

right: Jerry Jerrett, 1935



the most original, accomplished and moving works to have come from the Winnipeg Film Group in its 17-year history.

First of all, the films shot by Ernest Jerrett are not like the home movies that many an amateur photographer has inflicted on friends. Jerrett had a fine eye for composition and telling detail. But most importantly, these images have triggered Jerry Jerrett's memory into fresh, lively, humorous and ultimately revealing observations.

Taking a Walk with Dad, deceptively simple on the surface, is a work of surprising depth. Images and narration gradually bring to light not only details of time and place, but also the dimensions of Jerry Jerrett's relationship with his father and his unresolved lingering feelings. At first glance, you feel that Ernest Jerrett has left a marvellous gift to his son; the specificity of Jerry Jerrett's observations, giving such immediacy to events and people from so long ago, is surely a result of having these films to keep his memories fresh.

Yet, as the film progresses, melancholy seeps into the stream of memory. You begin to sense a distance between father and son, an emotional space within which the camera looms not only as the bridge used by the father to establish some kind of contact, but also as the barrier impeding closer emotional ties. The machine takes possession of the relationship, preserving the son's experience and transforming his life into this precisely structured artefact. A gift to last, but one which perhaps replaced a more valuable and lasting emotional immediacy.

The final image of the young Jerry walking hand in hand with his father brings with it a verbal expression of lost opportunity and regret. By giving the subject of these images an opportunity to speak, Shereen Jerrett has transformed this intensely personal document into a deeply moving experience which can be shared with others—surely a gift to her father as special as that given by Ernest Jerrett to his son. ♦

K. George Godwin

K. George Godwin regularly reviews film for *Border Crossings*.

Taking a Walk with Dad
A film by Shereen Jerrett
The Winnipeg Film Group, 1991

FAMILY GIFTS

ERNEST JERRETT was a professional photographer in Brandon who began to use an 8mm movie camera in the 1920s to record the growing up of his son Jerry. Shereen Jerrett, Jerry's daughter, edited some of that footage into a 24-minute record of her father's life from infancy to marriage. Then she sat her father down to reminisce about these images of his past.

The results of this process are far more than one might expect. Shereen Jerrett's *Taking a Walk with Dad* is one of



above: Jerry Jerrett, 1935,
photographs: Ernest Jerrett