

Transcript of Tape 2, Track 1, Frank's Intro

[Frank] ... are the sounds of Christmas, 1969, at the Shields's home in Scotia, New York.

To all those who may hear this recording soon, or perhaps at some long-distant time, the children and I extend the greetings of the season, hoping intensely that all who hear, and that far greater number who do not, may have the pleasure of these days extended into the days and months of 1970 and beyond.

As just ... as just a bit of background for this recording, let me explain that these 5 youngsters of ours, or mine, now, ranging from 8 to 15 years of age have had in 1969 what will probably prove in their memory to be one of the saddest experiences of their lives. That is, the untimely death of their mother, Leona. Beyond that serious blow, I have added in their young lives, continual demands that they assume responsibilities well beyond their years.

While these burdens have been tempered with an enjoyable vacation trip to Prince Edward Island, and, for all of us a fond, or fondly remembered, summer of visits with various relatives, this has been never-, never-the-less a bleak year of loss and daily adjustments for the youngsters.

For these reasons I have gone, perhaps, a bit overboard this Christmas, this Christmas season of 1969, to make these holidays very memorable ones with regard to Christmas giving. For one thing, the boys are receiving an AM/FM radio with a cassette recorder which, obviously, is why you are hearing this tape recording now. Furthermore, the family gift, that is from me to all of us, is a Heathkit 21 inch color TV. I think the kids will be thrilled with this; they've been guessing at what the family gift may be for several weeks. We have also a 5 by 9 foot ping-pong table, fold-away style, which can also be used to play their, to play with their racing cars, or for food service if I have a party in the cellar.

Beyond this, there are individual or group gifts, from individuals to the group or vice-versa. For example, the boys have pooled their money to buy an AC/battery AM portable radio, for both girls.

With the foregoing as introduction, here are the sounds of Christmas at the Scotia Shields's, with the tape recorder, we imagine, as the first of the gifts. Beyond that, we will be playing it by ear. Here it is.