Arctic Circle, part of Canada’s far north. The tour involved our travelling to twenty communities, most of which had never seen a live performance before. None of these communities can be reached by road, only by plane, as there are few roads here.

Fortunately, the tour organizers waited until late in June to start scheduling these concerts, but even then, some of the landing places still had snow or ice on the ground—or on the water—where we might have needed to land. With the Internet still over thirty years in the future, there was very little knowledge of the places we were going to, so it was a real leap into an area of the unknown—even to this day. But the tour was fascinating, and so rewarding to learn first-hand about this area of Canada.

Twenty-one Days North of the Arctic Circle

From Toronto we flew on Air Canada to Edmonton on June 17. Then Pacific Western Airline (PWA) flew us to Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories⁹. We gave our first concert in the schoolhouse in the town of Hay River, the most northern spot that the train lines went to. From there, you could actually travel on a paved road to the Mackenzie Highway, where you might drive north to Inuvik on the shore of the Arctic Ocean, if you had over a month to do it, one way. This was not recommended.

In the town of Hay River, we did a show to a mixture of local indigenous people, and transplanted southern Canadians who were there working for the nearby mining or shipping companies. This was

⁹ In 1999, the Northwest Territories was divided into two territories, the other of which is now called Nunavut.

the first live concert given by anyone in most of these disparate Arctic communities. There was no hotel in Hay River, so we flew back to Yellowknife the same day to sleep over in our hotel. The next day, June 18, we flew to Fort Providence, a mainly Inuit and Métis community on the southwest shore of Great Slave Lake. There, most of the town showed up for our afternoon concert at the local school. After the show, we packed up and flew back to the Yellowknife hotel. The next day, we followed the same routine as we flew to Fort Rae, also a mainly Inuit community. The show at the school took place when we arrived, as we were now in “The Land of the Midnight Sun”—with twenty-four hours of daylight at this time of year. Again, we returned to our Yellowknife hotel and, on June 20, we awoke and did an evening concert in the Yellowknife Hotel meeting room. Because there were no motels or restaurants in any of the small communities we travelled to, we had to return each night to Yellowknife.

After the Yellowknife concert on June 21, we flew on a regularly-scheduled PWA flight three hours north to Inuvik, probably the second-largest community in the North after Yellowknife. It had streets, several hotels, and an airport and, because it was summer, it was 26° Celsius (80° Fahrenheit) when we arrived. Then, while walking from the plane to the terminal, we were attacked by large mosquitoes, and our initial slow gait shifted rapidly to a quick run to the terminal.

We did our first show on June 21 in Inuvik with a pretty urbane crowd. We slept in a nice hotel that night, and ordered a plane to fly us to Tuktoyaktuk for the afternoon concert the next day. We loaded the equipment onto the plane and arrived in an almost entirely indigenous community. We flew back in the daylight and slept in Inuvik. The next day June 23, we boarded a plane to take us to Aklavik.

Partway there, we encountered some bad weather, and the pilot decided that we had to turn back. The next day, the weather was better, so on June 24 we flew to the small hamlet of Fort McPherson down the Mackenzie River, and then we continued south back to Yellowknife for an overnight there.

For the next seven days, we worked out of Yellowknife, as all the places we visited had no adequate overnight accommodation and no restaurants at all. On June 25, we flew north again up the Mackenzie River to Norman Wells, a petroleum town with nearby oil wells. To get there we had to fly at noon to reach Norman Wells, and then return to Yellowknife to sleep. We ended up flying about 1,000 kilometres (about 620 miles) all day each day. We saw mainly “Southerners” at the concert, for they were transplanted oil workers and their families.

We returned to sleep at our Yellowknife hotel. The next day’s trip was an unexpected treat! We were heading to Fort Simpson, again on the Mackenzie River. That day there was no plane available in town that could take all of us and our equipment up the river to Fort Simpson in one trip. But they offered to make two helicopter trips to get us there. There was no room for five-foot tall speakers in the passenger cabin of a helicopter, so on one flight they put two passengers in the chopper and tied the speakers to the pontoons, since we would be landing on a gravel strip, not water.

The extra treat? They said they would take us into the Yukon, to the South Nahanni River where the Virginia Falls are located. These falls are twice as high as the Niagara Falls, so on our way to Fort Simpson, we diverted and flew over them. Then it was back to Yellowknife to put the rest of our instruments in the cabin, and another flight back to Fort Simpson again over the Virginia Falls, simply a spectacularly breathtaking “Canadian scene”. We left the helicopter in Fort Simpson, and managed to charter a plane there to take us back to Yellowknife in one trip.

Next morning, we flew to a Dene village on the shore of Great Slave Lake. The town was called Pine Point near a mine of the same name—the only reason for its existence. Five years later, the mine closed down and the town was abandoned. Nothing remains there now but a spot in the forest. The interesting audience for our show included local indigenous people who had never seen a live show before, plus transplanted miners and their families from the South. Again, we returned to Yellowknife and then repeated our trip the next day by flying to Fort Smith—another community that has since disappeared from the map, with the same history as the town the day before. On all

of these trips, we had to take a lunch with us as these two towns had no restaurants and only a Hudson's Bay Company grocery store, with very high prices.

It was now June 29, and we flew from Yellowknife to northern Saskatchewan near the border of the Northwest Territories to the town of Uranium City. The uranium mine was in full operation at that time, so they had a hotel and also a pub. As unlikely as it seems, in the bar there I met one of my dental patients from Toronto, who was working that summer with Atomic Energy Canada. We again had a mixed audience, but it was a good concert, and well appreciated by the audience. Uranium City closed ten years later when the mine ceased operation, and the town virtually disappeared from the map.

The next day, June 30, we travelled to Fort Resolution, or "Fort Rez" as it was known. This was an entirely indigenous community with a church, a Hudson's Bay Company store, a school and not much else, but the show was well appreciated. Then it was back to Yellowknife for July 1, Canada's 100th birthday. Yellowknife was holding a 24-hour golf tournament because of the "midnight sun" and the twenty-four hours of sunshine. It's difficult to grow grass in the Arctic, so in place of greens they had "browns" which were oiled sand and flattened earth. The non-stop drinking feature at the 24-hour golf tournament truly made the day.

Canada Day in Inuvik 1967

We had a concert date in Inuvik, so once again we boarded a plane and flew up to Inuvik to do our "Canada Day" concert. As you may recall, Inuvik had a hotel, so we checked in. I had been attempting to reach my wife by phone at home in Toronto, for this July 1 was our tenth wedding anniversary. As we were leaving the hotel for the school to do the concert, Ray Woodley emerged from his room and hung his clothes bag on a hook in the hallway, not realizing the hook was attached to the fire alarm. Well, the alarm went off and caused much panic, as a fire in a wooden hotel was dangerous to the whole town. I had finally reached Greta, but had to say hello and goodbye quickly

because the fire alarms were blaring. We proceeded to the school where we did a well-attended concert to an appreciative audience.

It was now July 2 and we flew to the community of Coppermine on the south shore of the Arctic Ocean. We boarded a large old DC-3, with a sloping floor. Then we discovered we had to make two unscheduled stops. Along our route were two NORAD bases, staffed with mainly American crews. But because of local flight problems, a number of specific planes had not been able to travel from Inuvik to either of the local air bases, CAM 1 or CAM 2. Both bases had run out of beer! So, we loaded up with beer in Inuvik, and the pilot made two stops to deliver beer before taking us to Coppermine. As a consequence, we were now known as a “Mercy Booze Bomber.”

Coppermine was near where the *Terror* and the *Erebus* vanished in 1845 while seeking the Northwest Passage.¹⁰ When I realized where we were going, during the flight I sang a song I

knew about the lost Franklin expedition and the lost ships.

Coppermine was the home of many Inuit carvers who carved whales, animals, and birds, and we were hopeful of bringing some carvings home. But it turned out that, several weeks earlier, they had sent their winter carvings south to be sold. There were only a few, left in town. Even so, they generously gave us some souvenirs to take home and, during our performance, our all-Inuit audience was very appreciative.

We returned to Inuvik, and next day flew to Aklavik, a small hamlet nowhere near the NORAD Beer Drop. Our concert started at noon, once again for an all-Inuit audience. It went well, and we finished at 3:00 p.m. With twenty-four hours of daylight every day, it could have been 8:00 at night because the kids went to sleep when they felt tired. People did not use a clock much at this time of year.

On July 4th, we headed north to Holman Island,¹¹ a small hamlet on the west coast of Victoria Island on the Arctic Ocean. The town had

¹⁰ Recently, in 2014 and 2016, Sir John Franklin’s ships from that lost expedition were finally found, exactly where Inuit reports said they would be. But back in 1967, no one knew this yet. Diving crews are now trying to salvage artefacts.

¹¹ Holman, or Holman Island is a small hamlet on the west coast of Victoria Island in the Inuvik Region of the Northwest Territories. On April 1, 2006, the name was

no airstrip and the bay still had too much ice, so around two o'clock in the afternoon, we landed on the main street of the town and we performed for an all-Inuit audience. Again, it was the first time they had ever seen a live show of any kind. After we had performed three songs, they did not even clap as this custom was unfamiliar to them, and they did not know what to do. So, their teacher told them that if they liked the songs, they should clap their hands when the song ended. After that they became very enthusiastic, and as a result the concert went about twenty minutes longer than planned because of the extra length of the clapping!

Our last day in the far north was July 5, and our flight took us to adjacent Banks Island to visit the town of Sachs Harbour, very close to Alaska. After our concert, we returned to Inuvik to pack everything and prepare for one last trip to the Yukon, and later back south to Edmonton. On July 6, after checking out of the hotel, we took off for the Yukon, and the town of Fort Liard on the Liard River. There was no airstrip and no road, so we landed on the river to be then faced with a twenty-minute walk to the town. So, they got an open horse and wagon, and loaded us and all our equipment onto the cart and drove us into town. Fort Liard was an all-indigenous community of First Nations and Métis heritage that in 1967 had had very little contact with the outside world.

After the show, we said goodbye to everyone, loaded our gear, and went back on board the horse and open wagon. Full of feelings—sad to leave, knowing that we would never return, but looking forward to getting back to what we called “civilization”. We headed back to the river where our plane was waiting. As we boarded the plane and took off, we knew we would not return to Yellowknife again, for we were heading directly south to Edmonton. The very same plane that had landed on the Liard River in the Yukon now flew us south into Alberta and, after a four-hour flight, we landed safely on the airfield at the Edmonton airport. After making our way into the terminal, we checked all our gear and luggage with the airline and, after a short wait in the

returned to **Ulukhaktok** (Kangiryuarmitutun (Inuit language) spelling *Ulukhaqtuuq* [ulukhaqtu:q̃]) as it was known to the local indigenous people.

terminal, boarded a regularly scheduled flight with other people and flew back to Toronto. We were filled with thoughts, and oh-so-many memories of our twenty-one days north of the Arctic Circle, and the twenty concerts we had performed there. Who knew if we would ever return to the “North of 60” area of Canada? We had the satisfaction of knowing that we had done the very first of this type of tour of Canada’s far North.

We were now about halfway through 1967. We had just finished the longest tour of the Arctic and Subarctic communities that had ever been made—a record that as of 2018 still stands. Apparently, the number of consecutive performance dates we did has not been equalled, or even attempted, by any group or even by an individual. That tour could only have been done by air using planes like Beavers, DC-3s, and Otters, and we had had to rent a plane in each location to meet the heavy performance schedule drawn up for us by Festival Canada. It was masterful to even attempt to complete that schedule, but it’s a credit to the members of The Travellers—Ray Woodley, Simone Taylor, Joe Hampson and Jerry Gray—who did fulfill that schedule, and did Canada proud. Yet for some reason, there really has never been any official designation by any federal body, to recognize or even thank The Travellers for doing this. We fulfilled a commitment to the country to educate and entertain the people who live in largely unknown and forgotten areas of Canada, and to help them feel that they are part of the country and share its promise and ideals. Why has no one ever done anything to honour this achievement that certainly went above and beyond what any group or individual had ever done.

The Canadian federal government asked for our help, and we succeeded beyond anyone’s expectations. Yet it was still early summer of 1967, and our schedule was only half done. We now began the second half of our commitment to Canada. We returned to Toronto on July 7, reacquainted ourselves with our families and recharged our batteries for what lay ahead. Some of the future tasks we had agreed to had also never been done before.

There is one thing we must apologize for to those people who live “North of 60.” We wrote the new words to “This Land” in 1954, and

in the chorus, we sing, “From the Arctic Circle, to the Great Lakes’ waters”. But for most of a month, we had been singing to Canadians who actually live far north of the Arctic Circle. It’s hard to circle back now and change the lyrics, so we simply have to acknowledge that much of Canada lies north of the Arctic Circle, and is filled with heroic people who live and survive north of the 60th Parallel, in Canada’s far North.

The Last Part of 1967

As you may remember, when the year began, Greta and I had two boys, James and Rob. We had been trying for over a year to increase our flock, and in February we took a vacation to Acapulco in Mexico. Several months later, we were thrilled to find we were expecting another child, to be born before the end of the year, and hopefully when I was not on tour.

After one week at home, The Travellers rented a car and drove for an hour west of Toronto to the town of Guelph. Like many of the events we did, this one was co-sponsored among the local, provincial and federal governments. First, we did an afternoon concert for kids in a local school, and later, an evening concert for university students and adults. Then we packed up and drove home. Three days later, on July 17 we were driving north again—back to North Bay for another locally sponsored show, and then back to Toronto that same night. On July 19, the Toronto Parks Department had us booked for our annual Hootenanny in Riverdale Park. We set up at the base of the hill. The audience was sitting on the hillside and looking down on us, and participating in a singalong performed as only The Travellers could do.

On July 21, we rented a car and drove to Wallaceburg in southwest Ontario, and returned the next day. After a couple of days in Toronto, we began a small tour around central Ontario starting on July 24 in Midland. The next day, we headed to Collingwood on the other side of Georgian Bay and slept over. While I was there, I visited some friends at the Collingwood High School. At that time, teacher John Kirby at Collingwood High began a long friendship with The

Travellers. On July 28, we found ourselves in Walkerton, and the next day in Goderich. These are similar communities with similar crowds, enjoying the music and history of Canada as taught by The Travellers. We finished our last concert of this small tour on August 1st in nearby Kincardine.

After a few days of relaxing at home, on August 5 and 6 we were invited back to the Ontario Pavilion at EXPO 67 in Montreal. There we did a program that included songs such as “The Black Fly Song” and Ontario’s theme song, “Give Us a Place to Stand”. It was two days of three shows per day. Greta and the boys joined us there to visit with her family. Then again, we headed back home to Toronto.

Two events had happened earlier that year. First, we changed record companies, leaving Columbia for our new label, Arc Records. Since we first began, both The Travellers and I had performed many times for labour unions and on picket line rallies. There was no other person or group in Canada with a similar history. So, to mark their 100th anniversary, The Canadian Labour Congress asked us to create an album of songs. Earlier in the year, we’d recorded an LP of Canadian labour songs under our joint sponsorship. Then, CBC-TV decided to produce a TV show based on our recording, called *A Century of Song*. Between August 11 and 13, we videotaped a new colour TV show of those songs based on our LP, with a studio audience of workers who were on strike at the time. The show was scheduled to be broadcast three weeks later on Labour Day. But before that, The Travellers returned for a fifth appearance at Mariposa. With that show, we returned to our roots. It’s important to note that no group ever made as many appearances at Mariposa as the Travellers.

What happens in Toronto at the end of the Summer? Why, the EX of course! That year, the city of Toronto and the province of Ontario hired The Travellers to do our all-Canadian show at the CNE Bandshell. After so many years, we returned to our almost second home, the CNE Bandshell.

On August 27, we fulfilled an obligation to the town of Parry Sound, which is about three hours north of Toronto on the eastern shores of Georgian Bay. As the end of the summer approached, we travelled to Ottawa and did a TV show where we were interviewed

about what we'd done so far that year. But our real reason for being in Ottawa? The Conservative Party of Canada Convention was being held there on September 3, and The Travellers were booked as the main performers. To date, we had sung for the Provincial Conservatives, but never for the Federal Party. That same week, our Labour Day TV show was broadcast nationally on CBC TV.

While The Travellers had performed throughout Ontario as well as toured the north during the year, we'd not yet gone east. But it was time. We'd been to PEI many times during this decade, but now the group had been booked for an unusual tour. It was a six-community tour of PEI without performing in either Summerside or Charlottetown! Is such a thing even possible? Watch!

On September 11, we flew to Charlottetown and registered at a hotel which would be our home for the next week. Ahead of us was a circular tour of the Island through small rural and coastal communities; our concerts were booked in schools and church halls. The towns were all similar, but each community has its own character and history. We were bringing the rest of Canada to these small communities. That evening, our first stop was in the small town of O'Leary. We returned each night to our hotel rooms in Charlottetown and headed to the following places in order as we rotated around the island from September 12 to 16: Miscouche, Kensington, North Rustico, Montague, and Souris.

These concerts were co-sponsored by the PEI and the federal government's Centennial Commissions, and each night was sold out. What a lucky bunch of communities they were, invited to share in the Centennial experience, virtually for free! We delivered a full concert experience in every community, and if there were kids in the audience, we did specific songs for them, which oldsters took a part in as well. On September 16, we flew back to our Toronto homes. We'd set an Island record though, of performing six concerts in six days, and none in Charlottetown or Summerside! Can anyone duplicate it? I doubt it. And that is still so.

On September 19, we appeared at a sold-out Maple Leaf Gardens, singing for Bell Canada's Telephone Pioneers Association. We shared the stage with Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians and with old

friend, Rich Little. Later, we headed home to pack for a long eastern tour. We'd been booked by the New Brunswick provincial government and the federal government, to do thirteen concerts in fourteen days, all in New Brunswick. We asked ourselves, "Has anyone ever done such a tour of New Brunswick before?" The answer was that no one knows!

The next day on September 20, we flew to Saint John, New Brunswick and did our first concert. The next night, we packed the car and drove to Fredericton, the provincial capital. Then on September 21, we sang at the U of NB, and the next night for the city of Fredericton. Travel distances were not great, so we criss-crossed the province while covering eleven more venues.

On September 23rd, we were in Moncton, and then we had a break with two days off. As I often do with two days off, I grabbed a late flight out of Moncton after the concert and flew back to Toronto. I then spent a couple of days sleeping at home, and working in my dental practice. On September 26, I returned to the airport for a flight to Fredericton to do a concert at the Oromocto Army Base. But when the Air Canada flight attendants discovered there were no wine glasses on our flight, we were delayed by two hours! I told the captain of my need to be in Oromocto quickly, and could we drink wine from paper cups? But my plea fell on deaf ears. Even so, the captain contacted the army base, and they arranged to have an army vehicle waiting for me. I arrived at the base about fifteen minutes before concert time.

The next day, we left for northern New Brunswick—an area not seen by most tourists because it's off the regular Trans-Canada Highway routes. We started on September 27 in Edmundston, and then followed performances in Campbellton, Woodstock, Dalhousie, Bathurst, and finally St. Andrews on October 3, my birthday. On October 4, we packed up to return to Toronto. Just like our tour of the Northwest Territories, this was the longest concert tour done by anyone ever in New Brunswick, or since. It was only made possible because of the Festival Canada funding given to provinces to help defray the costs involved in bringing a four-person group to tour the whole province. The federal funding made it possible to provide these events to communities that would otherwise never have seen anything

like it. But sadly, once again there was never anyone from either the provincial or federal governments that made mention of The Travellers' tremendous efforts in fulfilling these record-breaking tour schedules. To this day, there has never been any recognition of this tour by anyone! Hard to believe isn't it? Thirteen concert dates in fourteen days by a four-person group (with no crew) who prepared their own stage set-ups and took them down, and then travelled on. We certainly lived up to our name THE TRAVELLERS more often than not.

The Travellers go East

We were home on October 4, then on October 6th we drove to Simcoe, in southwestern Ontario near Lake Erie, for a date there. The next day, we flew to St. John's for three concerts in the Newfoundland capital, our first visit to the Island known as "The Rock". My wife had negotiated a deal and found a babysitter to care for our two children, while she joined me on this tour of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. When we arrived at the Holiday Inn where we were staying, they gave us a welcome sign on behalf of our TV sponsor, Molson Canadian, after seeing our TV commercial after the game on *Hockey Night in Canada*.

We gave one concert at the university and another the next day at the new Concert Hall. The next day, we were on the road for a concert at Grand Falls, a town we could smell the sulphur before we get there because of their pulp and paper mill. We arrived at 4:30 for an 8:00 p.m. concert, and decided to eat first and then set up and do the concert. Ray and Joe went into the hotel dining room when it opened at 5:00 and ordered the "Special of the Day" for dinner. Greta and I followed about ten minutes later. There was no one else in the dining room, and we also ordered the Special. But the waitress said she was very sorry, but they were now out of the daily special! With no other restaurant around and no one else in the dining room, after we stopped laughing, we decided to eat something else, anything. The concert went on as planned, and we had a real "Newfie" joke to enjoy later.

After Grand Falls, we drove to Corner Brook, at the other end of the island for the last part of our Newfoundland trip. We saw a beautiful area of the country for the first time, and it was great to share it all with Greta. We also gave a memorable concert and, after the show, we flew to Nova Scotia for the next leg of our tour.

The first stop on October 11 was Antigonish on the mainland. It was not a university gig, but one for the whole community, and it was a great success. Now we dove into a series of one-nighters: Truro, followed by Digby on the north shore. In Digby, we stopped at a restaurant for a lobster dinner, and were amazed at the sight of a huge five-pound lobster in the restaurant tank. We didn't have the heart to have the giant creature killed to make a dinner for us, so we each ordered smaller ones. After dinner, we headed out to our concert. It was very interesting for The Travellers to make this Canadian tour. Our musical repertoire includes songs from every region of Canada, allowing us to perform songs that are native to each area, and Nova Scotia was no different. The audiences appreciated our including these songs in the program, and always applauded with appreciative gusto.

On October 14, we arrived in Halifax for another show, and then took a day off to be tourists in some of the nearby sights, like the area of Ecum Secum on the Eastern Shore. On October 16, we flew to Sydney on Cape Breton Island, and arrived as a black cloud hovered over the city. In Sydney, they call this day "Black Friday"—the day when the local mines were ordered closed forever by the government. We recognized the misfortune of the community, and tried to do a more upbeat show to raise their spirits. Our Nova Scotia songs and our Cape Breton tunes were well-appreciated by the audience, and the next morning we departed for home. We sang "Farewell to Nova Scotia" as this lengthy tour came to a close.

Back in Toronto, we did a concert at Sir Francis Fleming Collegiate on October 25, and a private convention at the Royal York Hotel on October 28. On October 29, we returned to Brockville, Ontario where we had started the year on January 4th, for a performance in the home city of Ontario Minister of Tourism, James Auld. this concert was set to officially be the last stop, but we had some last-minute commitments to honour. On November 1, we went to the

CBC radio department and recorded a small album of Christmas songs for a radio show to be broadcast at Christmas time. The show was called *Once in a Year*, a tribute to The Weavers who had recorded *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* sixteen years earlier.

On November 9, we went to Lakehead University for a Centennial-based program. While we were preparing to return to Toronto, we were invited by the university pub to extend our stay and perform there for five days. But I declined, telling them that my next child was due soon and I needed to get back. Our friend, guitarist Amos Garrett who is a fine musician, was in town, and we asked him to fill in for me for the week. That was the only gig I have ever missed with The Travellers, but I knew I had to get home to Greta, and I also knew that Amos would fill the bill perfectly.

The last official gig of the year was on November 24 at the University of Windsor. Similar to our first concert of the year in Brockville, we shared the bill with Catherine MacKinnon, who was again accompanied by guitarist Ted Roberts. Ted agreed to play the second half of the concert with us—and just like that, a new person joined The Travellers. Ted joined the group as a lead guitarist, official musical arranger and good friend, and has remained with The Travellers for almost forty-five years. Two days later, Kevin Gray was born on time in Toronto. a third boy to our home. Both mother and son were fine. Early in the year, we had purchased an empty lot near Bayview and Hy 401, and hired a builder to design our dream home. So, as this monumental year came to a close, it was marked by the birth of our third child, and moving into our new home.

It had been an amazing year when you consider the feats we accomplished. Several years later, our guitar player Ted Roberts, wrote a song about the British North America Act being returned to Canada in the 1980s, and he included several verses about The Travellers' tour of Canada's small towns. He said we often had to wait outside town until Bobby Gimby had left, singing his "Ca-na-da" song. He said that Bobby Gimby had been to a nasal specialist and had his horn elongated so he could play and sing CA-NA-DA.

The 1967 tour should be appreciated for what The Travellers did for Canada. It has never been noted in any official federal or provincial

publication, nor were The Travellers ever sent a letter of congratulation or even thanks for our huge efforts. My hope is that, after reading this memoir, someone like you will now remember. I sure do. The official record for that Centennial year of 1967 is 186 performances! Someday I'll find the time to tally up the number of miles or kilometres we travelled by car, horse and cart, airplane, helicopter, and regular airline. If you have the time, perhaps you'd like to do it after finishing this long history of Canada with The Travellers.

1968 and 1969

When 1967 ended, our group was wondering what our future looked like. Actually, we began hearing from convention bookers, as well as government bookers. There were always things happening in this country and, as we headed into 1968, it looked as if we were again going to be part of the changing history of Canada. During 1967, we had made Canadian history by the number and quality of Canadian concert appearances we had done, as well as their impact on Canadians. We recorded three record albums, did three TV specials, and made 186 concert appearances, sometimes three times in one day, often including a kids' show in the afternoon and an evening adult concert.

At home, my family moved into a new home to make room for our new member, son Kevin. (The new house had a room for one more permanent guest, so we would see.) Our new, custom-designed home is in the Bayview and York Mills area of Toronto. We will end up living there for twenty-five years, with many memories and more additional kids.

Early in January, the CBC called us to participate in a radio program. A new show called *Folk World* wanted our input about the state of folk music in Canada. We taped the show on January 26. Several days later on January 29, one of the B'nai B'rith lodges in Toronto invited me to a Sunday morning meeting to sing a program, and speak about our folk future. On February 11, I was invited by CHUM Radio to be interviewed about the past year, and about the future. It's not often that we were heard on CHUM Radio, so I gave

them my experienced view that the cycle of political songs would change, and young people would be involved in global rather than local problems.

On February 15 we were asked to do a concert at Ryerson Polytechnic Institute (later to become Ryerson University) with Ian and Sylvia. It was a warm folkie evening for an upbeat audience in our home town. On March 18, CBC TV rebroadcast The Travellers' Labour Day TV special from the previous year. The next day, the group appeared at Eaton's to play at a fashion show. On March 26 we appeared at the King Edward Hotel, at a convention of North American optometrists. We had recently appeared at conventions for smaller optometry groups, and this, was finally the "big" one.

The year 1968 was an election year, so on March 27, The Travellers were invited to be the main entertainment for the Conservative Party of Canada's Convention, with Robert Stanfield being the main speaker. On April 1 we were back in the main ballroom of the Royal York Hotel to again provide entertainment for Bell Canada employees. So far, all these gigs were easy because they were in Toronto, and we didn't need to bring our own sound system or travel overnight. But soon we were on the road again. On April 4, we headed to Ottawa to provide two days of entertainment for the Liberal Party of Canada's Convention in a large arena. Several days later, on April 9, we were back in Toronto at the Inn on The Park, for a banquet meeting for McLaren Advertising.

The Savarin Tavern on Bay Street in Toronto announced the appearance of The Boss Brass, beginning April 1st for two weeks. Beginning on April 15, for the first time, also for two weeks, The Travellers would be performing, The Savarin turned out to be the very best local drawing place for us and, as a group of four or five, the financial remuneration we received was much more than we could eke out at folk clubs, as they simply didn't have the volume in patronage or revenue to pay us as much.

We were well received, and we realized it was because many folks in these new Bay Street audiences had seen us when we played at their universities, and were simply renewing their relationship with us. In fact, many people in the audience came up between sets to tell us they

remembered us from their college days. During those two weeks, we also spent the afternoons recording our next album for Arc Records, finishing it all up by May 1. The album was called *The Travellers Salute Canada*, and contained songs written by Canadians Joni Mitchell, Ian and Sylvia, Gordon Lightfoot, Wade Hemsworth, Leonard Cohen, and our own Ray Woodley. We chose those songs from a new show we were preparing for that year's CNE, less than four months away. More about that later as it loomed as a big event for us.

On May 4 we returned to our roots by singing at the national convention of the Canadian wing of the United Auto Workers Union, held in the Ballroom of Toronto's Royal York Hotel. On May 7 and 8, we appeared on *In Person*, on CBC TV. Two days later, it was off to Orillia, for two nights at the Orillia Boat Show. On May 13 we headed back into the Arc Records studio for three days to record a sound track for an upcoming show at the CNE. (I'll share the details of that groundbreaking event as we get to August.) On May 24 we did a show for a Molson's salesmen meeting in Toronto. June 6, we were off to Montreal's Bonaventure Hotel to do a show for the Canadian Institute of Underwriters, then were back in Toronto the next day for a CBC radio show—part of the Ontario School Broadcasts where we sang and talked about songs of Canada. On June 10, we were still in Toronto, this time to sing at the Funeral Directors' Convention at the Royal York Hotel. We cover you coming and going!

I mentioned earlier that that was a month leading up to coming elections, so listen to where we went. On June 11 we sang in Hamilton at the Palace Theatre, an event sponsored by the Steelworkers' Union for the Hamilton NDP. Tommy Douglas was the main speaker and, later, I was sent a video copy of that event. It was certainly a big loud crowd, but on June 19 we sang at a rally for The Liberal Party of Canada at Nathan Phillips Square in front of Toronto City Hall. The elections were nigh and, on June 21 we were invited to sing at an NDP picnic at Toronto's Kew Beach. On June 23 we did a picnic for the Toronto NDP Committee, and on June 26, for the fifth year in a row, the Toronto Parks Department had us singing and leading a Hootenanny in Riverdale Park. It was always a great success because

we'd performed at Hootenannies since we began fifteen years earlier. I don't think that Lightfoot or Ian and Sylvia or Anne Murray ever did Hootenannies.

During that month, we sang for all three major federal political parties, doing the same program for each—songs from and about Canadians. For July 1st that year, we were in Sudbury at the Bell Amphitheatre for a public Canada Day event. Some performers do their best work on recordings, but aren't able to live up to them at a live concert. The Travellers were the opposite. We sang to all types of audiences, to all parts of the community, and we were at our best in live public performances. That is where we truly shone.

We were soon on the road again, this time heading east, back to the Maritimes. On July 10 we were in Shediac, New Brunswick for the Lobster Festival where we did two shows per day. On July 15 we flew to St. John's, Newfoundland, for two days of shows at the new Arts and Culture Centre. Next, we stopped in PEI for the Summerside Lobster Festival where we sang between races at the race track events. That was not a great week for intimate concerts, but the food was amazing—especially the lobster!

While we were in Shediac, we were feted at the Moncton Yacht Club with a luncheon. When we showed up, we noticed that all the members were dressed in shirts and ties while we were in summer wear. With permission from the yacht club, we had invited our friend David Silverberg to come and see us as our guest. David was an ex-Montrealer, a former classmate and friend of my wife, and now the Artist Laureate of nearby Mount Allison University. He arrived with his brother, Nachem Silverberg, and another friend, David Kolokovsky. All three of them had beards down to their belt buckles; they actually looked like escapees from a Jewish shtetl in Poland! Two of The Travellers, including me, were also Jewish, and each time the Silverberg brothers were introduced, as well as David Kolokovsky, we were amused to hear the MC struggle with their names as he attempted to introduce these bearded, artistic individuals. The members at this exclusive yacht club in Moncton had never seen nor heard anything like them. We all had a good laugh at this before returning home to Toronto for a few days. My wife, Greta had also been there to watch

her Montreal artist-friend Silverberg astound the yacht club. Greta has always been a great storyteller, and she tells that story to this day.

It was now July 24, and CBC Radio had invited us to Winnipeg to be on their syndicated show, *Hymn Sing*, done at the University of Manitoba. The show was called the “The Gospel According to The Travellers”. Our originally all-Jewish group had performed many gospel songs in concert, as well as on our recordings, so it was easy to come up with enough gospel songs to fill out a half hour on the radio. We actually had so many it really came down to what to leave out.

The next day, July 25, we flew to Lakehead University for a concert there. On July 29 we were invited to appear at the Academy Theatre for the Kawartha Summer Festival, in Lindsay, Ontario. Next in line was that year’s Mariposa Folk Festival, August 9–11. Singing for the sixth time in their eight-year history, at the Festival we had helped start, was like returning to our backyard family to show them what we’d been up to since they’d last seen us.

On August 14, we returned to Toronto. The Richmond-Adelaide Centre was officially being opened to the public, and we were asked to sing appropriate songs for an opening. That same day, Arc Records released an album of our next project—a show which would open at the CNE Grandstand on August 16 and run for two full weeks. Shows at the huge CNE Grandstand venue were usually reserved for the likes of Guy Lombardo or Bob Hope or Danny Kaye, but, since Canada’s Centennial, the Grandstand shows were undergoing a change. This year the show was a review of Canada’s history including a depiction of the Riel Rebellion and the building of the trans-continental railroad, all on the huge CNE Grandstand field. Howard Cable wrote and arranged the music; Don Harron wrote the lyrics. John A. Macdonald was played by Robert Christie. Catherine McKinnon sang some of the songs. The Travellers also suggested some significant songs, and sang “Farmer Is the Man”, Lightfoot’s “Great Canadian Railroad Trilogy”, and the theme song to the production, called “Sea to Sea”.

Those two weeks of daily performances made it impossible for the Travellers to do any other shows at the CNE that year. It was a huge production which included a hot-air balloon, a railroad engine, and

actors and dancers who reproduced the Riel Rebellion. The Travellers sang the songs of the era, as well as those written for this huge event.

When the show ended after Labour Day on September 8th, for the tenth year, we were invited to return to Hillel House at U. of T. On September 10th, The Travellers were invited to sing at Toronto's Metropolitan Church at the memorial for Dr. Martin Luther King. This was truly a great honour for us, to be invited to help headline the event, which ended by us leading everyone in the singing of "We Shall Overcome".

On September 12 we sang at the Ryerson Theatre for a group of kids with cystic fibrosis, where we delivered our original children's show. One week later, on September 21, we returned to do a concert for Ryerson students. On September 26 we finally did two children's concerts at Toronto's St. Lawrence Centre Hall and, on October 7, CBC Radio, asked us to do a children's show on the School Radio Program. For the second time, we did a program for the Ontario Funeral Directors Association at their Toronto Convention at the Royal York Hotel.

We had been in negotiation with the CBC all summer to do the pilot for a new TV series. The show would be set in various festival locations across the country, with The Travellers performing songs that fit the appropriate festival. The pilot would be done on October 16–19, at the International Ploughing Match held, that year, in Guelph, Ontario. The TV show was to be called *Movin' On with The Travellers*, a very appropriate title. We wrote a tune for the series' theme song, and taped the pilot in colour. We were told it was "a sure thing to be picked up by CBC TV", which Arts and Entertainment writer Sid Adilman wrote in the *Toronto Star*.

But early the next year, there was a change in upper CBC management and, to our disappointment, we learned the show had not been picked up. We were left with a terrific pilot that was shown on TV to great reviews. Sid Adilman wrote that he could not fathom why they had cancelled the series. And neither could we.

After the pilot was shot, on October 25 we returned to the Maritimes, this time starting in Charlottetown. On the 26th we went to Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia for the first time. On

October 28 we recorded a TV and a radio show in Halifax, both for the CBC. We finished the tour with two concerts in Fredericton on the 29th and 30th. All the places where we had sung on our 1967 tour were now calling us back.

We returned to Toronto and, on November 8, played at the Skyline Hotel for a meeting of the Advertising Club of Toronto. On November 14 we taped a TV show called *River Inn*, hosted by singer Catherine Mackinnon. Done at CFTO for CTV it was shown in the new year. On December 1, the TV show we'd done in Winnipeg was broadcast on the CBC TV Network. On December 3, Norman Alcock, founder of the Canadian Peace Research Institute, had invited us to appear at his group's convention at the Galaxy Club in Oakville. The Travellers had long been on the pro-peace bandwagon, and one of the first three songs we ever learned was "The Strangest Dream".

Looking back on 1968, it was certainly another productive year for us. We sang for all three major political parties, and returned to some places where we'd sung before. We recorded the pilot for a TV series that almost happened, and were a part of a huge stage show at the CNE about Canadian history. We recorded two record albums and about five TV shows that were shown over the next few years. We did a lot of conventions in various places, and were still able to spend more time with our families, as many of these shows were done in and around Toronto. I also began a new sport for me, squash. A few of my close friends had begun playing squash in college, so I had lots of people to play against to learn the game. I also began to ski in the Collingwood area of Ontario, and you'll hear about that as we progress.

1969

Faced with the loss of our potential TV series, as a group we needed to decide which way we should go, and what was available to us. The first gig on the books was January 14 at the London Ontario Fairgrounds, for the United CO-OPS of Ontario. Following that, we had a return two-week engagement at the Savarin Tavern. During that gig, a reporter asked us about the TV series, and interviewed Simone

about her plans. When the article from that interview appeared in the paper, we were startled to learn that Simone had told him she was about to leave the group because of the loss of the TV series. She had not mentioned this to us, and when we asked her about it, she confirmed it was true. She was leaving the group.

Over thirty years later in the year 2000, Simone was interviewed for a documentary being made about The Travellers. During that interview, she said that in 1969 The Travellers were in the process of removing her in the same manner that Sid had been removed in 1965. Sadly, Simone seemed to be suffering from loss of memory. First of all, in 1965, Sid had been voted out by the other three members of The Travellers, including her, in a vote that was supervised and documented by a lawyer. Secondly, in 1969, Simone gave an interview to a *Toronto Star* writer and said she had decided to leave the group because of the disappointment of The Travellers losing the TV series. This was news to us, but when we asked her, she confirmed it was true. So naturally at that point, we began seeking a replacement. I'll talk more about that documentary when we reach the year 2000.

Once our gig at The Savarin was over, we began searching for a replacement. Ted Roberts, who had been working occasionally with us, suggested Pam Fernie, who had sung for several years with an Ottawa folk group called The Couriers, and had recently moved to Toronto. Ted had worked with her recently in Toronto, and said she would be great. So, we tried her out, and it went well. Pam is a real pro, with good rhythm and stage presence, and her experience with the Ottawa folk group made her a good fit. Whenever a new person joins a group there is a lot of work involved to reset all the harmonies and the stage gestures, and to teach the basics of what we do, and how we do it. We had a date on April 25 for Trinity College School in Port Hope, Ontario, so we began to work on a program for that date.

In the early years, when we had had to replace someone, it wasn't a problem, but in a now well-established group with a particular sound it was much more difficult. Any group is the sum of its parts, and we knew that with Pam we were going to be different, but better suited to the changing song culture. Once people in Toronto involved in

bookings heard we were now available to return to the stage, the invitations started arriving.

On May 10, I was invited by Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple Young Peoples' group to do a show of Yiddish and other songs. It went well, and we began preparation for a new season for The Travellers. The Lindsay Lions' Club invited us back for the third time on May 31 at the Academy Theatre. We were underway again. On June 8, we went to McMaster University in Hamilton to do a concert to support the Police Union's Chorus. The summer was relatively quiet, so we kept rehearsing a new sound for the group. The folk music world was changing, and the audiences were looking for new sounds. So, we were changing too.

One big summer event: on August 6, Greta gave birth to our fourth son, Michael. Maybe you were like us, hoping finally for a girl! But four of a kind is a good poker hand, so with four boys we are winners, and time will prove that!

As a group we had started to recover, and headed to Ottawa for a concert on August 25 for a convention of radio program planners at the National Arts Centre, and hosted by the CBC. We accepted a gig in Brantford for September 1st at the Graham Bell Hotel, doing three shows a night, and rounding out the new repertoire and songs. On September 8, The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) was meeting in convention at our old stomping grounds, The Royal York Hotel. This event was Pam's first test at singing all the old union songs we had grown up on. The excitement was high, and the response was truly uplifting for us. On September 18 we did a concert in London, Ontario. We'd been there many times before, and they remarked positively on the "new" sound. On September 22, we sang to an International Brewmasters' Convention. Since 1967 international convention planners had begun using Canadian venues for these events, and The Travellers filled the bill by providing true Canadian entertainment. Three days later, we were at the Skyline Hotel for a convention of Canada Packers employees. Then, on September 27 we drove to Teeswater, Ontario, for the Teeswater Agricultural Fall Fair. The next day, we were back in London on the campus of the University of Western Ontario to do a concert at Alumni Hall for the London

B'nai B'rith. October 3 found us at the Sheraton Hotel in Niagara Falls, Ontario, for the World International Convention of Patent and Trademark Lawyers Association. The event planners that booked these hotel conventions enjoyed hiring The Travellers because of our repertoire of Canadian and international songs, and because we did not require a band to back us up. We were self-contained and reliable. Then on October 21 we did another convention at the Royal York Hotel for the Association of Canadian Real Estate Boards.

November 2 was a “watershed” experience for us, as we were booked to do two children’s shows at the St. Lawrence Hall that day. This was the first-ever real concert for kids in Toronto, and the reviews were superb. That same month, we did another radio show for the CBC at the Toronto Press Club. We finished up this comeback year with another week at the Savarin Tavern starting December 15. The year ahead was filled with new bookings, with a special trip planned to sing in Japan to open the Canadian Pavilion at the Osaka World’s Fair. We were also scheduled to finally record an album of kids’ songs, plus there were some Christmas bookings in Europe coming later in the year. 1970 looked like it was going to be another “olde tyme” Travellers’ year with bookings everywhere.

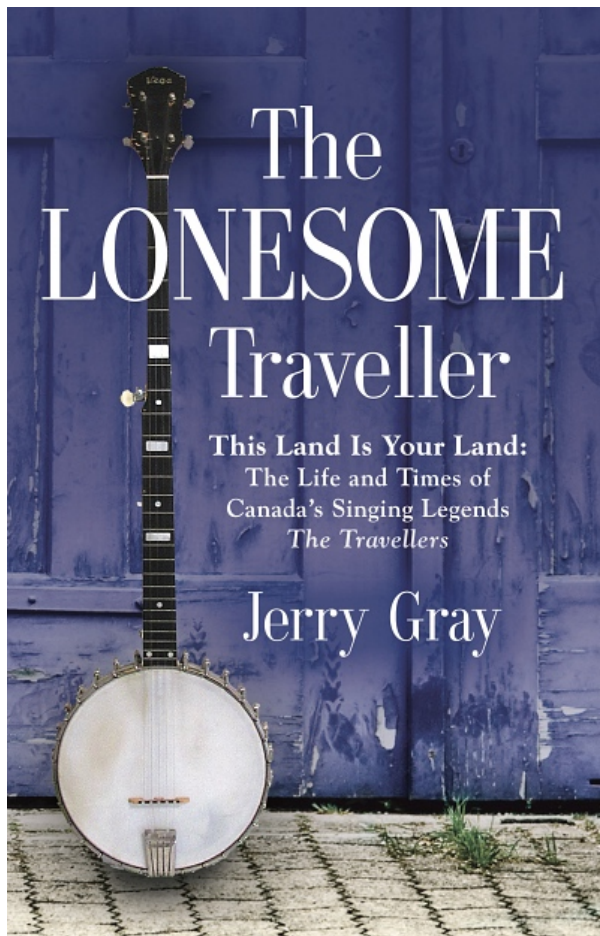
There is a post script I must add to this chapter about an event that happened during 1967, the year when we sang “This Land Is Your Land” 186 times. We had word that another group called The-Brothers-in-Law, who had recorded two albums for our Arc Records partners, had also written songs for a third album in 1967, which included a parody of “This Land”. Woody Guthrie’s music publisher was notified that the album had been recorded, but not yet released. The publisher of “This Land” then sought a ruling to stop the release.

A Canadian Exchequer Court heard several days of testimony, and ruled against a parody of “This Land”. The main evidence was that in Canada, The Travellers’ recording of “This Land” was considered as sacred as an anthem, and a parody was considered similar to parodying Canada’s national anthem. I actually looked that up in the pages from the Exchequer Court. The Guthrie family was not aware of the trial, nor of the judgement in their favour, but I have apprised them of what happened and will be sending them the trial minutes to be placed in

the new Guthrie museum in Oklahoma. The court ordered that all copies of the recording of the parody be destroyed, and I was never able to even track down the words to that song. Several years later, the Arc studios and building was destroyed by fire, and there appear to be no copies. I did look it up recently and found the version to be there on the internet. An interesting project might be to contact the now disbanded group, The Brothers-in-Law, in Windsor, Ontario to see if they have any copies. The group was so named because they were all ex-policemen.

Very few people know of this event, nor that The Travellers' recording of "This Land Is Your Land" is considered to be sacrosanct by the Canadian courts. It's another example of our record having played a part in Canada's history. It's ironic that there have been several incidents where this song was not allowed to be part of the "best song in Canada" voting at all, whereas a Canadian court has found, and ruled, that this song is indeed part of Canadian heritage! As such, it is part of our legacy as well.

This decade of the 1960s was earth-shattering for us, and all the Canadian events we were part of. The future ahead looked to be a continuation of what we had been doing—continuing to sing at the same events as before, as well as beginning a singular series of concerts and recordings specifically for children. It'll be interesting to find out!



Jerry Gray is the last living original member of Canada's first iconic folk group, The Travellers.

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