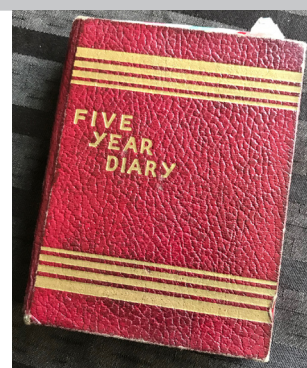
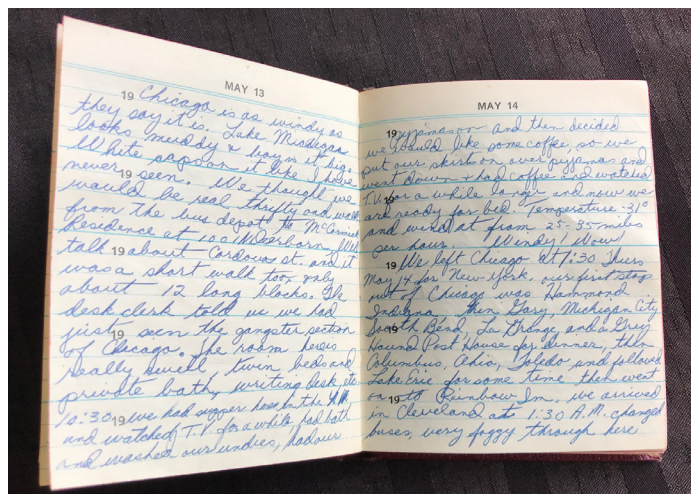


## TWO WOW! THE WIND & WHITECAPS OF CHICAGO; TRAVELLING LIGHT TO N.Y.C.



May 13, 1953

Chicago is as windy as they say it is. Lake Michigan looks muddy & boy is it big. White caps on it like I have never seen. We thought we would be real thrifty and walk from the bus depot to McCormick Residence. It was a short walk too, only about 12 long blocks. The desk clerk told us we had just seen the gangster section of Chicago. We had supper here in the Y. and watched TV. for a while, had bath and washed our undies, had our pyjamas on and then decided we would like some coffee, so we put our skirts on over pyjamas and went down & had coffee and watched TV. for a while longer and now we are ready for bed. Temperature 31° and wind at from 25-35 miles per hour. Windy! Wow!



Irene and her friends are not poor but they are hardly rich, either. They don't splurge on cab fare or accommodations, if they don't have to. They travel light, each able to carry what she needs in a small suitcase, which necessitates washing their undergarments to make them last for the trip's duration.

They have a long way to go yet.

They are a brand of practical borne of growing up poor or growing up in large families or growing up learning to make every penny, every morsel, every stitch count.

She is just a few years out of high school: Vancouver Technical Secondary School. She has worked at a fur shop and even bought herself a fur coat, which she will for years wear on special occasions, such as annual New Year's Eve parties at her brother Lou and sister-in-law Virg's home in North Burnaby. \*

She is by this point an accomplished seam-

stress who will, two decades later, in a large but simple basement room on Windermere Street, sit at her Bernina sewing machine hemming her sons' pants, making herself dresses, repurposing hand-me-downs or offering guidance to Anita and Andrea, the daughters of her best friend Cookie, who will walk down the lane to Auntie Irene's for help with their high school Home Ec. projects. \*\*

But on this day, she is marvelling at the wind in Chicago — Wow! — and the whitecaps like she has never seen in Vancouver, certainly not Trail.

And after just a day there — and three days on a Greyhound bus — she is looking ahead to the next big stop on her journey: New York City.

(\* I will forever remember the feeling of the fur on my face as I leaned forward in the back seat of our Chevelle and rested my tired head against her collar when we drove home late at night from parties and dinners.)

(\*\* I ran into an old friend, Nadia, last Remembrance Day and she told me my dad had given the sewing machine to her mother, Carmela, after my mom's death, and Carmela had given it to her. Nadia said she works on her sewing projects "and I think of your mom.")