

TO THE BEST OF MY MEMORY

Stories from the Life of
Velva Magdalena Diede Walden

AN ORAL HISTORY
TOLD TO AND EDITED BY
SARA COWLES WALDEN

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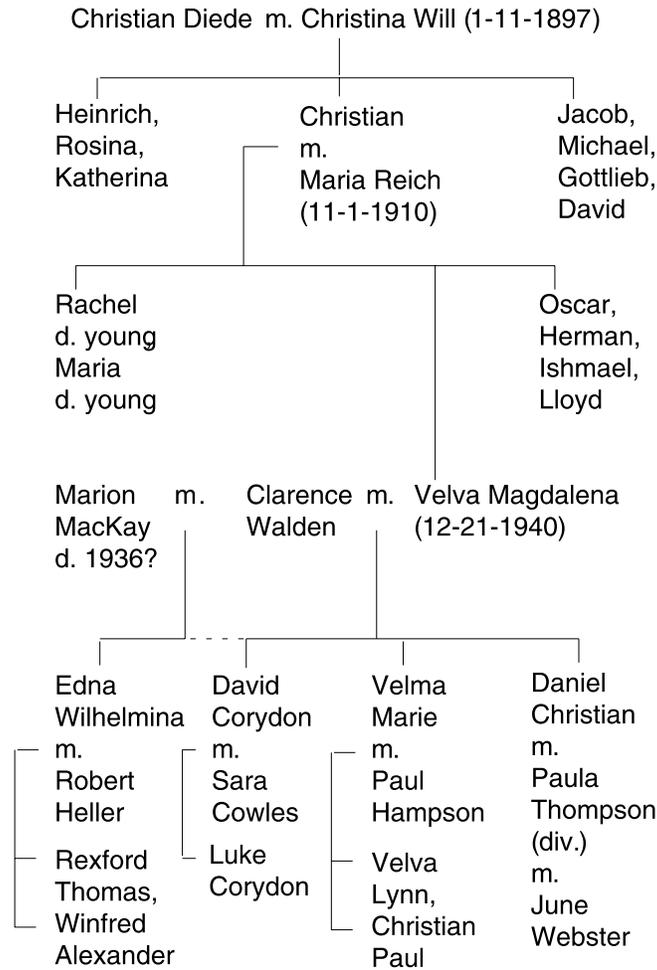
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Waterside Publishers
12 Linden Road
East Sandwich, Massachusetts 02537



Velva Magdalena Diede
High School Graduation, 1935

Family Tree¹



¹Since original publication in 1990, Rexford Heller married Pamela Mason and they had a child, Luke Walden married Mindy Sobota, Velva Lynn Hampson married David Rowell, and Christian Hampson married Malia and they had twins, a boy and a girl.

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Nine years ago I prevailed upon my mother, Margaret Cowles, to permit my recording her life story in the form of an oral history. One reason for my wanting to do so was a belief that we are a part of all those who have gone before us and that knowledge of them can help us better understand ourselves. As scientific information on environment's relationship to genetics and heredity's influence on personality accrues, we begin to get an ever-more-complex picture of how our forebears influence our own lives. The idea of recording for present and future descendants the thoughts and experience of an interesting older family member, her personal history in the context of her family and times, seemed more than intriguing — it was compelling.

The oral history book that resulted from my mother's and my collaboration proved interesting to readers both in and outside our family. My husband, David Walden, suggested that such a collaboration between his mother and me might prove similarly worthwhile.

Like my mother, Velva was somewhat reluctant to presume that her story would be of interest to others. But when visiting us from Oregon over the Christmas holidays in 1984, she participated with characteristic enthusiasm as I interviewed her on tape in our Sandwich, Massachusetts, kitchen. Her memory is rich and full of detail, and we produced many hours of tapes. These I have transcribed, edited and organized, attempting to eliminate the inevitable repetitions and digressions of normal conversational speech while still retaining Velva's personal speaking style. Velva occasionally prefaced the answer to a question with, "To the best of my memory. . ."; and, because perceptions differ, it would not be surprising if readers who shared certain times or events with her experienced them somewhat differently and have different memories. The Editor assumes responsibility for any errors of fact the book may contain.

I am grateful first to Velva for her willingness to participate in this project, as provider of material and photographs and as manuscript reader. Her patience in awaiting completion of the project and in adding new material as time passed is typical of her attitude toward all her family and friends — an attitude of confidence, acceptance and approval that no evidence to the contrary can shake! Now 75, Velva applies much of her enormous energy to the service of others, an inclination that has directed her life throughout its course.

Second, without the encouragement and help of Dave Walden this book could not have been completed. He has spent countless hours formatting the data to produce what we hope is a professional-looking volume. His preparation of a family tree and general contributions as the Editor's editor have been invaluable.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to Luke Walden. His long hours spent in the darkroom produced negatives and prints of old photographs that would reproduce well and thus enrich the text. In being allowed by both Luke and

Dave to change my mind often without fear of rebellion, I am the fortunate beneficiary of the patience and generosity of spirit they seem to have inherited in part from Velva and, as her memories suggest, from her father before her.

Sara Cowles Walden, Editor
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
October, 1990

To the Best of My Memory

My German-Russian Ancestry

I am the daughter of Christian Diede and his wife, Maria Reich Diede. At my birth in 1915, I was named Velva Magdalena Diede — Magdalena was after my maternal grandmother, who was the wife of Jacob Reich. (Her maiden name was Klein.) My father and mother were both born in South Russia. My father was fourteen years old when he came to this country, and my mother was four. My father was born in a *dorf* called Johannesthal. *Dorf* is the Russian name for village. My mother was born in a *dorf* called Kassel. Both villages are in south Russia in the area of Odessa on the Black Sea. Of course, my parents did not meet each other until they were young people living in North Dakota. My father was known as Christ (pronounced like “Chris” — the “t” is silent), and until her later years my mother was known as Marie. Eventually everyone called her Mary.

Maria Reich, Christian Diede and Dowries

I don’t believe marriages were arranged. My mother was eighteen when she married; she was married in 1910, and she died in 1974, the year she was 81. My mother told me when Dad proposed marriage to her she was very reluctant. She knew her parents would not permit her to marry so young, but he was quite insistent, and though he hadn’t asked her parents about marriage, her mother said to her father, “He is such a nice boy, if we don’t let her get married, we might lose him.” So it was definitely not an arranged marriage.

In those farm days a woman brought with her dowry several milk cows, and it depended upon how wealthy the woman’s family was how many cows she would get. I don’t remember how many Mother got. Her bedroom set and the cows were the dowry. For instance, in a letter to me recently, Aunt Anna happened to mention that my cousin Pauline got seven cows when she married Jake, which was quite a lot.

But I’ve gotten ahead of my story. Before I describe my life I want to talk about how we came to be in North Dakota.

Family Origins: Manifestoes Created “German-Russians”

My family were what we call German-Russians. In 1819 my father’s grandfather moved from Germany to Russia: Tsar Alexander I issued a manifesto similar to the one that had been issued earlier around 1763 by his grandmother, Katherine the Great, whereby land was given to the German people.² In this manifesto foreigners were invited to settle in Russia.

²*Heritage Review*, “Manifesto,” June 1973, p. 2.

Colonists and their descendants were guaranteed free land with initial financing, exemption from military service, complete control over their own churches and schools and local self government.

Katherine the Great had issued her manifesto when she remembered that the German people were very good workers, and farm workers were needed up in the area of the Volga country. They went to Russia then and all settled in that area. Later, when they came to America, we referred to them as “North Russians,” or “*Nord Russlander*.” In some areas they were called “*Volga Deutsch*.”

The manifesto by Alexander I was issued following the Turkish War when Russia won all the land in the south near the Black Sea and didn't have people to work it. The German people were excellent *landsmenner* or farmers. Many, many thousands of them migrated from Germany to Russia, and a great number of them were lost on the journey. I have a book about the journey on the Danube which is bloodcurdling — so many people failed to reach the goal.³ They would travel by boat and at night they would pull up to the shore. People had to carry their own food, and there was a great deal of illness. People ran out of food. Many traveled overland more than 2,000 miles, and their troubles were much like those of the American pioneers in their westward movement.

In Germany many of them had been in the areas where there were a lot of little wars between the states. I understand that one of the reasons many of them were so poor was because of these little fights between the various groups. The Turkish wars preceded the second migration. And so they went to the Russian steppes because they promised a very good living, and it was good country, very good land, and the people became very rich, very wealthy. They were a hard working people.

In the *dorfs* all the people lived in the village just like a small town, but their land was on the outskirts. So they would go out during the day to do the farming, and somebody told me not too long ago that they'd go out and maybe stay overnight a few nights to get their planting done, because it was too far to come home each time.⁴

³“Fateful Danube Journey, A True Account of an Emigration to Russia, 1816-1817,” Friedrich Fiechtner, Ed., 1973.

⁴In 1981 I visited in Itingen, Switzerland, and it made me think that maybe this is what the villages were like in Russia. Across the street where I was staying with my friends there was this house with its barn right on the main street of the village, and there was a big manure pile out in the front yard because cows were still kept in that barn.

And when I mentioned to my friend Lotte Schaub that to me that seemed a very strange thing, her reaction was, “Well, they were here first. They're entitled to be there.” But as each *bauer* or farmer sold out, whoever bought the place could not continue the farming, so that all the other places except that one on that street had been made into houses. The barn areas had also been made into houses. And I had wondered at the time if that isn't maybe what the situation was in the villages where my folks came from, with barns and houses together. But of course people that were there are all dead now, so there's no way of asking them.

In North Dakota it was different. People settled at least a mile apart, always. And then they homesteaded right on the land there and had what we call “sections.” A quarter is 160 acres and four quarters made a section which was 640 acres of land, and that made one square mile

My father's grandfather, Gottlieb Diede, was born about 1811 and was eight years old when his parents migrated from Germany to Russia. When they left Germany they went as a group to Johannesthal,⁵ but there's no record of exactly where the Diede's came from in Germany.⁶ The Diedes then lived in Russia for a period of almost one hundred years.

My father was fourteen when he came to this country with his father and mother, Christian and Christina Will Diede, and their children. People started coming here when they had another ruler in Russia who suddenly abolished all the benefits of the manifesto,⁷ and ordered the German boys into the Russian military. I am not aware that this was for a particular war — I think the Tsar just didn't like the idea that these people had privileges. As the boys came of age, the various families would move to America because they did not want their boys in the Russian army. My father's brother, Heinrich, was old enough to go into the service at that time, so the family immigrated to America.

My grandfather, Christian, Sr., was one of thirteen children. His oldest sister, who was very much older than my grandfather, had died at childbirth when her second daughter was born about 1859 or 1860. (Her family came to America very early.) Of the twelve remaining children I believe seven came to America and the others stayed in Russia. My grandfather, who was born in 1854, was the only one of the boys that came — his brothers Heinrich, Jakob, and Gottlieb stayed in Russia, as well as sisters Elizabeth and Katherine. When World War I came, there were still Diedes living in Russia, and after that it was impossible to leave.

Gottlieb was the father of Mrs. Emelia Diede Schorzmamm, whom I visited in Germany in 1981. He was the youngest son. When I was over visiting there with her, she made the comment one day, "My father wanted to go to America so badly, but my mother wouldn't leave her mother, and so we stayed. If we had gone we would have been spared all this hardship we have been through." Numerous things happened to the people who

of land.

⁵See Appendix I for a description of the town of Johannesthal.

⁶A man named Dr. Karl Stumpp went to Russia and did a tremendous amount of research about the German people. In fact, he had completed the whole research with another man who was assisting him. On his way out the last bunch of information he had gotten was burned in a fire in Prussia, I believe. I read this material once and have never been able to locate it again. The event must have happened in the 1940s, and I don't recall from reading it whether it was accidentally destroyed by fire or whether he was caught in a situation where he destroyed it. It was sort of during the war.

Now Dr. Stumpp has a book, it's about four inches thick or so, but it's not complete. But in this particular material it does state the point of origin of the Diede family is unknown and their occupation is unknown, so I would assume that possibly they were just not very wealthy people or not people of any consequence in Germany. Of the other people from the village I think there were only five for whom the point of origin and occupation wasn't in the book. In Dr. Stumpp's book there is this material for every village in Russia. Johannesthal had I can't remember how many people, but approximately forty different families, and they were also listed as to where they came from: all of them but five or six came from Wurttemberg, so I assume that's where my family came from.

⁷*Heritage Review*, "Manifesto," June 1973, p. 3.

stayed there.⁸ I have thought so many, times how fortunate we were that my grandparents had the foresight to leave, yet how terrible it must have been to go. My grandmother's mother was still living in Russia when they came to America.

I heard about the events I'm speaking of quite a few years ago, and if I had thought of it more I'd have asked questions. I just overheard some things, but you see my Dad has been gone since 1942. Before that I was away from home, and there was a period of time when you didn't talk about family history much. Occasionally there was a storyteller in a family who would tell a lot of things, but most of the time people didn't talk about it a great deal. I remember when I was growing up, I learned to read German script — I could read the Gothic script (I still can read some of it, although I have difficulty) — so that when we would get letters from Russia, I could read them. I remember some of the things I read, but there again, I left home in 1937 and a lot of water is under the bridge since then. There were many years we just didn't hear from anybody in Russia.

We had a German newspaper that came out of Bismarck, North Dakota, the "*Staats Anzeiger*," and there were people in various villages in Russia that would write to the newspaper, sending newsletters about people, and I used to read them very, very diligently. It was kind of an exchange: some people had the papers sent to Russia to their families. So they would write a letter to the paper. These were people from Johannesthal and other villages that were writing.

Migration to North Dakota and Buying, not Homesteading

In 1849 Louis Bette came to this country from Johannesthal. He came into Ohio, I read in one of the *Heritage* magazines, a magazine published by Germans from Russia. He came over here and became prosperous very quickly. So he went back to Russia to visit in the early 1880's to urge people to come to America to live. He was really dressed as an elegant person and suddenly the Russians became aware of what he was doing, and so according to the article I read, he dressed in very modest shabby clothes and was spirited out of the country at night, because the Russians were not happy with him. But after that four families came with him, and some of them were relatives of ours.

My mother's family left Kassel about 1901 and came through Staten Island. My father's family came in 1903 through Halifax in Canada. They took the long train trip to Hamburg first, and then a ship to North America. They were leaving because the boys would have had to go into the service.

During the last conversation I had with my father's brother, David Diede, in Hebron, N.D., around 1981, I asked him, "Uncle Dave, why did you come through Halifax instead of New York, where most immigrants came?" And

⁸Velva's commentary on the Russian period is found in Appendix II.

he said, "Because it was cheaper!" Why it was cheaper he didn't know. He was a young boy at the time they came. And then I asked about the homesteading. I had never heard anything about it, and he said "Well, we didn't homestead. Dad bought the land. We had money and we bought the land."

Uncle Dave told me that Grandpa bought the piece of property near a creek because there was a little stone house on it. So they lived there (I never think to ask all the questions I need to ask) but later Grandpa and Grandma Diede bought the house where their son Michael, my Uncle Mike's, later lived. When my folks first married, they lived in a wooden house not far from the old stone house, but I don't know who built it. It was the house I was born in.

My grandparents were not the first people on this land. But practically everybody else homesteaded in that area, which was wheat country. One reason all the people who were coming went into that particular area was because they were accustomed to being wheat farmers.

"Homesteading" meant you got some kind of document from the government and then you had to stay on the land a period of years — two years, three years, five years, I don't know — and then the land was yours. That was the government's land; the only people that had been there were the Indians. And the Indians that were there were not farmers. In fact, I don't know that any Indians inhabited that area ever. They just traveled through there.

I didn't see any Indians when I was growing up. There were two buttes north of our home, one of them we called Custer's Lookout and the other was Long Butte. They aren't that big, but in that flat land area they can be seen from as far as thirty to forty miles from the south. Custer's Lookout was named that because that's where Custer was watching for the Sioux Indians, or so I was told. When I was growing up I thought the battle had been fought there. There was some kind of a battle fought there because people picked up arrowheads for years, but the Pine Bluff battle was in Custer, Montana. But we didn't see Indians around.

My mother's people came into South Dakota, and they homesteaded in an area called Roscoe. They lived there a few years and then they moved north to North Dakota and homesteaded there, because there was no water in South Dakota. When my maternal grandfather, Jacob Reich, decided to move, he and his son, my Uncle Jacob Reich, and my mother came up to build the house. My mother was about seven years old at the time. She came along on the house-building venture to do the cooking. At the age of seven, to do that part of the work — imagine!

There were trains from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to North Dakota. But many of our people came into South Dakota first because there was a large settlement there already. One of my grandfather Diede's sisters, Maria, married to Matthew Saylor, came to South Dakota first, and one of their sons still lives there. Most of the others came up north to live around the Hebron area and south of there. (I knew this particular uncle, Matthew Saylor, who was my father's uncle, when I was quite a young girl.)

All of my father's family made the trip from Halifax. The oldest in their family was his sister, Rosina Diede Steiger. There were six brothers, two sisters and Grandma and Grandpa Diede. They all made the trip over together. Uncle Dave told me another family came with them — I don't know who they were. Uncle Dave told me about that the last time we were talking. He said Grandpa loaned the family the money.

One of Grandpa's sisters and her husband were to come at the same time, but she became ill and couldn't come. Their names were Karl and Rosina Miller. Later my brother Ishmael married their daughter, Rosie.⁹

⁹See Appendix III for another family's immigration story that Velve remembers.



Figure 1: Velva's mother's family. Front row: Adam, Grandpa Jacob Reich, Bill, Grandma Magdalena Klein Reich. Second row: John, Jack, Fred and Maria (Velva's mother, known as "Mary"). Katie was not present when this picture was taken.



Figure 2: *Velva's father's family, around 1904. From left, front row: David, Charlie Heinle (grandson on Grandma's lap). Second row: Gottlieb, Grandpa Christian, Sr., Grandma Christina Will Diede, Henry, Michael. Third row: Rosina Diede Staiger, Christian, Jr. (Velva's father, know as "Christ"), Katherina Diede Heinle and Jacob (fatally injured not long after in a threshing accident).*

North Dakota Years

Antelope, N. D., My Birth and Birth Customs

I was born February 24, 1915, in my home at a location near Antelope, North Dakota, a village that no longer exists. Antelope was a store and two grain elevators; the post office was in the store. After the post office was closed, thirty years ago or so, they closed down the elevators, too. But it was right on the railroad track, on the Northern Pacific Railroad. The only reason people went to Antelope basically was to get the mail (after some years we had a rural mail carrier) and to take the grain to the elevator and the cream to the station platform. We would take our cream cans and put them on the platform, and then when the train came through they would be picked up. We had lots of heavy cream. So often now when I'll pick up something heavy somebody will come up and say, "Oh, that's too heavy for you." I tell them, "I was raised on eight and ten gallon cream cans!"

When I was born there was a midwife and her name was Mrs. Eisenbry. She was the midwife for the entire area. She lived about fifteen miles south of where we lived. I knew her well as the years went on, because we went to the same church. She attended all births during that whole period of time. In fact, my mother was attended by this same midwife for all my four brothers, except Lloyd. When Lloyd was born, the doctor came to our home. I don't know why.

There was a doctor in Hebron, Dr. Sam Schierbaum, who was there for many years. When I was born, my father's cousin, Emma Staiger, came and took care of my mother and me. She was a foster sister to my father, so she was "Aunt Emma" to us. Her older sister had a daughter named Velva, and I understand that the reason I was named Velva was because Aunt Emma wanted me to have that name.

There was an interesting custom when babies were born. I never remember taking a baby gift for a newborn, but being farmers we always killed and cleaned a hen. A batch of egg noodles was made (with egg yolks only because that made them so nice and yellow). A cake was baked. Sometimes it was an angel food because we had egg whites left over to use. Sometimes the cake was a two layer cake with jelly filling between the layers. These three items — hen, noodles and cake — were taken when you visited a new mother. The hen and noodles were to be used to make chicken noodle soup for the nursing mother.

I was the first child to survive infancy. My mother gave birth to two other daughters. My parents were married in 1910, and I was not born until 1915. There were two other births before I was born: Rachel Diana, who lived three weeks, and Maria, who was stillborn. After me came Oscar, Herman, Ishmael and Lloyd.

Learning English

I was a few years old when Anna Kapitz came from the state of Wisconsin to be a schoolteacher in the area. She lived with my parents and they learned to speak English from her. There were few other people in the area who spoke English. Most of the teachers for our rural school came from Wisconsin and Minnesota, as I remember. Because we were miles from town, teachers roomed and boarded with one of the families whose children attended her school. As a result of Anna's living with us, I learned to speak English before I started school. German was my first language. I imagine I was about three, maybe two, when Anna came. She was never my teacher, but she lived with us and she married my father's brother, Gottlieb Diede. After she was married, her sister Lydia came also to teach in our district, and she later married my Uncle David Diede. Aunt Lydia was my first or second grade teacher.

A Mysterious Conflagration

One event I remember well. One evening we had company. It was a winter evening, and we were all sitting around visiting. The phone rang, and someone called and said the schoolhouse was on fire. So we looked out our window to the East, and there was this huge glow. I remember what a dramatic thing it was, and I just sat and cried and cried because the school had burned.

No one really knew why it happened, but Aunt Lydia years later told us that she suspected it was arson. Someone came riding by on a horse one day not too long before when she had stayed at the schoolhouse after dark doing some work, and she suspected from then on that this person had come that night planning to set the school on fire. But she never, never even to her dying day revealed who the somebody was. It was someone she knew. Everybody knew everybody around there. People didn't travel that far on horseback. There wouldn't be strangers coming, and so she felt that this person was the one who set the school on fire a few days later.

My Pneumonia

Going back to my earliest memories: The earliest memory I have is when I was about three I had pneumonia. I have a vivid picture in my mind of the house where we lived which was on the same property that my grandparents had bought when they first came from the old country. I remember lying on a cot in the living room near the door to what was the bedroom where I ordinarily slept. I was brought in to the living room, the "parlor" as we called it in those days, to be warmer. I remember Dr. Shierbaum coming and sitting there on a chair in front of me as he was treating me for pneumonia. That is my very earliest memory.

When I was feeling somewhat better and able to get up and around, I was very weak, and my parents purchased a doll buggy and a doll for me. I used the doll buggy to learn to walk again. I was so happy with the buggy and the “mama” doll. I also remember how upset I was when my brother Oscar took the speaking mechanism out of the doll! He was quite young then. Oscar is about eighteen months younger than I.

Our Move to Another House

My next memory is of the move, when we moved from the house we lived in to the house where I grew up, which is approximately the distance of a mile. I remember the day when father went to town to close the deal. I really had no awareness of what was going on, at least I don't remember that there was any awareness, but I can still see my mother standing by the telephone next to the stove and next to what was their bedroom. Dad called home, and then she hung up and turned around and told me we would be moving, that Dad had bought this other house. And I had, as I recall now, sort of mixed feelings about it, because this was home. They're not very vivid memories, but I do remember moving day. I was just four year old.

We moved with a wagon — put all our things on a wagon. In those days the wagons had many, many uses. Of the four wheels on a wagon, the hind wheels were always quite a lot larger than the front wheels. There was what we called the “wagon box,” which was the floor and the sides, which must have been about eighteen inches to two feet high. Then there was another, what we called the “double box”, which could be set on the top. It had sides to match the original box. The double box had stakes on it, and these stakes fitted down through brackets on the wagon box and held it in place.

There were three sides to the wagon box — the front and two sides — and then the back was open and had what we called “end gates” — a board that fitted down into a groove to close the back. On the top of this double box went a seat for two or three people that could be taken off. Sometimes if the wagon was used for transportation for more people we could put in two seats. The seat itself was attached to a series of three or four springs that were kind of arched, with another series along the bottom arched the same way. The whole unit was attached by hooks onto the sides of the box. The springs would break the bounces, which were considerable since the wheels were made of wood and had steel rims three inches wide and maybe a half inch thick, with no rubber to cushion the bounce at all.

I remember riding with my father on this wagon with the household goods behind us going from one house to the other.

Herman's Birth, Grandma's Death and a Scary Sleighride

We moved before Herman was born, and Herman was born on March 14, 1920, in that house. I was five when he was born. My maternal grandmother died the day before or the day he was born. She died of breast cancer, and my mother couldn't be at the funeral. This was my mother's mother, my grandma Magdalena Reich, who I was named after. My father didn't go, either. I went with my Uncle John and Aunt Emma and my Uncle Bill. They came from quite a lot farther south and picked me up. I really don't know why I was sent to the funeral except possibly to get me out of the way. And I don't know why I never asked my mother over the years.

I have a very clear memory of going to town in a sleigh. At that time the coffins were always kept in the house. It was in the days before mortuaries, so that the body was kept in the home. On the end of the coffins there always was a little chrome plaque and on this particular one it said, "At rest." Before the burial it was removed and put on the frame above the bedroom door — Grandpa nailed that up there — so that all those many, many years I remember going to his house there was this plaque over the bedroom door.

In the early 1970's when I was visiting in Hebron, Aunt Lydia took me to see Grandpa's house, and there over the bedroom door was the faded shape of that plaque. I told the occupant of the house about it, and she said she had often wondered what had been there.

When I got there I remember Grandpa picking me up and holding me in his arms so I could take a look at Grandma in the coffin. I remember turning to him and saying, "She's asleep. She's sleeping," in German.

That was in the morning: We had our lunch, and then it was time for the service. In those days it was customary that the minister came to the house. The family was there and some friends would come and there would be a short service before they took the body away from the home. From the house they went to the church for the funeral and then to the cemetery. My Aunt Katie Rieger, my mother's sister, would not let me go. She said it was too cold out. I kicked up an awful row. This was in March. I cried and screamed because I couldn't go. All the children were kept at Grandpa's house because we were told it was too cold. One of the older Reiger girls stayed with us. She was nine or ten. I don't remember if an adult stayed with us younger children, but I do remember that I had a tantrum.

On the way home with Uncle Bill and Uncle John's,¹⁰ I remember that it was very snowy and it was very cold. We were in a sleigh, not in the big box sled which we put on runners instead of on wheels a lot of times. We had a lightweight sleigh that my uncle was driving. And we were bundled in — there was a lot of snow. And the thing I remember is that every so often —

¹⁰Velva's family uses the possessive "John's" in this way to mean John and his family, in this case Uncle John and Aunt Emma.

it was very frightening really — the horses hind legs would break through the snow to the point where they were clear up to their bellies, and then my uncle would take the whip and really whip them to encourage them to get out, because the snow was so deep. They had to be really rough with the horses to get them out. There was no way to get them out unless they themselves did it — tried to help themselves out. I also remember Uncle Bill jumping from side to side on the sleigh. A runner would break through on one side, and he would jump to the other side to keep the sled from tipping over. Very frequently sleds *would* tip over. I have a clear memory of this. It was very scary, and I think that's why I remember it so well. John had the reins. He was the one that was guiding the horses. I don't think we had two seats, but maybe we didn't have any seats on that particular trip — I don't remember. At any rate Uncle Bill was behind where Uncle John was, and so he was in between where Aunt Emma and I were.

Usually the sled or sleigh was fitted with hay — some for feed for the horses and some for warmth. You'd be much, much more comfortable sitting on a pile of hay with robes which were made of horse hides that had been tanned and then had floral felt backing put on. Whenever we got ready to go in the sled some place my Dad would put a lot of hay in the sleigh and then he'd put one of those robes on it hairy side down so we sat on the felt part, and then we had a similar one to cover up with. They were really as warm as you could get.

I have always remembered this trip, and many times I've wondered if it was true or something I kind of made up. So the last time I saw Uncle John, which must have been in 1978 or 1979, the last time I had a chance to visit with him, I said to him, "I remember Grandma's funeral day as cold and snowy. Was it really so, or is it something I've kind of manufactured in my mind?" And he said, "The day of Mother's funeral was the coldest day of the year." He didn't contradict anything I had said, so I had remembered correctly. I was really glad that I happened to think of it that day, because it reassured me that my memory was good!

The winters in North Dakota were very difficult! I have many memories of being very, very cold. Later, when I was a high school student living in Dickinson, I remember bundling up with layer upon layer of stockings and underwear and coats and walking across a low spot and up the other side to school one day, only to find it was closed because the temperature was -54 degrees!

I remember going out to a little hillside not very far from the barn and picking wild lavender crocuses in the early spring. What a joy to find the first flowers after a long snowy winter!

Segregated Church Pews and Bohemian "English Ones"

Grandma's funeral was in town because Grandma and Grandpa lived in Hebron at that time. But we always went to church eleven miles south

of our place. Hebron was ten miles northeast, and we went eleven miles south to church. It was the church that my mother and her parents went to after they came to North Dakota and where my parents were married. Practically all of my mother's family, except the Phillip Reigers, went to that church. The Reigers went to the town church because they lived three miles closer to town. They were only seven miles from Hebron.

We went to this country church, way out in the open spaces. The name of the church was Bethesda, with the German pronunciation, of course — "*Batesta*." It was a name from the Bible. I have many memories of going there. We spent our lives there practically! We went to church every Sunday morning for Sunday School, which started at 10. The Church consisted only of the sanctuary, just one small room, and for Sunday School classes we were arranged according to ages. Usually classes were divided by girls and boys and the youngest children sat in front. So that when I was quite young, we girls sat on the left side of the church in the front row. The Sunday School teacher stood up in front of us, between us and the front of the church. The boys were on the opposite side of the aisle with their teacher. The teenagers were a few pews back, all sitting in a straight row, and their teacher stood in the pew in front of them facing them, and so on to the back of the church. Every class was conducted that way — it was a lot of noise! Males always sat on the right side of the aisle and the females always sat on the left side of the aisle. They never sat in the same pews, for Sunday School or church.

This past summer when I was home in North Dakota, I went on Sunday to the church that my mother attended after she moved into town and the church where I was confirmed. Most of the women were still sitting on the left side and the men on the right, although most couples sat together. The tendency still is, where there are lone women and oftentimes even older couples, the men sit on one side and the women on the other.

We never sat together as families. After Sunday School we changed seats for worship. The youngest children would sit on the front bench, boys on one side, girls on the other, and then the next age group and so on. People moved up further to the front because there were empty pews where the teachers stood. There was no break after Sunday School except long enough to move from one pew to the other. We always took our lunch to church, because we had prayer meeting in the afternoon. We had about an hour's break between church and prayer meeting.

In the summertime we always ate in our cars. Parents would get in the back seat and the lunch basket would be set between the father and the mother. Mother would get things out and pass it to people. A few of us would sit in the front seat. There were six of us, and a couple of the boys would stand outside, and we would eat that way. In the winter time when it was too cold to do that we would sit in the pews.

Everybody seemingly had their own pew where they sat. Uncle Jake, my mother's brother and his family, usually ate in the pew just behind us. It was kind of like a ritual. We always had our lunch in the right hand

side of the church in the pew where my father generally sat, and he would be closest to the wall. The lunch basket would be there, and my mother and the rest of us would sit in the rest of the spaces out to the aisle. Then Mother would make up whatever it was and it would be passed on down the line! And when we got all through eating and everything was put away, somebody would get the broom and sweep the pew where we had eaten our lunch.

In the wintertime we usually had sausage and bread. We didn't make sandwiches. I don't remember having sandwiches when I was a younger person. We had bratwurst, and we'd just hold a piece of it in our hand and bite off of it, and we'd have a piece of bread in the other hand. In the spring-time we usually had that type of thing also, but one of the topics of conversation in the spring among the women at the noon hour almost always had to do with gardening or who had the biggest fryers, "spring chickens," we called them. There was great pride in having the most advanced garden or biggest chicken. And when the summer came we always had roasted chicken. (We never had fried chicken at home.)

Whenever the chickens were ready, big enough to butcher to eat, fryer size, Mother always stuffed the chickens with bread stuffing and then put them in a roaster and cooked them and then put rice in with them. As my children were growing up they always called it "chicken rice" when I cooked it. The chickens were placed in an oval porcelain roaster, always two chickens for our family, and they were cooked in the oven with the lid on. Of course, when we went to church we didn't take the rice. I don't remember our taking dishes to church. It was usually finger food, and my mother would pass the food along. The biggest treats of all that I remember so well was if we happened to go to town on Saturday. We would prevail upon my mother, we begged her, to bring home a ring of baloney, because the biggest treat was to have a ring of baloney on Sunday. That was just the nicest thing we could enjoy! And once in a great, great while, oh, I imagine I can remember once or twice, we talked Mother into bringing a loaf of store bread, which was a real treat.

We didn't go to town on Saturday unless it was absolutely necessary. It was customary for people to go to town on Saturday evening and spend a lot of time and come home late, but my parents did not believe in going to town on Saturday night because they would be too tired for Sunday to go to church.

My father's people were Baptists. They went to the church that was in fact much closer to where we lived — it was only about five miles from us. But Mother's family were Congregational, what we called the German Congregational Church, which is now part of the United Church of Christ, and we went to that church.

The Baptists were also German speaking. In fact, certain people were kind of uptight about them, thinking the Baptists felt that they were better than anybody else. Aunt Anna and Aunt Lydia tell about going to the Baptist Church. They were of a Bohemian background, spoke the Bohemian

language. But they also spoke English, and therefore when people referred to them they would refer to them as “the English ones.” And they were no more English than we were Russian, but some folks were prejudiced against non-Germans.

Aunt Lydia and Aunt Anna went to the Baptist Church. There were people that were very critical of their coming — they didn’t feel they belonged there. Aunt Lydia tells about the first time they had communion there. The Baptist Church had closed communion at that time. Lewis Magstadt who is a brother to my cousin Harriet’s husband, was an elder in that church and a little bit more modern than other people. Lydia said she just wondered what would happen when they passed communion, whether they would just quickly by-pass them. Anna and Lydia knew they were not to take communion, but she said he just very nicely passed it right along without any attempt to by-pass them. Lydia said she had felt that if he had by-passed them, she would have walked out, because she would have felt so discriminated against! But they continued to go to that church.

Later on there was an English Congregational Church in Hebron, so Lydia and Anna went there. They hadn’t understood a great deal of the German in the church, but both of them made a serious effort to learn the spoken language. They worked very hard so they could speak with Grandma and Grandpa. That was their aim. They did learn to speak sufficiently to talk to them. Aunt Anna and Aunt Lydia were two of the nicest people I have ever known.

Our Kitchen Stove

The stove in the house where I spent most of my childhood was a cast iron kitchen wood stove, and we used coal. It was much like what we call “antique” stoves that we see these days. It had the firebox on the front of one end and it had two big covers (round lids) that you could open to put coal in when you lifted them. Many times if we wanted to hurry something cooking we would take one of those lids off and set the pot directly on the flame. And behind that were two rectangular pieces of iron that were the same width as the first one that contained the two openings, but it was just a rectangular piece the width of the stove, I would say twelve inches wide and there was another just like that, so that the stove was possibly three to four feet wide and thirty inches deep or so. It was quite a large surface, and if you wanted something to simmer, you just pushed it farther to the back of the stove, and you could keep it hot or simmering. Soup could simmer all day. Or you could put a lot of things on the stove at one time because it had great capacity for surface heating.

At the end of the stove by the firebox there was the unit that we called the reservoir. It had a rectangular lid that would flip up and stay up at an angle, and we would bring water and pour it into that reservoir. It held about two buckets worth, so I would imagine it would hold between five

and six gallons. Whenever there was fire in the stove, the water would heat. That would be our source of hot water. We would get water from there for dishwashing or washing hands or taking baths.

Bread Baking Day

We baked all of our bread. Mother had a large bowl, I'd say it had a diameter of at least 24 inches at the top and slanting sides, in which she mixed bread dough. She always made about six loaves, and that would just fill the oven.

In the wintertime we baked with coal. We used coal because there was no wood in the area at all — Paul Bunyan had gotten there before the rest of us! So there was no wood in the area to speak of. We used corn cobs for kindling. In the summer time we would bake with corn cobs because it would be so warm that you wouldn't want to maintain heat in the house any longer than we had to. When you opened the oven door, the whole oven would be full of bread. The bread would really rise. It was high. You'd put your pans so they didn't touch each other, each loaf in a separate pan, but many times when it was baked it would just have all molded together into one huge piece of bread, so you'd break it apart. And the top of your bread, the part that was out of the pan, would be about twice as big as the base of the bread. It smelled so good!

Last year when I was in New York we went into Bremen House. I saw some bread in there, and I said to Daniel, "This looks just like the bread mother used to bake!" I bought it, and they have bought it since. The bread has a lot of air spaces in it and it's so very tasty. Although it's white wheat flour, it's totally different from the bread you ordinarily see.

When we were growing up, in the fall I remember Dad going to town to get the flour, and he'd go into town with the wagon and bring home ten hundred-pound sacks of flour. Then he would take it upstairs in the granary and store it there. We had a large can that held a hundred pounds and was kept in the house. We always bought Occident flour. It came out of Minneapolis. I don't know what other kinds of flour there were at that time. It was always in cloth bags which we used for dish towels. I remember going to town with Dad a time or two to get flour. The road paralleled the North Pacific railroad, and the horses would be frightened when the train went by.

Ironing

In the summertime, baking day was also ironing day, because we didn't want to heat the house an extra day, and the stove was hot. We had three irons and put them on the stove top and covered them with a baking pan. The irons were shaped like boats, identical at both ends, so they nested together. There was a handle that snapped on to the top, and when the iron

being used cooled down, we would put it back on the stove and snap the handle on another one. We ironed shirts, tablecloths and pillowcases (to iron sheets my grandmother Diede always folded them and sat on them). In those days we also ironed the men's work shirts and pants, as well as aprons, dresses and tea towels. It was several hours of ironing to do, and difficult because it was so easy to scorch things.

Family Bathing

Bathing was another thing. Up until the time we got the bathroom around 1927, bathing was done in a round wash tub, a regular wash tub which was three feet across. It's like the old wash tubs you see now. Because I was the girl, I had the privilege of having the first bath and the clean water, and then my mother took her bath. Baths were taken in the kitchen, so everybody else was sent to the other room, or Mother and I often took our baths before the men would come in from the barn. And then the boys and Dad in turn would all take their baths in the same water generally, and more hot water would be added from the reservoir to keep it a comfortable temperature. And as the boys got bigger, sometimes the water would be carried out and dumped and new fresh water would be used, but frequently all seven of us had a bath in the same water. I was the privileged one because I got my bath first almost always. Saturday night was bath night. It wasn't until much later when I was quite well grown that often there would be baths on Wednesday evening, also.

Our First Washer

When I was a child I usually wore the long underwear with the drop flap in the back, and we wore our underwear a week, before washing. When I was very small, quite young, my father got a washer for my mother. But the washer had to be propelled by hand. It had a handle that you pushed back and forth kind of like an "Irish Mail" wagon. It was more upright than the Irish Mail, because when you were sitting in the wagon the handle would come quite close to you. But the washer was upright, and you had to pull it back and forth, and it had cogs that made the dasher turn. That was my mother's first washing machine. I was very young at the time, about three or four, and it was too difficult a job for me. We also washed clothes on the washboard. We always boiled our sheets and towels and underwear. Everything was boiled so that it would stay white. The ladies took tremendous pride in who had the whitest clothes. It was a status symbol of housekeeping. Wash day was generally on Monday.

In the wintertime, even when it was cold out we would hang the clothes out. We didn't use sheets in winter very often. In winter we had cotton blankets on our beds that were twice the length of the bed. They would fold over in the middle so that you couldn't get your feet out of it at the foot end,

and you were sleeping in between the blankets, kind of like a bag — quite warm. We would take them out and hang them on the clothesline to air, so that they weren't washed more than a couple of times in a winter. In fact, we never washed them unless it happened to be an unexpectedly nice day. Usually it was done by airing.

You had to be careful when hanging clothes out in the winter because they would freeze solid. When sheets or towels were taken off the line they were rigid like kites. If you weren't careful and bent the sheets, they would break.

Cozy Homemade Bedding

Over these cotton blankets we used comforters. I don't know what we had at first, but I remember when I was still very young we started making wool quilts. We had sheep, and the wool would be washed and then when winter came my father would card the wool into little batts with little combs between six and eight inches wide and maybe three inches in depth. He would have two carding combs, and he just brushed them back and forth, and he'd add another little dab of wool and do it until it made a very nice little soft batt, about two by six inches. These would be made into quilts by overlapping them for the filling, putting them between layers of cloth, then quilting them. I don't know if we had feather comforts before that, I don't remember that, but I remember my Dad doing carding. The outside of the comforter would be made of some kind of a dark material, possibly flannel. Very frequently the top of it was pieced, we called it "crazy quilt," and it would have feather stitching by hand around the pieces. My mother did that. In her later years she made all sorts of quilts, many of which are still in use throughout our family.¹¹

These quilts were never washed, because wool just didn't lend itself to washing. Quilts would be aired frequently. We always put what we called a "quilt cover" over them. These covers were like a giant pillowcase. We had winter covers for quilts and we had summer covers — the winter covers were always made of flannel. And they would be taken off and washed, but the quilt itself would never be washed. It's the same thing as you're using on your feather comforters now, and for many years when our children were small I always used the quilt covers.

One thing we did have was feather beds. On the mattress we always had a feather bed that we slept on under the double blanket. These feather beds were warm and snugly. And we had a long pillow that was the width of the bed. There was a long cover that fit on it with a ruffle around it, and Mother always made those.

¹¹Velva's son David remembers that his grandmother made at least one quilt for each of her grandchildren, and she had a closet full of these quilts in her house in Lodi, California.

Feather Harvesting

We used feathers that we, should I say, “harvested” from our ducks and geese. We always kept ducks and geese for eating, but also for feathers. In the spring, always, as soon as the weather got really warm we would pick the down off the ducks and the geese. The night before we would lock them up so they couldn’t get out. And then Mother had a little stool to sit on, and she had a sack in front of her. We’d go and get one of the geese and she would take the neck of the bird and tuck it under its wing. Then she would hold the bird between her knees so the head part was facing her and the back was away, and then she pulled the feathers toward her, away from the way they were grown, and pulled them out. The ducks didn’t struggle much but occasionally gave a little grunt that we would hear. Then she would very carefully put her handful of feathers into this bag, because you had to be very careful or they would blow away, pop out at you! If you didn’t pull the down out of the birds on time, they would do it themselves when it got warm. You could watch them, and you’d see down all over the yard. They would be pecking with their bills and pulling the down, because it would get too warm for summer.

Picking ducks and geese was done first thing in the morning, and you wanted to be very sure that you had the head secure under that wing, because if it wasn’t they would nip you on your leg. We always harvested down. It was one of the jobs I didn’t care too much for, but it was something that had to be done. As each bird was finished it was turned loose then, and they’d go off, “wuack, wuack, wuack, wuack,” making a lot of noise. Only the feathers on their breasts were taken since those are the nicest ones. We *never* used chicken feathers. They were not soft enough for our use.

Coal Harvesting, Central Heating and Coal Dust Allergy

We heated our house with coal. We had a basement, and we had what we called a hot air furnace. It had pipes running to all the rooms. It had a front opening where you would shovel in the coal, and below that there was a place into which we would shake the ashes. It was a big tray in the bottom that had a handle with which we would carry out the ashes and the clinkers. We burned lignite coal — lignite is a soft coal and produced a lot of clinkers. Not all the coal burned into ash; there were these formations of small, lava-like clinkers.

In the summer time one thing that we always had to do was bring coal for the next winter into the basement. Our coal all came from open, fairly shallow pits. In that area there was a strata of coal that was quite close to the surface, and it was on Uncle Henry’s land. So for years and years we got our coal there. The men would go out and I guess would chop it with pickaxes, and they’d bring home the pieces that were big — 18 inches

long and some of them as much as 8 or 10 inches thick. There was a room behind the furnace that we would fill with coal. Coal would be dropped into the cellar through an opening in the side of the foundation that was built out with one of those little doors. Coal would be thrown into the basement through that opening. Then it would be very carefully stacked, the way you would lay stones on top of each other, so that you could still walk in. That space would be filled clear up to the ceiling. Toward the end it would be very difficult to get in: Someone would have to come in through the opening where they threw the coal to stack it. We needed a lot of coal to keep warm in winter.

We had no kindling wood at all. We used corn cobs for kindling. We picked up many bushel baskets of corn cobs, enough to fill a big corner space in the basement. All summer we would throw ears of dry corn (from a corn crib) to the pigs, and then after they had taken all the kernels off we would go out and pick up the cobs and bring them in. We'd need a lot for winter use to start fires, both upstairs for the kitchen stove and in the basement for the furnace.

In our house each room had an opening, what we called a "register," and it was installed in the side of the wall near the baseboard. It had a flap that you could screw shut. During the time I was a child I coughed continuously from fall until spring. I remember coughing until I was almost beside myself. As time went on and I have later had allergies, I'm convinced it was an allergy to coal dust. After I left home I didn't have that much of a problem, although I didn't realize it at first. I didn't miss the coughing. I was the only one that had this problem, and I remember feeling kind of hurt because I had this coughing and pneumonia.

Those families who didn't have basements with furnaces used a potbelly stove, and they would just heat the one room. In that case if they had an upstairs and most people did, they'd just have a hole cut through from wherever the heater was to the upstairs. In our house every room had a conduit leading to it, central heating. Our basement looked like a super octopus!

This was the house we moved to, a two-story house with a full basement including a root cellar. The first house we lived in down by the creek where I was born we always referred to later as Gottlieb's house, because that's where they moved.

Wells, Cisterns and Dad's Ingenuity

Most people had to rely on cisterns, because there was not always wind to propell their windmills to pump water. North Dakota was a very windy place, but we could go for weeks without a breeze in the summer time, which made it very difficult. We had a well. Wells had to be very deep in that area, and our well was 240 feet deep. We had very good water, and the windmill was quite close to the house, ten or twelve feet from the house,

so my father dug a cistern which is a square hole in the ground that is maybe twelve or fifteen feet deep. And it was cemented. Then he put a pipe from the corner of the cistern going into the basement of the house, that was maybe four feet or so from the bottom of the cistern. The cistern was deeper than the basement. Then he put a little faucet on the pipe in the basement which enabled us to get water for the house without having to go outside to get it.

Occasionally, when we had something that we really wanted to keep cold we would put it in a bucket and hang it just below the water level in the cistern to keep it cool.

Most people used rain water to fill their cisterns. If there wasn't adequate rain during the year oftentimes they had to haul water, because the water in their cisterns was too low. But we pumped from the well into the cistern always, and sometimes we'd have to watch when we were filling the cistern because every so often we'd forget and the cistern would run over.

Having water in the basement really was a tremendous advantage because then we never had to carry water for the laundry. Other people had to always carry their water in to wash, and sometimes they had to carry it quite a long way. In the basement of our house we had a little stove that we called the "laundry stove." It was very small, but wide enough so we could push the oblong washboiler to the back and leave enough space to work on the stove and put fuel in. Or we could put two boilers on it. We always heated our water for washing on this laundry stove. Other people had to heat it in the kitchen and carry it to wherever their washer was, if they had one, so we were saved a lot of lugging water.

Dad also put a drain in the basement in an area near the washer that was lower, and it had a shallow, bowl shaped funnel. There was a catch basin under the basement. We always drained our wash water down through that. We were very fortunate, because my father was always concerned about my mother having too much to do. I don't know whether my mother asked my father to do these things. I think that he possibly initiated a lot of it.

Butchering Day

Butchering day was always in the fall. We did do some veal butchering (very young calves) in the spring and summer, but the heavy butchering was in the fall when we made the summer sausage, bratwurst, hams and bacons. We always, always butchered with the Rieger family. We worked together. The Riegers would come over to our place for butchering day and my folks would go there for butchering day.

When the butchered pigs were hung, my father would heat several boilers of boiling hot water in the basement on the laundry stove. We had a long, deep trough, and after the pig had been killed it was put in it. I think it must have been one that belonged to Uncle Phillip because I don't remember the trough otherwise, but I know we shared it. They would put the

pig in, and they'd throw scalding water over it, and then they would turn it, and that would loosen up the bristles. Then they would use a knife to remove the bristles the same way you would remove fish scales.

After that part was done they would of course dress it out. The intestines were all emptied out, and hours would be spent cleaning them, and they would be the casings for the sausages. The small intestine would be used for the bratwurst and then the larger intestines would be used for liverwurst. First the linings of the intestines were removed by scraping, and then we would flush them out with buckets of water poured through them — of course, there was no running water — and then they would be scraped again. Almost always Uncle Phillip was the one that did that. He had a long board about two to two-and-a-half feet long and about three inches wide and a bucket of water. One end of the board was in the bucket, the other rested against his knees. He would spread one end of the intestine on the board and then take his knife and scrape along, so that everything except the basic thin casing was removed. When he had come to the end he would dip it into the bucket and then rinse his knife off and do that again. Then he would turn it inside out and do the same thing on the inside until it was just paper thin like the casings you see. Almost always sausage was made out of pork.

We had a big meat grinder which was turned by hand, and we had a machine that was used to stuff the sausages. These were either jointly owned, or we owned the grinder and the Riegers owned the stuffer. The grinder was five or six times as big as the little grinders we use today. The stuffer stood about fifteen inches high, and it had a spout coming out in front that was about five to six inches long. It had a lid that screwed down into it. You unscrewed the lid until it was raised up above the top of the container and then turned it to the side. You would take the meat that had been ground into sausage and seasoned — the seasoning was a very, important part of sausage making — and fill the container. Some people made good sausage and some people didn't, it all depended on the seasoning. The stuffer container was filled and the lid was swung back over the opening. They had already taken yards and yards and yards of the kaesler, casings, and pushed it onto the little spout. Then as they started turning the handle the meat would come out and the sausage would start curling up. They'd let so much out and then they'd twist it and those were the places where they would cut. Those were the portions used to make bratwurst. They would take other portions of the pig, the head, and a lot of the skin, and make what we called "head cheese," and they would make liver sausage, and that was boiled. That would all be put in a tub and boiled. Liverwurst was always ground, but head cheese was chunky.

The day after butchering day was the day to render lard. That was always a long day. The fatty parts were cut into small cubes which got put in two or three big kettles, and we just kept it on the stove and kept stirring it, and the lard would melt. The pieces that remained we called cracklings. You can buy them in the store now. A pig has huge slabs of fat underneath

the skin and that would be trimmed off. Also in that area would be the bacon area which had some strips, and we would trim off some of the fat that was inside. Oftentimes when you see slab bacon it has the skin on and then the strips of fat through there. It just depends upon how fat the animal is how the bacon is. The lard was what we used for cooking throughout the year. We very seldom ran out, but oftentimes people would run out and would have to borrow. It was just as pure as could be and the lard would be just as white as snow. It would be put in crocks and then covered up and saved. When the lard bucket was empty you took a big scoop and went down into the cold cellar, scooped out big spoons full of it, put them in the lard bucket, brought it up, and used it until it was all used up.

The cattle butchering was another day, a totally other day. We didn't often butcher sheep. My mother didn't like lamb or mutton.

Which reminds me of something that she told me not too long ago before she died. Her father would never, never eat fresh meat, meat that hadn't been salted ahead of time. Part of that was due to the fact that in earlier days to preserve meat it had to be salted. And when Mother made hamburgers or meat balls she would very frequently mix it ahead of time and put salt and pepper on it and let it sit that way for a while. She said that that was part of what she had learned because her father just wouldn't touch fresh meat.

Smoked Meat, Summer Sausage and Ice

We had a smokehouse for meat. Sausage was smoked the day after they were made. The hams and bacons were soaked in a salty brine before smoking. They sat for weeks for the brine to soak clear through. The sausage was smoked in a day or so, but the hams and bacons would take much longer to smoke. When all the meat was smoked, sometime after Christmas in January or February when it got very cold and the river froze over, the men would go to harvest ice. They would cut huge big chunks from the Heart River about a half mile from where we went to church, twelve miles from home.

A group of men, Dad and uncles, took the bobsled which was the big sled with a big box on it, and they'd cut through ice that was the depth of the water, twelve to maybe twenty-four or thirty inches. They had saws like a buck saw, saws that worked on ice, and two men would work together. They'd haul home the ice and put it in the smokehouse which then became the ice cellar. When the cellar was full of these blocks of ice, carefully placed as close to each other as possible until it was up to the door sometimes, straw was brought in and the ice was covered. That ice would sometimes last until August. The water was absorbed into the ground as the ice melted. The ham and the bacon and the summer sausage were left hanging in the ice house on pegs in the ceiling because that provided some coolness for it during the summer. It would be preserved that way. Many

people didn't have ice cellars, and a lot of people didn't have as much ice as we had.

Canning Meat

Oftentimes we'd butcher a veal or baby beef during the summer time, until the "spring" chickens would be ready, and of course we had no refrigeration then. Usually when we butchered an animal like that we butchered it together with the Rieger family, because it was just more than one family could preserve. We would cut the meat into small pieces and then we would brown it off in a fry pan on the stove. We had a crock, one of those old five or six gallon crocks, and we'd put the meat in when it was cooked through and then pour lard over it. We'd take the crock down to the ice cellar, push the straw away and set it on the ice and then put straw up around the crock to keep it cold.

Also in the winter time we would can a lot of sausage. When the sausage was smoked we'd take the big half gallon jars and put sausage in by winding it around all the way to the top and then stick a couple of pieces down the middle. Then we'd fill the jar with lard and process it in hot water.

A lot of the meat we used was canned, and we also would can the beef. Of course, you didn't need that much lard with the beef because we put all the pan juices in the jar, so that it would have almost a transparent appearance to it. That was real good and that was one of the ways we preserved meat for the summer. We cooked this like we cook Swiss steak today.

Washing those jars from the cooked meat was something else. It was terrible! The meat juices made the meat stick and it was very, very difficult to get it out. And I remember for years while my hands were small and I could get them into the jars, really scouring away at them because that meat was baked on to the jars. It was hard to clean!

Sometimes snakes hunting for cool spots crawled into the entrance to the ice cellar. I would have to go and get the meat in the ice house, because Mother wouldn't go in there because of the snakes. The door was one of these slanted cellar doors, a bulkhead with steps to the bottom. I didn't like snakes, either, and I would reach for the door with my right hand and turn away, so that if there was a snake it had a chance to disappear before I looked in that direction! They weren't poisonous — the rattlesnakes which were poisonous never went into places like that. I had to go into the cellar with a pan and a fork. The crocks had a big plate or a lid on top and then a dish towel which had been folded into a triangle tied around the top to keep the straw out. I'd brush the straw back so that it was clear and then I'd just reach with my fork and pry enough meat out for a meal.

Ice Cream, Sunday Company and Broken Plates

The other thing we did in the summer time was make ice cream. Since we had ice it was possible to make ice cream. People who didn't have ice houses could only make ice cream when it hailed. We did that sometimes, too. Although we often made lemon and coconut cream pies, we had ice cream quite often, especially when the harvest people were there and there was still ice in the ice cellar. We had a big gallon freezer, and that was a daily chore during harvest: We'd make ice cream for dinner at noon when the men came in from the field. I remember we used equal amounts of whole milk and cream which had been separated, which was pretty high in butter fat, eggs and sugar and vanilla. Once in a while we'd cook a custard, but usually we just made it with all raw ingredients. It had to be cranked, and I usually had to do it because the boys and men were out in the fields and Mother and I were home fixing the next meal. But the ice cream was really appreciated.

Sunday was a wonderful time for ice cream, and many times on Sunday after church we would invite company. In summer time people rarely went visiting except on Sundays. On Saturday we might get things ready; maybe make a big potato salad, and of course we always had sausage, we always had eggs we could boil, we always had noodles. On Sunday after church we would invite maybe two or three families to come to visit, and they would always stay for supper. Very frequently we would make ice cream, and on those days I didn't have to turn because there would be boys around to turn. When we had this company for dinner the adults always ate first, and then we children would go to our parents' places and we would eat off of our parents' plates. There was no such thing as clean dishes in between. Grownups would leave the table and then the children would be invited to come. I would sit at my mother's plate or my father's, one or the other, and I really don't know what happened as far as the rest of the boys were concerned, but that was always customary. You just didn't wash dishes in between, that was too much work. Many times we had twenty people there. We would invite a family or two and you'd say "Well, you come too." It was always done that way — those were great days. Another Sunday we'd go to someone else's house.

One day we had a lot of company, and we were washing the dishes after dinner. My mother had a set of dishes, white dishes with gold bands, a set of twelve. When we were washing the dishes, I dropped a whole stack of plates. I'm sure I was scolded for it, but either it was so terrible I don't remember or it was not very severe. Of course, I was totally devastated. As I think of it, I think many times when something like that happened my parents just kind of thought that we had suffered sufficiently. I don't know, but I kind of have that impression. Scolding couldn't change it. They were broken, and nothing would have put the dishes together!

Butter Churning Day

To me, store butter is not fresh butter and I don't eat it! Churning day is another story. Sometimes, if the cream was the right temperature it would go to butter very quickly. Because we had no way of regulating temperature without refrigeration, if it was too warm, I remember sometimes we just churned all day, as much as three or four hours, and it wouldn't turn, and we'd have to do it again the next day. It was the most boring job because there was nothing to do while you churned. We had two kinds of butter churns. We had the big wooden churn with the dasher that we plunged up and down, and we had the small glass square shaped butter churn. If we had filled it up I imagine it would have held a gallon of cream, maybe more. It had a handle on it that you cranked, like an egg beater, only instead of beaters like an egg beater it had four winged dashers sort of like a pinwheel at the bottom of a rod inside to which the handle outside was attached. I don't think we ever used butter that was more than a week old. If it didn't taste fresh in the morning we'd go to the cream bucket and we'd churn some more. "Old" butter went into the lard bucket for cooking.

Meals on the Farm and Mother Takes the Wheel

We always had our big meal at noon, because the men came in from the fields to eat and then had a long afternoon of work yet. In the morning Dad would get up and go outdoors — He usually got up around 4 a.m. during the summer months, and then at about 5 he would whistle, and the rest of us would get up. By that time he would have the machinery serviced, the cows in, the horses harnessed, and the feeding taken care of. During the summer time and in the spring the horses were always kept in the barn. They were never let out, except on Sundays when we wouldn't use them. Weekdays they needed to be there in the morning to be fed. He would do that, and then when everything was ready to milk he would whistle and we would get up and go out and milk. Usually in the summer time we milked about 25 cows. We all milked, but when the boys got a little bigger, Dad would leave the harnessing to the boys while the rest of us milked. In the early years we had a small Fordson tractor with a gasoline engine. Dad used that for certain things, but we still used horses for a major part of our field work. We usually had around ten workhorses.

After we milked, we separated the cream from the milk using a hand cranked separator. (During the summer we would get around twenty gallons of milk each day and that took about fifteen minutes to separate. We'd end up with eighteen or twenty gallons of cream a week.) After separating we'd go and have breakfast. We always had meat for breakfast, sausage or ham or bacon, and eggs and a lot of bread. A lot of times we had kuchen or some sweet pastry that Mother had baked the day before. It was very necessary to have a big breakfast — this was about 6:30 or 7 a.m. and the field workers would be in for dinner at 12 o'clock. Usually Dad didn't want "lunch," which was a mid-morning snack, and we didn't usually have lunch

except at harvest time. At harvest time when there were other people there we always took lunch to the field in the middle of the morning. First thing in the morning Mother would set some sweetbread dough for cinnamon rolls or kuchen and that would come out of the oven by about 10 o'clock. Then we would take the lunch out to the field, and quite often if the watermelons were ripe we'd take some watermelon, too. We'd cut the watermelon in slices (like apple slices) and fill a dish pan with them. A dish towel folded into a triangle was tied up over the pan — we did not have saran wrap or aluminum foil. We'd have sweet things as a sort of mid-morning snack, and always in the afternoon an afternoon snack, because at harvest time people worked very hard. When they'd come in the evening we'd feed them supper. The evening meal was a much lighter meal than the noon dinner.

Very frequently we walked to the field with the lunch. Sometimes it was far away, a mile or more, and we would take the car. I taught my mother how to drive. She had never driven and she wanted to, so I took the instruction book and read it to her and she learned how. I didn't know how, but from the book I taught her, so we could go out and take the food out to them that way because we had no horses — they were all being used. Sometimes if we had something to go and they were going to be far away, she'd arrange to have lunch ready ahead of time so that she could send it out with them in the morning. Or if grain was being hauled to the granary, we'd send lunch when the empty wagon went out.

My parents had a car from my earliest memory, but the roads were awful, full of ruts, and if it rained we were sure to get stuck in the mud and would have to go for horses or a tractor to pull us out. Before my mother learned to drive the car, I remember numerous times when we hitched a team of horses to the buggy and Mother, my younger brothers and I went to visit different aunts while the men worked in the fields.

In the fields the men never stopped work. They would eat their mid-morning lunch in relays. Very often, for example, they would be threshing what we called bundles — grain that had been cut and made into bundles — and there was usually an extra person with the threshing machine, or sometimes two. My Dad owned a tractor and my Uncle Phillip Rieger owned a threshing machine, and they were always there with the rig, which was stationary. Usually they tried to keep five bundle wagons going, and others would pick up the bundles and bring them in, and Dad and Uncle Phillip would unload the bundles into the thresher while the people who brought in their loads would come and have their mid-morning lunch. Then they'd go back and finish unloading and the next group came in and they would have a lunch. But they never stopped the machine for lunch.

“Heading” the Grain and Threshing for Hire

During the harvest time before we got the combine, we did what was called “heading” the grain. We had this machine that would just cut the

tops or ears off the stalks. It was pushed by four horses, driven by a rider in a seat in the back. The cutting part was up front, and behind it was a big platform. A cutting blade with long teeth threw the grain back onto the platform and onto a canvas “elevator” that could be moved back and forth to distribute the grain in the header box. My father “stood the header” and Oscar and I “worked the box,” spreading the ears of grain into the corners of the header box.

The year Lloyd was born, 1927, we all worked in the fields. Herman drove the header box. Mother did the stacking. Ishmael would stay in the car with the baby while mother stacked.

Let me tell you about stacking. The grain from the header box was unloaded. The stacker put forkfuls of the grain at four corners and then along the edges to make a rectangular stack. Every forkful had to be properly placed. When the stack was seven or eight feet high the top was closed by narrowing the top of the stack and rounding it to keep rain out. There were always two stacks built side by side so later the feeder from the thresher could be pulled between them and be fed from two sides. People took great pride in being good stackers. I was very mediocre at it.

Threshing was the next step after stacking. We had the tractor and Uncle Phillip had the thresher so we always did those two farms, and usually we took on extra threshing for other farmers, those that didn’t have threshing machines. And as I remember, that was done “by the bushel” — paid by the bushel. The land owner would get a certain number of bushels, and then a ratio of one out of four or some other ratio would go to the machine owners to pay for the threshing. I know I remember seeing Dad sitting and figuring out at the table how much it was. The thresher had a balance on it that you could watch, and it would record how many bushels they had threshed. It had a bucket that was kind of elongated and kind of rounded, and that would fill up, and as it filled up it would spill out and dump it out into the wagon. The wheat came through a pipe into the wagon, and each dump would register by adding another number, like a duplicating machine works, and so they’d have a record. After a while the wheat would make one pile in the wagon box and somebody would have to go down into the wagon and shovel it into the corners so the wagon would get full all over. When the wagon was full somebody would drive it off to town or home. We lived so close, we were only about four miles from the grain elevator, so that we could take the wheat to the elevator. Whereas people that lived farther south would have to put it in bins, so they’d haul it in when they had time.

Driving the Grain Wagons to Grandpa

I think possibly I got involved in field work because I was the oldest. I remember a number of years when I was really quite small when there was threshing, I would go out and take the full wagons from the machine. Grandpa Diede would come out from town when we were working at our

place, and he would haul wheat to Antelope — I would drive the wagon from the thresher until I met him. I didn't go all the way to the elevator for quite a few years. I drove the horses, big horses, until I met Grandpa, and then I would take the empty wagon and bring it back and Grandpa would take that load to town. I imagine I was about eight or nine. I remember one of those years when Oscar was supposed to do it — he must have been seven or eight. He was much more acquainted with that kind of thing and could handle horses much better than I could, but he wouldn't go to the field because he said it was "too dirty out there" by the thresher! When it was windy you'd always get a lot of chaff blowing around.

Always there were two horses hitched to the wagon, and usually they were very careful about the horses they let me use — they wouldn't let me take all of them. We had one team that was a little bit on the wild side, and I don't remember what happened with those, if they didn't use them, or if somebody else took the load if that team of horses was pulling a grain wagon. We usually had to have at least three wagons to make it to town and back again, so I don't remember what happened, but I know there were certain horses they wouldn't let me take. I don't remember that anybody in our family had a bad experience with the horses, but it was not uncommon for horses to be frightened and take off, causing the wagon to tip over, and people were killed that way.

We never put the seat on grain wagons. I just sat on the grain and put my feet out over the sides sometimes or let myself just get swallowed down into the wheat. Coming back with the empty wagon I just stood up. I was strong. It could be that Grandpa had the seat, and if he did, then he would just lift the seat from one wagon to the other.

There was no communication between us and Grandpa Dieder. It took a given length of time to go to town, and it took so long to fill a box, so he would take it into the elevator and start back, and when the load was full I would take off to meet him again. We always had three wagons for grain, one being filled and two being driven. This would be a couple of weeks toward fall.

We didn't always take all the grain to the elevator. Some of it we brought home. Oats and barley ripened first, so usually that part of it was threshed first, and that was all brought in to the barn, into the granaries, as well as seed wheat for the following year. At those times Dad was usually home to do the unloading with a big shovel in through a granary window removed for the occasion.

It was while we were threshing the oats and barley — undoubtedly barley — that Oscar refused to go out to the field because it was too dusty. So we'd just bring the load home and Dad would shovel it there with what we called the "scoop shovel." It was built like a scoop, and it had a handle in the back and a brace type handle over the top. A strong person could really shovel a tremendous amount through the window. Oats and barley were kept for feed. Later in the year they would take the oats and grind it with a grinding mill. The oats were ground up into feed for the horses. It was

better for the horses when it was ground. And we also ground corn for the chickens — instead of giving them whole kernels it was always ground.

Plowing and Sowing

I participated more in plowing, planting and that type of thing than I did in the harvest, because most of the time at harvest time I was needed at home to help with preparing food. When I was quite young I did a lot of plowing. Usually Oscar and I worked with two teams of horses and two plows, one following the other. These horsedrawn plows had two plowshares. Later on we got a tractor and that had three plowshares. Oscar always was the leader more or less because he was the boy, even though he was younger. When they hooked up the horses, most of the time a team had three horses in the back and two in the front — they put a pair of the better horses out in front — which was pretty hard to handle. Men almost always used those, and the boys, but they never gave me five horses, ever. Oscar had five, and then I came behind him with four horses abreast, and we plowed. These plows had shaped seats on them but had no padding.

Although I did a lot of plowing, I never did any sowing. The only time I ever remember doing any sowing was one day when I took fresh horses out to my Dad. (Very frequently, especially if the weather had been bad and they couldn't get into the fields, sowing would never stop from sunrise to sunset. So we would take fresh horses out and bring the others back, and then of course take lunch out.) This one day I remember when I went to bring the horses out to Dad, I took the drill, which is what we called it, while my Dad ate. But that is the only time I ever did that, because the wheat sacks were very heavy. They had, I don't know, about two bushels in them. The wheat sacks were a very heavy canvas and they were about four feet long and about fourteen inches in diameter. They were not built like a flour sack. They were much longer and slimmer.

One of the things we always did the night before sowing was fill all the sacks for the next day. Very frequently I was the one that would go out and hold the sacks while someone would shovel the wheat into it. When it was all full my Dad would lift it and shake it down, because it got heavy, and then he would tie it with a piece of binder twine. Then when they got ready to go in the morning, they would take the sacks and lay them over the top of the drill — the drill is the machine that sows. It had all the little disks from the little tubes that lead into them that would cover up the grain as it was sown. The drill had a box on the top that had a flip up lid, and so they would pour the grain into that box section. But to get the sacks to the field they would lay them across this drill. Then when they got out to the field usually what they would do was unload one sack, and then drive a little farther and unload another, and so on. So the sacks of grain would be there where you needed them.

Cultivating

I never planted corn, but I sure did a lot of corn cultivating — a *lot* of cultivating. That was done with two horses. You went down the row of corn, and you had to sit with your feet on the pedals and you had to guide with the pedals — there were little anchor-shaped kind of hooks there that went into the ground. There were three on each side. We did one row of corn with one turn, and that would break up all the dirt and bring up the grass roots on either side. You had to sit there and manipulate this, because if you looked away you'd get some corn. So it was a very tedious thing to do, really tedious. The horses went straight down the row. There was not much difficulty with the horses, they just went. The horses were straddling a row of corn, and I was sort of protecting that row of corn and getting stuff out from either side. And I remember Dad would go to the field and look around and say, "Somebody sure was looking around a lot when they were working out there," because there would be spaces where there were three or four corn plants missing! But we usually cultivated all the corn four times in a season, starting when it was just about five inches high and then did it three times more. That was a lot of cultivating. I imagine we had forty or fifty acres of corn.

Making Hay

The most important thing on the farm, aside from harvesting and seeding, was making hay. That was late May or early June and a very important part of the farm work, because then you'd bring in the hay for the following winter. If you didn't have hay for your animals in winter you were really in trouble. Usually after the hay was cut those fields would be disced and that would be what we called "summer fallow." Nothing would be planted there until the following year. What was left of the plants would be disced under, and I imagine the effect of it was very much like what we'd call composting now. It's good for the land to have those roots and stubble decomposing there.

For hay everybody planted certain grains, usually oats, and it was cut down with the mower when it reached a certain height. You'd sit on the mower and off to the right would be this long blade which was about six feet long or so. You would ride along on mower which was pulled by two horses. This big blade was keyed into some kind of gear so that as the wheels went round the blade went back and forth very rapidly. Mowers are still the same type of thing. It was the same process for all cutting. The header, the binder — all had the same principle.

After the hay was down for a few days it was first raked into rows and then into heaps, and then it was brought in. Our hay in those days was all handled by a person using a fork with four tines, fairly far apart. We had no loading equipment. Nowadays they have bailers and it's all done by

machine, but we did it all by hand. We did, however, have something we called “slings” that would fit on the hay wagon that were used to unload.

Our barn had a very high attic for hay, and it was like some of the roofs on some of the houses here in New England. It came to a point and at the front of the barn there was a door up high, clear to the very top, that just dropped down completely and left a wide opening. At the peak of the barn, there was a metal railing that was installed when the barn was built. From that there hung several pulleys, and when we put hay in the barn we always used two slings for one wagonload. In the field the hay would be laid down on a sling in the empty hay rack, and when it was about half full, they would put the second sling on top of it and then fill that. When they came back to the barn with the loaded hay wagon they would hook the long rope which extended from one end of the rack to the other together with a rope that ran up to a huge hook. Then we'd take the horses off the hay wagon and hook them on to some eveners that were attached to this rope, and then we'd drive the horses out into the yard away from the barn, lifting the hay into the air.

Eveners made it work. There was a piece of board maybe four or five feet long, and to the back of that, right at the center was a big eye of some kind to which the rope was hooked that was used to pull the hay up. There were straps coming off the horses' harnesses that were hooked on to each end of the board. The horses had to share the load in order to make a good pull.

I didn't like to drive the horses to unload. It was such a heavy load to be pulled up to the railing at the tip of the barn that we had to drive them and yell at them to keep them going and pulling harder. I just didn't like to do it! So if I could possibly get out of doing it, I did. I didn't have to do it too often, but it took two people to unload these slings of hay — one to stay near the barn to pull the rope and trip the load and unload it when it came to the right spot and one to drive the horses. And frequently only one person came in from the field with a load of hay, so I would have to help if I was there. I had begun to drive the horses by the time I was eight years old.

If there had been only one sling on a haywagon per load it would have been far too heavy a load to unload the whole thing at one time. So we put in one of these slings or nets and filled the wagon, the hayrack, about half full and then put the second sling on. Once it hit the railing at the top it went very easily. We had a long rope attached to the bottom of that net, and when it got where it was wanted in the barn you pulled that rope and it was tripped and unloaded. Then we would do the same thing with the second sling. That was the way we unloaded into the barn.

We also made haystacks, which were much, much larger than the grain stacks that I talked about the other day. A haystack would have been possibly the size of this house, perhaps thirty-five feet wide, and sometimes much longer. Sometimes they were very long and very high. We unloaded from the wagons on to the haystacks also with the sling, but that wasn't

so heavy a job because mainly it had to be pulled off the wagon and onto that stack and then it was dropped. Then somebody would have to what we called “work the stack,” which meant take every forkful and place it in a very special spot. Because if the hay wasn’t properly stacked rain could get in on it and it would rot the hay. But if it was properly stacked it would be very well protected. Once in a great while somebody would put a piece of canvas over a stack, but most people didn’t have that. A big wind might open up the stack by lifting some of the hay, but not usually. A good stack would withstand almost anything.

As wintertime came then we always used the hay in the big barn first and hardly ever had to put more hay in there. The big barn had a very, very big loft. But we had other animals in other sheds that we had to feed. So the hay would be loaded from the haystack onto the wagon and then taken over into those feeding places.

Women’s Work and Men’s Work

When I first started hearing about Women’s Lib and all that type of thing, it took me a long time to understand what that was all about. I remember when I learned that Peggy Weber, who was one of David’s friends in high school, graduated from Mills College and got a job with the telephone company earning two thousand dollars less than men who had the same education and did a similar job. I certainly thought that was really unfair, but still I didn’t really understand, and when I tell you about my father you’ll understand why.

It wasn’t until we were in Coos Bay, after Clarence’s death, in fact, that I finally realized what it was all about. And I decided then that I had always been liberated and that’s why I couldn’t understand what people were talking about. Because in our house there was no “man’s” or “woman’s” work. Everybody worked when there was work to be done. And after I was married it was the same way — no man’s work or woman’s work. Anybody did what needed to be done. I had just always been liberated. You did what needed to be done. When I was growing up, the day I left for high school, one of my brothers was assigned to the house. Later, when my husband Clarence and I were raising our children, boys did what needed to be done — David and Daniel did what needed to be done. There was no question about who would wash the dishes or who didn’t wash the dishes. If the dishes needed to be washed and one of the boys was there, it was done. If there were clothes to be brought in, whoever was there brought them in.

Growing up I lived in a totally different environment than my children. There was a lot to be done on the farm, but in our California home there wasn’t too much to be done that way. If the lawn needed to be mowed and if they were strong enough, they did it. Of course, there was the physical aspect, but I don’t think our girls were hesitant to do work. Usually that wasn’t the problem. On most farms women were always permitted to do

everything. It was the boys, the men who didn't do certain jobs. I finally realized that.

Around 1979 I went to Roseburg, Oregon, one day to a Women's Task Force meeting, and Howard, our minister, was in charge of the Women's Task Force at the time. As he was talking about differences between men's work and women's work it was just like a light that hit me. "Oh! I've always been liberated. I've never known the difference between men's work and women's work." And neither have my families. As far as Clarence was concerned, he did anything that needed to be done.

Clarence's family had a rooming house much of the time that he was growing up, so emptying chamber pots and that type of thing was just one of his assignments. I don't think I cleaned a toilet more than half a dozen times over all the years we were married. That was his job he said, to start out with. He was going to clean the toilets, and he did.

Outhouses and Chamberpots

We had an outhouse on the farm, and we had a two holer for a while. I don't know why, really, because we didn't need it that bad. I was the only girl, but when we had company on a Sunday afternoon, which was really quite often, two or three of us girls would go together to the outhouse. The way girls do now — go to the girls' room.

We did have chamberpots. The boys had more chores outdoors than there were indoors. When we got the Delco battery plant in around 1928, we took one of the four bedrooms upstairs and made it into a bathroom. (The battery plant was charged by our windmill.) As soon as we had water, we built a cesspool, and from then on enjoyed indoor plumbing at night and in the winter. Nowadays I often wonder how people on low incomes can afford toilet tissue for a whole family. With indoor plumbing toilet tissue is a necessity. We used Sears or Montgomery Wards catalogs in our privies, or newspapers. Today that would be an immediate call for the plumber!

My Father, Christ Diede

My father was a very special person. Like others in his family, Dad was somewhat brusque in a way, but he was a very kind person, a nice person. As the years have gone by I've thought about it — he was a very unusual man for the time. He lived long before his time.

Among the German farmers there was a lot of milking and the type of work that was "women's work" — many men would not do "women's work," and yet my Dad was totally different. When it came to Mother he was overly protective of her all the time, which was very unusual then.

I was aware of his being different. We had a telephone party line with thirteen other families. Each family had its own ring, but we heard all of the rings. Ours was four short rings, Uncle Mike Diede's was five short

rings, and others were a short and a long, a long and a short, and so on. A favorite occupation was to listen in on other people's conversations — “rubbering,” we called it! One of my favorite things to do on stormy nights was listen in if the phone rang one particular neighbor's rings along about five o'clock or so. Somebody would call up and say, “Hello,” and ask for the wife. And the husband would answer and say, “No, she's out milking.” He'd be in the house and she'd be out doing the chores! It always amused us so much, because any time when my Dad was available to do the chores he would not permit mother to go out and do them, “because she has enough to do otherwise.” Taking care of the chickens, gathering eggs, gardening and that type of thing was always women's work, and yet when we were quite small if Dad had the time, he would do anything of that nature that needed doing.

When I wanted to go away to school, I just begged and begged to go to high school, and Dad would say, “Talk to you mother, and if your mother will let you go you can go. When the boys get to that age, I'm going to let them go. It's up to your mother.” My mother said, “Well, when you learn how to cook, bake and keep house, you can go.”

I finished eighth grade when I was twelve, so when I was almost sixteen I asked again if I could go to high school, and this time I was permitted. The day I left home one of my brothers was assigned to the house to help Mother, which was absolutely unheard of in most homes. Most boys never did dishes, never did household chores — that was just beneath them. But even before that, when I was away from home and wasn't there to wash the cream separator, instead of expecting Mother to do it, Dad did it. We had a cream separator in the barn, and we had a little kerosene stove, a little heater. Before milking was started Dad would put water on to heat, and when separating was over, he washed the cream separator. Mother never washed the separator in winter. Dad always did it. He did everything he could do to make life easier for her. It was a kindness on his part.

My Dad was also the peacemaker in the whole family. As in other families there were squabbles, and Dad would be called upon to talk to everyone. Shortly before Mother died she was talking about Dad. Mother made the comment that Grandma Diede would complain to Dad when Grandpa didn't treat her right.

He was a very good father, a stern father in many respects, in that he expected discipline. We were to follow the rules. He was the religious leader of our family — a custom among our people. We always went to church. There was to be no dancing, and cards were forbidden. I remember when Ishmael and Oscar were graduating from high school together: Ishmael was class president, and they were going to have a prom. Mother knew, but she didn't say anything, until the afternoon before the prom when Dad said, “Is there going to be a dance?” The answer was, “Yes.” The thing I remember about that whole discussion and event is how hurt Dad felt that no one told him — that he wasn't trusted.

Dad was not an argumentative person, and he had an expression that

he used when mother nagged at him about something, the translation of which is, "One alone can't fight." He wouldn't say anything more. He would not argue with her or hassle her or any of those things which the other families were doing. That was his statement: "One alone can't fight."

Dad was a rather quiet person, not very talkative, but when something amused him he would laugh until tears flowed down his cheeks. Another story I remember about Dad's sensitive nature. One day Mother had a sick spell of some kind. I wasn't there, but I heard about it. Oscar was home at the time, and it wasn't long after Grandma Diede died. But anyhow, Mother fainted, I guess, and Oscar and Dad got her into bed. And when they got her into bed, Dad fainted also! He was such a soft person.

We lived well. We had good land, but on the other hand, my father was an expert farmer. He was very thorough. He took good care of the land and farmed it well. There was a lot of envy, and I believe some people said that Christ Diede owned the heart of Stark County. But part of it was the fact that he was a very good farmer. A lot of people would not work their land properly, but he did a very thorough job. Some people would plant their grain into what we called "stubblefield," which was what was left from the previous year, but he never would do that — he would disc it first. Fields were not plowed every year. This was to avoid some erosion. He never cut corners. He was just a very thorough person in everything he did, very frugal, but not stingy.

We got to do a lot of things that other children didn't get to do. One of the things I remember that we got to do was go to a circus at Dickinson. I must have been about twelve or so, I think. And I don't know anybody else in our neighborhood who got to go to the circus, but our folks took us.

We also went to the laying of the cornerstone at the state capital at Bismarck. There were lots and lots of people there from all over. We had to get up very, very early in the morning to do our chores because we had to do all the milking before we went. Plus we were on Mountain time and Bismarck was on Central time, so when we crossed the river at Mandan, between Mandan and Bismarck, the Missouri River, we lost an hour. So we had to go very early.

I've been trying to think who the speaker of the day was, and I thought of it yesterday when I was walking but now I've forgotten again. I should look it up sometime. Anyhow, it was the Vice President of the United States who was the speaker, and that was the day my father was pickpocketed. He felt someone take the wallet from his hip pocket, and he turned around and he grabbed somebody next to him, but by that time the person had passed his wallet off to somebody else, so we had no money to go home on. He had had two cream checks from Mandan creamery in his wallet. So when we went home we stopped at the creamery in Mandan and stopped the checks and they gave him a check to replace it. I don't know if we had enough gasoline in the car to go home with — that part I don't remember. It was about eighty miles, a long drive, and it took about two and a half hours or so.

I think basically my father was interested in things, more so than a lot of other people were, which is possibly why he wanted to take us to things like the circus and the cornerstone laying. We almost always had a daily newspaper. We had the “Mandan Pioneer.” For years we had the “Dickinson Press” which came once a week; we always had that because Dickinson was the county seat. We had a German newspaper that came twice a week called the “Staats Anzeiger.” I know that I was reading the paper when we started taking the daily paper. Whether they bought the paper because I was old enough to read it, I don’t know. Of course, many of the other people couldn’t read English. But my father came to this country when he was fourteen years old, so he started school. When he went to school it was to first grade with the regular first graders to learn English. He already had the Russian and the German. Later he learned more English from Aunt Anna who was living with us. But when he came to America he went to school. I don’t know how many years; it seems to me he went two or three years.

Grandparents’ Visits

The land that my father farmed was the land that he bought when they bought the big house. The land that Grandpa originally owned was the land that Uncle Gottlieb got when he bought our little house, because in those days when you bought a house, you bought the land it sat on. My grandfather, as I’ve said before, bought his land; he didn’t homestead it. Then my parents lived there, and I assume the reason we moved was because of the size of our family, because there were Oscar and me and Herman, and the other house was very small. And then of course with Anna and Gottlieb just married, they needed a house and the land. So the land that my folks had originally bought went with the house. You didn’t just buy a house, you bought the 160 acres it was on. I don’t know how my grandfather divided up the land among Christ and his brothers, but I would assume they all bought it from him. I would think so, but I’m not sure. Grandpa moved to town — I don’t remember when they moved to town, they were always retired in town as far back as I can remember. Grandpa and Grandma had moved onto the land that was later Uncle Mike’s, and I assume that maybe they bought the house. That had a sod house that was used for a summer kitchen. It *could* be that Grandpa and Grandma Diede built the house that Uncle Mike’s later lived in. As I think back over the years, I realize I had a close relationship with my grandparents, more so on my father’s side, although I don’t know why. I was very fond of my other grandparents as well — my stepgrandmother (Mother’s stepmother) and grandpa. But I loved to go to town and stay over night at Grandpa and Grandma Diede’s house, which didn’t happen too often, but once in a great while it did. And they would come and visit occasionally. They lived in town which was ten miles away. Their sons, the five brothers, all lived within a few miles of one another.

Each year Grandma and Grandpa Diede who lived in Hebron would come out to the farm to visit. Someone from one of the five families would go to town and bring them out. They'd stay a day and a night at each place when they came. On the evening of the second day they'd be taken to the next place, and the next evening they'd be taken to another place. Grandpa usually helped around the place some, and Grandma would do mending. She always mended every place she went — that was her job. When the end of the week came somebody would take them back to town.

Once a year for a day was usually all that Grandma came to visit. Whenever we went to town we'd always stop at Grandma's house because they were very close to the center of town. We would go by their house when we went to the store. We'd bring them milk, cream, eggs, butter and so on from our farm, as others did from theirs. Grandpa would come out to the farm more frequently. If there was a need for him to help with the farm work, he would always come, but Grandma would stay home in town. As I said earlier, for instance, during harvest Grandpa would haul grain to the elevator, because this was not heavy work.

Sharing Rooms, Oscar and I, and Family Threshing

At home for years the youngest brother always slept with me. Later on I had my own room. The boys had a room with two double beds in it. The downstairs bedroom was not used since that was the company room. When we made a bathroom out of the fourth bedroom upstairs, Mother and Daddy had their room, I had my room and the four boys had their room.

Oscar was my oldest brother. I was the eldest, but he was the oldest of my four brothers. He and I used to have a lot of severe battles. When Mother and Dad would go to town they would leave certain things that needed to be done. I would ask him to do things, and he would not want to, and I'd say, "You've got to do them because I'm older." And he would say, "But I'm stronger." That's when the battle would start. So that many times the things didn't get done.

Another thing I should mention is how I loved to read. I just loved to read, and I would get books from Aunt Anna and Aunt Lydia. They were really the only source of library books I had. They must have had about twenty or thirty books each. They had the Jean Stratton Porter books, "The Harvester," and I can't remember the others. There were always the beds to be made and things like that, but if Mother and Dad went to town, very frequently I would spend quite a long time reading, and then I'd put my book away and hurry real fast to get my work done before they got home. I guess that's where I learned to work fast, because I can still work very well under pressure! I did that so frequently. I would do my reading first and then I would do my chores.

Oscar defied me a lot of the time. He'd also do the sort of thing that started out with good intentions but kind of end up badly. I remember one

Sunday when we had all of these little ducklings that had just hatched. We were going to the Neuberg church twenty miles away which was an all-day affair, and Mother was quite reluctant to leave the little ducks unattended. Oscar would have rather not gone to church if he didn't have to, so he decided to stay home and take care of the ducklings. While we were gone he decided that he was going to teach the ducklings how to swim. He put them in the water tank and most of them died, so that when we got home most of the ducks were dead.¹²

On Sunday one of Oscar's chores was to put gasoline in the car. We always had barrels of gasoline around the place that was delivered because we needed it for our farm equipment. Dad didn't go to town that often, and I don't even remember a service station, although there must have been some. There was always a barrel of gasoline for the car, and that was kept in the garage near the car.

This particular Sunday morning Oscar decided not to open the garage doors, and he just went in and started filling the can with gasoline from the barrel. Because the garage door wasn't open and he couldn't see, he decided to check how close to full it was and lit a match. Of course, the thing exploded. It singed his hair, but he must have acted very quickly because he got out of the the garage by going through the back doors of the car before it caught on fire. They tried to pull the car out, but it was destroyed. I imagine he was about ten. That was what you call a "close call."

Herman was next in line. I was just about five and he was born about the time Grandma Reich died. Ishmael was a couple of years younger than Herman and then Lloyd was born when I was twelve. I remember the doctor being there for Lloyd. I think we were asked to stay upstairs or something.

The bedroom downstairs was used only for company and in case of illness or birth. At that time mothers of new babies always had to stay in bed for two weeks. They weren't permitted to do anything. We had kitchen towels that were like tea towels only quite long. They'd be a yard and a half long or so. It was customary to tie one of those to the foot of the bed so that when the mother wanted to sit up she pulled herself up with the towel so she didn't have to strain. When there was a new baby, I helped, and there was always a hired girl, too. And this particular time it was Matilda Siewart, a girl from our church.

There was quite a lot of child care for me to do, but it wasn't like nowadays, because my mother was there all the time. The only time there was babysitting for me was when the folks went to town, or occasionally they'd be off in the fields. I was left with Ishmael when he was very young. Lloyd was born in April of 1927 and that summer it was very difficult to get help so, as I said earlier, the whole family worked in the fields. We took the car out and we took our lunch out and the baby would be left in the car. Ishmael, who was about four or five, stayed in the car with the baby. We

¹²For a history-repeats-itself story see "California Years: Life in Gridley During WWII."

headed the grain as I described, Oscar and I helping, and when we'd get back from gathering the hay, Oscar and I would get to rest while Dad unloaded the box and Mother stacked it. She would go up on the stack. As I said, a stack was started by carefully doing the four corners, each with a good forkful, and then we laid it carefully along the edges. It was really a skill to do a good stack, and if you didn't do it right the stack would slip and fall over, so it was important to stack it right.

When we would leave to go back for another round, Mother would go back to the car and stay with the baby and Ishmael until we came back, and then she would come and stack again. The only time she didn't leave the stack was at the very end when it was really pretty high and rather difficult to get off and on. She'd occasionally stay on top for one round to finish up the stack so she wouldn't have to climb back up there.

We worked as a family many times. It was not unusual for Mother to go and work in the fields. I remember when I was a little older she'd go out in the fields and I'd be left to cook and to bake. Before she went out to work in the fields in the morning she or Dad would always kill and clean two chickens. And she made the bread dough before she left. Making the bread dough was a very difficult job because there was such a big bunch of it, and you had to knead it a lot. She'd get the chickens ready so I could cook them, do the dinner and have it ready when they came in at twelve. I was ten or eleven then. I wonder why they ate the meals sometimes, as I look back. It was very easy to scorch things because we had those porcelain pans, and cast iron ones — you saw what happened to the strudels the other night. That happened very, very easily. We just hardly cooked strudels without scorching them.

A Helpful Competitor

How would I describe myself as a young girl? I was a very nosey person in a way, a competitive person in some respects, and I liked to do things people appreciated. I remember one time we were going to town it was going to be Grandpa's birthday, so I made a birthday cake to take to town for him. We got there and gave him the cake, and he was very touched. Then he disappeared. Pretty soon he came back. He'd gone directly to the store and bought me a beautiful scarf! I still have it. It's rectangular, I'd say it's about a thirty inch rectangle with a design and made of changeable taffeta, between a blue and a gold shade. It pleased me very, very much.

I liked to do that type of thing very often; it was one of the things that I was. When my parents went to town, almost always I set out to do something to surprise them when they came home. I guess I just liked the recognition or attention. Sometimes I would bake something. Sometimes the surprises weren't too good.

One of the things that always had to be done on Saturdays was the car had to be washed. One day when I was about fourteen or fifteen when

everybody was on the hay fields (Mother was out too), I just took the car out and washed it. I didn't drive at that time, but I had taught my mother to drive. So I got the car out, and I got it washed and polished and everything, and then I decided to put it back in. When I put it back in it didn't stop, and I broke the front bumper off! I was just terrified! There was no way I could escape telling my dad and my mother what I had done, because Sunday morning the car was going to be out and that bumper was gone. But as I remember I wasn't scolded — if I was, it wasn't anything I remember. I know I wasn't spanked. It was the same as when I broke the stack of plates. I think in that respect my parents were different from others. They were *very* stern, my father particularly so. But I think with that type of thing, the feeling was that I had been punished enough because I had been through those agonies. But I remember *dreading* their coming home — *that* I remember.

I always got along well with the the older people in church. I was a conversationalist, and I liked to visit with people. In fact, I remember my Dad asking many times, "Isn't that talking machine ever going to unwind?" I remember him saying that many times, and of course Aunt Lydia *never* stopped talking, so he commented on the fact that since the two of us were really very much alike, we must be related. (We were, but not by blood.)

One day shortly before Mother died with that final stroke, we were talking, and she commented on how much I used to talk, and then all of the sudden I didn't talk much any more. I think she said it was when I went away to school. When I would come home from school they would wonder why I didn't talk much. So I thought about it, and thought, "Well, maybe I found out how little I knew!" So that kind of verified what I remembered: That I just chatted constantly. I know Dad would say, "You're just like a talking machine that's wound up." In those times there weren't too many victrolas. Uncle Gottlieb's had a talking machine and that's why we knew about them.

Declamations and Bible Verses

I was very, very competitive. As I was growing up and became a teenager we had Christian Endeavor conventions each summer that I looked forward to so much. (In the morning of a Christian Endeavor Conference we usually had a worship service with choirs.) Each year these meetings were held in different churches in that southwest part of the state. There were about five parishes, with more than one church in a parish. We had only two churches in our parish, but most of them had three churches. "Yoked parishes" is what they are calling them now. One minister served two or three churches. They'd be one Sunday in one church, one Sunday in another. On Sundays when the minister wasn't there whoever had been elected the elder for the year would read a sermon from a book. My father was the elected elder a good many times. Almost always he was the elder or assistant elder —

“first and second elder,” they called them. He was very much involved in our little Bethesda church.

So when there was a conference we had Bible verse contests. We had what were called “declamations” at the time, which are readings, and I almost always did a reading of some kind. I was always involved, and a couple of years, one in particular I remember, I was involved in a Bible verse contest to see who could say the most Bible verses. There were two of us on a team. First one would say one verse, then the other would say one. I spent days and months getting ready for that. I wrote out on a piece of paper the beginnings of the verses and I memorized them as though they were a chapter. I remember when I would go out in the field at harvest time to “shock,” which was when we’d take the bundles and stand them up in a tepee fashion so they dried out, taking this list in my pocket and spending my day going over those verses and memorizing.

This one particular church day, it really got to be a joke. Everybody was laughing, because Edna Barrett and I could go on and on and on. We went on about twenty-five minutes because she also had memorized a lot, but I won in the end. I had close to two hundred Bible verses that I memorized, and I could just go from one to the other without ever repeating any. If I’d repeated one, it would have been over.

Visiting Ministers, Coffee and Tea

Each year there were three church festivals, basically, that we shared. One was a Missionfest in the fall. Special offerings were taken and a minister from another area was brought in for the day. It was a real treat because ministers would come from long distances. There was this one particular time that this man came from Kulm, which was the other side of Bismarck, and he was to be the speaker at the Neuberg church. We lived only ten miles from the railroad station in town, and so we were asked to pick him up and bring him way down to the other church. He came in on Saturday afternoon on the train, and he had supper with us that day and breakfast the next, and then we took him down to the church, about twenty miles south.

Now we had never had coffee in our house. We drank Instant Postum as our hot drink. So in the morning when this minister (I’ve lost his name) commented on coffee, Mother said we didn’t have any, so nothing more was said.

Now near the church there was a family by the name of Hirning, and Mr. Hirning had tremendous skill in his fingers. Anybody who had broken bones would be taken to him and he would set those bones just by touch. He was not a doctor but he had learned this skill from somebody. Anyhow, that’s beside the point. They lived quite close to the church, and during the noon hour instead of eating at the church many times they took guests to their home, because Mrs. Hirning would have everything ready, and then

they would go back for the afternoon prayer service. So after church was over that morning we were invited for dinner, because we had brought the minister. We all walked into the house, and when he smelled coffee, the minister said, "Coffee, coffee, coffee, coffee, coffee!"

My mother was so embarrassed that after that she bought some coffee, and from then on we had coffee in the house. It never occurred to me until years later to wonder how that man, who was a coffee addict, had managed to get through the sermon that morning at all without his coffee! He'd gone about 250 miles to preach the sermon that day, and he'd had to do it without a cup of coffee for more than 24 hours!

We also never had tea in the house when I was growing up. When we had what we called "tea," it was camomile tea. I loved to go out in the pasture to pick the little white flowers, petals all around a yellow beehive-like center. I would take my hand palm up and fingers spread and put it under the flowers, close my fingers and pull the flowers off. It would fill a container, which was usually a half gallon or gallon tin syrup pail with handles. (The gallon containers were also used for lunch pails for our school lunches. All the lunch for three or four of us was packed into the same bucket.)

When I returned home with the camomile flowers, I would spread a newspaper on the floor of our guest bedroom and spread the flowers on the paper. They would remain there until completely dry, when they would be placed in a tin container with a tight lid, to be used as needed.

Religious Holidays Celebrated Religiously

We celebrated religious holidays very religiously. We *always* always celebrated first and second Christmas day by going to church, first and second Easter day, and first and second Pentecost. We always celebrated Ascension Day which occurred on a Thursday forty days after Easter, and then Pentecost ten days later.

On Christmas Eve usually we had a children's program, but sometimes if the weather was too bad we wouldn't have it then, because we had to go by sleigh. We might have it Christmas Day afternoon, or we might have it the 26th. We did not, when I was growing up, celebrate Christmas Day with much gift giving or a big dinner. Christmas Day was when we went to church. We took our lunch as we would every Sunday and stayed for the afternoon and we did the same thing on the day after Christmas. We were very church oriented.

Shortly after Thanksgiving the announcement would be made in church that they were going to have to take orders for Christmas bags. Each family would order however many bags they wanted, and in most cases, like my parents, they'd always order one for each of us. They were fifty cents a bag. They were brown paper bags which were really quite heavy when I stop to think about it. They had two or three pounds of nuts, all kinds of nuts, and

an apple and an orange. In many cases the nuts were all the family had in the way of presents, just what came out of the Christmas bags. We were always thrilled with the oranges because we didn't very often have them.

After Thanksgiving we began preparations for the Christmas program, and every child had something to say, to memorize. Every Saturday between Thanksgiving and Christmas we had practice for the Christmas program. This was taken very seriously. For many of those years my father was Sunday School Superintendent, so he was in charge of the practices, which was okay if the weather was nice. We lived eleven miles from church. Many times it would be snowing, but we would have to take that trip, anyway. Practice usually began at ten o'clock so we could go through the program twice in one day. If we had to go by sleigh we usually went as far as Uncle Fred's so we could take fresh horses, and we would all ride together, which we really liked because it was fun to get together in this way.

Mother would never go. She would stay home those days, and of course sometimes there was a baby that she had to keep at home. After we had gone through the practice, we would have our lunch at noon and then go through the program again. Then we would go back to Uncle Fred's and take our horses and drive home. It was always nice to come home because Mother had some soup ready. Then on Sundays we went again by sleigh, and on Sundays Mother would go. Sometimes it would turn cold during the day. I remember one day in particular, it turned cold while we were gone and it was so cold, so cold, you just almost felt like you would freeze. One year I think we did that trip by sleigh eleven times. It was just a bad winter. But unless it was a blizzard, we would go to church in the snow.

On Sundays we did not stop at Uncle Fred's. We drove our team all the way because there were too many of us for one sleigh.

The Christmas program had to be well done. We learned our carols, everybody learned carols together, because we didn't learn songs in Sunday school. As I told you, we met in the same room so there was no opportunity for that. Unless we sang the carols in the afternoon time before prayer meeting started, we wouldn't have a chance to learn them, because during the worship service we sang worship hymns. There was always a Christmas tree, and the bags were placed around the base of the Christmas tree and sometimes it was quite wide. There was always a Christmas tree, but no Santa Claus. The tree would be nicely decorated. I don't remember who had the responsibility of decorating the Christmas tree. There were these old fashioned wax candles on it, and near the end of the Christmas Eve service, and sometimes even through the whole service, the candles would be lit. There would be two or three men with long poles and they would never take their eye off the tree the whole evening long because of the fire danger. I remember one time (and I don't know if it happened in our church or if it happened in Hebron, because sometimes, if our program was a different day, we'd go to the Hebron church with my Grandmother and Grandfather), the tree caught on fire, and I can still feel how terrified I was. The men saw it and beat the fire out before it could grow. They were close enough so they

batted it with their hands and got it out. They didn't take their eyes off the tree, but I didn't either because it was scary. I am very fearful of fire. It worries me more than any other thing. Fires are so destructive, they are so total. A flood you can clean up after, but after a fire, everything is gone.

There were no fire engines. We were very fortunate in my lifetime that we didn't have many prairie fires. Occasionally there was a prairie fire and they were very, very frightening, especially if there was a wind, because they would move so rapidly. If there was a prairie fire the men would take wet sacks and try to battle it with that, but it was almost a hopeless situation.

Christmas Eve at Home

We had a Christmas tree for Christmas Eve. That was when we always opened our gifts. When we came home from church we would open our Christmas gifts.

The tree was brought from town and Dad put it on a stand, and then it would be taken to the parlor. From then on the parlor door was closed. Nobody was permitted in the parlor until Christmas Eve. I was about ten or so when I got to help with the tree trimming the first time. Then when we came home from church we'd go in, and there would be the Christmas tree.

Usually there was one gift for each person. I remember two or three Christmases as I was a little older. I got a camera one Christmas, one of those little Brownies that folds in. Another Christmas I got a necklace with a little amethyst stone in it. I still have that, but the camera has disappeared. Those are the only two Christmases I remember what I received. They were really special. Usually we got some clothing.

Christmas Smart Alecks

I wanted to tell you about one other Christmas. That was the Christmas of the smart alecks. We were taught a prayer when we were children that had a very nice rhythm — "*Englein komme...*" which says "Little angel, come make me good so I can enter heaven with you." This particular year there were three of us. My cousin Ben Rieger, who was older than I was, my cousin Ben Reich, who was quite a lot older than I, and me. Now instead of a kind Santa Claus, we had a mean *Belsnickle*, the European tradition of a saint who was very mean and who would "take care of" children who hadn't behaved. He usually came with a whip and a lot of chains. I don't know why we were such smarties but way before Christmas I kept saying, "When the *Belsnickle* comes I'm going to say "Santa Claus, make me good so that I can enter into the nut sack with you." The phrase spoken in German was the same rhythm as, "Angel come, so I can enter heaven with you." That was the significance and the fun of it.

So this particular Christmas eve we were in Hebron for the Christmas program. Uncle John and Aunt Emma were there and Uncle Bill who was not married at the time and was living with Uncle John and Aunt Emma. (John and Bill were my mother's brothers.) After the program — programs were held early, I imagine about six o'clock or six-thirty so it was still an early evening — we were talking about getting ready to go home. Uncle Bill said he wasn't coming, he was going to stay at Grandpa's. So we went home, and pretty soon Uncle John and Aunt Emma came, too, and we were in the house. The Christmas tree was in a corner of the dining room by the door that went onto the big porch, which we didn't often use in winter. That was in the days when you never locked doors. The candles were lit and everyone was jolly.

So we were there, and all of the sudden we heard this horrible racket and noise. It was the *Belsnickle*. And then we saw the *Belsnickle* go past the window and head for the porch door and start pushing it open. The tree was against the door and the candles were lit, so the men all ran and held the door. Finally he got the message and went around the other way to the kitchen. When he came in he headed directly for me, just like that! With this big sack. He stood up — I can still see him standing in front of me — and he took my neck and pushed it down into the sack and held it there. I managed to free my head, but he got it again. I can still visualize that bobbing up and down! I didn't know who it was at the time, but it was my Uncle Bill. He had turned his fleeced lined sheepskin coat inside out. The next day the *Belsnickle* arrived at the Rieger's house and went right up to Ben and really gave him a bad time. I know Uncle John and Aunt Emma were there. And the third day, the second Christmas day, he arrived at Uncle Jake's house and went right after Ben Reich, and Ben ran and got way under the bed!

That's a Christmas I remember very well! That was fun, as I think back on it. I guess I was ten. Bels meant heavy coat. I wasn't believing in Santa Claus, I was being so smart. I had figured that one out. We all paid for it. I don't know why — there were the three of us and I guess the word got around. I guess we must have been very bold about it because everybody seemed to know.

Nuts, Sunflower Seeds and Entertaining

Another thing at Christmas time that was really different at our house, was that, aside from the candy and nuts in the church bags, Mother always bought nuts in town, so we had quite a few nuts. The nuts were always put in the closet in the bedroom downstairs, just off the parlor. When we had company between Christmas and New Year's, we always got out nuts and ate nuts, which many families just didn't have.

That reminds me of sunflower seeds. We couldn't have survived without sunflower seeds. We raised our own sunflowers, of course, and when the

season was over and the sunflowers were gone we'd take them and hold them upside down over a sack or a tub or something and take a stick and bat the heads until all the seeds would fall out. Usually we had at least two great big twenty pound flour sacks full of sunflower seeds. Sunflower seeds were a very important part of life. When someone called and said they were coming over for the evening to visit, somebody would go out to the granary and get a pan full, sometimes two of them, and put in sunflowers and put them in the oven and roast them a little. We never, never salted them. We'd all sit around in a circle and eat sunflower seeds and spit the shells out. Sometimes when people left — there might have been two or three families there — there'd be about an inch of sunflower seed shells all over the floor. It was one thing you just always did when you sat eating sunflower seeds, something that everybody had. We called them Russian peanuts.

Pickles and Sauerkraut

As the years have gone on and I have learned how nutritious sunflower seeds are, I have often wondered if that wasn't a survival food, because we had almost no vegetables during the winter. We had carrots, we had potatoes and we had beets. In the summer time Mother pickled some of these and canned them. But aside from that we had very little fresh, nothing fresh. We always had a lot of cucumber pickles, and we had watermelon pickles. At the end of the season, just before the day the frost came or was going to come that night, we went out and picked all the watermelons, regardless of size, even if they were only two or three inches across and brought them in and put them in the basement. We had a big crock that stood about three feet high which would hold about fifty gallons. We would put as many watermelons in there as there were, whole watermelons, and then we poured brine on and spices, just like we made cucumber pickles in the jars. They would never be touched for two months or more, and then we would take them and peel the outside, which of course was all wilted then, and cut them up to eat as we did pickles. They were super! (Later on we didn't do it that way — Mother would just pickle them in jars without the rind after she moved from the farm.) We always had the watermelon pickles, and we had sauerkraut.

Sauerkraut was a thing we lived on. When you read history, sailors would take sauerkraut against scurvy, so I guess that's why we needed some of those things so desperately. Sauerkraut was always made in a big crock — we always made a lot. Sauerkraut needed to be firmly packed. We had a cutter that was maybe two and a half feet long or so, and down the middle of it it had three slanted knives. Kind of makes me think of a grater. We would take a head of cabbage and run it back and forth and cut it quite fine, put it in a crock, and then after a certain amount of it was in there we'd put some some salt on. Then it would have to be packed. When I was fairly

young, my mother would take me and scrub and scrub my feet. They had to be clean. Then I would be put into this crock, and I had to walk around and pack it down, along the edges particularly. The thing I remember most about it was walking around on this squishy stuff, it didn't take long before I'd have to go to the bathroom! Then my mother and my father would be so disgusted, because I'd purposely been sent to the outhouse before we started this!

In among this sauerkraut we would put whole heads of cabbage — quite a number of them. And those heads of cabbage would be what mother would use in the winter time to make cabbage rolls, *haluptzy* as we called them, or “pigs in blankets” is what they're often called. When I was growing up we never made cabbage rolls with fresh cabbage. It was always sauerkraut. Of course, nowadays when people do them they wilt the cabbage with water. When the crock was full we had wooden lids that had been cut to fit inside, and a heavy stone would be placed on top to keep it weighted down. They stayed in the cellar.

Clarence and the Big Freeze

Years later, after Clarence and I were married, around the time of our move to Gridley, California (David was a few months old) in 1942, we went back home to visit Dad because we knew he wasn't going to live long. He had cancer. We went in September and stayed a couple of weeks because teaching school in Gridley wasn't to start until about the twenty-second of September. We left Kelso probably about the first of September and went back to North Dakota. I stayed on a while, but the day before Clarence was scheduled to go back to California, it looked dreary and rainy out, and people said, “Tonight it's going to freeze.” So it was wet and messy out, but we spent most of the day harvesting everything that was left out there. All the pumpkins, the dill, the watermelons — anything and everything was brought in. Of course, to me this was a situation that happened many, many times. This was the day before it froze! But Clarence talked about that day the rest of his life, it was such an experience for him. The potatoes had long before come in, but whatever else was left we just walked back and forth from the garden to the house and carried them to the basement all day long, and to him that was a very, very memorable time.

Our Large, Close Family Circle

My mother and father were both from families of seven, and there were thirteen families of cousins. As we were growing up we basically never had any friends, you might say, because we had so many relatives! I have 63 first cousins. All the friends we had were people we would see in church, and quite a few of them were relatives, or the people we went to school with in our country school. We didn't have time to go and visit, although

sometimes I walked to visit Aunt Anna for a few hours in the afternoon. I would have to work my way through two fences, each having three strands of barbed wire, without catching my clothes or my arms.

The thirteen families lived within a radius of approximately seven miles from us or an overall diameter of fourteen miles. We lived sort of to the north and Uncle Gottlieb's, Uncle Dave's, the Heinles and the Reigers were farther north than we were. So we lived in close relationship to each other. Grandma and Grandpa Reich, my mother's parents, as well as my Dad's parents lived in Hebron. So when we went to town we would visit them. When we went to town we would take cream and milk and eggs, because we had our own. This was always done, so it didn't really cost them that much to live in town. In those days you really didn't buy that type of thing in the stores. There was no refrigeration.

We were a very close knit family as far as I was concerned. They mattered a lot to me, and I think one of the most traumatic times of my youth was when Uncle Bill and Aunt Katie decided to move away. They decided to give up farming, and they bought what was called a Gamble store at the time — it's now Western Auto. They bought this store in Wilton which is the other side of Bismarck. I remember I was just totally devastated when they had to move because I felt so badly. I was a young teenager. I just couldn't imagine anything worse than them moving away, because they were part of my family. Then a few years after that Uncle Adam and Aunt Hilda Reich sold their farm at an auction sale, and they moved to Ashley which was about 250 miles away — they had a grocery store there for quite a while. As I remember both families just tired of farming. So again, the circle was broken. After that, aside from my cousin Richard Reiger, the oldest of the cousins on my mother's side of the family who went away to the seminary and became a minister, I was the first one to leave. When people started leaving, I left and went to Washington State in 1938 to go to college.

Land Division, School Lands and Prairie Hay

In North Dakota and I imagine other midwestern states, too, all land was divided into townships which were six miles square, and each township had 36 sections of land. A section had 640 acres. The sections were divided into quarters which had 160 acres. In each township it was mandated, by state law, I guess, that sections sixteen and 36 were called school land. They belonged to the state, and income off of those sections was used to help support the schools. Most of the time they were in what we called "prairie land," they had never been plowed.

These school lands were "auctioned off." Every year or every couple of years, there was a "sale" of school land at the county seat. Everyone who lived near or was interested would go and bid for them, and the use of them for that next period of time, which was a year or two, went to the highest bidder. Whoever worked them paid for the privilege of the use of them, and

they did not work them other than to cut the grass, or in later years people were permitted to fence it and run cattle in it for pasture. They paid rent on the land and that income went to the schools. Usually it had nice grass on it and we would cut prairie hay off of it. It was valuable to have that prairie hay because it seemed to have some type of nutrition the animals didn't get from our other hay. The rest of our hay usually was oats that was planted for hay and then cut before it reached maturity. In later years my father planted a field with alfalfa.

One thing about the prairie hay I remember very, very distinctly. I hated to go on those trips when we brought in that hay because prairie hay had what we called "hay needles" in it. They stood up straight and had a kind of a little flag which was like a miniature feather. On the end of it it had a little hook — when you looked at it very closely it almost looked like it had a little anchor on it. They were painful — they'd get into all your clothes and they were really sharp. Some years there were many more hay needles than others, I don't know why. It depended upon how much grass there was and how much rain there had been. So I didn't like going out and helping bring in that hay, because it hurt! The animals liked that hay. It didn't have the same effect on them. It wasn't a last resort, they liked that hay. It was very, very nourishing.

My Schooling, High School and Teacher Training

We had a short school year, and the reason for the short school year was there was so much farm work to be done. Our district school year was eight months, but we were very fortunate. In the other districts around, south of there where Uncle Jake's lived and so on, they went to school only seven months of the year. School was out in April and started in September. And many, many times people were kept out of school to do chores. It was not at all uncommon for the girls to be kept out of school on butchering day, because butchering day parents would be very busy, so the older daughter would be kept home to take care of the children. The school we went to was a mile from where we lived. We could see the school house from our house. When I first went there were about sixteen or seventeen of us in grades one through eight. It was quite a large school. Many of the boys were very big at fourteen or fifteen years of age. We usually had very inexperienced teachers from states east of us, and many times the boys really gave the teacher a very, very bad time.

I remember my school days at School No. 5, which I attended after our schoolhouse burned down, especially our Christmas programs. We spent a lot of time memorizing verses, doing acrostics and little plays. These evening programs were always well attended by families and relatives from other schools. The ages of children in school could be from four to seventeen.

As a youngster I had always said that I wanted to be either a missionary or a nurse. I had no desire to be a teacher. There were seven rural schools

in our school district. Our township was an area of about nine miles by six miles, and in that area there were these seven rural schools. They were placed so they were two or three miles from each other so that children could walk to school, because there was no transportation. People either walked or in the winter time they were taken by sleigh. My father was on the school board, so the applications for jobs would come to us, and some years for the seven schools there were thirty or more applicants. In many cases the teacher would come back from year to year, so I just didn't see teaching as any kind of a possibility at all. I was the first of the girls in our area to go away to school except for a friend from our church who went to Redfield, South Dakota, to a seminary. In our community the only time it was acceptable for a girl to go to school was if she was going to be a minister's wife.

I started grammar school when I was five or a little bit younger because I spoke English since Aunt Anna had been living there, and they seemed to feel I was ready. School was conducted in English, and if we spoke German on the playground we got punished. That was about the only thing I got punished for. We were not to speak German on the playground. We were supposed to learn to speak English when we went to school. Of course, some of the teachers were more strict about that than others — they could not understand German, so they were not very happy when we spoke it.

I graduated from the eighth grade when I was twelve years old, and I wanted to go to high school. I just begged and begged and begged to go to high school. My father would say, "Talk to your mother. If she lets you go, it's okay. When the boys get the age to go to school, if they want to go I'm going to let them. Talk to your mother."

I just begged and begged, and Mother finally said, "When you learn to cook and bake and keep house, you can go."

So along about the time just before I was sixteen I then really started coaxing and goading, and then it was agreed that I could go to school. I went to Dickinson which was a teachers' college 35 miles from home, and they had what they called a Model High School there. The college students who were working on their teaching credential did their practice teaching there with those of us who were in the Model High.

So I went away to school. That same year two of the Jose girls who were church friends of mine also went, so the three of us lived together in a private home. We had kitchen privileges, and we had two rooms. We would bring our food from home, as much as we possibly could. I think we were paying five dollars a month for our rooms, and we would buy what we had to buy. I remember after we had been there a while we were questioned when we went home how much money we had spent for food, and it was something like three or four dollars. We were scolded by our parents for being so conservative. They thought we weren't eating right. Our meat came from home, and we always brought some cream and milk and so forth when we came. As I said, from my home it was 35 miles. From Jose's it was a little farther, so we didn't get home too often. Somebody would have to

come and get us. But it was the county seat, and sometimes people came to town on business, and they would bring us food supplies. At that time we paid \$12.50 a quarter tuition. The school was on a quarterly basis, and the tuition was \$12.50, but we actually paid \$15: We were issued our books from the bookstore, and if we turned in all of our books at the end of the quarter, we got a \$2.50 refund. And that to me was one of the days I really waited for, when I had that \$2.50 in my hands!

Let me backtrack a little bit. I had said that I wanted to be a missionary, and that was in the 1930's during the dustbowl days. I had hoped to go to Hastings, Nebraska, which was a Presbyterian school. My cousin Richard Rieger and his wife had a church there. He was a minister there, so it was a school I knew about and I planned to go there. First I would do my high school at Dickinson's Model High School and then I was going to do this. But when I finished high school, times were so bad I didn't even mention Hastings, because it would have been too expensive.

So I went first of all to Dickinson Normal School and started taking the teacher's course just to stay in school. I had signed up for a two-year course in teaching, but all of a sudden one morning at assembly Mr. Hatch, who was the head of the placement bureau, said they had a need for a second grade teacher in Hazen. The next assembly he announced a couple more vacancies. And suddenly I said to myself, "You can do missionary work in the schools."

So the spring of the year they gave the teacher's examination, and I decided to take it. I passed it and got a job right away. I had done my four years of high school in about 3 1/2 years or so, a very short period of time — I took extra courses. Then I took one full year of college, plus a summer session, and passed the teachers' exam, and then I went out and got a teaching job for that first fall. I was 21 years old.

When I started teaching, I was very aware of things that had been done when I was in school and what my teachers did. Before I started teaching I did not have practice teaching because I wrote a teacher's examination at the end of my first year and passed it, so I taught on that credential. So I resorted to my memory for a good many of the things I did in the classroom, memory of how my teachers had done things. Because when you have six to eight grades in the same room and have to get to all of them each day for many subjects it takes a lot of planning, and I would remember what my teachers had done when I was in school and try to pattern after that.

I don't think I'd ever have succeeded if I hadn't thought back and remembered how my teachers had done things. Those were the days when the teacher did it all. Unless you hired someone to do it, you started the fire, you tried to chop wood for kindling (usually old railroad ties that could not be penetrated by an axe), carried in coal, swept the floors, supervised playground and all else that came up.

I taught a second year, too, and between my two years of teaching I spent a summer in Portland, Oregon. After my second year when several traumatic things happened at the place where I lived, I decided that I wanted

to leave and didn't want to do that any more. I didn't want to live in that type of a circumstance. So then I went to summer school.

Rural Teaching, Board and Room

My first school was in Glen Ullin. I lived with a family by the name of Dittus in their home and had to walk to the school most of the time, which is about a mile. There was one family that lived fairly close to the school house, and so I hired them for \$5 a month to start the fire in the schoolhouse each morning.

It was one of the rural schools where we had all the grades in the same room. A school could have all the grades, but I was short two. There were only ten children. In the house where I boarded, I slept in the same bed with my eighth grade student, and they put a cot in the same room for Ruby, my second grader. I paid \$11 a month to the family for room and board. I was getting \$60 a month, and my contract read, "This contract will be void if teacher is married." I don't know why. They liked old maids, I guess! I don't know if it had to do with the fact that married women weren't supposed to work, or exactly what it was. I knew one of the men teachers, and we kind of speculated whether his contract said the same thing, but I don't remember the outcome of it right now. But anyhow, he wasn't fired when he married.

The only peer support I had was another teacher in the district named Ann Miller. (She later lived in Quincy, Washington. I corresponded with her for years, but recent letters were returned to me.) She was in the district and would come over occasionally and visit. She was dating a male teacher off and on, and he was a friend of the family I was living with.

Part of my job living in the household was to empty the chamber pot every morning, the one in our room. For some reason or other the lady I lived with was not too happy with me. What she really wanted was for me to be kind of like a maid, and she'd make comments like, "There's sure a lot of difference between people." Then she'd name a teacher who had lived there a year before who would put up all the lunches for the children, which I didn't generally do. I didn't feel obligated to do that. I always helped with the dishes and the chores, though.

That was the first year I voted. I was about eighteen or twenty miles from home. My father came and got me. I was anxious to vote, and he was anxious for me to vote, which, as I think of it now, was probably quite something in those days. He had to come and get me and take me back for school the next day — quite a trip for a November day in North Dakota.

I didn't talk to my parents on the phone very often as it was a long distance call, but I did get home frequently for weekends.

I stayed just one school year at Glen Ullin, and then I went back to Dickinson Normal School for the spring session. I took what was called an "intersession" course. I taught an eight month school year. Dickinson

always ran a six week session in April and May before the summer quarter. I took this intersession course and I took correspondence courses, so that I spent one full year at Dickinson and later one full year at Ellensburg, Washington, two summer sessions at Dickinson and two at Ellensburg and got my B.A. degree from the Ellensburg College of Education.

As I mentioned, I did two years of rural teaching. The second year was a very traumatic year in many respects. In some respects it was a better year and in other respects it was not. It was a successful teaching year. I think the reason I didn't go back to the first district was because I didn't intend to teach the next year: I was going to go back to school. But there must have been a shortage. Anyhow, I took the school in this other district.

I lived with a family in a place that was northwest of Hebron about the same distance as we lived southwest of Hebron. The family had three daughters and one son. One of the girls was out of school — she had graduated from the eighth grade. I had the other two in school. One of them was I think seventh grade or so and the other was younger. Reuben was also in my class. He was the youngest, and he was a spoiled one who caused me problems. This particular year I shared my room with all three of the girls, but I had my own bed. There was a big room upstairs, and there were three double beds in the room. I had my bed and Hulda had hers and the other two girls had the third.

This lady was very nice. They had had two years of very poor teachers in the school so that the children were really far behind where they should have been. I worked hard trying to get them up to level, because in those days all children had to take eighth grade examinations. In the seventh grade they had to pass agriculture, hygiene and geography. Then the other subjects, English, history, spelling and math, and one more, had to be taken in eighth grade. So the goal was that they had to pass these examinations.

With as small a group and as many grades as I had, I did a lot of things on work sheets. I would spend hours getting papers ready. I had one of the gelatin duplicating "machines" that was there in the district. There were three different plates with gelatin on them, and you made your master on regular paper with a purple pencil. First you wetted the gelatin plate with a sponge, and then laid the master on it face down. After the image was absorbed into the gelatin, the master was pulled off and pieces of blank paper were laid on the gelatin so the image was transferred. You pulled off the sheet and put on the next until you had enough copies. It took a minimum of six hours for the image in the gelatin to dissipate so you could use it again.

So it was a long, laborious job to make copies. Often just using carbon paper was easier. You haven't lived until you know the gelatin process! And the mother used to say to me, "Aren't you going to go to bed?" You can't do in one year what other people didn't do in other years!" The family were extremely nice to me.

Incidentally, supplies in rural schools were limited. For example, my allotment of construction paper for the year was one thin package of white

9 x 12 and one of colored paper. Anything else I had to buy myself.

The family belonged to the church in Hebron. Very frequently I would call home and one of my brothers would come and get me on Friday afternoon and take me home for the weekend. Then on Sunday my family and I would go to church in Hebron (by then we no longer attended the country church) and I would go home with the family.

The problem that arose there was the fact that the father was not a stable person. I don't know if it was his father or somebody in his family had committed suicide. And he himself would go into these very, very, deep, deep depressions.

This one day the children had really given me a bad time in school, and when I came home I guess I must have looked depressed or something. They began to question what the problem was, and I mentioned that Reuben had given me a hard time. So he took the boy out to the barn with him, and they quarreled, and he beat the boy. I kept suggesting that maybe I ought to go out — I was sure he was going to kill Reuben. Eventually, after the boy had come in, the father himself wouldn't come in, and for some reason his wife didn't want to intervene.

To beat the boy was not uncommon in those days. It was a "spare the rod and spoil the child" philosophy. There were a number of times when my Dad, even though he was a very kind person, would take the whip to the boys when they wouldn't behave. It was just that philosophy at the time.

So that part of the year was really very, very emotional. They think what really brought depression on in this farmer was during the Depression when he would go out in the morning to the barn. His whole herd of cattle was literally starving to death because there was nothing to feed them. This was during the dust bowl days of the early 1930's when the only thing to cut for hay was Russian thistles (tumbleweeds) and some farmers didn't have those. And yet he was not permitted to butcher an animal because they were mortgaged. The depression of going out to the barn and the garden and seeing the animals starving and some of them dead just really created this problem. Eventually, years later, he did commit suicide.

West for Summer Work and College

As I think of it, I really don't know what prompted me to go west, except a friend went west and I had communicated with him. His name was Michael Kasberg, and he was one of my student teachers in high school. We weren't really close friends, but for some reason or other he and I corresponded for a number of years (still do, off and on). He lived in Portland, I wanted to get away, and it seemed an exciting thing to do.

I went out the summer after my year at Glen Ullin teaching and worked as a domestic in Portland up on Council Crest in one of the better homes. I knew I was going to go back home because I did have a teaching contract, but I didn't say anything at first. But the lady of the house encouraged

me to go back and do something other than just be a domestic. I did the cooking for the family, which was to me a challenge, because at home if we were going to have company Mother always did the company cooking. She just didn't trust me, and here I was cooking for these elegant people and elegant company and so on! I liked that summer in Portland. It was the summer I learned to knit. On my Thursday afternoon off I went to Meyer and Franks department store. I bought yarn for a suit and finished it. At this point I was 23. My mother's aunt lived in Portland, and a cousin of my father's.

For college I chose Ellensburg, Washington, mainly I think because there was a family from home living there. I didn't know the family, but they had moved to town there and had a little restaurant and soda fountain. I was tired of teaching rural schools in North Dakota and somewhat adventure-some, so I decided to go to Washington state and chose Ellensburg State Teachers College. It was kind of a thing out of the blue. I just decided that I wanted to go.

The thing that I have many times thought about and tried to remember as my children grew up, was that when I decided I wanted to go, my parents did not object to it. They took me to Ellensburg in the car. The trip was about 1,200 miles long. My cousin Rachel Rieger and another girl from Hebron came west in the car with us. They went on to Portland with my parents and remained there working as domestics. (Later, more of the Rieger girls came to Portland, and in 1941 Uncle Phillip and Aunt Katie and the children still at home moved to Portland, too.)



Figure 3: *Velva's parents, Maria Reich and Christian Diede, Jr., on their wedding Day, November 1, 1910.*



Figure 4: *Velva's father driving six horses on the drill, seeding wheat, around 1920.*



Figure 5: *Christ and Mary in front of the barn on their first farm around 1912.*



Figure 6: *Christ waters the horses before a trip to Richardton. Uncle Gottlieb and Aunt Anna later owned this farm.*



Figure 7: *Velva (left) and little brother Oscar with their parents on a chilly Sunday around 1920.*



Figure 8: *Oscar reveals at a young age the determination that would lead to battles when his older sister was in charge!*



Figure 9: *With an appropriate smile, a happier Oscar sits on the family's first tractor, a "Happy Farmer," while Velva clings to the rear.*



Figure 10: *Beyond the cornfield lies Velva's family's farm. From the left are the granary and garage, the barn, a chicken house and the main house. The drought stricken corn in the foreground was probably not typical of Christ Diede's prosperous farm.*

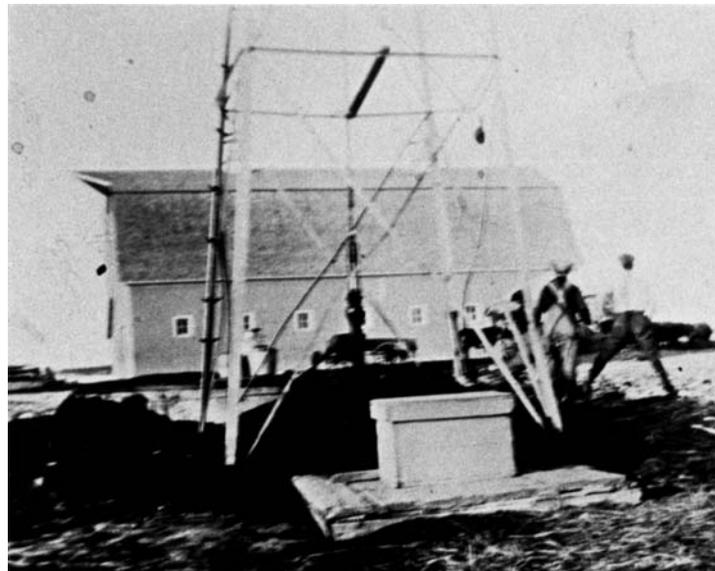


Figure 11: *One view of Christ Diede farm's barn: Seen from the house with the cistern and windmill in the foreground.*



Figure 12: *Another view of barn: The front of the building with a clear view of the large upper door through which hay was loaded. At the age of eight Velva drove the team of horses which hoisted hay high into the loft.*



Figure 13: *A view of the front of Diede's stucco house: a screened porch below and an open one above. The windmill peeks over the roof.*



Figure 14: *Another view of Diede's house: Velva's folks stand with brother Lloyd at the side of the house, between the front and porch doors.*



Figure 15: *This car is not the one Velva taught her mother to drive and Oscar accidentally ignited. His hatless forehead shows in this handsome sedan behind Ishmail, Lloyd and Herman, taken around 1931.*



Figure 16: *Veva at about fifteen at a July 4th picnic.*



Figure 17: *Velva at about seventeen with her family. From left rear: Herman, Velva, Oscar. Front: Ishmael, Mother, Lloyd, Father. Her father's face and hands betray the sensitivity and enlightened compassion of a man who in many of his attitudes, "... lived long before his time."*



Figure 18: A few years later Velva, Oscar, Herman, Ishmael and Lloyd pose by the porch door. Here for the first time we see the glasses she began wearing at eleven, bought at home from an itinerant salesman out of his "suitcase full of glasses. Because they did not address all her optical needs, her eyesight has been a source of difficulty throughout her life.



Figure 19: *These photographs of Veva were taken while she was a student a Dickinson Normal School in North Dakota. Constantly changing hemlines must have made it as difficult then as it is now to keep coats and skirts aligned.*



Figure 20: Velva's first teaching job was at the one-room schoolhouse in Glen Ullin. Here she poses with her students in 1937. A lodger with the Dittus family, Velva shared a bed with eighth grader Erma, who stands next to her. Ruby Ditus, front row right, slept on a cot in the same room.



Figure 21: As she relates in *“Washington Years,”* Velva finished her Bachelor’s degree in August, 1940, at Ellensburg’s College of Education. She then took the train back to visit her family, shown here. She had spent the previous school year teaching in Kelso, Washington, where she and Clarence Walden met. They married December 21, 1940.

Washington Years

Ellensburg and Working for the Hertzes

I went to Ellensburg to college in 1938, and that winter I worked. I stayed in the dormitory, in Sue Lombard Hall, and I worked for my board for Wayne and Tekla Hertz. He was the vocal music teacher who had just been hired that year at the college. They had one small child, Barbara, who was under a year old at the time. Basically, I was a babysitter more than anything else, because Mrs. Hertz, who was a piano teacher and a very accomplished pianist, did most of the housework and most of the cooking. So my basic work was to be a babysitter when they went out, because they had to go out evenings. They were very nice to me — they were good people. I ate in the kitchen and they ate in the dining room, which didn't really bother me a great deal because they talked about school events and about people and so on, so it was only appropriate. But one night she cooked oysters, and I had never eaten oysters before. I always sat at the end of the kitchen table that was next to the dining room door, and that evening Mr. Hertz insisted upon keeping the door to the dining room open so he could watch my reaction as I tried to eat the oysters!

Eyesight Problems

I had finished my two year standard at Dickinson, which gave me a teaching credential in North Dakota, and when I came to the state of Washington I planned to major in English. I started my English classes but had to drop them almost immediately. My eyes just gave me so much difficulty that I just couldn't do the reading that it required.

I had already had trouble with my eyes, and from then on my eye problems became more and more severe all the time. In fact, as I think back over the years, I'm indeed grateful that I did manage to get through college.

Over the years my eyes kept getting worse and worse, until about 1968 or thereabouts when they got so bad that I gave up almost all reading. In Antioch, California, I had given up sewing, too, and I would spend time knitting in the dark, knowing that I would eventually be blind and training myself to do this. I had gone from teaching in the grades to teaching kindergarten because it required so much less reading.

Along toward May 1968 it just got so I could hardly do anything that required close observation. So I went again to see Dr. Berek who was the optometrist that I had been going to for a number of years. He examined my eyes over and over and over again, and I just thought he'd never get through. Finally he said, "I'm getting something in your eyes that I have never gotten before. I'm going to try something. I'm going to give you these

clip-on prisms, and I want you to see if you can wear them at least two hours a day, if they don't drive you up the wall."

So I took them home and put them on, and they felt good. I had been knitting a dark, lightweight sweater for my husband, and it was all completed except to sew the pockets on. It was done on very fine needles, and I just hadn't been able to finish the handwork. That night I went home and put those prisms on and picked up the sweater. It worked just beautifully. So the next day I put the prisms on and drove downtown. And everything was just perfect, just great. I went back to Dr. Berek in a few days, and he asked, "Well how did you get along? Did they drive you up the wall?" And I said, "No, they didn't. I put them on and I drove downtown." And I thought he'd hit me over the head with something, he was so upset about it. But I said, "Everything was just great!" So after three or four more visits to him he prescribed new lenses with some prisms in, and from then on things have been much better.

I had gotten my very first glasses when I was eleven from a man who came around with a suitcase full of glasses to sell. He went from house to house and he had the "E" chart, which was all that most doctors used in those days. What had happened was that I was nearsighted, and the prescription for my glasses just didn't include the other needs that I had. Over the years that I saw Dr. Berek again and again — I had to get my lenses changed every nine months or so — he used to say to me, "Only you wouldn't have given up by now. Anybody else would have given up." Finally, when it got to the point where I just couldn't see enough to do anything else, my eyes just went back to what was their normal thing. Because over the years I had kept them so strained doing what I wanted to that when I just couldn't go on any longer and relaxed a bit, the original situation, the thing that created various problems, showed up. Because by that time I couldn't read at all. In fact, I would complain about it, and Daddy (Clarence) would say to me, "Just don't worry! I'll tell you whatever you need to know!" He would kid me about it. I found it quite worrisome, and yet I was reconciled to the fact that I was going to be blind before very many years. I don't know what the problem is, except it requires the prisms to do the adjusting. What Dr. Berek really said, I don't remember.

It would have been nice if it had been diagnosed earlier. Of course, the problem didn't really show up until I was trying to do all that reading in English. Other classes just didn't require all that reading, I guess. After I graduated from Ellensberg and went to Kelso to teach I would go down to Portland to visit my mother's cousins, Henry and Helen Fisher. I complained about all the difficulty I was having with my eyes. Henry worked in the building in downtown Portland where there were some eye specialists, a father and son team, who were well known, it seemed, and I began to go to them. For a good deal of that winter, a matter of three or four months or more, I would go to Portland every other weekend and have my pupils dilated, and they would try to diagnose the problem. Later, after I was married and moved to California, I saw a specialist in Chico. Later still when

we lived down in Pittsburgh, California around 1946 we went in to the University of California at Berkeley to the Optometry School and had our eyes checked, very inexpensively. The doctor there gave me some eye exercises I was to do with one of those things you looked into, a stereopticon.

As time went on I went from teaching in the grades to teaching in kindergarten and just kind of sloughed off more and more anything that required real need for my eyes, until it fortunately reached that point. But I guess there again it's part of my determination. I've always been a determined person. If I wanted to do something I did it, and I managed to keep on. I made myself be able to see.

From Ellensburg to Kelso

I was at Ellensburg for a total of one year and two summers, and in 1940 I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. I had already graduated with a two year Standard Teaching credential in North Dakota, so I went one year and two summers at Ellensburg and got a teaching job in Kelso, Washington. That was the fall of 1939.

Dorothy Balliot, who was and still is my friend (now Dorothy Johnson) had been an assistant housemother at Lombard Hall. The two of us together and one other girl were sent out together by the placement bureau from Ellensburg to Kelso. We went down on the bus to be interviewed for teaching jobs. Dorothy and I interviewed for Rose Valley district and Elsie for the other district. I don't think Elsie got the job, but both Dorothy and I did. I got the first and second grade job with music for all eight grades, and Dorothy had third through fifth. When I had to switch from English I took some music, so I got a minor in elementary school music. Mr. and Mrs. Hertz were so helpful during this period of time when I was having to make switches. When I questioned the fact that I just wasn't a musician in any way, he said, "You didn't have to be a musician to teach elementary music, because sometimes people know too much to do these lesser things." So my major was in Elementary Education and my minor in Music.

We were in a three teacher school. We had a man, Earl Edmondson, who taught sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Dorothy had been married, and her husband was the maintenance engineer at the college at Ellensburg. But they separated, so she and I and her younger son, George, rented an apartment. Our apartment had one big bedroom with two double beds in it — it was kind of like an attic that had been made into a kitchen, a little living room, quite a long hallway, and one bedroom. So George and Dorothy shared one bed and I had the other one. We lived together there for a year and a half until I was married.

Kelso, Meeting Clarence and a Journey Home

We lived right next to the Presbyterian Church in the Earle Apartments. Dorothy had been a Presbyterian for quite a while, and I went to church there because it was convenient. I went to choir practice, and that's where I met Clarence. We were both members of the choir. I sang soprano at the time. I never did have a very good singing voice, but I may have filled out a space there! He sang bass. He was teaching in the Kelso high school. He had come to Kelso about three years before that.

After my first year teaching at Kelso, I went back and did another summer at Ellensburg. I graduated in August with a B. A. degree and then went home on the train to North Dakota. That trip to North Dakota was rather interesting.

There were three Englishmen on the train that time, and there was visiting and talking and joking among us. I had mentioned that I was going to get off the train at North Dakota, and they asked about the farm, the pigs and chickens and so on, and the thing they commented on a number of times was if they were to stop by would I give them some fried eggs, sunnyside up, a new expression to me! Now why that was so important to them, I don't know. Anyway, I guess I hadn't really kept up with the news particularly while I was in school, and they were then talking about how they would have to go home and go into the service because that was right at the very beginning of the war with Germany and the prospects of war were there. That was the thing that really interested me about them as they would talk amongst themselves — the fact that when they went home they would surely have to go into the service.

The trip was two thousand miles long, and lasted a couple of nights. So I went back home for a visit before I went back to Kelso teach. The contracts were signed year by year, and before I had left Kelso that spring I had signed my contract. So I was home for almost a month and then returned to take up my second teaching year.

When I became a mother, the thing that I marveled at many, many times was how little opposition I had for settling in Washington. My parents came out the fall of my second teaching year. They brought my brother Ishmael out who went to school at Ellensburg for that school year, and they came out and came by to visit with me. I had met Clarence the first year, and we were thinking quite seriously about possibly getting married, so he came up and met my parents at the apartment. Then we went down to his house to visit one evening. He owned a little house in Kelso. Clarence was a widower, and his daughter Edna was already asleep, but he brought her out so the folks could see her. She was six and had just started school.

Maybe I mentioned that when I first went away to high school, the people at home were very critical. They just couldn't understand a girl going to school, because all a girl would do was get married anyhow, so why did she need to go to school? When I was almost sixteen and went away to go to high school my mother was ostracized by her friends. They just kept saying,

“How dumb can Mary be? She has one girl and she sends her to school and does all the work herself!” They just couldn’t comprehend it.

So then, of course, the big news was that Velva was marrying a widower. The comment that was made around home, Mother told me later, was “Well, she could have married a widower here. She wouldn’t have had to go to school and go that far away!” And the question was also asked, “Well, he has a child — did Mary know that?” And Mary could say yes, she had met the child. But in everything I did I really got no opposition from my parents, and I’m sure that it wasn’t as easy as it would have appeared for them, but they never gave me a hard time at all about going too far away. I’ve certainly been grateful for that over the years.

When we were married they sent us a hundred dollars to buy a bedroom set, and that was our wedding gift. They didn’t come to our wedding because they had been there that fall. We were married on the 21st of December. We were planning to just get married and that’s it, because it was expensive, and we didn’t have any money. (When I went to work in Kelso I got a hundred dollars a month. My teaching contract was for \$1,200, versus the \$480 a year that I had gotten in North Dakota. So it really felt like a lot of money.) I don’t remember how much the apartment was. I think Dorothy and I paid maybe \$100 a month for the three of us — it was not an expensive apartment. One thing I do remember, and why I don’t know, but I think it’s possibly because it was a luxury: We bought tuna fish to make our lunches. I remember the first time we did it, Dorothy and I were at the store and we were looking at it. It was seventeen cents a can, and we were trying to decide if that was too much money to spend for our lunches, and how many sandwiches we could get out of a can of tuna fish. So money was really an important thing.

Clarence

Clarence was from Lynch, Nebraska. He was born September 22, 1904. He was ten years older than I was. His father was a dentist, but he never called himself a doctor because he did not have a degree. He had one year of dental school in Chicago. He went out to Nebraska and was a dentist there in Lynch. Clarence’s mother was Edna Mosher. Her mother was French, and her father was English. Clarence’s ancestors came from England very early. It was 1635 or so,¹³ and they settled in New England, up near Salem and through that area. Later when our son David moved to Massachusetts and we went to visit, people several times said to us, “Were you named after Walden Pond?” Finally Clarence just jokingly said, “No, I think it was named after us!” Which I’m sure was the case because the Waldens lived around there. We had hoped that sometime we could go into one of the offices and check out some of the land records of that time, but

¹³Although he may have come earlier, Edward Walden, Clarence’s ancestor, is placed by genealogical records in Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1648.

the first time we were back East visiting it was just too hot, and the second time we came it was in the summer again and too hot, and then the third time we came in the fall he wasn't feeling well enough to do it, so that never got done. We would have gone to Salem or to Springfield where the family settled to check on some records. He thought that would have been fun to do.

As I said, Clarence's father was a dentist but didn't call himself Dr. Walden because he had not gone through dental school. All his advertising was, "Clarence Walden, the Dentist," never "Dr. Clarence Walden." Because it was illegal — he could have gotten into trouble. Everybody else called him "Doc Walden," but he never, never called himself that. He called himself "Walden, the Dentist."

They lived in this little town in Nebraska, Lynch, and Doc Walden had a dental chair there. In the summer time, he took his portable dental chair, and they would go across the river into other little towns such as Valentine and Nibraro and several other little towns that I don't remember. He would take this dental chair, and they would camp in a tent and he would take care of all these people's teeth. He was an itinerant dentist.

Clarence had talked for years about writing a book, and it's too bad he didn't, because he had an interesting, exciting childhood. My childhood was kind of drab, really, because we worked. But his family would do a lot of camping because they would go out summers with the dental chair. And then his parents were in plays, they were always in plays. Both his mother and father sang in a quartet for years and were a very musical family and loved dramatics of every kind. So his would have been a very interesting story.

When Clarence was about four they moved up into South Dakota and homesteaded. But they couldn't make a living there, they just starved out. I think it was near Winner, South Dakota, that they homesteaded, but they stayed there only a very short period of time. While on the claim Clarence had a bad cut on his arm. He remember that his father sewed it up. Being a dentist he was qualified!

I guess I kind of gathered that for a while his father drank quite a little. And when Clarence was in third grade they moved down to Randolph or Plainview, I forget which, and they lived with his grandfather and step grandma, whom they called "Aunt Net." When Aunt Net married Grandfather Mosher she didn't want to be called Grandmother, so the children always called her Aunt Net. They lived there one school year when he was in third grade, upstairs in Grandpa and Aunt Net's house, and then they went back home again. When Clarence was seventeen years old his father died. That was when he was a junior in high school. Mr. Walden died of a heart problem. He'd been an obese man, and I don't know if there was any dropsy involved or what. I never really heard if he was that ill — I don't think it was talked about a lot, and I didn't pay that much attention.

Now there was no money. Mr. Walden had been a very excellent dentist, and for years even after we were married we would go to Nebraska picnics

in California and people would come and open up their mouths and show us some of the dental work he had done thirty and forty years before. He was an extremely good dentist, and he was left handed. The few tools that we have are left handed tools. But money just didn't seem to matter, and the family was almost always very poor. They had a rooming house that Clarence's mother ran. I think Walden had his office in a room in the rooming house. I often heard the rooming house talked about over the years, and it seemed like a very immense place. But when we went back to Lynch in 1959 it was not much bigger than a regular two story house! The first time we went back to Lynch our son David was between his sophomore and junior years in high school, and we went to Ohio State for the summer school graduate courses and stopped there. Clarence commented on the schoolhouse, and he said, "That hill isn't nearly as high as it used to be." He remembered walking up the hill to the school house, and yet when he looked at it now it was just almost on the level, it wasn't really very high at all. That's how his perception of things had changed.

Anyhow, he graduated from Plainview High School. He went in there for one year and was valedictorian of the graduating class, which couldn't have set too well with the people there. There were twenty-three in the class, and when we went to the 45th high school reunion in 1969, only two members of the class had died. I think only seventeen were present, however. One of the girls died shortly after high school — I think she married and died in childbirth — and the other one was Buddy Castil, who was a second cousin of Clarence's.

We again went to the fiftieth reunion, and in that period of time three others had died. Then shortly after the fiftieth, Clarence died. That reunion was in May, and he died November 14, 1973.

Lynch, the place where he mostly went to school, has a high school reunion every year. It includes everybody who ever graduated from Lynch, and if you did not graduate from Lynch, even though you went to school there for eleven years, you were not invited. A number of times over the years Clarence said he thought we would go back to Lynch sometime for the reunion and just park our van a block away and put up a sign. He felt he could have real competition with the reunion itself because of the fact that since his father was a dentist everybody knew him.

After graduation he went to Lincoln, Nebraska, to the university for two years. He was going to be a dentist and went to dental school there. Byron Tullis lived in Lynch and was a friend from the time they were babies, and they went to the university together. Clarence did very, very well scholastically — I think he was top in his class in dental school — but he could not do the manipulative things. He just didn't have the skill in his hands and dropped out for that reason. Byron continued and graduated from dental school.

After that Clarence went west. In fact, his mother remarried, a man by the name of Ernest Nance, and she moved to Spirit Lake, Idaho, where Mr. Nance was a butcher. So Clarence went to Idaho and worked in the rail-

road roundhouse as a helper. He would have to hand people the hammers and so on. He talked quite frequently of that experience, and I guess Byron came out for the summer, but Byron went back to dental school.

After he'd done this for, I don't know, a year or two years, not too long a period of time, he decided to go back to school and went to Cheney Normal School in Washington which was not very far from Spirit Lake. Cheney is just west of Spokane and was later called Eastern Washington College of Education. It was while at Cheney that he met Clyde Foster, who remained a lifelong friend. He was best man at our wedding.

Clarence liked school. When he went to school in Cheney he took English from Doc Tegee who was president of the school and taught English. No matter who you talked to who had taken English from Doc Tegee, they were absolutely specialists in English. Doc Tegee must have been the most tremendous English teacher that ever lived, and when Clarence left there he went to Colville, Washington, and later to Ione to teach English. He also did dramatics. His parents both liked acting, and numerous times over his young years talked about picking up and joining a vaudeville troupe because they liked that type of thing. But they decided against it then because they thought the children would miss out in school. So he was always interested in dramatics, and he did dramatics when he taught English.

When he went to Washington State at Pullman to get his degree after several years of teaching, he went in to matriculate, and they looked over the credits he had and said, "You have two years of zoology," which he got from dental school. Because of that they shifted him into science, because he had to have a major and that was the closest with just one more year of school to go. When he graduated from Pullman then, because he had a science major he went into Colfax for one year and taught science and remained in science the rest of his teaching career, although he would always have preferred English or History. He never was too happy in science, he never felt he was particularly good at it, although he was a very effective teacher, a good teacher. But he liked English so well and history. As the years went by he decided he really was glad he wasn't teaching English because of the amount of paperwork to correct which would have been so much greater than it was in the sciences.

To pay for college he had saved up money when he worked, and during most of the years he was in college he still had to help support his sister and his mother. His mother eventually separated from Mr. Nance, and she then moved to where he was teaching, and his sister, Bernice, moved there also. His mother had a rooming house, a boarding house, so she supported herself to the extent that it was possible. He always was pitching in.

He was a special person. Clarence felt responsible for his family, and out of his wages, which were small, always helped with the support of his mother and sister.

He taught two years in Colville and at least two years in Ione. In Ione he met and married Marion McKay. But he had gone to Washington State before he was married. That's where he met Helen Bishop Herbage, in

Pullman. In fact, he dated her — they went on Sneak Day together when they were seniors and it was after that he went to Ione.

When he went to Colville to teach, Helen Bishop was there, too. She was teaching there and Warren Herbage, “Herb,” was teaching there, and Clarence introduced them. We all have remained lifelong friends — when my husband died Herb wrote a letter saying, “Clarence was my best friend.”

Marion McKay and Grandma “K”

Marion McKay was not a teacher. She had worked in a bank. There were four children in Marion’s family. There was Marion, who was the oldest, and Esther and Hugh and Helen. Clarence had both Hugh and Helen in classes in Ione, and he said Hugh was without any doubt one of the meanest kids he had in a class. He set out to make life miserable for his brother-in-law! Our daughter Edna was born within a year of Clarence and Marion’s marriage and two and a half years later Marion died of tuberculosis.

We kept in touch with the McKay family for two reasons. One was for Edna’s sake and the other was Grandma McKay. There has never been anybody that has been more kindly toward me than Grandma McKay. Grandma McKay — “Grandma K,” as the children called her — was much more receptive to our marriage than Clarence’s mother was, and she was always much kinder, less critical. She was just part of the family. Our children, all our children, had three grandmothers. We wouldn’t think of going through Portland without stopping to see Grandma K. She was a very dear person, and I felt very close to her. I think everyone in our family did.

Edna

At the time we married, Clarence was living in his house in Kelso with his daughter, Edna, and his mother. As I said, Edna’s mother, Marion, had died when Edna was about two and a half, and so Clarence’s mother came to live with them and became very attached to Edna. Edna was very anxious to have her father get married again. Her expression was, she wanted “a young Momma and a baby brother.” Those were her desires, so she was very happy about our getting married. Her mother, Marion, was pregnant when she died, and Edna had been told that there was going to be a baby. So later, of course, when her baby brother David arrived, it was just a tremendous day for her. That was just what she had been waiting for. She was very, very proud and very pleased with him.

Grandma Nance

Clarence’s mother, whose second marriage had been to Mr. Nance, was against our getting married. She didn’t mind our getting married, that was

okay, but she wanted to stay with us and live with us. And I said that I didn't feel it would be right; I would like at least the first year by ourselves to get adjusted. But she was extremely opposed to that. She just wasn't going to give up, because she knew I wasn't going to take proper care of that little girl. I remember one evening Clarence came over to see me, and he was very, very upset. And he and his mother had had a fight the night before he came about the fact that I didn't want her to live there. He was telling about it, and I said to him, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" And he said, "It isn't what I'm going to do about it, it's what you're going to do about it." He said, "I told Mother that if she broke us up that I was going to sell the house and take Edna and move into a boarding house. I am not going to keep the house just so that she can have a home." He did help her financially so she could find another place to live, but that didn't satisfy her. She tried a couple of living arrangements that didn't work out, and during that time Clarence wrote to her every week, but she never answered. Eventually, however, she did come for a visit.

She didn't feel needed really, was all it amounted to. She had to feel needed. I think that was it as much as anything, as well as the fact that she needed to be the center of attention. So she was never too cordial toward me in all the years. I don't think she realized how critical she was a great deal of the time, but she always blamed me for a lot of things that I really had nothing to do with.

About that time or the next year Bernice, Clarence's sister, moved over from Ione, Washington, which was clear on the east side of the state, and she got a teaching job in Longview. So she got an apartment in Longview, and her mother moved in with her. Bernice had been a very poor manager moneywise, and when Grandma Nance went to live with Bernice, Bernice owed everybody in Spokane. She never kept track of anything, so her mother and Clarence both felt that she had paid many bills two and three times over. People just knew she was gullible and kept billing her, and she paid. She really owed a lot of money. Mother decided to take over the finances, and she set out to pay Bernice's bills, and did a very good job of it. But we pretty much supported her financially that year as far as food was concerned — not so much with money, but Mother would come over and go down in our basement and get whatever she wanted to eat and take it home, and that's what they pretty well lived on — home and store canned goods. In a matter of a year or two years, she got Bernice out of debt.

It was a while later, one day Bernice wanted Clarence to do her income taxes, and she got all the bank stuff. With a straight pin she had pinned every check on to every stub and was really keeping track of it all. I remember when Clarence looked at that he chuckled, and after they were done he just laughed and laughed because he thought that was such a reversal. Bernice had turned over a new leaf as far as financial situations was concerned, and from then on she continued to pin checks to stubs as long as she could do her own work, until she became blind.

Bernice and Mother lived there for a while, and they didn't get along too

well. Shortly before David was born there was an epidemic of some kind in the schools — I don't remember what it was, measles or chicken pox — and we had kept Edna out of school just not to get her too exposed to it, because we felt it was safer not to do it with the baby coming. They came over on a weekend, Sunday afternoon, and said they were going to take Edna to the movie that afternoon. So Clarence really put his foot down, because here we had kept her out of school and they were going to take her and expose her in a movie theatre, and that created a lot of dissension. They were very unhappy because they thought they knew better than we did.

Our Wedding and Marian Shirer

We were planning a very simple wedding. The choir at the church had always put on a production each Christmas, and they really decorated the church. Usually it was the Sunday before Christmas, and they decorated the church with beautiful boughs and greens on the Saturday before. They really went all out to decorate the church. So in 1940 when we announced that we were getting married on December 21st, they said that it was going to be their wedding. Many a time they had decorated the church for a performance and also had weddings, and this was to be their wedding. So we had quite a little wedding with a reception that the choir took care of. The organist and the choir director, Mrs. Michelson, sang a couple of songs, and the church people were invited. We did not invite the high school students, but we invited my school children, and quite a number of them came. It was really a very nice wedding. By this time a number of my cousins, the Rieger girls, had moved to Portland, and they all came up for the wedding. Henry and Helen Fisher, my mother's cousins that I've spoken of, came up also, and then we were going to go back to Portland with them and had hotel reservations for a couple of nights there.

Now we have talked many times about Marian Shirer, who like Bernice has lived in retirement at Wesley Gardens in Des Moines, Washington. She befriended Bernice for many years before Bernice died. At the time of our wedding, Marian was a member of our church, but not really a personal friend other than that she was in the same Circle (a women's group within a church) I was in. Somewhere along the line she had heard rumors that the high school boys were going to play some tricks on us, which they did when people were married. I don't know what the rumors were, but she had gotten hold of them. So she came up to my apartment and told us that she would give us the key to her car, so we could put all our luggage in her car and then park it at a different place. We put our luggage in her car and drove it around the other block near the Methodist Church. After the wedding when we were ready to leave, we got into the Fisher's car, drove up and got our luggage out of Marian's car, safe and sound, and we have always remembered that thoughtfulness. Years passed, and when Marian moved up to Wesley Gardens our friendship was renewed. We have just been very

close friends ever since, so that was a kind of interesting little incident. It kind of laid the foundation for our friendship. It showed the concern she has shown all her life for people. She is just very aware and always ready to do something for people. All those years Bernice was in the home Marian did her letters and finances because Bernice was legally blind when she went in to Wesley Gardens. Marian's husband was a plumber. She and her husband owned a plumbing business in Kelso, and after her husband died, she ran the plumbing business for seventeen years before she retired. Marian died in 1985 at the age of 91 after a short illness. I'd never have guessed her to be more than 78 years old.

Our Decision to Move to California

Things in the school district in Kelso kept deteriorating, and Clarence got unhappy about it and finally one spring simply said, "I'm going to turn in my contract, I'm not going to teach any more." That was in the year that David was born, so that was 1942. He turned in his contract and went to work for Weyerhaeuser. He had taught chemistry and physics, so he went to work in the chemical lab as soon as school was out. But he was a "people person," and by the time the summer was half over he just knew that he couldn't tolerate working in a lab.

He had heard about what good wages they paid teachers in California when we spent a summer there. The June after we were married we had taken a trip to North Dakota to visit my family, and from there we went by train east as far as St. Paul. That was the division point and the fare was cheaper that way, and so we took the train out of St. Paul to Sioux City, Iowa, where Aunt Ollie, Olive Chamberlin, his mother's sister, lived. We stayed over night there and we spent a day visiting and then went on to Los Angeles to visit his brother Corydon and sister-in-law, Marge. From there we went to Berkeley, California, where he spent a summer in summer school. At that time, he asked about getting teaching jobs there in California, and they said there was absolutely no way he could get a teaching job in California unless he came and spent a year going to school at the university.

The thing that Clarence wanted to do more than anything in the teaching business was to teach in Spokane. He had gone to Cheney Normal, he loved this Inland Empire area, had taught at Colville and Ione his first teaching years. He started teaching after his two years at Cheney, and then he went to Pullman and got his degree from Pullman, Washington. Then he went during the summers to get his masters at the University of Iowa at Moscow. So he knew and liked the area. There was just one high school in Spokane. If he couldn't go to Spokane, he would have liked to have gone to Portland. But the man he succeeded in Kelso had taken the chemistry job in the Portland high school. So there no hopes of getting there. That's when he started to think about going to California. Anyhow, he was told

there was no possibility of getting a job in California unless he came and went to school for a year.

But then, in 1942, when he decided that he wasn't going to be able to stand staying in a lab, he wrote to the placement division in California, and immediately we started getting notices of vacancies, sometimes as many as six or seven in one envelope, so the situation had changed totally — this was right at the beginning of the World War II, you see. He wrote out a master letter. Each day while he was away at work and the mail came, I would write an application to each of these vacancies, get them all written out ready for him to sign. Then when he got home he'd sign them and then we'd eat, and then we'd walk to the post office or he would walk to the post office which was about ten blocks away to mail them. So we were sending out a lot of teaching applications to California. At one time that year there were five different teaching offers. Just everything had changed.

Another place where he had applied was Oregon State in Corvallis, and they offered him \$1,620. If he had stayed on at Kelso he would have gotten \$1,700. So he felt that he wasn't going to teach for less than he could have gotten there, so there was a lot of writing back and forth. He would have liked this job, teaching at a state college. Finally they came through with what he had asked for. They sent a telegram saying they would give him \$1,720 or \$1,760, I can't remember which. But just that morning there had been a letter from Gridley, California, offering him a job for \$2,400 a year. So I called him at work that day. . . ordinarily I wouldn't have, but this was a good job offer, so I called him. . . and he told me exactly what to write and to immediately go up to the station and send a telegram accepting it, because that \$2,400 looked like a gold mine. When he came home then I showed him a copy of what I had written. He was so excited about it, but he just wanted to be sure it was proper, so he sent a second telegraph to verify that he was accepting. Anyhow, he had just come back from sending the second telegram when the delivery boy came with a telegram from Oregon State. So he just wrote out an answer saying, "Sorry, but I have already accepted a position." He got a very nasty letter from them. They were very upset when here they had come up to his terms, and now he wouldn't accept it. But of course what he accepted was much better. If the timing had not been such, would he have made a decision to accept the Oregon offer? He was really quite anxious to get into California, because at that time all teachers knew that California paid well.

Kelso to Gridley via North Dakota — David's Birth and Dad's Death

In 1942, the year we moved from Kelso to California, my father was not well, and we wanted to visit him. We decided that if we were going to move we had to get the house ready for sale. So we decided that we had to put a new roof on the house. School in California was not going to start

until about the 25th of September, which seemed very, very strange to us, because every place else school started early. But we set out the summer of 1942 to put a roof on the house and to take a trip to North Dakota by train. And the day we were to leave for North Dakota on the train, 45 minutes before the train was to leave, we were still on the roof, finishing! It was a very warm day, the neighbors were all concerned about the fact that we were going to leave. Clarence's mother came over and stayed with the children in the house. David was then a baby three months old, and she got him ready to go. We quickly took a bath and made it to the train — one of the neighbors took us because we didn't have a car. When we got out a ways on the train and got kind of settled, I got ready to change the baby and discovered that — how, we never knew — Grandma had put the baby's diaper on backwards. I had to turn him on his stomach to get his diaper off! She was never known to be very ingenious with anything of that nature.

The scenery through the mountains was absolutely gorgeous. It was the first time that Clarence had gone that way for a long period of time, and I was enjoying it a lot, too. As we were travelling along we kept urging Edna, who was seven years old, to look out the window, but she refused — all she wanted to do was read her Raggedy Ann books. We didn't learn until she had her eyes examined in the fourth grade, two years later, that her distance vision was so poor that when she looked out the window she couldn't see anything! That was the reason she just wasn't interested. She was very nearsighted.

We arrived in North Dakota and my parents met us in Dickinson. The first trip back we had made in 1941 Dad had met us there, but now he was sick. He had cancer, and that's why we went. He was fifty-two. I remember my father getting distressed when David would fuss, and I remember his saying, "If somebody doesn't feed this baby, I will!" Those were the days when babies were fed on a schedule only. Of course, he was a sick man at the time, but he loved that baby, just really enjoyed that baby.

Dad was the first one in his family to die, except for Grandpa and Grandma and his younger brother, Jacob, who was killed in a threshing machine accident when he was seventeen or eighteen. Jake got caught in a threshing machine and was severely hurt and suffered a lot before he died.

Clarence stayed at the farm about two weeks, and that was the time I mentioned earlier when we harvested everything on the farm before the frost. That evening he went by train back to Kelso where he packed up our stuff. He hired a moving van to take it out of the house and got the house ready for sale. I stayed on in North Dakota until about the 15th of October with the children.

When Clarence got to Gridley he discovered the reason that school started so late was that in that area school never started until after the prune harvest, and prune harvest was the first two or three weeks in September.

But the other, the big surprise he had when he got there was that the schoolhouse had burned down the previous spring! They had never men-

tioned it during this period of time he was communicating with them. So that when he got there he had to spend a week going through and trying to salvage whatever there was to be salvaged. They had school that fall in temporary quarters at the Mormon Stake Building. Gridley was one of the places where the Mormons come from many areas around. It was not like a temple, but it was an area meeting place, and so it was a fairly good sized building, and that's where school was held the first year.

So he came in assuming there would be textbooks and pencils, and instead he had to go clean up the mess!

My father died that November. Oscar, who was then stationed at Fort Knox in Kentucky, had come home several weeks before. My father died November 23rd and they had the funeral on Thanksgiving Day, because Oscar's time was up and he had to go back.

Let me backtrack a bit and tell you about our trip to North Dakota and back. When we went to North Dakota it was at the beginning of the war, and there were some troops on the train. When I came back in October I stopped over in Portland where my mother-in-law was visiting, and she insisted that she give me some lunch to take on the train. She made me some sandwiches and gave us some fruit. Edna, David and I were the only civilians that had anything to eat that trip. We got on the train near evening, and by that time the train was so full of troops that there was hardly room for civilians, and all the troops were fed before the civilians were fed. So I was grateful that Grandma Nance had put up sandwiches for us, because that way we got something to eat.



Figure 22: Clarence Ettrick Walden graduated valedictorian of his high school class in Plainview, Nebraska, in 1923. When Velva met him in the church choir in Kelso, Washington, in 1939, he was teaching high school, widowed and raising his small daughter, Edna.



Figure 23: *Clarence, far right, and his parents, sister Bernice and old brother, Corydon.*



Figure 24: *When Clarence was about four, the Walden family tried homesteading in Winner, South Dakota. This is the house on their claim where they failed to make a living and "...just starved out."*



Figure 25: *“Walden, the Dentist,” demonstrates his left-handed technique (acquired in his one year of dental school in Chicago) on son Clarence while Bernice waits her turn. In the summer Doc Walden would take his portable dental chair, a tent and his family on the road to practice itinerant dentistry.*



Figure 26: Clarence and Velva in front of their house in Kelso, Washington, in 1941.



Figure 27: Velva with David, her first baby, the day of his baptism at eight weeks in July of 1942.



Figure 28: In August of '42 in North Dakota Grandmas and Grandpa Diede see their step-granddaughter, Edna, again, and meet their first grandson, David. Ill with cancer at the time, Christ Diede died two months later. He was 53.



Figure 29: *Edna and her long awaited baby brother, David, in 1943.*

California Years

Life in Gridley During WWII

There was only one train through Gridley. We were not on the main line, and whenever the Southern Pacific train from the north was late, which it almost always was, they would take passengers for this branch line off the train at Gerber and put them on the Greyhound and take them to Gridley and other towns by Greyhound bus, so that is what happened to Edna, David and me. This was my first visit to Gridley. Now in all the little towns we went through, we'd drive off the highway and around some blocks to get to the bus station and then back on the highway. We got into town after dark, and Clarence was there to meet us and was very happy to see us. But because of all that riding around, I was so confused that in the four years we lived in Gridley, I never did get my directions straight! I was 180 degrees off constantly. It was while we were in Gridley that we eventually bought our first car and I got my driver's license — I had driven some in North Dakota, but I didn't have a license. And I'd get ready to go to Chico or to Sacramento, and I'd drive out to the highway and I would sit there and tell myself it was the wrong thing to do, but I'd better follow the signs. I was just totally turned around always, and never really got it straight.

We had rented a house there for \$25 a month and lived in it from September until January. Before my father died he had told my mother that whenever we found a house she was to give us the money to pay for it. So she gave us the \$3,000 that bought our first house. It had an electric stove in it which was very important because stoves and all that type of thing were very, very difficult to get during the war when everything was rationed. Sugar, shoes, tires, and gasoline were rationed. Rationing meant you had to have a coupon, and you could only buy the item if you had a coupon. We got coupons from City Hall. I still have some coupon books. We each got one. We always had extra sugar, because we didn't use sugar in our coffee. There were four of us, and of course David was just a baby. So we always had extra sugar coupons which I would send to my mother in North Dakota. She was always out of coupons, because there were only she and Lloyd to have coupon books, because Dad had died by that time.

She didn't sell the farm until the war was over. Ishmael was on the farm and was farming it, and she was saving it so that when Oscar came home from the war, if he wanted it, he could have the farm. Oscar and I communicated back and forth and decided that we just didn't want Mother living there, so when Oscar came back from the European theatre and got into Camp Kilmer in New Jersey he called mother and said, "Get an auction sale ready. We're going to California." He had decided while he was in Europe in that cold, cold place that he never wanted to live in that cold a place again. So they had an auction sale as soon as he got home and then

they left almost immediately for California. Mother didn't object to it at all. Her brother, Jacob Reich, had moved out previously to Lodi which is where she and Oscar were headed, and many North Dakota people were living in Lodi already.¹⁴

Mother and Oscar arrived not too long before Velma was born. They stopped at our place. There had been no maintenance on Mother's car to speak of, and Oscar had been a mechanic in the motor pool, so that when he arrived the first thing he did was to start working on the car. He worked on the car for a week or more, just taking it apart and fixing it so it worked better. David was by that time a little over three years old, and he stood by the hour and watched Oscar work. Finally Oscar had the car all back together again. It was working pretty well and he was ready to quit, and David said to him, "Uncle Oscar, let's take another hunk off the car."

At Easter that year David had received a little wooden truck, because there were no metal toys of any kind available at the time. He had received a little wooden truck that had sides on it, and each side had bunny ears on it. A few days after Oscar had worked on the car, Clarence came into the house one day and he was absolutely in stitches. He could hardly contain himself. He said, "I want you to come with me." And we went out to the pump house, and on the ledge down near the foundation was David's little truck. He had taken it apart piece by piece, every single piece, and then couldn't get it together. So he had nicely piled it there. So when they'd gotten Uncle Oscar's vehicle taken care of, he took care of his. It was funny!

We had three acres in Gridley. We had cherry trees, grapefruit trees, lemon and orange trees. Really, it kind of felt like a paradise. I know David remembers our neighbors the Wilcoxes and the Vaughns very well. The house was just outside the city limits, and when we first went there we had no car, no transportation. It was during the war, and everybody was expected to contribute to the war effort. Because he had a family, Clarence was exempt from the army. But he was told that he was expected to work, so he went down to the Libby, MacNeil cannery — this was summertime so they were canning peaches — which was about ten blocks from the house. It was within walking distance, but it took quite a while to walk. So he decided that he would go down to City Hall and apply for a permit to buy a bicycle, so he could ride the bicycle to work. At City Hall they said, "Well, if you don't have a car, why don't you get a bicycle for your wife, too?" So he got two permits. He came home and said, "I've got a permit for a bicycle for you, too." I had never in my life been on a bicycle, and I said, "Okay, if you'll buy it, I'll ride it." I learned how to ride it immediately. I guess I decided then whether you learned things or not depends upon how badly you want to do them! He brought the bikes home and held me while I got started. I rode down two blocks from the house and got a flat tire. A brand new tire. I had to walk the bike back. It was really very fortunate that I learned, and I guess it was mainly perseverance, because I had never skated or roller

¹⁴See Appendix IV to learn about those who stayed behind in North Dakota.

skated or anything like that requiring balance, but I managed to ride that bike.

We got a bicycle for Edna from some people that lived in town there, an old boy's bike that their boys couldn't use any more, so we had three bikes. We had baskets on both of our big bikes, so that I rode all over that countryside, out to East Gridley and various places, with the baby in the basket. Edna, Clarence and I would ride our bikes downtown, and one of us would carry the baby in the basket — David was now a little boy, more than a year old — and the other one would bring the groceries home in the basket. We got a lot of traveling done on our bikes before we got our first car in about 1944.

Clarence worked in the peach cannery for two summers, and the last two summers we were in Gridley he worked for the Randolph Dairy and delivered milk. First he worked nights in the creamery, and then Mr. Randolph asked him to work as a delivery man. During that time we built a chicken house, and we had a lot of chickens. We had frozen food lockers in Gridley, so we would butcher the chickens and keep them in the locker, so we hardly ever needed our meat coupons. We did have to use our coupons for butter and for nylon stockings.

Mentioning the chickens reminds me of the time when David was about two years old. We had just gotten him all dressed up in his Sunday best to go to church, when we turned around and he had disappeared. We looked all over for him and found him down at the chicken coop behind the pump house. Daddy had built a brooder cage which had kerosene lamps to keep the baby chicks warm. David was standing in sand and mud which was all over his clothes, holding the water hose — he had a passion for water and hoses — watering the baby chicks, and there were lots of chicks there caught in the stream of water. They were very bedraggled, and a number of them died.

The day when Japan surrendered we were on our way to Oroville. At that time for some reason Randolph's didn't have enough milk, so if there wasn't enough milk to be delivered then we would have to go over to Oroville and get some milk from another dairy. We were on our way home from there when we came across an accident, and a young man had been killed. He had been driving too fast, and it had to do with the reveling because the war was over. Marysville was not too very far from where we lived, and there was a large Air Force base there, Camp Beale. Perhaps he was from the base.

David's Paralysis

It was while we were in Gridley that there was a very severe smallpox epidemic. We were fearful of it, and we all had to have our smallpox vaccinations. When we took David in for a smallpox vaccination it took three people to hold him. I've never seen him fight like that. It was about two or

three weeks later when he woke up one morning, came crawling into our room and very cheerfully said, "I can't walk this morning!" He was about four or thereabouts — it was in spring of 1946 and Velma had been born in the fall of 1945. We didn't think anything of it because just previous to that, a week or more, Clarence had had a very severe charley horse in his leg so that he could hardly walk. It was very, very painful. So we thought David was just kind of imitating. But as the day wore on I could see that he couldn't walk, he kept falling. So I called the doctor and made an afternoon appointment. But during the morning this really kind of bothered me, so I kept him outside riding his tricycle all morning, just kept urging him to do something.

Let me backtrack to the tricycle. I said earlier that there were no tricycles, no metal toys of any kind. But early in the war, when David was five or six months old, Clarence and I were downtown one day on a Saturday, and Penney's had tricycles, a whole bunch. And Clarence said, "I always wanted a tricycle and never had one," so he bought a tricycle for the baby. So David had a tricycle. He was a long ways from being able to ride it, but he had his tricycle because Daddy bought it for him that day!

So anyhow, I kept him riding on his tricycle until 1:30 when we went in to see the doctor. By this time he had a fever, and the doctor then said he had polio, and made an appointment for us to see the specialist in San Francisco the next day. So just as soon as school was out we drove to my mother's in Lodi. Next morning we left Velma and Edna with my mother and went to San Francisco to have David checked. On the way to Lodi his fever had broken. The specialist in San Francisco took all sorts of tests, but all the tests showed nothing active in his system.

So we went back then to pick up Edna and Velma and spent Sunday there, went to church at Lodi. David began to walk, but he limped for quite a long time. For a number of years after that if he got really tired he had a slight limp.

Then one day, at least two weeks later, the health officers came and said, "You folks have to be quarantined for polio." We protested because this was long past, but he insisted. We had been, well, we'd been every place and had really exposed people if there was any exposing to be done. But we were quarantined, he put a sign out. He did agree to let Clarence go to and from work, but that was all. So Clarence brought home some paint and I painted the inside of the house during that period of ten or twelve days.

Our Move to Pittsburg, California

We moved from there because Clarence decided that he wanted to go on, and we started applying again and moved from Gridley south to Pittsburg, California. He had been teaching science, general science and physics and chemistry. Other places farther away were paying more. It was money, always money that determined where we went. We decided to go to Pittsburg.

We had a number of job offers because right after the war jobs were very easy to get. I think there were four or five to choose from, but Pittsburg paid the highest at the time. If I remember right it was \$2,650 he got when we moved to Pittsburg. That was 1946.

We looked around for a place to buy, to move in. Although there were plenty of teaching jobs, housing was unavailable in Pittsburg because Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg was the port of embarkation for all the troops that went to the Pacific. There was a place in on Hill Street in West Pittsburg the realtor showed us that had a small rental on the back of the property, and that was vacant. It had two bedrooms and it was quite small. So we bought the place for \$7,700. We had put our house in Gridley up for sale that we had paid \$3,000 for, and we sold it for \$6,250. The McKeechams, who rented the main house on Hill Street, were very nice people. They were from Hibbing, Minnesota. Half of Pittsburg seemed to be from Hibbing, Minnesota. That was a steel area, I think, and an ore area, and because of the steel mills in Pittsburg many of the people had migrated there during the war.

One of the realtors in town was from Hibbing, and when the McKeechams learned we were going to buy the house they contacted him and the first house that became available he rented to them. So that by the time our goods came — we of course had to go back home again and get packed and all — by the time our goods came, on that very day, the house was vacant. So we never moved into the little house, which was very fortunate for us.

When we were looking at the house we talked with the McKeechams, and I said that I was a teacher, she said, “Oh, you can get a job. They need teachers badly.” The Ambrose School was about six blocks down the road, so when we came to move in we contacted the superintendent and the principal there and he immediately offered me a job for \$2,200 teaching sixth grade. At that time it was in sixth grade that they were short of teachers. It was on double session. I was to teach afternoon session, and I said, “The problem is Edna, who can babysit, is in the morning session eighth grade, and how are we going to handle it?” or something to that effect. And he said, “Well, that’s no problem at all. We’ll just dismiss her early so she can get home.” She had a bicycle, so she rode the bicycle home, and just as soon as she got home I took the bicycle and went back and got there in time for school. So Edna would take care of David and Velma, who was under a year old.

That year they were not insistent that you be there early. I often went back in the evening and did things that I needed to do. We’d all go down — Daddy would go along and we’d take the little children and go and do the work. They were really, really hurting for teachers. When I went to Pittsburg I had no intention of going back to work. I was going to be one of the mothers that stayed home with her children. But there was this need, and of course we could use the money.

We had to buy a stove. The McKeechams took their stove. There was a

hardware store down next to the school, and we walked in and they happened to have an electric stove. We were really lucky to get this nice new stove, because there was practically nothing of that type available. It was difficult to buy appliances of any kind. People still hadn't geared up after the war.

The house in West Pittsburg on Hill Street where we lived then had two bedrooms on the one floor and it had a basement. It was a one story house. We fixed a room in the basement which was Edna's room. It had bunk beds built in already because the McKeechams had also used that, because they had four girls. The upstairs had a living room which had a fireplace and quite a large, square kitchen where we had a big table, with a bathroom between the two bedrooms and a hall. The heating system for the house was a register that was right in the middle of the hall, one of the most curious locations there ever was, but that's where it was, and it would get very, very hot. Velma was about two when she fell on this register, and burned herself badly. That was in the days when little girls wore dresses, and she had a burn on her legs that was sore. It really hurt, and she cried she was hurt so badly. I was holding her and she struggled to get down. Finally she wiggled out of my arms and she went right back to that register and stomped it! She was going to punish it! She was mad. That was the first time that Velma showed her real fire! We of course had to grab her before she fell again, because those little leather soles on her shoes were really slick.

We lived there four years. The second year then, when Edna went to Mt. Diablo High School in Concord,¹⁵ Mrs. Friedle, who lived next door, kept David and Velma. She babysat for as long as we lived out there, and "Auntie Friedle" was very dear to them they always called her "Aunt Friedle."

In the apartment we almost immediately got some renters, a man who worked for Dow Chemical. The name of the man was Ivan Lombrav, and he was from Bulgaria. They had Gary who was just David's age, and Gary and David played together all those years. Later on they had a little girl, Virginia. Mr. Lombrave didn't have a car so he rode to work with Mr. Friedle all the time. They both worked at the same place — they were draftsmen at Dow Chemical.

I think we lived out there for four years. Clarence was working in town. I taught every year then. I worked at Ambrose School, one year in sixth grade and another year in second grade, and then I got fired. This was the first time. I had a very incompetent principal, and he fired four of the teachers, and I was one of them. He never gave a reason — anybody who had a strong disposition of any kind was a threat to him. Clarence tried to talk to the school board about it, but they wouldn't listen.

The principal was transferred eventually away from there into another school in Concord, and later when we were living in Antioch we came across

¹⁵West Pittsburg was an unincorporated area which was not part of the town of Pittsburg and was part of the Mt. Diablo high school district.

the man who had been custodian of his school. The custodian told how the principal's thirteen teachers at Concord had asked for transfers.

My contract wasn't renewed, so then I did some substitute teaching in the Pittsburg Schools for a while. Then a few years later the time came when we had to make a decision. (By that time we had moved to 88 Mae Avenue in Pittsburg.) At that time you could get life credentials if you taught a certain number of years. And because Clarence was ten years older than I was, we decided that maybe the better thing to do would be for me to keep on teaching. Instead of his getting a second job to support the family it would be better if I taught also. So I started teaching in Antioch, and then that fall I became pregnant with Daniel and had to take time out in the spring. Daniel was born May 19, 1952. I quit teaching on March 19th and went back the following fall and taught from then on.

When Daniel was about two we decided that since I was going to be teaching in Antioch it would be much better to live in Antioch rather than driving there all the time. I was taking Velma with me to school — she was in the Kimball School in Antioch, and I was taking Daniel over to Antioch to a babysitter. So we moved to Antioch when we built the house at 1111 Beverly in 1955. David transferred from the Pittsburg schools to the Antioch schools for the eighth grade.

By the time we moved to Antioch Edna was gone from home. She was married while we were still living on Mae Avenue, before her senior year at college. She did the last high school year at Pittsburg (where she graduated second in her class) and then took two years at East Contra Costa Junior (now Diablo Valley College) and then went to the University of California for her last two years at Berkeley. She majored in biochemistry. That was the first time she had been away from home. She didn't come home for quite a long time after she went, and she told us quite a lot later that she was so homesick that she could hardly stand it. But she wouldn't come home until she had gotten past that stage, and possibly she was afraid she wouldn't want to go back. We went down and saw her several times. She lived in a co-op the first year she was there when she also met Bob Heller at the First Presbyterian Church. When they got married, she had another year of school to go. He was working at Livermore Radiation Lab at Berkeley. He'd been out of school for quite a while. Later, after Edna had become the mother of sons Rex and Win, she went to the University at Santa Clara and earned a law degree.

While I'm on the subject of my children's education and marriage, I'll mention that after graduating from Antioch, David went to college at the University of California in Berkeley and then Diablo Valley College before graduating from San Francisco State and eventually, after marrying Sara Cowles, did the course work for a master's degree at M.I.T. Velma graduated from Antioch High School in 1964 and then went to Diablo Valley College where she met Paul Hampson, whom she later married. She later attended San Francisco State and got her teaching certificate from Tulare. Daniel graduated from Antioch High in 1970, the same year as his first wife, Paula

Thompson. He started at Willamette College but got his undergraduate degree at the University of Oregon and his law degree at Boston University. Daniel and Paula were divorced, and he later married June Webster.

Real Estate Investment

We sold the house in West Pittsburg for \$11,000. Then we bought the house on Mae Avenue in Pittsburg for \$9,500, and that was the only house we ever sold for less than we had paid for it. We sold it for \$9,350, and really it was kind of a painful thing to do. But when you stop to consider that we had lived in the house for four years, we really weren't out anything. Camp Stoneman had closed and the demand for housing had gone down.

In the meantime we had a little money left over from selling the West Pittsburg house, so we bought a house down the street at 28 Mae Avenue. We rented it to military service people, "living dangerously" kind of you'd say in those days — we were living dangerously by extending ourselves. We also bought a place in Antioch which had a two bedroom house and a rental apartment over the garage. We could never keep money in our pockets — we always had to invest it.

For quite a while we had the house on 28 Mae Avenue rented, and then about 1955 we sold it to the tenants. They made their payments to us regularly. They were very nice tenants, and they decided that they wanted to pay it off. So they borrowed money from the credit union and gave us the money they owed us. Well, there again the money was burning holes in our pockets, so we got in the car one day, drove up to Sonora, California, and looked around. We found an area that was just in the process of being opened, and we bought four lots. I think we paid \$500 down on all of them and we paid \$25 a month each. And we still had more money, so then we drove up to Calaveros County and found land there, 36 acres. We put down a thousand for that and made payments on it. This was right around the early 1960's — I imagine David was in college — maybe it was 1962.

This was our investment pattern. We also played the stock market a little bit, but every time we bought something in the stock market it seemed to kill the company, so we didn't do very well at that until later years when my mother gave us some money — well somewhere along the line there we had some money and we put it into Bank of America stock. Later we decided to divide that among the children and gave each of them some stock.

The Citizens Utility stock was to be furniture for the next house. My mother gave us some money and we bought that. But we managed to buy furniture without using it, and it seemed to be pretty good stock so we kept it. (I sold it when I bought my house in Coos Bay in 1979.) The house out in the country didn't sell, so I had to sell my stock to remodel the house I bought in town. That was the only stock we ever had that really did anything for us.

The land investments turned out to be quite good. I don't remember what we bought and sold the house and the apartment in Antioch for, the

one we rented out. The land in Calaveros County — we sold two parcels at different times for \$7,720 each. Then we sold the last part of it for maybe \$20,000 to the Trebwassers who bought the land and then moved up to Walla Walla Washington. They paid me off in 1974 — they owed \$15,000 — I took that money and put it down on 134 acres in Broadbent, Oregon. I sold 34 of those acres to Dennis and Wendy and I had 40,000 trees planted on the rest for harvesting later, the first planting in 1974-75 and the last two years later. In thirty or forty years they should be valuable acres if there isn't a fire.

Once we got into the land business we kind of stayed with it. We always did fairly well except for the lots at Confidence up in Sonora. The realtor that sold them was a shyster. He opened up this one development, and we were told there was water there. We checked a faucet and it ran, but he never completed the water system. People who built there had to leave because there just wasn't sufficient water. So I sold the lots — I don't remember what I sold the first three lots for, but for the fourth one I got \$4,500. It seemed like a lot of money, but it really wasn't when you stopped to think of what inflation had been, and we'd paid taxes on it all those years. So that wasn't a very good deal. But the acres up in Calaveros County was a very good deal.

1111 Beverly

As I mentioned, around 1955 we had decided that we wanted to move to Antioch because I was teaching over there. We looked at houses to buy, but there didn't seem to be anything available, and we were shown two or three lots. We did that the way we always did things — if we decided to do something, we did it quickly. We didn't waste much time over it! We went and looked at those lots on Saturday, looked at three or four of them, and decided which one we were going to buy. We got Mr. Burbank who was a developer, and he took us to see his house. We liked it and signed up to have a house built just like it!

We got an FHA loan, and there was a stake out in front with an FHA number on it which Daniel, who was just a little boy, always called a "PG na E number" (Pacific Gas and Electric). While construction was going on, I went by each day since I worked in Antioch, so the workmen never saw Clarence. One day someone told me, I think it was Mr. Garrow or Mr. Vetrano, that one of the workmen had asked, "Does that lady have a husband, or is she a widow?" We always went over on weekends, Clarence looked it over, and if there were any questions, Monday after work I would go by and pose the questions.

We moved in February on Lincoln's birthday. Grandma and Uncle Phillip (my mother had married Uncle Phillip Rieger in 1954) came over and Grandma made curtains — they came over to help us get moved in and stayed a couple of days. Grandpa put up curtain rods and things like that. That was

in 1956. We lived in Antioch until 1971. Clarence continued to teach in Pittsburg, and I taught in Antioch.

Church in Our Lives

When we first moved to Pittsburg we were members of a Congregational church there. There was an minister there who was very, very set in his ways. As time went by more and more people became disinterested. A lot of the people in the church were of Presbyterian background, and so finally, someone suggested that we should organize a Presbyterian church. So we became very involved in that and started a Presbyterian church. All the organization meetings except one were held in our house, and choir practice was at our house for a year. We didn't have a church building, so we met in theaters, and Edna was the pianist and accompanist, until she went away to school. Edna had taken piano lessons since she was very young and was a very good pianist.

So we started a Presbyterian church in Pittsburg, and after we moved to Antioch we would go to Pittsburg for church and Sunday School, and sometimes we went to the Congregational church in Antioch. After we'd done this for a while David said one day, "Let's make up our minds. Let's go one place or the other." He was very unhappy because, he said, "I never know what anybody's doing by going back and forth." So we said, "All right, you decide where you want to go." And he decided he'd like to be with his school friends, and so that's when we moved our membership from the Presbyterian Church to the Congregational Church in Antioch.

Church had been a very important part of our lives. We always went to church. I was raised in the church, and it just seemed to be the thing to do. The time when I was least interested in the church was just before we moved up to Oregon. A minister that had come into the church and we didn't seem to get along too well. That was during the time when I was really having a lot of problem with my allergies, and I always had a lot of problems when I went to church because of perfumes. So I had learned to sit at the back of the church, and he sort of tried to discourage my doing so. In fact, one day when I got there the usher, not someone that we knew very well since he was new at the church, told me I couldn't sit in the back near the choir because the choir didn't want me sitting there. So I just pulled a chair over to the side, but eventually it became quite discouraging, and I'd come home from church every single Sunday feeling really lousy, to the point where Clarence kept saying, "I don't know why you want to go and make yourself sick every Sunday." So we kind of drifted away. I was very discouraged with the church, not only because of my allergy to perfumes, and said when I left there, "I'm never going to join another church unless I find one that I like. I'll work in the Salvation Army to do something, but I'm not joining another church."

When we moved up to Oregon in the spring of 1971, we tried a number of churches in the area. Then one day when I was substitute teaching I

was talking to the office lady in one of the schools in North Bend, and I mentioned that we were looking for a church. She told me about a “liberal” church in Coos Bay. So I came home that night and said, “Guess what? Coos Bay has a liberal Presbyterian church!” Clarence said, “Let’s go next Sunday,” and we did, and joined First Presbyterian. That’s where we met Howard Hannon, the minister, and really got a totally different point of view toward religion than I had been involved with. To me a religion ought to be something here and now and involving people rather than saving your soul. A religion has to have present day meaning, which is what we found there at the Coos Bay church.

And Clarence, who went to church because I went or out of habit or because he wanted the children to go, but who was never really church oriented, said Sunday after Sunday on the way home from church, “No wonder people don’t like Howard’s kind of religion. It’s a tough religion!” He never preached for you to go into your closet and pray. He preached for you to get out there and get on the ball and do something for people. Which is what I personally feel religion is all about. I evolved to that and didn’t know what I was unhappy about until I got to Coos Bay and saw what my problem was.

In the church in Antioch where we had been there was at that time a lot of emphasis on details, such as, “It’s got to be quiet, it’s got to be perfect, it has to be silent.” I had difficulty accepting that, because to me that isn’t what religion is all about. Religion is a joyful thing. In the church I grew up in there was a lot of noise!

Allergies

I’ve had no serious illnesses, but do remember having the childhood pneumonia for a long time. I coughed every winter, all winter long. I had a lot of coughing and a lot of sore throats. I had my tonsils removed when I was about twelve or so by an electric needle process which was not very effective, but I missed quite a lot of school because of sore throats.

I really didn’t give much thought to allergies. I didn’t use cosmetics until after we were married: Clarence got to buying me things, powders and perfumes and so on. I got in the habit of wearing perfume on Sunday. Every single Sunday I’d get a terrible, terrible headache. That was the time when Velma was quite small, but it might have gone on for quite a while before that and I just didn’t make the connection. Then one Sunday I forgot to put on perfume, and I came home and didn’t have a headache. So that was the end of perfume or makeup — I wore lipstick a while longer.

I didn’t have as much of the severe coughing I had had after that, but I was quite susceptible to coughs and laryngitis and bronchial infections. Eventually I began to notice that if I was in a room where they had roses I would start yawning just as soon as I came into the room. So when I walked in people started to take the roses and carry them away. Otherwise I was not aware that I had allergies until I believe it was 1968. The Hong

Kong flu was severe that year, and I had a very bad case of it. I came down with it Thanksgiving Day in the afternoon. I stayed out of school for a few days and then decided since I wasn't getting any better, I might as well go back to school — that's how I ended up in bed on Christmas. I was sick all Christmas vacation. I went shopping over to Sun Valley the Friday before school started, hoping I could just get out of the house. I found I was so weary I could hardly get back in the car. Back at school I went from one doctor to another. There was no way to find out what the problem was.

I had seen Dr. Guyera many times. He sent me to a neurologist because I had complained about bad smells, because he thought it could be a brain tumor. I had a brain scan and all sorts of things. About May finally they sent me to Dr. Sause, who was an ear, nose and throat man, and he discovered that I had a very bad infection in the back of my nose which was what was creating all that bad smell. I guess it was so deep down that it just wasn't discovered. But in the end Dr. Sause discovered it and cleared it up, and then gave me allergy tests. By then I was allergic to everything. I guess the five or six months that this went on just broke down my respiratory system or something. I still can't smell things. When Clarence was alive he'd walk into a store and say, "You'd better turn around and get out of here. You won't like it." Because he could smell the perfume or whatever it was, but I couldn't smell it until it got to me. Many times I still don't know if something is in the air until I start to yawn. Yawning is almost always my first symptom of an allergic reaction, and after that I just get so spaced out I can't think and can hardly function.

I was allergic to just about everything and had to learn to live with it. Because of the dust allergy we took out the carpeting on Beverly Street, which I had wanted so badly — the one thing I had wanted for years and years and years was wall to wall carpeting. We had it put down in time for Velma's wedding and had to take it up a couple of years later. Since then I think I can truthfully say there isn't anything that I have really, really wanted. The one time I did want something it was my undoing! "Thou shalt not covet!" I think it was the carpeting that caused my problems! Our bedroom wasn't carpeted, and even before I knew I had allergies that was where I would spend a lot of my time, because I'd be more comfortable there. I'd sit on the bed and crochet or knit or read or whatever I was doing. Daniel would get down on the floor to watch T.V. in the living room. I realize now I probably got the dust that he created from down the hall, and I would say, "Daniel, why don't you sit in the chair?" So it turned out that we just had to take out the carpeting.



Figure 30: *Edna props David up at the tricycle his eager father bought him — the same trike Velva would, in the 1946 polio epidemic, keep him pedalling one morning to prevent leg paralysis.*



Figure 31: *Edna, her puppy, Clarence and David bedeck the bicycle Velva learned to ride perforce — bicycles were the Walden's only transportation during World War II.*



Figure 32: *“Our children, all our children, had three grandmothers.” Here Grandma (Walden) Nance grips David. Grandma “Kay” (McKay) backs up Edna, and Grandma (Diede) Rieger holds Velma, in the mid 1940s. Daniel was yet to be born.*



Figure 33: *In 1947 the family rented a converted railroad car for a vacation in Long Beach, Washington. From left, Aunt Bernice, Grandma Nance, Enda and Velva, Velma and David in front (cousin Fransic Kingsvogel behind).*



Figure 34: *A view of the Walden family's Hill Street house in West Pittsburg, California, where the family lived for about four years in the mid-1940s.*



Figure 35: *Velva, Clarence, Edna, David and Velma pose for a formal family picture a year or so before Daniel's birth.*



Figure 36: *Above, the Walden family at Mae Avenue, Pittsburg, in 1952. With baby Daneil in the picture, the family is now complete.*



Figure 37: Several years later the family gathers in the 1111 Beverly living room in Antioch. Now Edna is absent, having married in 1954.

Oregon Years

Looking for a Place to Breathe — North to Oregon

The reason we had bought the lots at Confidence above Sonora back in 1955 was because that's where we wanted to retire. Then after I developed the allergies in the late 1960's, we had to drive through all these oak trees that I could not tolerate. That's when we decided we could not retire there. One time we drove up there just for the ride, and we had to drive on up to Pinecrest just for the night, which was quite a lot farther, before I was comfortable, just to get away from all the trees.

We took Daniel to begin his Freshman year at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, in the fall of 1970. We had talked about maybe trying to buy someplace else. So we drove along on the Oregon coast and stopped at Seal Rock to camp. We were there a couple of days, and I just felt like a million dollars. I really, really felt good. I wasn't taking any antihistamines. There is a lot of rain in Oregon and it clears the air of pollens and pollutants. There are fewer pollutants near the Oregon coast than in Antioch, California, where there are several mills.

So we talked about it and looked around. We had decided we were not going to put all our money in the same place. We were talking about taking the money we had and making down payments on two or three different lots and then paying it off at a later time. I was still in teaching and at that time planned to teach in California two more years, which would have given quite a bit at retirement. Because the last year I taught I got \$15,000 which was very good pay, more than Clarence ever got. I was at the top of the schedule and it had taken me twenty years to get there. So I was planning to teach two more years, and we would pay these lots off.

Then the next day we drove down as far as Reedsport and looked around. We didn't see anything we liked there. We drove on to Coos Bay, stopped by Safeway's and said, "Ah, there's a real estate office!" We went over and talked to Mr. Hutchinson, who then told us to come in at 9 o'clock the next morning. He showed us seven different places, mostly lots. We went out to Rainmaker Road on the hill and looked at a couple of lots — there was one just higher than the one that in the end we bought — and decided that was too high up the hill. Every place we'd stop Clarence would say, "How does it smell, how does it smell?" Because seemingly that was the thing. So we stopped at the one on the hill there, and I said, "I think this is okay." We went back into town to talk about buying it, and they had discovered that morning there had been an error in the survey. The next morning they were going to get together at a meeting and determine the price for certain. We had to head home to Antioch, so we arranged that at 1:30 the next afternoon we would call collect and Mr. Hutchinson would be at the phone. We were down in California in Scotia on our way home at 1:30 and when we

called, Mr. Hutchison told us the price was about a hundred dollars higher than what he had quoted the day before because there was more land there. Clarence turned around to me and said, "What shall we do?" And I said, "Take it," and we went home.

The plans were that we would stay in Antioch two more years and then move. This was late in August. We got home, and school started, and two days later I was so sick I could hardly work. And all that time away I had felt so super good. So we immediately started talking about the fact that he could substitute and I could get a teaching job up in the Coos Bay area, and maybe we could just move. By the end of September we were doing house plans and so on, and that was when we decided it might be a good idea if he went back to look at the land and see if we had bought a pig in a poke, or just what we had bought!

Daniel, who hadn't seen the land, came down to Coos Bay from Salem. Clarence drove up there and picked him up, and they liked it. We had said, "Well, maybe if it's okay we'll buy another lot." At the time when we bought, the end of August, there were only two or three lots sold. When Clarence called me he said, "There's only one lot left," and that was lot 19, up the hill and across. So we decided when he got home that he would buy that one, because we still had money that we wanted to invest. I said, "Well, how does it look?" And he said, "It's just beautiful. Daniel just fell head over heels in love with it."

Then I went in very shortly afterwards and told my allergy doctor we were going to move — this was in November of 1970. I would give up my job and we would sell the house and move up to Oregon. He said that was the craziest thing he'd ever heard! "Give up a place, a job and a house just by driving through?" So he said he would write a request that I get a week's sick leave and go up and look the place over. We took the van and drove up there, and we took our green tent from home with us. At that time I couldn't stay any place indoors because of my allergies — I didn't even sleep at my mother's in Lodi because I had such a bad time.

When we got there, it was pouring down rain. We set up the tent out on the property, and the only time we were dry during that period of time was when we were asleep in the van. And yet I felt good! We went into town and talked to Mr. Hutchison, and he made contact with Mr. Sherman Cutlip, who we later hired to be an advisor on the job. We talked to the sanitation department about the septic tank, we talked to Mr. Barrington about drilling a well and made all our plans, because I just felt so perfect. It was just unbelievable how good I felt.

Clarence had retired in 1968. He was very willing to make this move. He was especially concerned because I was having so much difficulty. But the statement he made was, "It's better to breathe than to eat, if necessary."

So we went home and started really planning. I started packing books — I packed books all winter. Daniel's room was empty, so I just packed boxes and boxes of stuff in there.

I managed to get through the winter, and Clarence wrote and told Mr. Bar-

rington and Mr. Cutlip that we would be up for spring vacation in March. Our orange tree in Antioch came into bloom, and I got so I couldn't take it, so we left one week earlier. I went to school on Saturday morning to get things ready for the substitute, and I came home almost immediately: I could hardly get things ready I was so all in. In fact, Clarence drove most of that trip — I was just so miserable.

We didn't get away from home until about noon, and it would be dark when we got there. I kept wondering if we'd find our way out to the place and wanted to stop. He kept saying "We're so close. We'll go on," and we got to the property at about 11 p.m. As we drove in he said, "Oh, we've got a well drilling rig in our yard!" I stepped out of the van and I took one breath, and I remember saying, "I think I've arrived in heaven!" It felt so good to breathe that air.

The next morning we slept in some. We still hadn't gotten up yet when we heard a pickup. We looked up and there was Barrington, the well driller, and he said "You've got a good well here." It was 119 feet down to really good water. Sherm had put up a power pole, and we hadn't even signed any contracts or anything. Clarence had just written we were coming, so they went ahead and did it all. It was an unbelievable experience, because we had lived in Pittsburg and Antioch for more than 25 years and still we had trouble cashing checks, they were so fussy. Here we arrived in Coos Bay and they just trusted us.

So we put the tent up again. It rained again, and we went to town and got a little electric heater which we set on the table and heated our tent. We had our Coleman stove to cook with. It was a good experience. I looked around for a job, and the next town North Bend told me that without any doubt in the fall they would have a first grade job for me. But all of a sudden there was a surplus of teachers, so Clarence and I both substituted.

The major purpose for substituting was to get Medicare for me. Clarence had eleven quarters toward Social Security he had gotten by doing summer jobs. He needed eighteen quarters to qualify for Social Security because of his age. Eleven qualified him for Medicare. So we both started working on it, which was fortunate, because he died when he was three quarters short. He had fifteen quarters when he died, so that meant I had to work out 26 quarters and managed to do so by the time I was just past 64. Just a quarter before I was 65 I got my 26th quarter in! Without that I would not have qualified for Medicare. I don't know what the Blue Cross insurance would have done, but at 65 they change your insurance coverage to a supplement. I imagine there was something I could have gotten, I don't know. I was fortunate in that I got the quarters in, so I didn't have to worry about it. I substituted for a while, but it was really rather difficult to get enough days in because only three quarters were covered in a school year, so that's when I took the job up at Steamboat. I'll tell about that later.

We moved to Oregon in the spring of 1971 and built the house. Like 1111 Beverly, it was a one story ranch house with three bedrooms, a living room, dining room and kitchen and two baths. Velma and her husband Paul came

up, and Paul and Daniel built the house with Sherm's help. Daniel had just finished his first year at Willamette.¹⁶ That fall in October we went back to California for a visit, and we were gone about ten days. I really had a relapse of my allergies. After we had moved up into Oregon for quite a while I didn't have any shots at all, and then I had one a month instead of two a week like I had had in California. But when we went down and visited it took me about six weeks to get back where I was. After that I never went back to California for more than three or four days. I could handle three days, but if I stayed four it would get to me. So I did a lot of commuting back and forth in that period of time.

Mother's Stroke and Clarence's Sudden Death

In 1973 we had Velma's children, Chris and Lynn, there for quite a long time during the summer, because the Hampsons were getting ready to move into a new house in Pittsburg, California. They were supposed to move in about the 8th of July. Velma and her old friend Ruth Mary Lippy brought the children up 4th of July weekend. Then they went back, and it turned out the house wasn't ready for occupancy until about the middle of August. So early in August Velma came up to help take care of the children, but then Paul called and said they could move into the house, so I drove them back. When I took them home, I brought my mother back up with me, too, to see our place. The second day after she got there she had a stroke. We took her to the hospital, and she was in the hospital about a week. We kept her at our house until she was well enough to travel and someone was found to care for her at home. That was the fall when we were planning to come back East and visit with you folks.

My brother Lloyd's wife, Lilly, had called (they have since divorced and each has remarried) and said that they had found a couple of ladies who could take care of Mother (she was determined she was not going to go to a nursing home). Clarence needed to go to Seattle and visit his sister Bernice. So when I left home to take Mother to her home, I put Clarence on the bus and he went to Seattle. He went to Eugene and then on to Seattle to see his sister. When I returned from California, I went to Eugene and picked Clarence up and we were home a matter of maybe a couple of weeks.

Mother's birthday was the eighth of October, and we were going to have her 81th birthday party. We were going to have a party with everybody in Lodi, and so we went down in time for the birthday. Mother was able to get around some with a walker then. Then we left our car at Velma's, Paul took us to the San Francisco airport and we flew back to Boston on the 10th of October. We were there visiting David and his family until the 14th of November, when we flew back to California. A few hours after we got to Velma's, Clarence died of a heart attack.

¹⁶See Appendix V for Velva's account of Daniel and the Vietnam War.

He didn't feel well the whole time he was in Boston, and he blamed the whole thing on the smoke in the plane. The night we got on the plane coming back East he had asked for the non-smoking section. We had the first seats in front of the smoking section, and there were three ladies sitting there and they smoked like chimneys all night long. There was a questionnaire in the seat pocket in front of Clarence asking passengers to make recommendations, and in the morning before we got to Logan airport he wrote a letter to the American Airlines complaining about the smoke.¹⁷ All month long he thought that he had just been poisoned that night by all that smoke. And of course as a result of not feeling good he didn't exercise enough and ate quite a lot. He discovered Jarlsberg cheese that trip which he felt did not taste salty like other cheeses had, and since he avoided salt, he really enjoyed eating it.

He had taken naps a lot for many years. I have wondered about several things since he's been gone. Over the years he was seen by a doctor regularly, and he had complained on one of our trips when we were up in a high altitude in Colorado that he just couldn't function. When he told the doctor about it, the doctor said that shouldn't be. And over the years Clarence kept saying, "I guess I just don't have any cholesterol problems, because nobody's ever said a word about it." Then after he had died I read this book by Dr. William Knowland, "Surgeon under a Knife," where he had had this total physical and nothing showed up but they had forgotten to check his triglycerides. So I have often wondered if maybe that was the problem.

The other thing I have wondered over the years is whether Clarence was one of those people that started developing cholesterol at a very young age, and it built up over a long period. After the fact I realized that over the years his chest had begun to expand. He became more chesty than he had been. The coroner's report read, "Very, very much enlarged heart." So this is something that had been building up, undoubtedly. He had been told that he was to cut out salt, but he had never been given an explanation such as most people are given as to why he should. The sheet that he was given when Dr. West told him not to have salt included things like apples and all sorts of things that he wasn't supposed to eat. There seemed no rhyme nor reason to it. Basically they were not thorough about what they told him, and yet I imagine they checked his cholesterol, I don't know. Other people have their cholesterol checked all the time.

He would feel as though his breath was shut off, and many times around the house he would come up to me and ask me to put my arms around him and "crack" his back, and that would relieve this feeling he had. Sometimes it had to be done more frequently than others, but almost always he'd say, "Crack my back," and that would relieve it. Possibly his back was feeling pressure from his chest, when the back cracked it relieved the other, so I don't know what it was.

¹⁷After he died then this letter came from American Airlines thanking him for his recommendations and saying that they would see what could be done about that type of thing.

My Teaching Career

I was pensioned on 26 years. The first two years I taught in North Dakota schools I did not get pension credit at all because that was too far back. I got two years at Kelso, and then 21 years in Antioch, two years in West Pittsburg, and two years of substituting. If you substituted a certain number of days then you got credit for a year, based on income.

In 1946 when I first went to work in Ambrose School in West Pittsburg teaching in grade 6, Velma was nine or ten months old — I talked about this in “California Years.” Then I substituted for a couple of years, and then in 1950 we decided that I should go back and get a contract. That’s when I went to Antioch’s Kimball School in second grade on double session. When Belshaw School was completed (during the school year) all afternoon sessions were moved there for full day sessions for the remainder of the school year. I discovered I was pregnant with Daniel and taught part of that first year. I taught until March, but after Daniel was born I decided that the thing to do would be to go back and stay with teaching. When Bidwell School was completed I went there and taught Kindergarten for a number of years. I switched from Kindergarten to first grade and back several times, just for a change.

Kindergarten in those days meant two sessions, morning and afternoon, two and a half hours each. The maximum number of children per class was 33, and morning sessions were always full. Sometimes afternoon classes were a bit smaller. In my Kindergarten days there were no helpers, “aids” as they are now called. We were required to have two conferences a year with each child’s parents. There were no conference days at that time, and we had them on weekends or at night. For each child’s conference we had to fill out a printed sheet stating what each child knew — number recognition, counting ability, ability to repeat a sentence or series of numbers, alphabet recognition, ability to tie shoes, cut, follow directions, write their own name, and many, many more.

As I think of those days now, I wonder how I ever made it, but at the time I never questioned but that it was possible. However, I’ll never forget the Saturday when I had twenty parent conferences! I retired from Bidwell School and teaching in June 1971 because, as I said, my allergies required that I get out of the area. We moved to Coos Bay at that time.

Oftentimes while I was teaching I’d tell the children about the “olden days” when I was their age. I’d say, “When I was your age we didn’t have a sink and faucet in the kitchen,” and they would gasp. “When I was a child we had no Scotch tape. Store packages were tied with string, and every bit of that string was rolled onto a ball for later use.” As I’d relate more facts, the gasps would get louder. It was a fun game for me.

Before Daniel was born, my decision to continue teaching was based upon the fact that it would be better to have us both working and have vacations together than have Clarence take a second job. After that we decided that because he was so much older, and we would have Daniel to

educate, it would be wise for me to keep on working. We came to that decision together.

It worked very well. I've always had a lot of energy, and I really did not find it too difficult to be a mother and a working person. I did feel, however, that at times the children suffered in that I could be very patient at school and then take out my frustrations on our children after school. The first one that crossed me when I got home "got it!" I wasn't as aware of that until one of the other teachers was talking about her neighbor who came home after working at another type of work and how much she enjoyed her children when she got home. And Natalie said, "I've just had kids all day, so I don't think I'm very patient." And then I began to think about it and began to realize that that was really what happened.

I enjoyed teaching, I really enjoyed teaching all the way through. When we first talked about getting married, one of the things Clarence said to me was, "You ought to finish college so that you have your degree, that's one thing. But if you want to keep on working so you'll have some more money, I don't approve of that." He very much felt that just earning more money was not really worthwhile. But to get a credential he always felt was very important. He thought way back then that every woman ought to have something to fall back on.

Clarence, My Helpful Companion

We shared things a lot. Clarence was always very helpful around the house, unless he was too weary. Toward the end that happened very frequently. The last few years he taught, not the last year but a couple of years before that, he would come home and go to bed, he was so tired and so weary. But otherwise he was really very helpful. The only thing he wouldn't do around the house was wipe dishes. He absolutely refused to wipe dishes, and his reason for it was that it was unsanitary. They should dry in the air. Over the years as the kids were growing up and snapping towels at each other and so on, I couldn't argue with that! But he would wash dishes, he would hang out clothes, he would bring in clothes, he was very good about taking care of the children and very helpful always.

When Velma's daughter, Lynn, was born her husband, Paul was overseas in Viet Nam with the Coast Guard, so we brought Velma to our place after she got out of the hospital. Later on they lived in Pittsburg and Velma did substituting. By that time Clarence had retired, and he would take care of Lynn. He loved doing that. And I always felt that he was back taking care of his little girl, because when Edna was a baby she was not a very well baby and he spent a great deal of time taking care of her. She didn't sleep nights so he would spend some of the time, particularly nights, up with her. So that when Lynn needed to be cared for he really, really enjoyed taking care of her. He had more time, he could enjoy her and he was the one that did have the time. He was retired and was the neighborhood Grandpa. He

fixed the toys for other children, babysat for neighbor ladies if they had to go out on unexpected business, and so on.

Of course, he was a very jovial person, a very happy person. The one thing was if he woke up at night he would feel very depressed, always. I don't know if it had to do with his physical situation, but he commented numerous times that things were so dark when he woke up at night. I think this was in later years possibly — I can't remember if that had always happened, but for a number of years that would be his expression — things were so black at night. Velma says that she has that feeling — if she wakes up at night, she's very down.

I think that's one reason we got in the habit of letting the radio run at night. I'm not sure, but there'd been a program for years called Music until Dawn, where we heard semi-classical, very soothing music. That was before we moved up here. When we moved up here to Coos Bay, of course, we'd used the radio at night to get San Francisco news, because the five minute's news we got per hour just wasn't sufficient after we'd lived where we had twenty-four hour news stations. This was during the Vietnam War when we were just hungry to find out what was going on. Since Clarence died I use my radio all the time. If the radio is going I can go to sleep. If for some reason there's nothing on — sometimes the station signs off to do repairs — and I wake up, then I'm awake. But if the radio's going, then pretty soon I go back to sleep. With the radio going you don't have time to think. You just kind of listen and get bored. I guess that's what it is.

Steamboat Inn

When I was talking about getting quarters in for Medicare and Social Security eligibility, I said I'd tell about the Steamboat Inn. In 1974 Alice Roach and Duff Gilchrist came by, and we started talking about Steamboat. I had met them when they came to see me after Clarence died: they were friends of our son David's who lived in a Dodge motor home, and they dropped by to see me and we became friends. They housesat for me when I was away from Rainmaker Road. Anyway, they worked periodically with Jim and Sharon Van Loan, the owners of the Steamboat Inn on the Umpqua River, and they thought I might enjoy it. The first year I didn't go up, but the second year when we started talking about it again, I decided I should. It was one of the best decisions I have every made, because I worked out my Social Security that way. After I went to work at the Inn, I didn't do any substituting any more.

I liked working at the Inn, and they helped me arrange my payments, so it worked out. I went up in the summer and then several times in the following spring. The first year they asked me to come up in March — Jim and Sharon wanted to take a week's vacation, so they asked me to come and run the Inn. I was the first one to learn the combination to the safe other than the family. We had a few people in the cabins, and the gas station was

open. We had somebody to come in because I couldn't pump gas and oil in those days, and one of the girls would be there to work in the kitchen and to help, but I was in charge. (Now when I travel I have to pump gas because most states have self service, but my allergies are so much better. I just couldn't have done it then.)

I worked as a cook. At the Inn they had cabins and people came from all over to fish for steelhead trout in the Umpqua River. The Van Loans instituted gourmet dinners which were served a half hour after sunset to guests at the Inn as well as others. So I worked on the dinners: I baked bread, I cooked. I tried if at all possible to be the second cook because I didn't want the responsibility for seasoning food. Because of my poor sense of smell which affects the sense of taste I just didn't feel comfortable with that. But it was a really fun experience. I loved the people. I just really enjoyed the people.

It was a whole new career. I had always liked to cook and bake, and many, many times over the years Clarence would say, "You know, some day I'm going to buy you a restaurant so you can cook to your heart's content!" And now he was gone, it was my first experience that was just me, and many times I thought he must be chuckling away someplace, because here I was at the restaurant.

Volunteering, Traveling, Aunt Marge and Knitting

I have always been a person who took on new things. I do a lot of volunteer work. As long as I am able to drive and get around, I will be that way, and I hope I can do that for a long time. I have a friend who's ninety now who just got her license renewed for four years, although I don't expect to be like Florence!

Following the appearance in the late 1970's of a television movie entitled "Roots," my son David began asking questions about our heritage. I decided to do a family genealogy for my father's family. Sarah Zimmerman Luthle and I planned a family reunion for June 1979. With production help from my son-in-law, Paul Hampson, I finished the genealogy book by then. It is entitled "History and Descendants of Gottlieb Diede, 1811 - 1901" and is about 400 pages long. It was a much bigger project than I anticipated, but I had a lot of help and cooperation from various members of my very large family, and it was exciting and rewarding to do.

The reunion in Elgin, North Dakota, was a great success. Over five hundred people came. David and my grandson Luke came from Boston. Others came from Washington state, Oregon, California and in between. Seven branches of the family were represented. Nametags were color coded by family branches. Many drove from two hundred miles or more just for the day. It was a day that I will long remember!

While researching the family I located a cousin of my father's in Germany, Emelia Schorzmman. So in the spring of 1981 I decided to go to

Europe, first travelling to Denmark to visit Sren and Annie Westergaard Nielsen. Sren had lived with us for a year as an exchange student. My son David met me in Denmark a week later and we took the train to Germany to visit our relatives. It was an interesting week, and some of the stories I heard from Emelia Schorzmman appear in Appendix I: "Those Who Stayed Behind in Russia."

I then went to Switzerland to visit some girls I had met at the youth hostel in Coos Bay and then returned to Denmark to fly home.

In January of 1980 we had become very concerned about Marjorie Walden, the wife of Clarence's brother Corydon, who lived in Los Angeles. My daughter Velma went to check on her, and she was in deplorable condition. Velma cleaned out her apartment and then brought Marge to Coos Bay for a month until Velma had time to find a place for Marge near Stockton, Velma's home.

Marge was malnourished, weighing only 65 pounds, and as soon as I started feeding her she had a gall bladder attack and had to have surgery. Because she was a welfare patient she had to remain in Oregon, so she lived with me for fourteen months, which was extremely confining for me. She was a bright and cheerful soul but she could not be left alone for more than a couple of hours at a time. So when I was getting ready to go to Europe in 1981, I moved her to Lifecare, a nursing home in Coos Bay, where I visited her several times a week. She remained there until her death in September, 1987, two months before her 91st birthday.

In June of 1984 I joined a "Mission Awareness Tour" of Presbyterians to Seoul, Korea, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing, China, and Sappora, Japan. Ninety-three of us went on this exciting journey to visit our church's mission work and be tourists.

In February of 1986, thirty-one Presbyterians went on a "Christian Life" tour to Mexico. We visited the Border Ministry at El Paso/Juarez and five projects. We went to Meridia, Yucatan, where we visited Bible schools, churches, a hospital, seminaries and ancient ruins. We did likewise at Villahermosa, Tahasco. Despite the fact that they had very little, the people were so very cordial to us, and it was a wonderful experience.

At Pueblo we visited a Heifer Project reproduction center, and in Mexico City we visited church related places, attended the ballet, shopped and attended the dedication of an apartment building rebuilt by Church World Service after the devastating earthquake of 1985. We saw much earthquake damage.

Our last stop was in Tijuana where we visited the orphanage. This also is a border ministry — Tijuana/San Diego. There are five border ministries the Presbyterian church supports. Some day I hope to return to Tijuana and work at the orphanage as a Volunteer in Mission.

In March of 1988 I rode the "Citizens Train" to Washington, D. C., from Portland, Oregon, along with almost three hundred others. We came to lobby Congress to change budget priorities from military to people-related priorities.

I am very involved in the United Presbyterian Women's group: I like it and enjoy doing it. For several years I have been registrar for a big retreat for the whole Presbytery, which has about two hundred people. Being registrar is one way of getting better acquainted with people. I've been an elder in my church and am now a deacon. I am Chairperson of the Youth Hostel at our church and a volunteer there. I have been president of our church Women's Association for a number of years. I've been on the Executive Board for Presbyterian Women of our Presbytery and very active in Church Women United.

In addition to the church things I do I've worked since 1975 on Helpline, which is a 24-hour crisis line for people that have problems or are in need or have questions. It's a telephone service that's patched into your home. And usually we are asked to take one night a month from 5:30 p.m. until 8 a.m., but I do a lot of extras during the day. I live alone, and if I'm home I can receive calls any time. If Marla, who is in charge of the Helpline, has to go to a meeting, I cover for her until she gets back. People call the Helpline number and then the answering service patches the calls through. No one knows who they're talking to, on either end.

I have served for five years as Chairperson of the Trustees for the Bay Area Senior Center, and for 6 1/2 years I did much of the cooking for the Temporary Help in Emergency House, T.H.E. house. They sleep and feed people for free, people who have no resources that come through Coos Bay. They started by feeding people hamburgers from McDonald's and so on, and I don't know how it happened, but one day I just cooked and didn't mind doing it. I cook up huge kettles of stuff and take it over and they put it on plates, as many plates as they can fit into the freezer, and serve it up that way. The only heating facility they have is a microwave, and they put the frozen dinners in there. But I make up three or four gallons of baked beans at a time or chili or something like that and take it over. I cook a lot of beans and a lot of brown rice. I mix them together quite often. I've cooked up some pretty funny concoctions, but people seem to like them. I've never taken anything over that I wouldn't eat myself — I'm pretty particular about that.

Knitting is my major hobby. I am very good at starting projects but often don't finish them as soon as I would like! Usually there's a new sweater at Christmas time for anyone in my family who wants one, either that or an afghan. I'm always knitting something.

Marriage, Death and Widowhood

I love to have people for meals and as overnight guests. I do not enjoy living alone, but since that is my situation I live with it without complaining and make the best of it. I have many friends I enjoy, most of them women from the church. Many of my friends are widowed or alone. I work with the Widowed Persons Support Group. There are so many people who are

left alone, widowed, who are very lost. Many times their families are too close to be objective in what they say and do, and I feel that I handled the situation quite satisfactorily when I was widowed. It was very painful, but not so painful you couldn't bear living. I've seen several friends that have really spent years being very, very miserable. But life is too short to do that — you have to go on. I think support groups help people like that, because you just don't know where to turn. Many women don't really know anything about financial affairs or anything like that and just feel very, very vulnerable. You feel vulnerable anyhow, without your husband.

I've always been very, very positive in most of my thinking. I'm the eternal realistic optimist, I think you could say. I know the night that Clarence died I knew he was dead before they took him from Velma's house. When the ambulance left with him, I knew he was dead. At the hospital, when the doctor came and told me, "He has expired," that just really bugged me. I feel that people make a great mistake when they avoid using the word "death." I think if I could change anything in peoples' thinking it would be to change from the word "passed on" or "expired" to the word "death." It's a way of facing life. All those other words that people use after a person's death just don't really face the fact. That's the way I look at it. I think the word "death" ought to be used.

As soon as we left for the hospital Velma called Ruth Lippy, and Ruth met us at the hospital. She was real close by and just came instantly. She was there, and as we walked away together my first reaction was, "Now I'm alone." And my next thought was, "Well, there are millions of widows in the world, and if they can take it, I can, too."

David came for the funeral and stayed to drive back to Oregon with me. In a week I took him to Eugene so he could take the plane home to Boston, and I started home to Coos Bay. That was the first time I was by myself since Clarence had died, and I'd do a lot of reminiscing. I would spend an awful lot of time reminiscing about our lives. We'd had a very good life together, and I was driving home and all of the sudden I caught myself singing, "Count Your Blessings." I really felt that way. I think part of it was an attempt to console myself. I came up with a start when it happened, but it was true. We'd had an awful lot of good times and there were many people who hadn't. There are many families who never have a good day in their whole marriage.

Over the four years I lived alone in the house on Rainmaker Road I was always thankful that he didn't die at home. I think that might have made a difference if he had died there in the house. But he just didn't come back. And over the years, many things I did, I'd hear him talking over my shoulder: cutting, for example. Many times I'd get ready to cut something, and I'd hear him over my shoulder saying, "You're going to cut yourself that way sometime." When he was alive I think that because I am left handed to him I seemed awkward, and many times he'd say to me, "You're going to cut yourself that way sometime." So over and over and over I would hear that voice when I was working on something, and it meant that I was more

careful. It was interesting, it really was.

Finally I decided to move to town. I'd been thinking about it. I was tired of living alone all winter. I went to town in the daytime but was always home in the evening. I really had no neighbors that I saw evenings, that was the first thing. The other thing was that that last year I was out there I started having wheat flour allergic reactions in the form of heart fibrillations and had to go in to the hospital. And about that time my close friend in town, Lillian Frostad, had a little heart attack. When she got out of the hospital she when to Medford and stayed with her son and his wife for six weeks, because the doctor said that she couldn't drive. I got to thinking about the seriousness if for some reason I couldn't drive and was out there on the hillside by myself. I wasn't anxious to leave the house we had built, but it was important that I be in charge of my life. Every time I came out of the hospital (nobody knew I'd been in usually), they'd take me to the door of the hospital in a wheelchair, and I'd get out of the chair and walk out to the parking lot and get in my car and drive home! Neighbors said, "Why didn't you call?" and they all were very good, which is fine for a week or two weeks. But if it goes on for six weeks you shouldn't rely upon neighbors. So I just decided I had to go to town, and I also decided that I had to be within walking distance of things so I wouldn't have to be dependent upon anyone. I guess you'd say that I've always been kind of very independent and continue to feel that's what I want to do — be as independent as possible.

I bought 877 Fourth Street in Coos Bay for \$20,000 and spent much more fixing it up. It has been a very comfortable house. Lillian Frostad lives just up the street, and other friends are also nearby.

A Good Life

I have said to friends at different times I just don't think I could have had a better life than I have had. And as I've thought about it sitting here talking, I think that's right. I had a wonderful childhood in a good home with loving parents, we had a good marriage for almost 34 years, and we were very fortunate in having wonderful, healthy children. The only problem apart from the usual childhood diseases was the little episode of David's, and ever since then as I've thought about some of these shots for swine flu and so on, I wondered if his illness was a reaction to that smallpox vaccination. This is one of the things that has come to me over the years.

There were the serious things, of course — my father's death and then Herman's death. I don't know if I mentioned that my brother Herman died the same day that my father died, but it was a different date because of the time zone. Herman was killed at Guadalcanal during the second World War. Mother didn't know about it until a week or ten days later. She got a telegram. It was devastating, to her and everyone.

My father's death wasn't nearly as painful for me as if I'd been there. I really missed being there and all, but it wasn't the same as if I had stayed

right there and met everybody. And anyway, I had accepted that it was going to happen. I had been home to see him to say goodbye. I was not prepared at all for Clarence's death and so it was a shock, but as I've thought about it again and again and again, the day you say "I do," barring accident, you know one's going to get left. It's a fact of life you have to accept. We had just short of 34 years together. Our children are all living, and they are all well educated. I have five grandchildren. Edna has two boys, Rex and Win, David has one boy, Luke, and Velma has a daughter, Velva Lynn, and a son, Christian.

I have seen great change and progress in my lifetime. For instance, I remember in 1927 how exciting it was to see an airplane in the sky for the first time. Twelve years later, when I was home from Ellensburg for a visit, we were eating supper when a plane buzzed our house. We all knew it was Uncle Bill, and we ran out and waved to him. He then flew out over the pasture and landed there, and my father took the car to get him. He ate supper with us and then said to me, "Why don't you come home with me?" Without hesitation I said, "Yes!" much to my mother's horror. That was my first plane ride, in around 1939. My next ride was to Boston in 1973, on a DC-10, and home again on a 747!

I've always been interested in people, in helping people, and I think that came from home. In the church at home, each fall we had what we called the Missionfest, where we took up an offering to be sent to the mission field. In our family that was always very important. It was after harvest and usually there was quite a little money donated to this, and so I was interested in that.

When we were home before Dad died, the Missionfest Sunday came. The Mission offering days they always took two offerings. One in the morning and one in the afternoon. The morning one was always for foreign missions and the afternoon for home missions. Dad was in pretty bad shape, and Mother didn't want to go to church that day. And Dad said to her, "I want you to go and take my money and put it in the collection." I've always remembered that — to him that was very important. I think he gave them a check for \$200.

I hope life will continue to be good to me, but whatever comes my way I hope to remember that life is a gift from God, and that it isn't what happens to us that is important, but rather what we do about what happens. I am thankful for every day I've lived, and I look forward to the days and hopefully years I have left. I would not want to do a single day over, as I know I wouldn't do any better the second time around. I consider each day and each birthday a gift.



Figure 38: *Clarence and Velva say goodbye to grandson Luke (and Snoopy) after his visit to Coos Bay in 1972. Clarence died one year later at the age of seventy.*



Figure 39: *Velva (center) and her children Daniel, David, Edna and Velma at Rainmaker Road, Coos Bay, in February 1974.*



Figure 40: In 1975 Velva's offspring gathered at Rainmaker Road for Daniel's marriage to Paula Thompson (they later divorced). From front left: Luke Walden, Christian and Velva Lynne Hampson, Win Heller,. Second row: Rex Heller, Sara Walden, Velva, Velma Hampson. Third row: Bob Heller, David Walden, Paula Thompson, Davniel Walden, Paul Hampson



Figure 41: *Velva and Daniel at his graduation from Boston University Law School in 1978.*



Figure 42: *In her Rainmaker Road kitchen enthusiastic cook Velva cheerfully maneuvers bread dough around grandson Christian's helpful hands in 1974.*



Figure 43: In the polyester 1970s Velva's own allergic need for cotton knitt clothes lead her to sew many clothes for grandchildren. Earlier allergies dictated her liberation from permanent waves for her hair.



Figure 44: *The Diede siblings and spouses gathered at Lake Tahoe California in 1988. From left, Ishmael and Rosie, Velva, June and Oscar, Martha and Lloyd. Oscar's and Lloyd's live in California, and Ishmael's in North Dakota.*



Figure 45: *Son David, Velva, son Daniel and his wife, June, on a winter weekend at Dan's in Clinton Hollow, New York, in 1990. Every two years or so Velva travels three and a half days by train from Sacramento to the East Coast to visit her sons and their families.*



Figure 46: A visit from Velva feels incomplete without a meal of her sturdels, a savory revered by many in her family. Here she stretches the dough in son David's kitchen in Boston in 1987.



Figure 47: Still a prolific knitter at 75, Velva rarely sits without a project in hand. Here she works on a baby blanket to be sold at a church fair.



Figure 48: Velva Magdalena Diede Walden at the age of 75 in 1990. It is surprising that Velva's becoming short, full haircut which resembles that of her childhood makes it possible to see the woman in the child (see page 63).



Figure 49: *Velva's mother, Mary Diede Rieger, surrounded by her direct descendants around 1951. Clockwise from her right Velma Walden, Wahyne diede and father Lloyd, Velva, Ishmael and Oscar Diede, David Walden and Oscar's son, Christian Diede.*

Addendum

Returning to California

In the first days of March of 2001, Velva moved from Coos Bay, Oregon, to the O'Connor Woods retirement community in Stockton, California, near the home of her daughter, Velma and son-in-law, Paul Hampson.

For years, Velva had said it was her intention to move back to California near Velma when she felt she should no longer live by herself. While visiting Velma after Christmas 2000, she visited O'Connor Woods along with Paul, son Daniel and daughter-in-law June.¹⁸ Velva immediately made a deposit on the rent for an apartment and, upon her return to Coos Bay, undertook the massive project of shedding many of her belongings, saying goodbye to long-time friends, and selling her house. Son David and daughter-in-law Sara traveled to Coos Bay the week before the move to help with the final packing, drove Velva to California, and spent several days at O'Connor Woods helping with the unpacking.

Velva's new home in Stockton was a wonderful location: an outstandingly well appointed and well managed retirement community; near Velma and Paul, brothers Oscar and Lloyd, several cousins, many nieces and nephews; not so far from some old friends from her days in Pittsburg and Antioch and grandchildren and great grandchildren in the San Francisco area; only a few hours from daughter Edna and son-in-law Bob near Reno, Nevada.

Activities in Coos Bay, Oregon

A few months after Velva moved back to California, son David visited her briefly while on a business trip to the San Francisco area and took the following notes¹⁹ on her activities during her years in Coos Bay, Oregon. Some of these notes may overlap with descriptions in the chapter on The Oregon Years.

Temporary Help in Emergency (THE) House. Quantity cooking (e.g., 25 pounds of a dish) one or twice a week for six or seven years, while THE House was based at the senior center across the street. There was no stove for the senior center location of THE House and thus food was put on plates and delivered this way, after which it was microwaved for the people to eat. Also was on the board and the treasurer for a while.

Help Line. Participated for about 15 years, taking phone calls at home (which were forwarded from a central number) for people who were in distress or needed information. Also was on the board and the chair person for a year or two.

¹⁸Dan and June were visiting Velva from New York for a few days while she was in Stockton.

¹⁹On May 12, 2001, in Velva's apartment at O'Connor Woods.

Widows support group. In charge of this group for about five years, e.g., training new facilitators. The first set of facilitators were trained by a woman who came up from California to do the training.

Habitat for Humanity. Involved in starting a chapter and on the family search committee (i.e., choosing good prospects to get a new house).

Church Women United. Started the local group that did all three celebrations a year, rather than just World Day of Prayer which was what happened in Coos Bay and North Bend before. Was celebrations chair person (the big job of this group) for eight years, organizing all three celebrations each year, until she said she would just to stop doing it unless someone else took over. This group named her a Valient Woman at the time she left Coos Bay.

Presbyterian Women. Was moderator of the Presbyterian Women at her church for six or seven years – also treasurer for a number of years. Was also on the board of Presbyterian Women of the Cascades (the regional group covering most of Oregon and bits of Washington and California) for a number of years, registrar for several annual "Camby Retreats" and coordinator of mission opportunities.

Coos Bay Presbyterian Church. Elder for six years, deacon for three years, helped in the youth hostel for 14 or 15 years, and so on.

Democratic Party. Precinct work (e.g., campaigning door to door) for a number of years, beginning with the McGovern campaign. Also participated in marches on Washington.

Oregon Coast Music Festival. Hosted musicians in her home.

Helping individuals Provided a place to stay in her home on a couple of occasions for people in need. Served a trustee for the life of a woman who moved to Coos Bay and joined the church and then became terminally ill.

Socializing and sharing with, supporting, and being supported by many friends.

Moving to Massachusetts

When Velva first moved back to California in 2001, she lived in the independent living part of her retirement community. A year later, she moved to the assisted living part of the community, and another year later she moved to a different assisted living community, also in Stockton. Each of these moves was dictated by the progression of her Parkinson's Disease.

In late July of 2004, Velva could no longer mobilized herself well enough to continue living in her assisted living community. Therefore, she moved to live in the home of her son David and daughter-in-law Sara (who earlier had edited this book) in East Sandwich on the edge of a Cape Cod, Massachusetts, salt marsh.

While this move was away from her family and friend in California, Velva was now relatively near her son Daniel and daughter-in-law June

near New York City and her grandson Luke (David and Sara's son) and his wife who Mindy in New York City.

Over the next year and a half, Velva had visits from lots of family, particularly for her ninetieth birthday in February 2005. She was visited by children, children-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and a niece and her husband. She also enjoyed letters, emails, and phone calls from many friends and other family members. She also used her exercise machine for 35 minutes a day six or seven days a week until her last few months; she viewed it as the work she needed to get done each day.

On December 17, 2005, Velva died as a result of complications from her Parkinson's Disease.

Velva was able to live at home until the end because of: the help of a usual complement of doctors and nurses; rehabilitation training and exercise help from a physical therapist and an occupational therapist for a number of months; and the help of a wonderful group of home health care aides who significantly augmented David and Sara's efforts including reading to Velva and really becoming her friends, one or two of whom visited her every day.

Appendices

I. Excerpts from Homesteaders on the Steppe, Cultural History of the Evangelical-Lutheran Colonies in the Region of Odessa, 1804-1945, Joseph S. Height, North Dakota Historical Society of Germans from Russia, Bismarck, N.D. 1975.

From “The Colony of Johannestal. Est. 1817,” p.74:

The colony of Johannestal was located in the Sasizka valley, 10 verst s. w. of Landau and 17 verst s.e. of Rohrbach. The Crownland allotted to the colony amounted to 4,143 dess., or 11,202 acres, and was planned for about 80 farmers.

A few families seemed to have arrived as early as 1817, but the actual settlement did not get under way until 1820, when 34 families arrived. These families were part of the immigrant contingent that survived the fateful Danube expedition of 1817, and who were temporarily lodged in Grossliebental pending their settlement in the Odessa area. Of the 34 pioneer families, 27 had emigrated from Wurttemberg, and the remainder (presumably) from Baden.

The colony was established under the supervision of General Johannes (Ivan) von Inzow, who was the superintendent of the Colonist Welfare Committee. In appreciation of his solicitous efforts, the first mayor, Dietrich Lutz, proposed that the colony be named after its chief benefactor. Since the settlers were very poor (only a few had larger sums of money), the Welfare Committee granted each of the 34 families an advance loan of 660 rubles, which was almost double the normal amount. The fact that the semelankas of stamped earth were not ready in 1820 made it necessary to quarter the new settlers with the colonists of Rohrbach until the following spring.

Other families continued to arrive in succeeding years: 8 from the Warsaw area in 1822; 8 from Baden in 1824, and 8 from Wu. in 1829/30. According to the census of 1830, Johannestal had 56 households. with a population of 285 (110 married, 8 single, and 167 children). Ten more families, half of them from Wurttemberg, arrived in 1831, bringing the total to 66 families, almost half of them Swabian. In 1859 the population of Johannestal had increased to 625.

From the “Town of Johannestal,” p.358:

Situated in the Sasizka valley midway between Rohrbach and Landau, Johannestal was an attractive, well-to-do little town. In 1814 its population was 1,620 souls living on 163 house-and-yard lots. The 4,165 dess. of Crownland originally allotted to the colony were used as follows: 2,360 dess. were plowland, 1,605 were pasturage, 100 were in town lots, 64 in vegetable gardens, 11 in woodland, and 8 in roads. The amount of privately purchased land is not known.

Johannestal, which was affiliated with the parish of Rohrbach, had an Evang. Lutheran church and a community school which accommodated 200 children. There were 3 teachers, one of whom was a Russian instructor.

The town also had 3 general stores, 3 flour mills, a blacksmith shop, and a wine tavern. Among the town mayors, the following are known: Johannes Heinle (1885-), Valentin Schatz (1890-), David Heinle (1894-), Jakob Schwarzmann (1903-), and Gottlieb Staiger (1907-).

II. Those Who Stayed Behind in Russia

In the early 1920's there had been the Bolshevik Revolution when many, many of our people starved to death. They were persecuted by the Russians. The Russians came through and took everything they had, took their food. Jake Diede of Deadwood, South Dakota, told me this. He remained over there. His grandfather and my grandfather were cousins. Jake Diede came out of Russia in the 1940's when Hitler was defeated and was retreating from Russia back into Germany. When Hitler retreated in 1944 he said, "Those are my people, and I'm going to take them with me." So they tried to organize all these German Russian people. They came out by wagon train to Hungary and from there by train to East Germany.

Jake was at that time what you might call a man without a country. He was a German, and he was in a position where he didn't know which way to turn, and when Hitler came into Russia he joined Hitler's army, as did quite a few of the German boys at that time. When Hitler retreated, Jake, who was of the right age, was the wagon master who was put in charge of organizing the people to leave the village of Johannestal with him.

Jake was the one that told me many of the things that happened there. In the 1920's his father was taken away one evening and shot along with many other men. If they walked through the fields and took a head of wheat and crumbled it in their hands and ate the kernels and were observed doing it, they would be shot. The Russians just really made a point of destroying the German people. They were very jealous of the German people, who were a very, very diligent people and did very well, where the Russian people were not very good farmers. Even now they have this very rich farmland and they are constantly having crop failures down there.

Starvation was common. When I talked with Mrs. Emelia Schorzmann, "Oma," and even when I first got in touch with her, she wrote and said that her family had received \$3 in the mail around 1923. When I was visiting her in Herzogenrath, Germany, in 1981, she told me it was the day of her mother's funeral: When they came home from her mother's funeral there was a letter from my father's sister, Katie Heinle, in America (my aunt Katie), with \$3 in it, and Oma said, "If it hadn't been for that \$3, we would have starved, too." During the four days my son David and I were there, she made that statement five or six times.

All the major hardships were while they were still in Russia. There was a Diede sister, Elizabeth, who married a man by the name of Jacob

Fischer. When I was in Germany the Schorzmanns said that she had died of an illness. First her husband died very suddenly, and just before he died he had asked Mrs. Schorzmann's father, Gottlieb, to take care of Elizabeth, who was his sister. And then Elizabeth died very suddenly.

Henry Diede was an older brother of grandpa's. Some of Mrs. Schorzmann's uncles and aunts she did not know because they were so much older than she that she didn't really remember. She had written me in a letter that Henry had two sons, at least one of whom had married a Russian girl. Henry must have died, and his wife lived with the two sons. She moved from one son to the other and back again. Each had a given period of time, a month or whatever. This one time when one of the sons came home he asked about his mother and his wife told him she had taken her over to the brother's house. A couple of weeks later the two brothers happened to meet, and one said, "How is mother?" And the other said, "She's over at your house." The wife had taken her out in the woods and just left her there to die.

Of the people I have known about, and I knew a lot, there was no intermarriage with the Russians. The Germans had their own churches and their own schools. There were no Russians living in the villages, so there was very little fraternization.

There was another family, a sister to my grandfather. Her name was Katherina, and she had ten children. One of the sons named Christian (the same as his uncle, my grandfather) ran away from the Russian army and came to the United States and lived with my grandparents for a while. I knew him very well: my mother's sister was married to Phillip Rieger, and Christ married Uncle Phillip's sister. (Later, after my father and my mother's sister had died, my mother and Uncle Phillip married.) So that over the years, because of our relationship to the Riegers, they were just really a part of the family. He was the only one of that family of ten that came to this country, the rest all stayed over in Russia.

After World War II, those that had survived to that point (many millions, I'd say, starved), tried to leave Russia with Hitler. But the front line was just behind them, and the Russians caught up with them and took them back, and that's when families were separated and taken to Siberia. Oscar Diede had joined the German Army because he was the right age, and Jake Diede, as I said, was in the army and Willie Schorzmann, who was only about fifteen at that time, he also went with the army. Willie was not a soldier. I understood him to say that he dug trenches. But anyway, he went with the army and his folks went along also, and that is when they became separated. When they got into Poland all the men were taken and put into cattle cars, standing room only, and women were hauled off separately, also in cattle cars, and hundreds and thousands of them perished. But Mrs. Schorzmann and her sister, Anna, and Anna's daughter, Amelia, whom we saw in Germany, somehow or other managed to stay together. So that when they got to Siberia, the three of them were together. When the Germans got to Siberia, there was nothing and the Germans had to build

their own villages from scratch.

Mr. and Mrs. Schorzmänn were separated from each other for eight years. They were separated from their son, Willie, for 21 years. Fifteen of those years they didn't know if he was alive or dead. I asked her how they found their way together, and she said that when the train came through the villages no one was permitted to get off, but people stood at the doors and windows and shouted messages, kind of a grapevine. Somebody came through and said, "If you see Emelia, tell her Karl's living and to start looking." So after that it was six months before she heard any more, and I didn't get how they made contact. (It was kind of difficult to carry on conversations, because I was listening to her and interpreting to my son, David who was there visiting with me. And she would say something, and then David would say "What did she say, what did she say?" In the meantime I would lose my train of thought, or she'd say something else, so I missed the part of how they found each other.)

But anyhow, when they did find each other, she joined him up in this country way up north, and they lived there then until 1964. They were along in years, and the Russians did not permit them to leave until Mr. Schorzmänn lost his hearing and was no more use to them. Then they let them go. He for years worked out in the woods. He talked about how he worked in 40 degrees below temperatures with inadequate clothes and how they slept in these wet clothes, and they got a few hours of sleep only. He was very much abused and treated like a slave.

After she joined him he became a gardener, kind of a landscaper, and I don't know whether it was government buildings or a school or which it was, but that's the type of thing he did in the last years. After she got there for eleven years she worked as a janitress in a school. They always called her Tante meaning Aunt. That was the way they addressed her. She said that no one could have been treated any nicer than she was treated. She was the only German in the school, a Russian school in northern Siberia. The teachers and everybody were, of course, Russian, but she said she was treated with the greatest of respect. She's the type of person that would go all out to do whatever she did. There were two teachers in the school that took advantage of her. Emelia didn't think she was abused, but in the evening they would bring all their notebooks into a workroom, stacks of notebooks, and throw them on the desk and ask her to arrange them, I assume in alphabetical order, which she did, just assuming that this was part of her job. And one day she said she was just so tired she just couldn't do anything more, so she went home without doing it. The next day the teachers came in and discovered it and kind of reprimanded her. The principal happened to come by and said, "What's this all about?" And she said, "Well, I was to arrange their notebooks," *heftla* she called them, "and I was just too tired to do it." He said to the teachers "What? You mean you're asking her to do your work?" He really read them out! And then he turned to her, "And if they ever, ever, ever bring those in to you again you take them and put them in the fire." In general, she had nothing but respect for them. She

did have a very different experience than Karl.

I don't know what their living quarters were, but the two of them did live together. Whether it was just a room, I don't know. After he lost his hearing and they left for Germany, they joined Willie and his wife who had four children by that time, of whom the youngest one was nine.

When the war ended, Jake Diede was an English prisoner. He would work a certain number of days and then get two or three days leave, and whenever he got time off he would get on the train and ride through Germany. Whenever the train stopped he would get out at the station and look around the station and see if there was anyone there. And this one day he got out and there were numerous people from Johannesthal, people that he had known. Carolyn, who at that time was a little girl, and her sister were there at the platform with people from the village. So of course he joined them for the rest of his leave. Those that were captives of the English, any time they came back with the promise of a job and a written notice that somebody had offered them a position were released. And so that's how he got away.

Oscar Diede, who is Jake's cousin, and I guess Willie Schorzmman, too, when they came out after the war was over, said that hundreds, thousands of these German boys just walked, literally walked across Germany looking for people.

Willie came up into the area of Holstein country, that's up in northern Germany, and there he got a job as a field hand and later another job. It so happened that the second job was at the uncle's of the girl he married. At that time jobs were very hard to come by in Germany I guess it was because of the devastation. He went to work in the coal mines and got his job down in Herzogenrath, and that's why they are living completely away from any of the other German-Russian people. There's a big colony around Stuttgart and one up in the Ruhr area.

There are a few German people left in the Odessa area, but they have intermarried with Russians. Johannesthal is still there. Jake and Carolyn Diede hear from a teacher in the schools there all the time. She has sent pictures to Carolyn at different times, and Carolyn has sent the pictures to me and I've returned them. She sent one of the church which is also in one of the books that has been written by Dr. Height about the area, but the church has now been made into a dance hall. And then she sent a picture of the house that Carolyn's family lived in.

Carolyn's family name is Schorzmman (Karl is her uncle). She's Mrs. Jake Diede, and her mother and father died of starvation, along with two other sisters during the occupation fo 1941-44, leaving her — she was about three years old — and two other sisters that were older. There were three little girls that had no place to go because nobody could take them in. No one had enough food for their own families. So there was a Jewish family that lived away from there, and they heard about the plight of these three little girls, so they came and got them. The girls lived with that family for a number of years, I don't know how many years, and then they came back to the village.

By that time there must have been some contact between the Germans and the Russians, because they went in to the village one day with the older sister. And she walked into a house there, and there was all the furniture that had belonged to her parents in that house. She went and told these Jewish people about the furniture, so the father took her and went up there and demanded the furniture back. The residents said something about having bought it, and he said "No, the furniture was stolen." So they brought it back and put it into their original home, because by that time the oldest girl was old enough to live with the three girls together.

When they left Russia with Hitler like the others, and they got to the place where the Russians caught up with them and people just started running, Carolyn and one sister got away. The other sister was grabbed and taken to Siberia. And this is what happened to many families, they were torn from each other.

At the same time Jake Diede's brothers and sisters were separated. He was in the army but the other brothers and sisters were separated from each other. This was after the war, 1945 or thereabouts. A year ago this Christmas, or was it two years ago this Christmas (around 1984), Jake got a letter from his brother who he hadn't heard from in all those years. At the time he was in the hospital undergoing heart surgery, a serious condition, and this letter arrived from his brother and he had another heart attack. Fortunately he was in the hospital. He had contact with his sister, so evidently his sister didn't know where the brother was either, all those years.

III. A Typical Immigrant Story

When Grandpa and Grandma Diede left Russia, Grandpa's youngest sister, Rosina Miller, and her family were going to come with them, but they couldn't come because she was ill. So three or four years later they came. They came to South Dakota first and then took the train from there to Hebron, and they got there in January on quite a cold day. They got out of the train at the depot at Hebron, and walked about a block to a store, a general store which we had there, and asked about a family called Mutschelknaus. Now Mr. Mutschelknaus was the husband of Mrs. Miller's oldest sister, who had died when Mrs. Miller was about six years old. But they knew that he lived in Hebron, and the man at the store directed them to go to Mutschelknaus's. It turned out that the place where they went was the son of this former brother-in-law, and the son was a son by a second marriage. So he really wasn't related.

The Millers arrived there just before dark with seven or eight children, and Mrs. Mutschelknaus opened the door and saw them there. It was a cold day and the lady said, "Do come in, do come in!" in a very friendly voice. She was a German lady, and of course, Germans spoke a different dialect from our people who were German-Russians. But they were invited in, and she

had a pot of soup on and made more soup, and they stayed there overnight. The next morning Mr. Miller, my father's Uncle Carl, set out to walk out to the country where my grandparents lived. It was about nine miles the way the road went when I was growing up, but at that time there was little fencing. He set out to walk out there the following morning and his wife was very, very nervous about his taking off and walking that distance. But about the middle of the afternoon there was Grandpa and Mr. Miller come to get the family in a wagon or sled, I don't remember which, and they took the family home. When Uncle Dave was talking about this and my aunts and I were commenting on how dangerous it was for Carl to just take off and walk cross country, Uncle Dave's reaction was, "That was no problem at all, because all he had to do was stay between the two buttes." The buttes were called the Long Butte and the Lookout. They were very obvious in that flat land.

The family stayed with my grandparents. They stayed with Grandma and Grandpa the rest of the winter in a two room sod house, and of course Grandma and Grandpa had eight or nine children, as well. Uncle Dave said the parents slept in beds and the children all slept on the floor.

And that is how various families that came across would spend their first few months living with families that had already come. I would say that was about 1905.

I have a friend, Mrs. Kessler. Her husband was our minister when I was a teenager. I have kept in contact with her ever since, and in fact this last summer I stopped in Walla Walla to visit them. Her father was a Mutschelknaus and so on the Christmas card I wrote to her after I had heard this story I mentioned that Mrs. Metzger (that's my sister-in-law Rosie's mother), had told me this. She wrote right back and said, "I remember that. I was about seven or eight, and I remember when that family all walked in. The thing I particularly remember is the strange dresses those little girls were all wearing!"

Communication was pretty slow in those days, and the Millers had gone to South Dakota where another sister lived, and then came on to Hebron. I knew this Uncle and Aunt of my father's very well as I was growing up. There were three younger girls and they lived less than a block from where Grandma and Grandpa Diede lived, and so when we went to town I almost always went over to Millers to visit with the girls. They were big girls and I was a little kid, and I loved visiting with them!

IV. Those Who Stayed Behind in North Dakota

Most of my father's family are still in North Dakota. Oh, there are some that left. Of Uncle Mike's children, Irma left, and then the boys all except two lived in Montana. Later on, much later, Uncle Mike bought land there because land in Montana was cheaper than the land in North Dakota available for purchase. So several of Uncle Mike's boys lived in Montana.

Of Uncle Gottlieb's, June and Ruth both live in North Dakota, Phyllis lives in Washington. She married and after she had graduated from college in Fargo she and her husband then moved to Kennewick, Washington, where he teaches at the Junior Community College and she's a high school counselor.

Of Uncle Dave's children, two of them, Margery and David, Jr., live in Hebron or the area, but Myrtle has lived away from there a good deal of the time. She comes back occasionally, but she's right now living in Carson City, Nevada. In Uncle Henry's family, the two boys and then Frieda, the girl they adopted, lived right there.

Of the Steigers they all lived in that area until they almost reached retirement. Harriet, the oldest, moved to Missoula eventually, and then in later years Emanuel moved there. Of the Heinles, one of the Heinle boys lived in Colorado but the rest all live in North Dakota. So on my father's side of the family practically everybody is still living in North Dakota.

Ishmael didn't want to farm. He and his wife Rosie had been living on the farm with my parents before Dad got sick, and they stayed there a while. Ishmael eventually went into the military and learned photography, which he later took up as a profession. During the war Oscar was in Europe and had enough of cold weather in the European campaign, and Herman was in the South Pacific and was killed on Guadalcanal. He was a part of the North Dakota National Guard that was practically wiped out at Guadalcanal. They had had very little training. Ishmael definitely didn't want to farm, and so Mother had moved to town, but Ishmael was on the farm for a while. Lloyd was much younger — he was still in high school. He was fifteen years old when our father died. And after he was through with high school he joined the merchant marines for several years. So there was no one to carry on at the farm.

My father had developed cancer, so in the fall of 1942, Mother and Dad moved into Hebron, where Dad died in November of that year. Uncle Dave bought our farm.

Eventually, Mother, Oscar and Lloyd moved to or near Lodi, California, as did many people from our area. The farm we owned, "the heart of Stark County," was next owned by David Diede, Jr., and now is being farmed by his son, Joel.

V. Daniel and the Vietnam War

During the 1960's when he was in high school Daniel became interested in the Eugene McCarthy campaign for the Presidency, and he and his friends met in his room at our house in Antioch, the big room off the kitchen that should have been our garage. I think his anti-Vietnam War stance came through working on the McCarthy campaign.

We supported him in his views. His father particularly urged him to become a conscientious objector, but he refused saying he couldn't, for if

someone attacked his family he'd fight for them. He wouldn't consider going to Canada. If it had to be jail, that was what it had to be. This Clarence was very opposed to — I guess he'd heard too many of Ernie Lagason's stories, a friend who taught with him at Pittsburg High School and had previously been a prison guard during a riot at Alcatraz.

Anyhow, we moved to Oregon. About a year later Helen Barton, our next door neighbor in Antioch, called and said the F.B.I. was in the neighborhood looking for Daniel. She told him we'd moved but not where. I don't know how the Draft Board got his address, but three different times after that a mailman brought letters from the Draft Board, and each time Daniel refused to accept the letters.

He had graduated from high school in Antioch, gone to Willamette College in Oregon for one year, traveled across the country, working for a while in Minneapolis and then ending up in Boston to visit David before coming back to Coos Bay and working some for Sherm, our house contractor. Paula Thompson, an old friend from Antioch joined Daniel in Coos Bay. He finally got a job at the lumber mill in Coos Bay and his draft number was 55. The previous year it had been 155, I believe. Mr. Elliott, an F.B.I. man and father of five sons, came and pleaded with Daniel to report, but he said "No." This was when Daniel and Paula lived in town, but before they were married. I think Mr. Elliott came just once. The second time he came Dan and Paula were gone but drove up before he left. When Daniel got out of the car he shouted "It's the FBI." I think that was the time Mr. Elliott delivered the demand that Daniel appear before the Federal magistrate, which he did and received notice to appear before the Draft Board.

As soon as we learned what was happening, Clarence called and then wrote the Draft Counseling Center in Walnut Creek, California, which we'd supported for a number of years before we left Antioch.

Dan went down for the appointment. He went to see Dr. Libby who wrote his medical report dealing with Daniel's allergy. Dan then went to see the draft counselors, who made an appointment for him with a urologist. They also gave other advice, and the result was that he was 4F with no possibility of joining the armed services. The day he went for his physical was the day John Dean was on the witness stand in the Watergate affair in Washington.

Daniel returned home, quit his job and he and Paula moved to Eugene for the fall quarter at the University of Oregon. School looked much better than before, even though he worked full time on the "green chain" at a lumber mill while also a full-time student, until he developed diabetes.

Colophone

The 1990 edition of this book was typeset using Microsoft Word, printed out on a laser printer, copied by a local copy shop using a xerography process, and bound by a Boston-based binder primarily serving those with requirements for bound theses. Not more than 100 copies were produced.

This 2001 electronic edition was created by cutting and pasting the Word files into ASCII text files using the WinEdt text editor, adding L^AT_EX markup commands, compiling the L^AT_EX with the freeware MiKTeX processor, converting the dvi output to Postscript using the **dvips** processor, and converting the Postscript output to PDF format using Adobe Acrobat Distiller 3.0. The photographs were scanned into Photoshop using a UMAX scanner and Jetsoft scanning software (in some cases the photos were slightly adjusted using Photoshop), and exported from Photoshop in EPS format.

For backward compatibility, the photographs were left at essentially the same locations in the book as they had between chapters in the hardcopy edition rather than including them at appropriate places throughout the text of the chapters. However, the locations of the photos were added to the table of contents.

The typeface for this electronic version is Palatino.

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September 2001