

# MEMORIES

Dec. 25, 2020



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Gerald (Jerry) Pulskamp

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*Take care of all your memories,  
For you cannot relive them.*

*-Bob Dylan*

These are my memories, in some order, but mostly random. At least it is those I want to take care of. And, of course, those I consider fit to print. There are some I don't particularly want to relive, but they're mostly here also.

I wanted a real catchy opening for this epic. Couldn't think of one, so I'm borrowing from some other book I've read.

**I n the beginning, there was darkness all around.** Then I burst forth into the light kicking and screaming because someone was slapping me, or so I imagine. It was June 28, 1934, and I had just made my grand entrance into the world. I've always assumed that my parents, Harry and Bernadine (Bernie) Stueve Winkeljohn, were both present, but I don't remember. At least I'm fairly certain Bernie was. The happy event (for some) occurred at a home on North Mill Street in Celina, Ohio. The family already had a son Richard (Dick), who arrived ahead of me by almost five years.

And so, it began. I was born in the middle of the Great Depression. Apparently I didn't help matters any because it continued on for another 5 years. As with most people, my years are a series of vignettes. I can't vouch for the accuracy of my memories, or when and where they occurred. Actually, my memories of the later years may not be much better. How's that for a disclaimer. Besides, there are very few people left who can say that I'm wrong, so I'm not worried.

The first major event, of which I have no memory, thank goodness, was the death of my mother on January 25, 1936. She developed a serious illness following the birth of a baby girl. The baby lived 14 hours. So for that short time Dick and I had a sister. She was given the name Laura. An uncle told me about Harry driving from Minster to Lima during a blizzard to get some much needed medicine for Bernie. Apparently, the meds helped because reports were that she was improving, but she then suffered a heart attack.

When I first heard about Harry's trip thru that blizzard it didn't make a great impression on me, until I thought about the quality of autos built before 1936, and what the road conditions were probably like. Harry was driving 35 to 40 miles each way, during a blizzard, with a car built in the early thirties. And he was driving on old, probably unplowed, two-lane roads.

There are still many of Bernie's (and my) relatives living in the Western Ohio area, primarily around Minster, Dayton and points between. In addition to the Stueves, there are Westerheides, Kinsellas and I'm sure many others.

I have only seen one picture of just Harry and Bernie together. Although I've found none of their wedding. My impression is that no pictures survived Harry's second marriage. When I was about 35 years old, I did receive a copy of what I think was Bernie's graduation picture, from Vernon and Madge Westerheide who lived in Fort Loramie. It was a strange feeling to have lived that many years and not know what my mother looked like. Since then, while going through some of aunt's Helen and Ida's old photos, I came across a couple of other photos of her. One was a large group shot, but I don't know what the event was or who the other people were, but I recognized Bernie. This is the only picture I have with both Harry and Bernie on it. The other was a group of young ladies, including Bernie and my aunt Ida, who were attending someone's wedding. I found out later that Bernie was the best friend of either my aunt Helen or aunt Ida. That may be how Harry met her.

It is interesting to look at Bernie's picture and try to pick out some resemblances to our children. But with just a couple of photos it is hard to do. However, more interesting is how there are much stronger common features between Dot, my adoptive mother, and our children. People have a hard time understanding this until they find out my adoptive mother is actually my aunt.

I wish I knew more about Bernie, but that's about it. Although both Helen and Ida said she was a great friend and a fantastic seamstress for a business in Celina.

Harry's second marriage was to Eleanor Knapke from Maria Stein, Ohio, in 1937. Eleanor worked for Harry in the restaurant, and Harry said, "He either had to give her a raise or marry her."

Harry and Eleanor had four children: Tom (Joyce Bott), Mary (Don Angel), Jim (who never married), and Susan (Dan Plummer). So, in addition to a brother, I have two half-brothers and two half-sisters. All these siblings and yet I spent most of my life as an only child.

Tom died in May, 2003. As of this writing, Mary and her husband Don, along with Jim (the confirmed bachelor), live in Myrtle Beach, SC. Susan and her husband Dan live in Ada, Ohio.

Susan and Dan live close enough that we enjoy getting together with them a couple of times a year. It seems we have much in common, like food, wine and beer, not necessarily in that order. Actually, we became closer when our brother Dick moved to an assisted living facility at The Gardens in Celina. Though he still had a car and could drive locally within Celina, he became more dependent on us for transportation to doctors and hospitals. He also relied on us for VA and other legal stuff. Plus, it gave the five of us a chance to gather together as the last of the family left in the area. And certainly not least of all, it gave Sue, Dan, Kathleen and I the opportunity to pursue our other common interests mentioned above.

About the time of Harry's second marriage, our family was living in an apartment above what was, and still is, the Dutch Mill restaurant in Minster, Ohio. I was told Harry ran the restaurant for a brother-in-law, Ray Westerheide. The Dutch Mill is built on the edge of the Miami-Erie canal, which involves one of my early memories. As I recall, Dick and I were walking along the canal when I fell into the water and Dick pulled me out. Could be that I was probably a pest, so maybe Dick pushed me in and then regretted it. Don't know how wet I got, It might have been just one foot, but it made an impression on me. I'm not certain of the date, but I couldn't have been much older than 2.

The Dutch Mill is still an active bar/restaurant. In fact, our granddaughter Abby Pulskamp, and her husband Dave Knapke, along with their wedding party, went there before coming to their wedding reception in Minster. (I'll never forget the date, June 28, 2014, my eightieth birthday.) They probably had a Coke & French Fires, or something like that.

My understanding is that Harry left the Dutch Mill and went to work for Al and Mary Winkeljohn, Harry's brother and his wife, who had opened a restaurant in St. Henry, Ohio called Wink's Inn.

Interesting footnote, my sister in law Mary (Tom) Niekamp, who grew up in St. Henry, remembers Wink's Inn. Even though it was mostly a bar, there was a back room, which was painted all colors and called The Rainbow Room. It was a popular gathering place for young people to hang out, probably the only one in that small town.

Mary earns another footnote here because her sister married Wally Post, who was a very good baseball player for the Cincinnati Reds. I'm certain Wally will be mentioned again later. Marys' husband Tom, along with Wally, (when he wasn't playing ball) worked together at a canning factory in Minster, Ohio. Baseball players back then did not earn enough in the summer to last all year.

I don't think my family ever lived in St. Henry. However, we did live at a number of other places in a fairly short period of time, although I'm not certain of the sequence or exact locations. There was a home along highway 119, in St. Rose, Ohio, across from what was Bomholtz Implement and Appliances Store. I must have been about 3 at the time. The only event that I remember while living at that home is being in church with Harry when an usher came and said Dick had been hit by a car while roller skating on the highway. He ended up in the hospital at Celina. His injuries were quite severe and the doctors said if he survived, he probably wouldn't live to see 20. Dick later said it seemed as though whenever he visited a doctor, they gave him another ten years. He continued fooling them and made it to 85.

I do recall being in the waiting room at the hospital and not wanting to visit Dick in his room because I was enthralled with some comic books. I still feel guilty when I think about it. I confessed that to Dick one day while visiting at the nursing home, and he just laughed. But I don't recall that he forgave me.

There was also a short stay at a farm in the St. Rose area, at 1800 Goettoemoeller Road, so I've been told. It was summertime and I remember lying on a straw stack with Dick, watching a kite that he was flying. On another occasion I was scared out of my wits by a snake in the yard. Still don't like them.

About the time I was 4 we come the last place I remember living with Harry and Eleanor. An apartment above the A&P grocery store in Celina, which was on the Southwest corner of Main and Fayette Streets. One thing I remember from that apartment is trying to get something from a high shelf using a broomstick handle. I knocked a can from the shelf that hit me on the bridge of my nose. I still have an indentation to remind me of it. I remember it being a huge can, but who knows. I'm sure when you're that little anything falling toward your head looks huge.

Also, while living there, something happened that I don't totally remember or understand well enough to write about. My life changed forever. There was some conflict, and as a result Dick and I went to stay with our grandparents, August (Gus) and Philomena (Philly) Teittmeyer Winkeljohn. Even though I remember little and

understand less about it, this was one of several significant events in my life. The break-up of our family.

As Dick and I were blessed to spend more time together in our later years, I had a chance to ask him if he remembered what happened that day. He didn't have much to say about it except that he thought he was the cause of the break-up, being in his words, "A handful". That really surprised me, except I can imagine losing your mother and getting a new one when you're 7 years old would be very traumatic and upsetting. Fortunately, as with many conflicts, time can be a great healer and in the later years Dick spent a lot of time visiting with Harry, Eleanor and their family, especially on holidays.

As for myself, since I was so young when Dick and I moved out, memories of living with Harry and Eleanor are few and far between.

Anyway, all of these moves and events happened before I was five years old, so almost certainly there are some errors in my recollections. Corrections will be accepted from anyone older than myself.

My grandparents, Gus and Philly, lived in a nice home on north Sugar Street in Celina. This was the home where Harry and his younger siblings were born. Gus, along with his parents and siblings, immigrated from Voltlage, Germany in 1889, when he was 13 years old. Philly, whose parents also immigrated, was born in Cincinnati. If you google "winkeljohn monument voltlage" you will see a picture of a monument in Voltlage erected by the Winkeljohn family members who left for the United States. Almost 130 years ago and still looking good. At least the monument is still looking good.

As far as I know, all of my ancestors (and Kathleen's) came from Germany, Prussia or Holland. We have both thought about doing a DNA test, but decided we were just as happy being ignorant.

One memory I have of my grandparent's home in Celina was a big black stove in the kitchen, which was fueled by wood. But mostly I remember my grandmother getting ready to bake something and putting a piece of newspaper in the oven. When it turned brown the oven was deemed correct temperature to bake. To a little kid, that was magic. I also vaguely recall my grandmother being laid out in the front living room after she died. I was seven then. All I have is that one mental image. I can even tell you where the coffin was situated. But I don't recall anything else.

Their home, like a lot of the homes at that time, were built with two living rooms. One for everyday use and one that was kept closed except for special occasions or uses. Apparently, funerals were special occasions.

I also remember Vic (to be introduced later) talking about Christmas morning when he was a child. His dad would open the doors to the front room living room and there would be the Christmas tree with candles burning on many of the branches. Everyone would ooh and aah and then quickly blow out the candles. Open flames on pine trees led to many home fires at Christmas time. I understand why the electric Christmas bulbs were a great invention.

There were also a number of diseases like Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever and Smallpox that required the patient to be isolated and the house quarantined. The front room was quite often used for that. Medicines that could control these diseases were not always available or did not exist, so the home would be quarantined until the illness had run its course, one way or the other. I think if the father was not ill, he was permitted to go to work. But no one else was supposed to enter or leave. Apparently, it was not uncommon to see a number of homes in a neighborhood with "Quarantine" signs stuck on their front doors, as the illnesses got passed around. However, children then were no different from what they are today. They had to meet with their friends, so they found a way. More about quarantines later, if I don't forget.

Gus and Philly spent their early, married life in Cincinnati, where five of their nine children were born. They had a bar called Gus's Place, which was located close to old Redland Field (which became Crosley Field in 1934) where the Cincinnati Reds played baseball. The family lived above the bar. Helen and Ida, the two oldest children, often reminisced about yelling "Who won the game," as men, properly attired in business suits, including vests, walked from the ball yard to the Union Terminal train station. Helen confessed they didn't have a clue what baseball was all about; it was just something to do.

An interesting note, the Reds were called Redlegs from 1953 to around 1958 because of the Communism uproar going on across the country at the time and McCarthyism was running wild, and no-one wanted to be "Red."

I remember going to my first Red's game with my aunt Helen (she ended up being a great Red's fan). I was about nine years old. We saw Ewell (the Whip) Blackwell,

who for a couple of years was the scariest pitcher in baseball for right hand batters to hit against. He was very tall, had long arms and threw sidearm. He would step toward third base, extend his long arm and whip the ball toward home. To right hand batters it looked like the ball was coming right at them. Sometimes it was. I have no idea who won the game. I vaguely remember another game where the opposing team hit five consecutive home runs, while later in the game the Red's infielders stood in a circle as a very high pop fly dropped in the middle of them. I'm fairly certain the Reds did not win that game.

So, after my grandparents, where did I go next? Apparently, I was so lovable that they wanted to keep me in the family. Leaving my grandparents, I first went to stay with an uncle and aunt, Fred and Ida Winkeljohn Gilberg, who owned a printing business in Celina. I don't remember much about living there, but I don't think that I stayed with them very long. From what I was told, it didn't work because I made Fred nervous. Can't imagine that.

Of the 4 daughters in the Winkeljohn family, none had children. Dot and Ida could not have children for medical reasons, Helen did not marry until later in life and Madonna became a nun in the Precious Blood Order. No wonder I was so precious.

Next, I went to stay with another uncle and aunt, Victor (Vic) and Loretta (Dot) Winkeljohn Pulskamp. Must not have made them too nervous because I stayed, and was adopted by them. Dot and Vic were not able to have children of their own, so I was raised as an only child. They were married in 1935, about a year after I was born. Over the years this caused moments of levity, which Vic got a kick out of. Dot not so much. They were wed at St. Louis Church in downtown Cincinnati. Don't know any particulars, like who was there or who wasn't. Or why Cincinnati, except that was where Dot's sister Helen lived. I always assumed they were choosing the least expensive option for the times.

A historical note: Dot and Vic were married just two days after Will Rodgers and Willy Post were killed when their small plane crashed in Alaska. Rodgers was probably the most famous man in America in the 1920s and 30s. Could probably have been President if he wanted, but he didn't have much use for politicians. That alone could have gotten him elected. Post was a world-famous pilot who, among other things, invented the pressure suit for high altitude flying.

I lived with Dot and Vic in an upstairs apartment on west Fayette St. in Celina, which was owned by George and Frieda Lutz, who ran an office supply store. I was in



Celina recently and decided to drive by the old apartment. It was **gone**. Just an empty lot now. Wouldn't think it would mean anything after all these years, but it did leave an empty feeling. It's hard to explain. I would guess it's that I no longer have anything to refresh my memories of that house. And I'm reminded often that my memory isn't as good as I think it is, or maybe never was, so I guess it does need refreshing.

That reminds me of the guy talking about his golf game. He said, "I'm not as good as I once was, although better than I'm going to be. But I never have been as good as I thought I was."

There are a couple of memories that have survived from the Fayette St. apartment. It was built next to a railroad track, with just a narrow road and a little bit of grass between. Keep in mind that all railroads were a lot busier than they are today. Plus, the trains ran on a pretty tight schedule since there were so many. I don't remember what my bedtime was, but every night, shortly after going to bed, the light from an oncoming train in the distance would shine through my north facing bedroom window. For some reason it was comforting. I think many times I was asleep before the train got to our home. But if not, the clickity clack of the wheels soon put me to sleep. So contrary to what you might think, after living there a very short time, the noise of the trains was never an issue, even the bells and whistles. By the way, the term *bells and whistles* has a totally different meaning today, but that's not where the term came from. The organs that were played to add drama during silent movies (no I'm not quite that old) had bells and whistles attached for the organist to use as extra sound effects. Don't know what all that has to do with anything, just ignore it.

Over the years that we lived next to the railroad, I placed a multitude of pennies and other junk on the rails to see what would happen as the train rolled over them. Most of the stuff was just gone, and what we did find was just a very flat piece of nothing. For some reason I never got tired of doing that. Don't know what I was hoping for.

There was also the time I needed a target to practice my pitching. So, I found a can of black paint and outlined home plate on the front of the garage. George and Freda the landlords, along with Dot and Vic, were not real happy with me for some reason. After all, should I be deprived of a big-league career because I couldn't practice properly as a youth? But in the end, it didn't help me. For many years when I would drive by the apartment, the black paint was still there. Maybe, George secretly used it to practice also. He didn't make the big leagues either.

I also remember having an icebox on the back porch, every so often the iceman came and dropped a huge chunk of ice in the icebox. Vic would stick a card in the window on delivery day showing whether you wanted a full block of ice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$ . Our icebox was located on the back porch because it was usually cooler there, which conserved the ice.

This reminds me of something most people reading this have probably never seen. An icehouse. Celina had two of them. Huge chunks of ice were cut from Grand Lake during the winter and moved on sleds to an icehouse where the ice would be buried under sawdust, which helped insulate the ice and greatly reduced melting, allowing the ice to last through the summer. Also, the icehouse was built with very thick walls for insulation. Anyway, it worked. It helped keep food from spoiling until the electric refrigerator was invented, and people could afford to buy one.

I was told that in the 1920s and 30s, with the ice being so thick, you could ice skate all the way across Grand Lake (about 8 miles), if you had the stamina. Now, with “global warming,” whatever is causing it, I wonder if anyone will ever again ice skate on the lake, except in selected areas. Will I or anyone be able to witness the large iceboats with “billowing sails” (I’ve always wanted to use that expression) gliding gracefully over the ice, their beauty rivaled only by the majestic sailboats of the summertime.

It’s been a long time since the ice on the lake has been thick enough for that, or even thick enough to walk on, much less cut big, thick slabs and then have it refreeze enough for another cutting.

But I digress, again. Back to the icebox. It didn’t take long before new electric appliances, including refrigerators, started showing up. I think the local gas company sold some appliances. The payments could be added to your monthly gas bill.

I don’t remember anything about our first electric “icebox”. I do however remember a new range. It was a Chambers brand and had bright red knobs and handles. It was the top of the line because Dot’s mom always warned her to buy a good first range, because it would be the only one, she would ever get. Appliances may have lasted a lifetime back then, but certainly not today. I don’t know how many ranges Dot had, but it was certainly more than one.

I should explain something here. Dot and Vic wished to be called that. Not mom and dad, and eventually not grandmother and grandfather, even though Kathleen and I

got the impression that some people thought it was disrespectful to refer to them that way. Not certain why Dot and Vic preferred it that way, except maybe there was some sensitivity because Harry, my birth father, was still a member of our extended family. Not certain how Vic felt, but we knew for sure that Dot did not want to be called grandma. Maybe it just sounded old to her. But the two of them left no doubt that they were proud and excited to be grandparents.

Vic, my new dad, was the sole employee of the Daytol Company in Celina. The Daytol was owned by the Spieler brothers (Gus and Bill) from Celina. In addition, they owned the Steric Acid Co., also in Celina. Vic's mother was a sister to the Spieler brothers, which may have been the only item that Vic needed on his resume, if people even had resumes back then. It was 1929 when Dot and Vic were part of the first class to graduate from the newly constructed Immaculate Conception High School. This is the same school I graduated from 23 years later. The high school is no longer in operation. Not my fault.

1929 was just the start of the depression and jobs were hard to find. Vic, like everyone else, needed every break he could get to provide a living, and being related to the Spieler family was a blessing.

The Daytol Co. produced a variety of patent medicines that, I think, were mostly petroleum based. Doesn't sound healthy by today's standards, but they had a steady market for their products for a lot of years. Vic's title was Compounding Chemist, which I think meant that he was very good at following a recipe.

I remember spending a lot of time at the Daytol with Vic. Maybe I made Dot nervous after all. One vivid memory I have of time spent at the Daytol is Vic giving me, as I recall a very long 2 x 4 and a hand saw, saying he wanted it cut in half, lengthwise. Don't remember how long it took me, but I learned how to use a saw. I also recall driving a lot of nails for something or other. He had a number of tasks like that for me, which I now realize was his way of teaching me how to use tools. It was a long time before I owned a power saw because I actually enjoyed cutting with a handsaw. However, I never did get very proficient at pounding nails with a hammer. Thumb yes, nail no.

There was also a time Vic was complaining because the FDA had come out with new regulations that required them to put directions for use on all their medicines, which meant reprinting all their labels. I recall him saying that at least the directions for using suppositories would be easy to do.

I may have made light of Vic's job, but there was really a lot of hard work and heavy lifting involved. At times there were also some hazardous conditions. He received barrels of sulfuric acid that had to be lead lined to hold the acid. But sometimes one would spring a leak. He would open the door in the morning and find the floor covered with acid. Not sure how he finally disposed of it, but he would sprinkle some stuff on the acid to neutralize it, and then scrape it all up. Not certain how he got rid of it, but I got a feeling disposing of it today, for environmental reasons, would be a lot more difficult than it was in the 1940s.

Vic worked there until they closed the business, sometimes in the late 1940s. He then became a Justice of the Peace. Our home had an enclosed front porch and Vic converted it into an office. Back then the Highway Patrol did not hand out tickets when they stopped someone. Instead the patrolman would bring the guilty party (I don't think there was any who were "innocent until proven guilty") to our home. Vic would convene court, hear the facts, impose a fine, and everyone would go on his or her merry way. Well, I guess it wasn't merry for everyone involved. I was dating Kathleen at the time and she feared she would be stopped and have to appear before Vic. Of course, I had the same concern for myself.

When you think about it, this was not a very efficient system. There was a lot of travel and time involved with a simple speeding ticket. At some point this was changed. Instead of escorting the offender directly to a justice of the peace, the offender was given a ticket and had to, at a later date, appear before a judge in Municipal Court for trial. This left little reason to remain Justice of the Peace, so Vic ran for and was elected Clerk of Courts for the Municipal Court. I'm not certain how long that lasted, but he later ran for and was elected City Auditor of Celina. Sometime during his term in that office, Dot began working for Vic in the Auditor's office.

He later was elected to the city council and served there until he became too ill to contribute. Along with all the elected positions he was also very active in the Fraternal Order of Eagles, and served as secretary of the organization for many years.

On the other hand, I was not, am not, a high achiever, never having run for or elected to any public office.

It was September 4, 1940, that I legally changed from Winkeljohn to Pulskamp. The only thing I remember about the adoption process is being at the Mercer County

courthouse in Celina, and taking my first ride in an elevator, complete with a guy who rode up and down all day operating the controls. I vaguely remember being in front of a judge, but then again I may just remember them talking about it. Looking back, this was about the time when Hitler was running amok in Europe and I now wonder if that was part of the reason to speed up the adoption process, since it changed Vic's draft status. Who knows, or even cares for that matter. No, actually, it couldn't have been that. It had to have been that I was so lovable they didn't want to risk someone stealing me away.

I'm sure it didn't strike me at the time, but I woke up that morning and my name was Winkeljohn and I was living with my uncle and aunt. When I went to bed my name was Pulskamp and I was now living with my freshly minted father and mother, and my father Harry and stepmother Eleanor had become my uncle and aunt. Weird! Sort of reminds me of the old song "I'm my own grandpa."

While all these wonderful things were going on in my early years, my brother Dick left the grandparents home and went to live with an unmarried aunt, Rose Tiettmeyer, who owned the home next door to Gus and Philly. As I look back, I realize now what a trying time that must have been for Dick, being only 10 or 11 years old. While Rose was a good lady, I'm quite sure she didn't offer a lot of guidance for him. I found out in recent years that he had dropped out of school and didn't get his diploma until he passed his GED while in the Air Force. When I asked him why he dropped out, he said, "Running around was more fun than school".

I recall Dick leaving to join the Air Force. It was Thanksgiving Day, 1950, and the family was at Aunt Ida's and Uncle Fred's for dinner. Everyone was skeptical that Dick would ever be able to pass a physical because of the accident he had as a child. But low and behold he was accepted. I think he spent most if not all of his four years at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, mostly developing x-ray film for the Air Force Hospital.

The day Dick left for the Air Force was also the day of the famous "Snow Bowl" football game between Ohio State and Michigan. The temperature was below zero with 20 mile an hour winds and snow falling at 2 inches per hour. Michigan won the game 9 to 3, even though they didn't make a single first down in the game. Michigan blocked 2 punts for a safety and a touchdown.

When Dick left the service, he returned to Celina and started working in the print shop at Reynolds and Reynolds. Kathleen also started working at Reynolds shortly after graduating, and actually knew Dick before she met me.

I've used up a lot of paper writing about the Winkeljohn clan. But that is no longer my surname. So, who were these Pulskamps? Socially, Dot and Vic spent the greatest portion of their time with the Winkeljohns, because most of them lived close by. Of Vic's siblings however, only Vange, who was married to Jerry Fortkamp lived nearby, in Coldwater, Ohio. While we did visit them quite often, three other sisters, Alma Tinnerman, Betty Campbell and Bernie Reynolds lived in Columbus, Ohio, while a brother, Herman, lived in Wooster, Ohio. Any visits with those living farther away were few and far between, As a result I know little about them. Just a story here and there. I do recall Vic talking about Bernie's husband Bill, who actually made "bathtub gin" during prohibition. Vic's sister Betty was an extremely talented typist and won some kind of competition with that skill. There was also a John Pulskamp who competed in weight lifting at the 1960 Olympics, and finished fourth. I think he was Alma's son from Columbus Ohio.

As I understand, it all started when three Pulskamp brothers migrated to the United States from Germany. The records say Hanover. However Their roots were in a small village of Merzen, Germany. An interesting note here is that Merzen, and Voltlage where the Winkeljohns were from, plus Essen, Oldenburg where Kathleen's relatives originated, are only 20 miles apart. If you want to check these locations on a map, note that the village of Essen Oldenburg is not the same as the city of Essen.

The brothers didn't stick together long. One settled somewhere in Missouri. That family then expanded into the Dakotas. Herman H. Pulskamp immediately moved to Oldenburg, Indiana and purchased a farm. That farm is still in the family name. One of his sons, also named Herman, moved to Maria Stein, and then later Celina. While living at Maria Stein he made a living building wagons. At some point he was elected Probate Judge of Mercer County, serving 2 terms. Friends of ours, Jack and Marlene Goudy of Wapakoneta, have their Grandmother's wedding license that was signed by Judge Pulskamp. Before serving as judge, Herman served 2 terms as Mercer County Treasurer. He had a son who was also named Herman. How confusing. This latest Herman started a furniture store in Celina, and later a mortuary.

Another of the Judge's eleven children was George. A graduate of Notre Dame, George came home to be editor of the Mercer County Bote, a German language newspaper. It was a very popular paper because of the heavy German population.

This held true until after the First World War. Using the German language became less and less acceptable, and the paper folded. (No pun intended.)

Also included in the Judge's eleven children was the youngest, Edward, my Grandfather. He followed George to Notre Dame, and returned to Celina with a Boiler Engineer's degree. Not much call for that today, but around 1900 boilers were everywhere. Trains, ships, factories, businesses, even some homes had boilers. At one point his employment was shown with some initials that sort of sounded like a train company, but I couldn't find them listed anywhere. Eventually he went to work for the Steric Acid Co. in Celina, which was owned by the Spieler brothers, one of whom was his Father In Law.

There were quite a few Pulskamps living in the Cincinnati area and also around Spartanburg, SC. Don't know what their history is, but they are related. Actually, all Pulskamps in the USA are related. But then, all Pulskamps in the world are kin.

In 2008 there was a World Gathering of Pulskamps held in Cincinnati. Quite an undertaking. Don't remember how many were present, but Kathleen and I attended the two-day event. One day at Cincinnati and the following day at the farm in Indiana. There were even five or six who came from Germany to celebrate with us. One of them was a young lady who competed professionally in beach volleyball. She did not arrive in her bikini.

When I was a child there was a long list of Pulskamps in the phone book. Presently our family makes up the only Pulskamps remaining in the Mercer/Auglaize County area.

So, what about this family I married into? The Niekamps. Like the Winkeljohns and Pulskamps they were of Germanic descent. Migrating here in 1833, the early settlers moved north on the newly completed canal. They may even have helped build it. They, like the other two families, struggled thru the Spanish flu epidemic and the Great Depression, trying to make ends meet, just happy to survive.

Kathleen's mom and dad, Alma and Andrew, moved the family between Cranberry Prairie, Celina and Saint Sebastian before settling in Saint Henry in 1943. This was just in time for Kathleen to enter second grade. She graduated as a "Redskin" in 1954. (Please note this was before Politically Correct became the issue it is.) The cutest cheerleader they ever had. A classmate of mine judged her as having the nicest legs. He was very astute.

Her family was different in one respect, two of her brothers married spouses who were not of German ancestry. Paul, the third oldest of ten, married a Polish lady, Dottie, from Wisconsin, while Jim the youngest, married a Spanish lady, Margie, from Texas. Both of these women have been a great influence on the family and have taught us much.

I must say they were an easy family to be with. It was surprising in a way. The guys were all hunters, fishermen and gardeners. I was none of those things but it didn't seem to make them any difference. I also got along very well with her mom and dad. Not certain about her dad, but Kathleen insists I bribed her mom with chocolate. I contend it continued to be my lovable nature showing thru, even after all those years. I rest my case.

Talking about the four families that make up most of my family tree, reminds me of a quirk about family names in Germany. In the Winkeljohn history it is mentioned that the newly married might take the family name of the bride if her family owned more land or ranked higher socially. Or, apparently there was a family named Winkel who at some point added "johann" to the end because it must have added some prestige. Of course at Ellis Island this was changed to "john."

There is also a note in the Pulskamp history. Similar, but a little different take on it. As late as 2008 there was still a Pulskamp farm located close to Merzen, Germany. The Pulskamp family that purchased the farm in 1840 was originally named Brewer. The Pulskamp family that sold the farm to them was originally named Krampe. The Krampe family is the one that Vic descended from.

Two members of the Brewer family came to the United States along with the lone Brewer, one of them went out west and the other stayed in Cincinnati. So, while there were three brothers that came to the States, they were probably not related by birth. Not sure how this all happened. Perhaps the Brewers and the Krampes changed names because that was the name of the farm, or it could be that in both cases the wives were from the Pulskamp family and inherited the farms.

Anyway, where was I? Names. Around the time I changed my name to Pulskamp, I also started the first grade at ICS (Immaculate Conception School). Don't think I started out kicking and screaming, but I probably was by the time I reached the eighth grade, if not sooner. All in all, it was a time of great agony for all concerned, especially the teachers. As I progressed through grade school and into high school I found, as I had long suspected, I sucked at athletics, and had zero interest in



studying. However, once I made it to high school, I did excel at the construction problems in geometry and liked mechanical drawing and art. So eventually, as graduation finally neared, a job in drafting began to look enticing, especially since it wouldn't require any additional schooling, which I knew wasn't going to happen. Kathleen, by the way, had a very hard time understanding this mindset since she loved school, and certainly would have continued on with her studies if she'd had the opportunity.

In June of 1952 I started my job at New Idea, in engineering, as a lowly draftsman. An uncle of mine, Jerry Fortkamp held some position in the company, and I think he put in a good word for me. New Idea was located in Coldwater, Ohio, and was a big name in the farm equipment industry. It had a very good reputation. It was said they stood behind all their products, except for the manure spreaders.

But I get ahead of myself. Back to school. One would think after spending 12 years in a school, I would have many memories to share. However, all the class plays, sporting events, proms and lots of other happenings don't show up when I hit "recall." Probably the times I remember best are all those when I got in trouble, but there's really no good reason to go there.

There was one occasion Vic liked to talk about. I had a dentist appointment and was late getting home from school. As he told it, when he came to school looking for me, the nun came out of the classroom remarking that he had a very stubborn son. Apparently someone had done something wrong so that entire class had to stay after school and pray the rosary. I however, sat in my desk and refused to pray because I hadn't done anything wrong. Sometimes I still think praying the rosary is a penance.

Dot and Vic tried very hard to keep me interested in scholastics. Two subjects in particular they felt strongly about were spelling and typing. I'm glad they did. While I don't spell everything correctly the first time, I get along pretty well. And after taking two years of typing, I can say that I am very accomplished 2-finger typist.

And then came Algebra. In all honestly, I probably should have flunked, but for some reason I got a passing grade. Looking back, I guess the reason was very clear. There was no way she wanted me back for another year. Interestingly, I probably used Algebra almost every day when I started working at New Idea.

Again I get carried away. Back to my youth. Compared to today, pastime for kids was completely different from now. First of all, television bordered on being science

fiction. Even when I graduated from high school in 1952, only about 50% of the homes had TV's, and then they were only in black and white. Color wasn't even available until a couple of years later. And of course, no video games. But I was fortunate to live in what is now called "The golden age of radio." Saturday mornings and after school on weekdays I would be glued to the radio, listening to program after program of serial type broadcasts. There was Superman, The Green Hornet and his faithful sidekick Kato, Sky King and his niece Penny, Sargent Preston of the Yukon and his sled dog King (King was the hero), Red Rider and Little Beaver, The Lone Ranger and Tonto, Captain Midnight, Jack Armstrong the All American Boy, and a few others that I can't remember.

Speaking of Superman, someone recently raised the question "whatever happened to all of those blue suits Clark Kent left in telephone booths." Either someone followed him around picking up his clothes or he had one hell of a wardrobe.

Many of the children's radio programs had some gimmick to promote sales for the sponsor, usually a cereal company. All you had to do was send in some box tops and a quarter for a secret decoder ring or some gadget with a hidden compartment. Of course we didn't have anything to decode or much to hide, but everyone wanted one. Or you might have been able to join some super exclusive secret club, along with thousands of other kids. But you did get a personalized certificate proving membership.

But the radio wasn't just for the children. It was the main entertainment for the entire family. Mornings and early afternoon were the soap operas, which almost always were sponsored by a soap company, hence the name. A few I remember my mom listening to: Stella Dallas, Pepper Young's Family and Rosemary. In the evenings I recall programs like: The Shadow, Inner Sanctum, Mr. District Attorney and the One Man's Family. Most of these were serious programs, or suspense. However, there were also the comedies: Life with Riley, Fibber McGee and Molly, Red Skelton, Jack Benny, Henry Aldrich, and The Great Gildersleeve. For drama there was an hour-long program called Lux Radio Theater (Lux was a brand of soap.) Being an hour long was a little unusual because few programs ran longer than half an hour. The children's program during the day were normally only 15 minutes.

After school, weekends and summer vacation was almost always spent outside, weather permitting. And probably sometimes when the weather didn't permit. We played just about any game that has a ball connected to it. And there were games of hide & seek, war games, or sometimes we would just throw stones at each other. We

would come in to eat and then right back outside, usually till after dark. Some of the best games were played after the sun went down. Of course, after dark was also a great time to get into trouble. One stunt my buddy Charlie and I would pull was to stand on opposite sides of the street, and when a car came, we would lean back and act like we were pulling a rope or something. Most of the cars would come to a screeching stop, and we would run like hell, being chased by a few choice words.

When it snowed, the streets didn't get cleaned off like they do now. So sledding was a great sport, but being kids we managed to make it dangerous. Cars couldn't drive really fast, so we could jump on our sled, grab the rear bumper off to the side, and go for a ride. Most of the drivers realized what we were doing but very few worried about it. I don't recall anyone ever getting injured. Winter was safer in one respect; instead of throwing stones at each other we threw snowballs. They didn't hurt near as much, unless you let them sit overnight and they became icy.

Recently I heard a story about a grandson telling his grandfather he wishes he had a place to go where he could do "stuff" and hang out with his friends. The grandfather said he had a place like that when he was a kid; it was called "outside." How true.

After dark, if there wasn't anything on the radio, I would retreat to a back room and make up some games. I liked to build things out of Lincoln Logs and then try to bust them up by making a catapult to launch "bombs." They must have been noisy games because I remember my dad yelling at me to "keep it down back there." Because of the times, I think most of my games involved war and destruction.

And I loved to read. Cereal boxes to comic books. A friend of mine from Florida, Tom Kelly, said he would read matchbook covers if there was nothing else available. Anything I could find in public or school libraries that sounded interesting was fair game. For my birthday or Christmas, I always wanted books. My favorite was a series about a character named Dave Dawson and his English buddy Freddy Farmer, who were pilots during World War II. I held onto those books and they became a favorite of our son Steve, many years later. I also remember an adventure book by Halliburton called Seven League Boots, which really enthralled me. I wonder if I had read less and practiced my pitching more, could I have made it to the "biggs?" I wonder if I had read my schoolbooks more, would I have made better grades? It seemed like I always had some other kind of book to set inside my schoolbooks. Oh well, as a much wiser person that I told me, "It is what it is and it ain't what it ain't."

Actually, my reading habits haven't changed much. I have shelves of unread books (I never keep a book after I've read it), mostly paperbacks because they're easy to carry. I always have one close by, especially when in the car. I've found the best way to survive a shopping trip is to find a comfortable chair and lose myself in a book.

The 1940s and 50s was a great era for movies. For children as well as adults. Vic worked nights and weekends as a projectionist at the Fayette Theater in Celina, which was great for me. I got to watch movies for free. Saturday afternoons were almost always a double feature of westerns, a couple of cartoons, newsreel and maybe a serial. What more could a boy ask for? I suspect it was also great for the mothers. A quarter for the movies, a nickel or dime for some candy and we were out of their hair. Some of our favorite "stars" were of course Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. But there was also Johnny Mac Brown, Lash Larue, Rocky Lane, Tex Ritter and many more. None of these movies required deep thought, probably no thought. They were mostly riding and shooting. While there was usually a woman in each movie, the hero might kiss his horse but never the woman.

The serials were a little different, more like our TV programs today. Each segment ended with a "hook" that was meant to bring you back the following week, because you didn't want to miss whatever happened next. Actually, you could miss a week and never notice because very little happened each week, also like our TV programs today. My favorite serial was the Green Hornet, who fought evil with his faithful sidekick Kato, who also drove their special car, Black Beauty. An interesting bit of information: In the beginning, Kato was Japanese, but after Pearl Harbor he became Filipino. So, I guess we've always had "politically correct" to deal with.

Once in a while I would get to spend some time with Vic in the projection booth while a movie was playing. It was fascinating to watch everything. Most full length movies used five or six reels of film, twenty minutes each. There were two projection machines that he would alternate between as each reel ran out. The machines had to be started and stopped at just the right time so the movie would appear seamless. He had to keep the carbon arc properly adjusted so the light was bright enough, but is ready to shut it off in case the film broke. A stationary film in front of the arc would quickly catch fire. Not a good thing to have happen. Of course, if the film did break, he had to take the reel out of the projector, repair the film and restart the movie. All while the audience would be stomping their feet and yelling.

In our modern movie theaters, the movies are digital. You youngsters probably can't remember a movie not playing flawlessly from start to finish. Actually Kathleen and

I were attending a movie at Florida recently when there was a short period of blank screen. We didn't think much of it, but as we left the theater the usher was handing out free passes to compensate. Surprised me.

During my younger days, almost every boy had a BB gun. The hands down favorite was a Daisy Red Rider model. It was not the most powerful model Daisy made. That honor went to their pump gun. It shot the same BB, but if you kept pumping it would really hit hard. However Red Rider, along with his sidekick, an Indian boy named Little Beaver, was one of the Saturday western movie stars. So that was the gun we wanted. Being boys, when we got tired of shooting at tin cans, we would shoot at each other. Much like throwing stones. Amazingly, despite all the warnings, none of us "got an eye shot out." It was however an interesting contest to see who could take the most hits in the butt as the shooter moved closer and closer. There was one kid who had a pump BB gun. Very few would volunteer to be the "shootee" for him. I don't remember how we explained all the red welts to our parents. I received my Red Rider when I was about ten years old, and kept it until it became the victim of "downsizing" during our last move.

Since the early 1900s the bicycle has been the "magic carpet" that allows boys and girls to explore and fantasize. It was no different for my friends and I. We explored every street, alley, trash heap, fire or accident we were able to get to. We mastered the skill of riding with "no hands," survived most of the spills with no major injuries, and all without the benefit of a helmet. I think we even tried "no eyes," but it never became a popular thing to do. The top of the line bike, the bike every boy drooled over was a Schwinn equipped with Knee Action, which was a spring mounted on the front wheel. The Schwinn was a little out of my price range, but I did have a black and red Monarch with a spring suspension. It was a cool bike, but it didn't get anywhere near the respect that a Schwinn did.

During the summer our bikes took us to Mercelina Park in Celina. There were tennis courts, basketball hoops and a great ball diamond where we would have semi-organized games. There were no organized sports for kids during the summer like Little League, and Club Leagues, at least that I can recall. We made up our own games, picked our teams, established our own rules and argued long and hard whether you were safe or out on the throw to first base. I don't think I was ever the last kid picked, but I'm sure I was never first either. For some reason I seemed to always end up in right field. No matter what sport I tried, my athletic ability was obviously and unfortunately very lacking. I don't know if playing pool is considered

a sport, but I did do okay at that. However, even that was only after playing a number of guys that really enjoyed “kicking butt,” especially mine.

The ball diamond in Celina was so well maintained because like a number of towns in the area, we had a semi-pro baseball team. Most of the area teams were staffed by guys fresh from the service in WWII, now too old to try out for professional team, or perhaps not quite good enough for a higher level of play. Most just wanted to play baseball. Celina’s team was called the “Independents” and they played at Mercelina Park. A couple of other local teams were the “Coldwater Merchants” and the “Bay View Ducks.” Bay View was sort of a small resort built on Grand Lake, hence the name. Contrary to popular opinion their name had nothing to do with their reactions at the plate when my Uncle Herb Winkeljohn was pitching. My uncle, Herb was a pitcher for the Celina team and threw rather hard. He was a left-hander and was sometimes (often) erratic. It was not unusual for him to yell, “Duck” when he would uncork a wild pitch.

All in all they played a very entertaining brand of baseball, but I have to admit I didn’t pay a whole lot of attention to the games. We were mostly there to “horse around.” Gosh, is that expression still used, other than by old folk, like me? Gee whiz, golly Ned, I hope so. I feel old enough as it without my vocabulary becoming obsolete.

World War II. I was 7 1/2 years old when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Most of my memories of the war are just bits and pieces. Even without television the media coverage was big. The front pages of the daily papers were always about the war, usually accompanied by maps showing the progress, or lack of, by the Allied forces. At the theaters, movies were almost always preceded by News Reels, which usually carried good news about the war. I don’t recall ever hearing bad news or seeing pictures of carnage. Movies were the same way (think John Wayne). This was probably good for morale except it seemed to glamorize the whole war thing, which was not good for our young men who joined the services with visions of grand adventure, only to return broken in mind and body, if they returned at all. Thank goodness the war movies today are not that way. I don’t like to see the blood and guts, but at least they don’t glamorize war.

I don’t have many opportunities to observe children playing, mostly because they seldom seem to play outdoors anymore. But when they do I don’t ever hear them playing “war” games. Probably a good thing, but still, it might be better than playing electronic games.

There was one thing that brought the war closer to home. Ohio had several prisoner-of-war camps, and one was located between Celina and St. Marys, at a 4H camp. A recent article dated 2012 stated that the grounds and facilities were still in use as a summer camp, and was still equipped with the original army cots. (I hope the mattresses had been replaced.) The kitchen also was still equipped with the original Army dinnerware, cast iron skillets and dutch ovens.

The camp had the usual high fence surrounding it, and armed patrols at night. However during the day the prisoners had a surprising amount of freedom. There was a larger camp in northern Ohio, and 4 or 5 hundred prisoners were moved to Celina just for the summer. They performed a lot of farm work and helped at three of the canneries in the area. With so many of our young men being called to the service, there was a shortage of laborers. One local resident made the comment that the prisoners were very well mannered and fun to talk with. It was almost like having guests.

There were always a lot of military airplanes flying overhead, but they were always "ours." This may sound humorous, but during the war there was a lot of worry about living so close to the huge oil refinery in Lima, and the Air Force base in Dayton, both of which were assumed to be high on the target list if we were ever bombed. I'm not sure how German bombers were going to make it all the way to Ohio, but people worried. We had air raid drills at night. Sirens would sound and everyone had to turn off their lights or cover the windows with blackout curtains. Air Raid Wardens would walk the streets and pound on your door if they saw any light peeking out. So, in addition to those bombers not only having to make it all the way to Ohio, they had to do it in the dark. Not very likely. We didn't have drills in the daytime because what could we do other than go outside and look in the sky. A lot like we do now when there's a tornado siren.

This is not meant to make light of the dangers those living closer to the coasts were exposed to. Not so much from bombers, but from submarines. Although it was seldom reported, there was a lot of concern about the U boats surfacing and shelling coastal facilities. However, shipping was a different story. Over 200 ships were torpedoed and sunk off the East coast and in the Gulf of Mexico. Also, there are three known instances of German saboteurs being landed from subs: Florida, Maine and the Carolinas. All were quickly caught. Two were sentenced to life in prison, because they surrendered and assisted our police in hunting the others. The rest were executed.

On the West coast there were two incidents of Japanese subs firing on shore facilities, with very little damage. The panic that resulted from these shelling's resulted in the internment of over 100,000 people of Japanese descent. Some of these people were second and third generation Americans. They lost everything. What a travesty.

Japan also sent aloft balloons that drifted all the way across the ocean, carrying firebombs, in the hopes of starting forest fires. Some fires did get started but were quickly put out. The only known stateside casualties during war were a mother and her children who were killed when one of these balloons exploded close to them.

The bottom line is that the vastness of the oceans was our salvation. Our enemies couldn't easily get here. When you look at pictures of devastation from Germany, England and Japan after the war, one quickly realized the oceans are a lot smaller now and our country will probably not be so fortunate if there is another major conflict. Technology has taken care of that. In the future all will probably suffer equally.

The refinery at Lima had a lot of big storage tanks of oil waiting to be refined. Once in a while one would catch on fire, and I remember us driving to see it. Those fires would put out a lot of thick black smoke that was easily visible from Celina, 35 miles away. After a fire the storage tank would be just a pile of twisted scorched metal. Later they started building the tanks with floating roofs, which solved the problem. Apparently, it was the vapors above the oil that was most volatile.

My uncle Herb Winkeljohn, the pitcher, was the only family member that I know of to serve in World War II, having been drafted into the army. Before serving he worked for his sister and her husband, Ida and Fred Gilberg (yep, the one I made nervous), in their small print shop in Celina. With that experience he was put in charge of a printing press in New Guinea, an island close to Australia. I remember him talking about how their printing press was transported there by boat with the parts packed in grease to protect them from the salt water. Some squads were not able to use their presses because of corrosion, and they were subsequently placed in infantry units. Herb's press worked perfectly and his squad sent a letter of thanks to the company that packed it. Don't know how long he served, but he was happy to say he didn't see any action.

My early work experiences began with what seemed like the obligatory paper route for young boys, at least in Celina. I started as a substitute for my friend Charlie



Bernholt and then took over when he quit. About 150 customers made up my route. Enjoyed it in the summer, not so much in the winter. Every day all the delivery boys would gather at the newspaper office of the Daily Standard. We would sit around, rolling our papers and stuffing them into canvas bags. We would then strap one bag into the handlebars of our bicycles, hang another bag or two over the back fender and take off.

Almost everyone in town subscribed to the Celina Standard, so we could peddle down the sidewalk, pulling papers out of the bag and throwing them on the porches as we rode by. At least that was the intent. Sometimes, it landed on the roof or in the bushes. And of course, there was an occasional broken window. Interestingly enough, back then people seemed to accept that sort of thing as part of life. Don't think I ever had to pay for a window. Well, there was this one house that had a wind chime hanging on the porch, and I must admit it was a daily target for me. Charlie admitted he used it as a target also. He must have been a better shot than I. When he quit the route, he bought the lady a new wind chime. I didn't have to do that.

Rain, shine, snow or sleet I peddled that route. At least that's the way I remember it, and I'm sticking to it. Can't imagine I was really that faithful, but I don't remember ever being driven by Vic or Dot. The biggest pain, but certainly a necessary one, was trying to collect every Saturday. Each customer had a card the paperboy would punch when he got paid. Of course, it seemed like some people were never home on Saturday. Maybe they were unhappy about their paper being on the roof, or were out buying a new wind chime. It's sure been a long time since we've had a newspaper delivered by a kid on a bike.

When high school started, I began working at Garen's IGA grocery store on west Logan Street, mostly stocking shelves, bagging and carrying groceries. I worked with another younger fellow named Ralph Pickering. One of our favorite pastimes was begging pastry delivery guys for free samples. It didn't work every time, but often enough that we kept trying.

A couple of years ago I was leaving the Wal-Mart in Celina and saw a Krispy Kream delivery truck. On impulse I stopped to talk with the driver and shared that memory with him. He laughed, reached inside and handed me a box of doughnuts. They were outdated but still pretty darn good. And I didn't have to share them with Ralph, just Kathleen. I wonder how often that would still work today.

Grocery work must have appealed to me. I left the IGA and started at the A&P store, the same store we lived above when I was little. Then a big Kroger store moved in across the street and most of the crew left A&P and went there. This was my first experience working under a union and going to union meetings. Not much fun and very little upside, if any. There wasn't much memorable from those jobs, except a man who worked at Kroger's, who was, as they say today "a little light in his loafers." He told a story about going into a local nightclub where the band was playing "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" and proceeded to stand and announce that his name was Bubbles. Said he got thrown out. I didn't understand why.

There also is a rather embarrassing story about my hand and stapler, but I don't really want to go there. Kathleen insisted I should mention it, so there it is. I mentioned it. Suffice it to say that it involved some pain and case of slow learning. Or perhaps it was a case of, "Those who forgot the past are doomed to repeat it."

My best friend through high school was Charlie Bernhold (the kid with the paper route). His dad ran an appliance/electronics store, although I don't think the term "electronics" was meaningful at that time. He had a portable PA system he took to a lot of church or community picnics. Just about every weekend during the summer there would be a picnic somewhere. Charlie and I would tag along to a lot of them. Don't remember what we did, which is probably just as well. We seemed to have a knack for finding mischief. Today we would probably end up in jail. I often wonder which of us was the worst influence on the other. Charlie ended up being a policeman, so maybe I was the culprit.

Charlie and I both had motor bikes for a couple of summers. Mine was a converted bicycle with a motor added, while Charlie had a real Whizzer, which was like a small motorcycle. Our races were always very one sided, but we ran all over town and the countryside with those things. Mine was hard to keep running and eventually died completely.

The two of us caddied at Northmore Golf Course for a couple of summers, which was a lot of fun, made decent money, plus we got to play free one morning each week. It must have been before our motorbikes because I remember hitchhiking to and from the golf course. Hitching a ride back then was very common, and as far as I can remember nobody worried about the safety of it. As for playing golf, like with most sports, I found my skill level to be marginal. When asked today if I play golf, my usual response is "every once in a while, I get the urge to play again, but I just lay down till it goes away." As an example of my skill level, I recall hitting a ball off the

toe of my driver, right through my golf bag, which was standing off one side. The ball tore through one side of the bag and stayed inside. No, I didn't try to play it from there. Fortunately, I was playing alone and nobody witnessed it. Although, people did ask why I had a piece of duct tap on my bag. I did belong to a golf league at Crown for a few years and managed to win a trophy or two, only because I had a very good, and tolerant, partner.

For several summers Charlie and I ordered boxes of fireworks that were advertised in some of the comic books. I'm talking cannon salutes, cherry bombs, aerial bombs and of course ordinary firecrackers. But we liked the big stuff. The more noise the better. One year, I think the last year we ordered them; the box contained this huge aerial bomb. Must have been 3 inches across. Charlie and I decided to save that for our last hurrah that summer. One night we rode our bikes down an alley in a residential area and found a place to set it off. It took off with a mighty whoosh. There was some sizzling and popping and low and behold, the bomb landed back at our feet. We forgot to check overhead for wires. Anyway, we ran like hell but man did our backs ever get sprayed with gravel.

The bigger fireworks were actually rather safe. But the smaller firecrackers were very unpredictable. Sometimes the wick, or fuse, would burn extra fast and the thing would go off in your hand. Fortunately, they were small enough that there was no serious damage, just instant pain and some small burns.

And then, the many pranks. One in particular, if you took a firecracker and rubbed the wick between your fingers, most of the powder would come out and the wick would burn slowly. So, you could light the firecracker, place it on a porch, ring the doorbell and run. By the time someone would come out, look around, and start back inside, the firecracker would go off. Man, if kids today did some of those things we pulled, they'd probably be arrested. Actually, we probably should have been. Strangely, other than soaping windows, Halloween didn't seem to generate any more pranks than other days.

At long last I graduated from high school, much to everyone's relief, and all in one piece (I'm referring to the school.) This was a remarkable event (I'm referring to the graduation part.) One would think that, other than graduating there must have been something memorable about those four years, but darned if I know what it is. Oh, I did have my first real date, for the senior prom, Thelma Buschor, a classmate. We both survived it and stayed friends.

My favorite pastime during high school days was shooting pool. My friend Charlie and I spent many hours in Fleck's Pool Hall in downtown Celina. I thought I was pretty good, but as it is with most games of skill, there's always someone better. We certainly did wile away the hours though, and it probably kept us from getting into more trouble than we did. When we turned eighteen, Charlie and I both joined the Eagles lodge because they had a pool table and we could play free.

Vic was an officer at the Eagles so it was easy for us to get in. However, there was a procedure for acceptance. Each voting member would place either a white or black ball in a box. One black ball meant you were not accepted. Hence the term "blackballed." Of course, all of the fraternal organizations wanted and needed new members, so very seldom was anyone blackballed.

So much for my high school days, at least that which I remember and/or is fit to print. As I get older I realize more and more how great selective memory is.

Being in need of better transportation since the old motorbike just didn't cut it anymore, I purchased my first car. It was a light green 1951 Chevy with a Power Glide transmission; although it was so inefficient everyone called it "power slide." Guys, being guys, liked to squeal their tires when taking off. I found that if I went in reverse fairly fast and dropped it into drive, it would yield a tiny "eek." It is often said that guys never forget their first car. All I can say is it always got me to where I wanted to go.

At last, after many pages, back to work. Now that I had transportation and was in need of better income after graduating, I applied for the job of draftsman at New Idea in Coldwater, Ohio. And so began my career in engineering. Albeit at the bottom of the ladder. My starting pay was \$1.25 an hour. It took me 2 or 3 years before I was making as much as the floor sweepers who were part of the union. I worked at New Idea from 1952 to 1962, minus two years spent in the Army. I was able to hone what skills I had, and managing to learn a little about engineering and design.

I did take one summer off and transferred to the service department, traveling around Indiana and Illinois repairing corn pickers with a crew of 3 other guys, Bill Wint and John Shinn, Jr from Coldwater, plus a guy named Clyde from Wapakoneta. Along the way I picked up some new skills, like welding and using a cutting torch. Most of all I found out how important it was to design a product correctly.

In the little town of Manito, Illinois I developed my first real crush. Her name was Betty Bernshausen. Her father owned the New Idea dealership we were working out

of. Obviously, I kept Manito as our base for as long as I could. But alas, all things must come to an end. I still managed to see her sporadically while working in the area, but the romance died a natural death. Thanks to the great and all-knowing Google, I found that Betty became a teacher, married, had a family and died in 2006.

The field service job came to an end and it was back to the engineering office. However, with the experience I picked up that summer, I was able to get a raise to the fantastic amount of \$100 a week.

One summer, as part of my job, I operated an experimental baler somewhere around Pocatello, Idaho. Don't remember how long I stayed out there, but I didn't meet any girls. However I did meet this old geezer who taught me a lot about the finer points of shooting pool. He just didn't teach me enough to beat him.

I still think it was rather crazy, sending a guy who had never driven a tractor, and knew nothing about farming, sixteen hundred miles to operate a piece of farm equipment, doing a job he also knew nothing about. But I survived, the baler survived and I learned another valuable lesson. I didn't want to be a farmer.

While in Idaho I had the opportunity to attend a rodeo. I didn't understand a lot of what was going on, but I was really glad I went because now I can say, with all truthfulness, "This ain't my first rodeo."

I was really fortunate to work with a great bunch of engineers at New Idea. They taught me a lot and gave me a lot of freedom to do my own thing. Sometimes, to my chagrin, my "thing" wasn't always based on sound engineering practices. But I was learning and being prepared for a wonderful, fulfilling and rewarding future.

Around this time I traded in the old Chevy and got a 1953 Pontiac. (I could squeal the tires with this one.) It was built like a tank and served me very well until I got rear ended at a traffic light in Fort Loramie when leaving the Lynn House dance hall. I had a young lady with me (not Kathleen). We got hit so hard it ripped the front seat out of the floor and we ended up on our backs starring at the ceiling. Amazingly neither of us had any injuries. And this was before seatbelts and head restraints. To the best of my recollection, that was the only time I had a date in the back seat of a car. The girl was from Fort Loramie and able to walk home, but Vic had to drive from Celina to pick me up. So marked the end of the 53 Pontiac.

Then I purchased my first "new" car, a 1956 Pontiac, a yellow and white hardtop with a black and white interior. I could really squeal the tires with this one. You

should have heard the sound it made when you dropped it into passing gear. I still think a good part of the sound was the gas rushing through the carburetor. This was my first car that cost enough that I had to make payments. It was also the last new car that I purchased for a long time. For number of years I bought all my cars from my future uncle, Jack Cavanaugh, who later married my aunt Helen in 1959. Jack owned a Pontiac dealership in Batavia, Ohio.

As you've probably gathered, my pastime changed from shooting pool to dancing. After all, in those days there weren't many girls hanging around Fleck's Pool Hall, unless you were looking for someone to arm wrestle. Actually, it was more like running around to dance halls, rather than dancing itself.

We were blessed with a number of dance halls in the area. Eldora (Ma Shoes), somewhere around New Weston, was open Sunday nights. This is where the Eldora racetrack is located now. On Saturday nights we had our choice of Crystal Ball at Frenchtown, Lynn House at Fort Loramie, and Eagle Park at Minster. Sunday night was Eldora again, while Wednesday found us at Crystal Ball. I think Eldora also had dancing on Friday night, but it was primarily square dancing. This led to a bunch of miles on my car. It was not unusual for some of us guys to hit all three places on Saturday because we had to find out what girls were where. Of all the places, Eagles Park was the classiest and had the best orchestra, Don Smith, who also had the best dressed of all the local bands, wearing matching blue blazers and grey trousers.

Because our area had a large Catholic population (I often commented that we lived in a Catholic ghetto), Eagle Park and all other dance halls closed during Advent and Lent. Can't imagine that happening today, someone would be "offended" and it would end up in court. Anyway, Easter Saturday was the much-anticipated reopening, and life resumed.

As it turns out, Eagle Park also provided some of the best memories. I should have divided this into chapters because this definitely was the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in my life.

It was the fall of 1955, on Saturday night at Eagle Park. I saw this circle of 5 or 6 guys that I knew, with a glow coming from the center of their group. There was this cute chick being razed about Wally Post, a baseball player from Saint Henry who played for the Cincinnati Reds. And Kathleen was giving it right back to them. I was smitten. I also became a dyed in the wool Reds fan that night. Kathleen continues to

be a loyal Reds fan, regardless of their ups and downs. Hates to miss a game. Loves being at the stadium.

But she must have thought I was a real dork that first night. She tells me I kept calling her Catherine instead of Kathleen. Just another example of how mesmerized I was. Or maybe I was a dork.

We danced a number of dances and I asked to take her home, which was very common at that time. The girls traveled in packs and the guys would circle them like sharks, picking off any that strayed too far from the group. Come to think of it, maybe it was the other way around and they were baiting us. Whatever, she said yes. I think she questioned her decision when I asked if she wanted to take the "long way home." It really wasn't that big of a deal, only 2 miles farther, just meant a few more minutes together.

Then I just about blew it. It was December, don't remember if we had a date or I took her home from the dance, but I asked her what she was doing New Year's Eve. She had nothing planned yet so I said I'd give her a call. Well, I didn't call. But New Year's Eve I showed up at Eagle Park, alone. Kathleen was there with friends. To say that I was in deep do-do is a gross understatement. But we danced and I managed to charm her with my wit, charisma, plus a lot of intense groveling, (*Mea culpa mea culpa mea maxima culpa!*)

Sometime that year we started going steady and during Christmas, 1956 she accepted a ring and we became engaged. Her "Yes" was the best Christmas present I've ever received. Also gave her a cedar chest, which we still use, and a set of silverware, which we no longer have, mainly because polishing silverware can be a royal pain in the rear.

Dating in those days usually consisted of going to dances and going to the movies. Those were the heydays of the big musicals like Oklahoma and State Fair, plus westerns such as High Noon and Shane (no vampires or living dead). I especially remember Singing in the Rain with Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds. I'm not certain how much Kathleen enjoyed the movies, since she usually fell asleep about halfway through. Maybe it was because I kept her out too late the night before. (Kathleen claims she only fell asleep during the westerns.) Sundays were extra special; we would get in the car and just drive. We still talk about those drives with a lot of fond memories.

Young people today don't realize how much more enjoyable "taking a drive" was at that time. For one thing, very few cars had bucket seats. One-piece bench seats were standard. Also, no seat belts. My 56 Pontiac had seat belts, but only because I asked that they be installed. And there certainly was no requirement or law saying you had to use them. The upside of all of this was your sweetie could ride very close. Plus, most guys had a spinner knob added to the steering wheel, which made it easy to drive with one hand while you kept your other hand around her shoulder. Of course, you did this only to protect her and keep her safe. The downside was that some spinner knobs were not made all that well, and would break off in your hand at an inopportune moment, or not give good enough control in emergencies. They had a number of nicknames like "suicide knob," "necker knob," and "knuckle buster." I did hear there were accidents, but not involving anyone I knew.

Also, no cell phones. Enough said.

Our time together as an engaged couple did not last long. The mandatory draft was in place and Uncle Sam wanted me to "Be All That I Could Be" and invited me to join the army. How could I refuse? In March of 1957, I along with two other guys from Mercer County, Paul Schroer and Don Stahl, went to Columbus to be inducted. After our physicals we were loaded on a bus and took off for Fort Knox, Kentucky. Our one task during the journey was to memorize our serial number. Mine? US52415604. Since it became part of my address, Kathleen knew it as well as I did.

I learned very quickly that if you hung around the barracks on Sundays during basic training, you would be put to work. Technically Sunday was a day off, but training companies didn't like guys lying around doing nothing. So bright and early I would be gone, first to Mass and on to the USO club where I would spend the rest of the day. Never received a reprimand for being missing on a Sunday.

Those Sunday hours were not hard to fill. Spent quite a bit of time writing letters. At least one letter would be to Kathleen. While at training camp my letters were rather sporadic, but Kathleen became a faithful daily writer. Once I was permanently assigned, I also began to write almost daily.

After leaving Fort Knox I went to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for advanced training as a Combat Engineer. If you've heard the expression "armpit of the world," that's Fort Leonard Wood. If most guys were given a choice between being assigned to Korea or staying at Missouri, they would choose Korea. Probably would regret



that choice but that's how much they hated Leonard Wood. Anyway, we learned how to build bridges and fun stuff like that.

I was sort of hoping to go to Germany, but my permanent assignment ended up being Fort Hood, Texas. Since I was going to be stateside, I snuck out one weekend, without a pass, and flew home to get my car. The army didn't run a very tight ship at that time, thank goodness, so I didn't end up in the stockade for being AWOL.

It was probably around the end of July when I arrived at Fort Hood, which was definitely not the best time of the year for Texas. That's when I realized the Army just did not put their camps in nice places. That part of Texas was chosen because it was similar to Africa, where, during WWII, our tanks were to be fighting against the German Panzer tanks, led by field marshal Rommel. So, living in Texas was a lot like living in Africa.

We lived in old wooden barracks built in the early 40's. They were temporary buildings meant to last a maximum of ten years. The plus side was that they didn't look very nice and so didn't require a lot of maintenance on our part. Swing a wet mop over the floor and we were done. Actually, every barracks I ever stayed in was an old wooden one. Be it Fort Knox, Kentucky, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Lewis, Washington or Camp Polk, Louisiana, they were all the same.

The location on base was good. We were at the intersection of the two main roads in and out. Most of the things I needed were within walking distance and there was a parking lot close by for my car. The post library was only a couple of doors down the street, which became my refuge most evenings. It was cool and quiet, and gave me a place to jot a note to Kathleen.

Each army is made up of anywhere from 2 to 5 corps, each of which is responsible for a division of the army, such as artillery. I was assigned to Headquarters Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps, which was responsible for tanks. No, I didn't get to drive one or ride in one, thank goodness. As claustrophobic as I am, I probably would have been a basket case.

I was Assigned to headquarters company, G2, which is the intelligence group. Isn't that a hoot? I along with another guy, Jerry Kilgore from Texas, worked in the reproduction department. In the event there were hostilities, we would supply maps to everyone in the Corps, plus update the maps daily with friendly and enemy troop

movements. Since there were no hostilities, we had an 8 to 5 job with nothing to do. At least I don't remember doing much.

That all changed the summer of 1958 when 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps was put in charge of a huge maneuver called "Rocky Shoals." Troops from all over the United States converged on Fort Lewis, Washington for additional training. Most of our company traveled from Texas to Washington in trucks, sleeping in school gymnasiums. I got lucky and was assigned to guard the classified documents, which were traveling by train. When it was my turn to stand guard, I and another guy would ride in the baggage car with the sliding doors open and watch the world go by. And it was a beautiful world. Our train took the "great northern route" across the upper United States and the scenery was fantastic. When the train stopped for any reason we would get out and stand guard on each side of the car. Must have done a good job because nobody stole a single classified document while I was on duty. Actually no one started a war either; guess I scared the crap out of them.

Interesting footnote: I had to have a security clearance to work with classified documents. Found out later that there actually were FBI agents in Celina checking me out. Glad they weren't too thorough. They never found out about the fireworks, and a few other things.

After our training in Fort Lewis they put us on troop ships and sailed down the coast of California. Then, in the middle of the night, we went down nets hanging over the side of the ship, into landing crafts, just like you saw in the old war movies. We invaded California somewhere around San Luis Obispo where the Hearst Estate is located. I heard somewhere that the Hearst family allowed the army to operate there in lieu of paying taxes.

The trip from the ship to the beach was a nightmare. There was cloud cover so no moon. It was pitch dark. Our landing craft couldn't find the shore until the sun came up and they could see it. They actually pulled up alongside one of the main ships and asked which way the shore was. As soon as they started out again you could feel the boat turning. We were very close to mutiny. What a comedy of errors. Meanwhile, riding in a landing craft is a lot like riding in a cork. It goes up and down with every little wave, and I got sick as a dog. Maybe that's why I still have an aversion to boats.

One of the few things I remember from the maneuvers was updating the map in the command tent one morning when someone said, "So what's new?" When I looked, all I saw was a couple of shoulders covered with stars. One other reason I remember

General Biddle is he broke his leg somehow, and the troops nicknaming him "Brittle Biddle."

One other memorable event, after our duty shift one night, they loaded us on trucks and let us off in the middle of a weed covered field, in pouring rain, no trees, and said they would pick us up in the morning. Sleep well!

Don't remember who won the maneuver, and don't think any of us cared. But, eventually it was over and we returned to Fort Hood where I finished my 2-year commitment.

There was a short stay at Camp Polk in Louisiana for some training. The only thing I remember from it was drinking chicory coffee. Didn't like it.

There were many civilian occupations represented in our barracks. We had a pilot, undertaker, architect, grocery store manager, accountant, mechanic, lawyer and a guy who owned oil wells. And their personalities were just as diverse. The mechanic came in real handy for those experiencing car problems. On Saturday we would line our cars up and he would walk from car to car, talking us through the repairs. I did replace a water pump on my 56 Pontiac. Saved a few dollars I couldn't spare. Interestingly enough, I can't think of anyone in our company who made use of their profession or training.

On a personal note I was a smoker when I entered the service, about a half pack a day. Four of the guys decided to quit smoking, and threw some money in a pot, which the last one to hold out would collect. I didn't join then in the bet, but decided to quit also. The four of them resumed the habit but I didn't smoke anything for close to a year. Then, for some reason, I took up the pipe. Think I just liked the smell of pipe tobacco. It wasn't until we were living in New Bremen that I gave the pipe up also. I always enjoyed smoking but never regretted quitting. Certainly, saved a lot of money over the years. Even though when I started smoking, a carton of cigarettes only cost \$1.

The army back then was not a very efficient organization, probably because most of the people doing the work didn't want to be there. One of the guys in my barracks worked in the office that kept track of leaves and weekend passes for all the soldiers in the Corps. He mentioned one day that his office was running months behind in updating everyone's records. So even though I had used up all my leave, I thought what the heck, I put in for another 2 weeks and it was approved. When I was discharged, I was informed that I owed the army 2 weeks pay. Wish I could have

paid them for the whole 2 years, stayed home and worked. I sure would have been money ahead, and probably a lot less stressful for the Army.

That brings to mind a story told by a classmate of mine, Don Beckstedt, who had enlisted in the Marines. His commanding officer told him "Beckstedt, you are one poor excuse for a Marine." His only reply was "yes sir I am." I probably would have had to answer the same.

One of our guys worked at the officer's club, so once in a while they would give him some booze, or at least sold it to him cheap. On Friday night we would hit every soft drink machine in the area and have a party. You have to imagine a dozen guys sitting around their skivvies, drinking coke and whisky and having a grand time. It was not a pretty sight.

Every once in a while, when we got up in the morning, someone would yell, "I'm double digit." Few guys ever talked about getting out until they had less than 100 days to go until discharge. Of course, everyone else would boo and hiss. It was especially agonizing for those who enlisted because they had a three-year sentence instead of our two.

As the saying goes, all things must come to an end, bad as well as good. March of 1959 saw me making my last 1200-mile drive back to Ohio. By the way, Texas isn't that big, it's huge. By the time I got out of Texas I was half way home. I drove it straight through a couple of times. There were very few interstate highways at the time, so 1200 miles took 24 hours. My first stop was almost always Kathleen's home, which irritated my mother no end. Well, after all, Saint Henry was right on the way to Celina, but that argument did not pacify her.

Fort Hood, like all Army bases required a sticker on your bumper if you kept your car on base. One problem was if you were picked up off base for any reason, the police see the stickers and notify your company. So, in addition to paying a civil fine, when you got back to base there would be some additional disciplinary action. So, with one of the gadgets at our disposal, we made small signs that read, "Drink More Milk" and placed it over the post sticker when we left base. No one in our barracks had a problem after that.

Finally, goodbye Army and back to Kathleen for some loving, and to New Idea to resume my career. Don't think I really thought about it being a career, it was a job, but one that I really enjoyed.

We also continued our preparations for our wedding, which was only 3 months away. We had done quite a bit of planning when I was home on leave, but Kathleen had to do a lot of work on her own. Fortunately, weddings were much simpler back then but still seemed like a lot of preparation. But so worth the effort.

We rented the Legion hall in Maria Stein for our reception. Don't remember when we arranged that, but the guys back then used to say, "Get a hall rented and then find a girl." Kathleen had hired the cooks and we managed to get the Topp orchestra for the music. Marvin Topp, presently a neighbor of our son Steve, was a member of that group. The family lived outside of New Bremen and I remember us sitting in their kitchen working out the schedule and price. Weddings then were an all-day affair and it was typical for the orchestra to play in the afternoon as well as evening.

June 13, 1959, was a bright, beautiful sunny day, although a little cool and very windy. The wedding mass was at 10:00, which was unheard of. Most were at 8:00 or 8:30. Not sure why, maybe that's just what the Priests preferred. (I think Kathleen was Father Fleckenstein's pet.) It did allow us to do the meals a little different. Instead of breakfast, lunch and dinner, we were able to do brunch and then a big dinner.

We have the marriage license and all the pictures, but without them I'm not certain I could swear we got married that day. It was a blur. All the events just seemed to melt together into this collage of images that I can't seem to separate into any meaningful sequence.

It was an afternoon and evening filled with music, dancing and perhaps a drink or two. All the traditional things took place, the garter and flower toss; cake cutting (before which I was warned NOT to shove the cake in her face). I didn't. Back then it was not unusual for the wedding couple to bug out from the reception early. But Kathleen has never been one to leave a party early. While we didn't lock the doors and turn out the lights, we also didn't miss much of the celebration.

Kathleen is a great record keeper. Somewhere is a list of expenditures for the wedding and our honeymoon. I'll have to find and include those things later if I can.

We stayed somewhere around Troy that night, attended church in the morning and off we went to begin this new life together. And what an adventure it would prove to be. We probably did have two nickels to rub together, but not much more. My car was paid for and Kathleen had saved enough to put a down payment on our first home on John Street in Saint Henry. Luckily, we got a private loan, which didn't

require as much down as a bank loan, and slightly lower interest. The real estate guy, Ray Wuebker, had a lot of connections in the area and set it up for us.

Anyway we headed east from Troy with a vague idea of going to Virginia Beach. In the fifties, honeymoons were a rather low-key event, at least compared to today. We were just happy to be traveling and exploring together. Well, for the most part we were happy. There was one teeny, tiny incident when I criticized Kathleen for not folding a map correctly. Let us just say that it didn't go over very well. Sixty years later I'm still reminded about it. However, on the plus side, she now folds a map very well. And lets me know that she does.

You would think that I would have learned from the map-folding incident, But I guess I'll never be known as "Mr. Sensitivity." One evening Kathleen made tomato soup for us and I must have made some totally innocent comment like "what the hell did you do to this soup?" Well, Kathleen took it the wrong way and it was not a very happy time. It seems her mom made canned tomato soup with water while my mom made it with milk. We laugh about it now, but not then.

We never made it to Virginia Beach. Somewhere along the way we ran across literature on the Skyline Drive. We had both heard about it and thought it sounded interesting. Don't remember how many days it took us. After all, we had to stop at every overlook so we didn't miss anything. It was quite a treat, unspoiled and beautiful country.

Then we read about Blackwater Falls State Park in West Virginia. The park had a beautiful lodge. Not certain how many nights we stayed but it was a great park, with nice hiking trails to the falls.

We met a couple from Lima, Ohio who were also on their honeymoon. They were staying in a cottage at the park and invited us to their place to visit and have a drink. Don't remember their names but they were very welcoming. Kathleen and I both wonder what became of them and how they're doing.

To this day, neither of us has ever made it to Virginia Beach. Many other beaches but not that one.

We pointed the "56" Pontiac west and slowly made our way back to reality and our new abode on John Street in Saint Henry. It was a nice little story and a half starter home in a quiet, friendly neighborhood. Later we made the upstairs into a third bedroom for Linda when we found out Steve was on the way. Actually, that home

was a great opportunity to try out our remodeling skills, such as they were. I found out early on that I got along with electrical stuff rather well, but if I touched the plumbing, in all likelihood I would break something. I'm referring to the plumbing not me. Usually.

One downside of that house was how poorly insulated it was. I remember some really cold and windy nights when the furnace never stopped running. The front corner of the house would not get above 60 degrees while the rear corner would be toasty warm. With all its deficiencies it was still our home and we were proud of it. Of course, it was just a house until Kathleen made it into a welcoming home. Just as she's done with every home to follow.

I was still employed at New Idea and Kathleen resumed her job at a printing company, Reynolds & Reynolds in Celina. A job she loved. Back in the 50s and 60s women were expected to quit working when they were obviously pregnant. Kathleen, ever the rebel, worked till the last minute, which made some of the men working around her very nervous. She thinks they were afraid they might have to help deliver.

If you were to ask about our feelings about the upcoming addition to the family, the answer would probably be "numb." Don't think either of us felt like we were really ready. But that didn't make any difference to Linda, who arrived March 19. Nine months and six days after the wedding. We just made it under the wire. What a relief. Shortly after she became pregnant, she passed out in church, and all the little old ladies in town went home and marked their calendars.

The birth appeared to go smoothly, but after we returned home Kathleen experienced serious hemorrhaging, and had to return to the hospital. Kathleen's mother cared for Linda during this trying time. Being dumb about things medical, I didn't realize how serious it was. Found out later that we were close to losing Kathleen.

The first night at home we had Linda in a bassinet at the foot of our bed. I didn't know how much noise a baby makes while sleeping. We soon moved her to another room in order to get our own rest.

Linda only weighted around 5 pounds, so she was on a strict feeding schedule. The problem was that all she wanted to do was sleep. We had to keep waking her up so she would suck another sip of milk.

Kathleen recovered from her trials, Linda gained weight, and we settled into a more normal family life. Essentially being an only child for most of my life, I'm not sure I had any idea what a normal family life was. I realized now that I just went to work every day, oblivious to what Kathleen was going through at home. Fortunately, she had her mother, sisters and sister-in-law's close by for support. What a fantastic family I married into. She also had a neighbor, Rosie Buschur, who became a really great friend, and provided the social interaction she lost when she had to quit her job at Reynolds & Reynolds. Back then women didn't get maternity leave; they had to quit their jobs with no guarantee of returning. Plus Rosie had a daughter Debbie, about the same age as Linda.

So, in the meantime, my return to New Idea was going well. I was working with Herb Colwell designing a tobacco picker. I was actually given the opportunity to design, which was a fantastic learning experience and a huge boost for my confidence. An interesting note. At Crown, later in my career, we also worked on a product for the tobacco industry. Neither of those products made it to production. It seems the tobacco industry had plenty of cheap labor and didn't like to spend money on mechanization, or much of anything for that matter. They would just "try them out" for a season and then return them.

Early in 1962 I began to see the handwriting on the wall. At New Idea you were always going to be low on the totem pole if you didn't have a college degree. In addition to that, business was starting to look a little shaky. When the economy starts slipping the farmers are among the first to stop spending. In fact, a couple of years later there was a slowdown and quite a few in engineering were laid off. I'm certain I would have been one of them if I had stayed.

About that time, I began to hear about a company in New Bremen called Crown Controls that made lift trucks and antenna rotators. I didn't know anything about rotators but I thought lift trucks sounded like big mechanical things, a lot like farm equipment. Plus, a guy I worked with had a friend who started in Engineering at Crown and was doing quite well.

I interviewed with Crown sometime in March or April of 1962. The company was so small I was even introduced to the president of the company, Jim Dicke. The engineering department also was small. Actually, it was housed in a garage stuck on the side of a cement block building located on the West end of New Bremen. Jim Utrecht was chief engineer, Harold Stammen worked on the new products, and Dick Anderson did "specials." (These were trucks where the customer wanted



something nonstandard.) Ted Wagner was a co-op student who worked off and on while going to school. Ken Hilgefert who helped Dick with specials, started a little bit after I did. Shortly after that, Bill Harshbarger returned from the Army. That was the Engineering department for lift trucks. You couldn't get lost in the crowd there. Also, none of those fellows had a college degree, but they certainly knew how to design lift trucks. It didn't take long for me to feel that I belonged, that I now had a "career".

In comparison, today the Engineering department at Crown has over 200 people, and most, if not all, have college degrees.

Ken was an interesting character. He lived outside of town and in good weather would often ride a horse to work. He would sky dive on weekends. Was injured once and developed quite a limp, but only when around other people. He became a preacher in Appalachia, and died there. It seemed like Ken was always short of money. So, come the first of the month he would write out the checks and send them to the wrong utility. By the time they were returned he would have enough money in the bank.

So anyway, Crown's offer sounded good to me, so I became a "Crown Guy." My last day at New Idea, in Coldwater, was Friday, June 4, 1962. This gave me 10 years of service and some accrued financial benefits. But June 1 was the qualification day for benefits at Crown, so they let me work a couple of Saturdays in May to get me on the books. I don't think I ever had any doubt that going to Crown was a good move, but never in my wildest imagination did I think it would be the fantastic adventure it turned out to be.

However, changing jobs wasn't the only thing that happened to us early in 1962. Kathleen and I found ourselves pregnant with Steve, who joined our little family on the 2nd of November. After the problems Kathleen had with Linda's birth, we were both quite nervous about this second one. But everything went well, at least as I remember. Kathleen may remember it a little more distinctly, and painfully, than I do. So, we did a little remodeling and redecorated the upstairs for Linda and put Steve in her old downstairs room.

While all of this was going on, work at Crown was going great. I felt I had found the perfect place for me, doing new product design and working with industrial designers. I was in seventh heaven. So, since the job seemed solid, Linda was getting ready to start kindergarten in the fall and I was getting a little tired of the 30 mile drive every day, looking into the sun morning and evening, and packing a bologna

sandwich and a thermos of coffee for lunch. The time seemed right to consider moving.

We got an offer for our home in Saint Henry and everything fell into place for us to buy a home in New Bremen at 77 Circle Drive, previously built and owned by Elaine and Alan Johnson. On June 28, 1965, (my birthday) we moved in. It was a pleasant, quiet neighborhood with families like ours, and children for our kids to play with. Catholics were sort of scarce in New Bremen at the time, but we did have four families close by. However, it wouldn't have made any difference because we felt welcomed by all. Which reminds me, back when I was interviewed by Verlin Hirschfeld, he made the comment "You'll like it here at Crown, we even have some Catholics working here." How often would you hear something like that in today's "politically correct" atmosphere?

The Catholic Church in New Bremen at the time was a small frame "mission church" on Pearl Street. So small that even sitting in the back pew you were close to the Altar. It was quite a change for us, having always belonged to big established parishes with huge churches.

After moving into our new home, it quickly became evident that we didn't have enough furniture to fill it. Kathleen saw an ad in the Celina Daily Standard offering a used dining room set. The sellers happened to be a couple named Oppenheim, whose grandfather invented the New Idea spreader and started that company in the early 1900s. The table, six chairs and a big hutch filled a corner of our living/dining room until the day we moved to 11 Webster Place. We kept the table and chairs for our new home, while our granddaughter Abby and Dave Knapke now have that hutch in their new home on Highmeadow Drive in Gahanna, Ohio. It's taken me 5 years to write this thing (so far), and now the table and chairs have a new location, 4 Miami Erie Place.

We also purchased new bedroom furniture and upgraded to a queen bed. Woo hoo, talk about luxury. When we moved to Webster Street, we got a king bed. Don't know what we'll do when we move next. Hope it isn't a hospital bed. WOW, how quickly things change. I started this paragraph in February of 2016, writing about 1965. Now it is 2017 and we have a new home under construction at 4 Miami Erie Place in New Bremen. As of now we'll be taking the king bed with us, no hospital bed yet.

Now it is 2020. New digs again, and yes, we're still using the king bed.

Our Circle Drive home was nice because the back of the lot was the east edge of town back then. George and Freda Voress farmed the land behind us and I can still picture our kids and the neighbor kids hanging on the fence, watching the tractor and other equipment roll by. It stayed that way until Crown bought their farm and developed the Pioneer subdivision. The land north of Circle Drive became Bremenfest Park with a swimming pool, ball diamonds and tennis courts. Just beyond the park is a wooded area that became part of the Pioneer housing development. In there, Kathleen found the last available wooded lot in New Bremen, 11 Webster Place. Like most projects, it took longer than expected. We started clearing the lot in 1999 and moved in 2001.

Neither of us had ever experienced any kind of construction, even a garage, much less a house. But we proceeded to design it ourselves. I had a layout along with side elevations to look at, but Kathleen had a little trouble seeing the finished product. So, I built a scale model out of foam core and cardboard. The roof lifted off so you could see all the walls, cabinets and counters. She liked it. We contracted with Baumer Construction from Minster to build it.

It was apparent a lot of people thought we were nuts to build a new home after I was retired. But it was really a lot of fun. We could take off anytime we wanted and drive fifty miles to pick out a faucet if need be.

We loved the process and we loved the finished product. Would probably still be living there except the basement steps, attic steps and outside work didn't agree with my back and legs. We didn't have much lawn but did have a fair sized woods where trees were prone to fall down and need to be cleared out. And leaves, lots and lots of leaves.

So, located between Webster Place and the park/swimming pool, Kathleen found another lot (no trees). It was part of a condo development, so that meant the yard work and snow removal would be taken care of, for a fee. The development had been put in by Crown, probably 25 years ago. This lot had been sitting empty the whole time. We made an offer and got a real good buy.

So, out with the drawing board again. No model this time. The design was simple and a lot easier to visualize. This one went a little faster. We signed with Hoying Construction, from McCartyville, on November 23, 2016. Not certain when they started digging, but they had it under roof before we left for Florida on January 1. We moved into our finished home on June 12, 2017.

We now had one less room and no attic or basement, so no steps anywhere except for the patio to the lawn. Our lot borders the park which has ball diamonds and the swimming pool. The activity in the summer is a pleasure and we enjoy it even more with the screened-in porch we added. With the addition of an old kitchen table on the porch we are able to have a lot of meals out there when the weather cooperates.

A historical note about swimming pools. New Bremen had the very first swimming pool in Mercer or Auglaize counties, thanks to the WPA (Works Progress Administration) initiated by President Roosevelt in 1934. The WPA provided jobs for millions of people during the Great Depression by doing public projects like the swimming pool, a football stadium in Celina and many bridges in the area. A big gazebo in downtown New Bremen now stands on the site of the old pool. I remember as a kid coming from Celina to New Bremen to swim in the pool. It was either that or Grand Lake which in the 1940s, unlike today, was relatively clean. Villa Nova is close to St. Marys and had a nice beach. Actually, there were several beaches along the North shore of Grand Lake (it's NOT Lake Saint Mary's). You have to live here to know what that is all about. Basically it's Mercer County (Grand Lake) vs Auglaize County (Lake St. Marys).

Speaking of the lake, in years past the Winkeljohn clan would quite often rent a large cottage on the lake for a week. Some stayed overnight and drove back and forth to work, while some took vacation. If my memory serves me right, a lot of beer (and pop) was consumed, and a lot of poker was played. We young ones just tried to get in some kind of mischief, usually with great success. I know we threw a lot of stones into the lake. That may sound a little strange, but boys were always throwing stones at something.

OK, back to our various homes. It seemed like our Circle Drive house was always a work in progress. It started out as rather plain looking with a small stoop in front. At some point we raised a portion of the roof and added a large front porch along with some nice-looking landscaping. At that time, for some reason, few new homes were built with porches so ours was rather unique for the neighborhood. One thing I remember is sitting on the porch with the kids when thunderstorms came rolling in, watching the beautiful lightning and listening to the thunder. I always hoped it would help them be less fearful while still respectful of the danger. While adding the porch we also put on a new roof, and vinyl siding along with the new landscaping. The transformation was amazing. Our nephews, Tom and Steve Rammel helped me with the roof, while our son Steve chipped in helping with the siding. My biggest

problem was I really didn't know what I was doing so I had to work things out on the fly. I do know I gained a lot of respect for roofing guys. That job is a killer for the knees.

Originally the garage was two cars deep, but we added a wall in the middle and made the back portion into a workshop. I guess today it would be called a man cave. Later we turned the workshop into a bedroom for Linda so each of the kids could have their own place. When my mother was dying, she and Vic stayed in that room for a short time. After Linda moved into an apartment it became our office, sewing room and catchall.

One job the kids will probably remember, I know I won't forget, was repainting the basement walls. The existing paint was flaking off so I decided I had to grind all the paint off and repaint with epoxy paint. I hung plastic sheets a couple of feet from the wall to hold down the dust somewhat. I wore a dinky mask, but when I emerged from behind the plastic after a couple of hours, I was covered with white dust from head to toe. I have no idea what my lungs looked like. I also have no idea how I ever got clean.

We were blessed with very good neighbors. I don't remember any disputes or arguments. Someone would usually have a summer party, complete with a volleyball game that would spill over into other yards. The neighborhood had a good mix of children, and it was a mix. The most interesting and entertaining were probably the Silvers Boys: Scott, Jay and Bill. They were more rough and tumble than the rest of the gang. Their mom, Joan, would send Scott and Jay to round up Bill, and they would return, literally dragging Bill, screaming at the top of his lungs, down the middle of the street. Another time, someone fell off a swing set, got up with a bloody mouth. I guess Jay was trying to make him feel better when he said, "Hey, you can get money for that tooth." Such was life on the "Circle."

The Webster Street neighborhood was completely different. Everyone was friendly but didn't socialize much, except for next door neighbors Chris and Bev Killian, who loved to play cards, just as we did. Of course, we were older than everyone else in the neighborhood, so I'm sure that made a difference when it came to visiting and interacting.

Our new Miami Erie neighborhood is much the same as Webster, except that we are a bit more isolated, being on the end of the street. So, there's no traffic and few people walking by. Plus, there is even more of an age difference. However, being at

the edge of the city park, which contains ball diamonds, playground and swimming pool, we have plenty of activity around us.

So, while all this building and moving was going on, what was happening at Crown? Around 1963, Crown began to get real serious about expanding the lift truck product line. Harold Stammen and I were the only ones doing new design. He was working on a rider truck to compete with a company named Raymond. So, I inherited the heavy-duty walk-along trucks, which was an expansion of our existing line of light duty trucks. Part of that project was to develop a new control handle. This was significant to me because it was my first experience of working with the Industrial Designers, Richardson and Smith from Columbus. The stuff they did just blew my mind and I was hooked by Industrial Design.

The control handle turned out so well that Crown decided to not wait on a new product and used a version of it on the light duty line. So, the engineering department was gaining credibility and we were gaining confidence in our abilities. Then I found out that the control handle was a piece of cake, because the next task was to design a drive unit. I had never worked on any part of a drive unit in my life. Harold handed me a book on how to design gears, and I was on my own. That same basic drive unit is still used today, fifty some years later.

Eventually a finished prototype of the first heavy-duty walkie stacker sat before us. To me it was a thing of beauty. The problem was Crown was very small at that time, cash flow was a problem, and Jim Dicke, president of Crown, couldn't quite justify the cost of the tooling required for the truck. But Jim loved to have clients see the new truck. One day he was taking a bigwig from Marsh grocery stores for a tour. The guy saw the prototype and said he was going to put one of them in each of his stores. That was all Jim needed as he gave the "go ahead" to go into production. The bottom line is that Marsh never bought a single truck, but Crown was on the way to eventually becoming an international force in the material handling industry. I'm sure we would have eventually gone into production anyway, but it makes a great story.

Crown continued to add new products to the line and win many awards for the innovational design for their products. One award in particular stands out because Kathleen and I along with Harold and Irene Stammen went to New York for the award ceremony. What an experience. We stayed at the Plaza Hotel across from Central Park. And then to top it off, Kathleen in her black gown and me in my tux, wow, what a dashing figure we cut. Such elegance.

Interestingly enough, Crown would get rather nervous whenever they would introduce a new model. Crown was still a small company and they did not have a dealer network of their own. Instead, dealers that carried the “big boys,” like Clark and Yale, would also handle the Crown line, because the larger companies didn’t have the assortment of smaller lift trucks to offer. Eventually though, every new truck Crown introduced would compete with some truck in their lines. The concern was that those dealers might be forced to drop the Crown line, which would have been a huge blow. But it never happened, and Crown grew on.

I did spend a couple of years in antenna rotator engineering, exploring other options and redesigning existing products to remove cost. The rotators were marketed by Channel Master, who offered trips to their dealers for meeting sales quotas. Kathleen and I along with Tom and Zeta Bidwell were invited to represent Crown on a trip to Majorca, a resort island off the coast of Spain. We celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary there. It was such a whirlwind of seemingly nonstop activity that it’s difficult to recall specifics, but what an experience.

Redesigning the rotator again involved working with Richardson/Smith. That was also about the time Steve was in the process of deciding what he wanted to do with his life. He talked about architecture because he wanted to do something creative. On one of my trips to Richardson/Smith in Columbus, I took Steve along and they gave him a tour of the place while I had a meeting. We were hardly on the road back when he said, “That’s what I want to do.” He stuck with it through thick and thin and didn’t seem to ever waver in that decision. Maybe some little wiggles.

A couple of years later my career shifted again when I moved back to the lift truck side of engineering. However new product design had passed me by. Most truck design was now done on computer, many engineers staffed the department, and all of them were college graduates. So, I got involved in paints and other finishing techniques, explored new materials and processes and was tasked with solving small isolated design problems, which usually involved components where there was operator interface. I loved it.

About that time Crown took a big step and started an in-house Industrial Design department. The projects I was working on gave me the chance to interact with this new group, although not always to everyone’s satisfaction. I recall walking in the door just as the department manager was saying he didn’t ever want to see me in their department again. Fortunately, it was one of those “heat of the moment” things

and it blew over. Traditionally, industrial designers and engineers did not play well together, sort of a love/hate relationship.

To better understand, back in the 1950's Industrial Design was a fledgling profession. Engineers tended to look down their nose at Designers. The impression was that after a product was designed, they would be called in to "make it look pretty." I do remember those very words being spoken at New Idea. Of course, you had to admit, it was rather hard to make a manure spreader look pretty. So, the animosity between the two professions could be quite intense at times.

Crown handled this well by creating teams of Designers and Engineers working together from the start of a project to the end. Not perfect, but as close to harmony as you could expect.

Anyway, that manager and I never did get along very well as long as he was there. Fortunately for me I outlasted him. In the meantime, I developed a good working relationship with some of the designers. One in particular, William Davis, who later became my boss, didn't seem to agree with me on anything. So, the two of us went to dinner one night and spent a couple of hours discussing our philosophies and what made us tick as Designer and Engineer. We worked well together ever since, and throughout my remaining years.

With the increased emphasis on the appearance of the product, Crown decided it was time to redesign all of the truck warning labels, and develop standards for size, color, text and adhesives. With my recent work with colors and materials, I inherited the project. This also entailed developing all new text for the labels so I worked with a company in San Antonio, Texas headed by Jane Welch, who was also English professor at one of the universities there. She eventually became our "go to guru" for all writing directed to the operator of the lift truck. I spent a lot of hours in her office while she tried to pound into my head how to compose proper text for warning labels. What an education. Little did I realize at the time that this was the beginning of another career shift.

As usually happens, when you improve something it makes something else look bad. In this case the next thing to require attention was the operator manuals for the trucks. But it wasn't only about appearance. As with most products, if someone was injured you would probably end up with some legal action. So while Crown trucks were very safe, and we had improved our labeling and warning approach, it was decided Crown needed to complete the task of properly educating the operator of



the truck by redesigning all operator manuals. Industrial design was given the huge task of designing a new manual, and I was asked to do the writing. I proceeded to find out how little I knew about writing. But with some classes and workshops at "that school up north," and again a lot of help from Jane Welch, I began to adapt to a conversational style of instructional writing that worked. One of the hardest things for me was to stop thinking like an engineer. This project also involved working with Crown's legal staff. Another learning experience. If the lawyers weren't happy, nobody was happy.

It also meant working with Jane again, my guru. I thought I was really good at this. I whipped out about a dozen pages and shipped then off to Jane for her critique. When I opened her return letter I couldn't believe my eyes. She hated it! Said it was just about the worst writing she had ever seen. I hope she was exaggerating a little bit to make a point.

So I swallowed my pride and started over. As the writing went on, and more and more people saw and liked the product, I gradually came to believe I could actually be a writer.

The first of the new manuals was a great success and we proceeded to develop a new manual for every truck in the line. The crowning moment (no pun intended) was receiving an award for the writing and design of the manual from the Society for Technical Communication, an international writing group. Kathleen and I went to Seattle Washington for the awards banquet.

I began to be very disenchanted with the few engineering assignments I was given. Since most of what I was working on involved the Design Center, I asked for and got a transfer. I suspect it happened mostly because the manager who banned me was no longer there, and Engineering was ready to get rid of me. It was a dream come true. This was a great fit for me and extended my career. It was like having a new lease on life. I felt reenergized.

In addition to the writing, I continued to make use of my engineering background by exploring materials and processes to solve industrial design issues as well as engineering issues. This involved a couple of trips to Europe, visiting Germany, Austria, Belgium, England, Ireland and Wales while researching new materials and processes. I was surprised how easy it was to work with those from other countries and cultures, as long as they spoke English. I did however gain a whole lot of respect

for people with multiple language skills. I've always said that my language skills included English and profanity. And my English isn't all that good.

I do have to say that the German engineers were by far the most difficult to work with. They gave the impression, and not too subtly, that they thought they knew more than you about almost everything. If you couldn't prove they were wrong you weren't going to change their minds, and probably not even then. (I don't know why Kathleen rolled her eyes when she read this.)

The best example of this was a company in Germany that was making aluminum castings for Crown. They were supposed to make some changes, including fixing a weak spot. We were sitting in the engineer's office and he was showing me a finished part, which did not address the weak spot as we requested. When I pointed it out, he said it wasn't weak. I reached over and hit it on the floor, which thank goodness was concrete, and the part broke right where we said it would. He threw the parts in the wastebasket and said they would fix it.

By the way, I thought Belgium was the most beautiful, picturesque country, with many canals and quaint villages, while Wales was by far the strangest. The Welsh language, both written and spoken, is from another world. For instance, the expression "have a nice day" would read "cael diwrnod braf." Your guess is as good as mine when it comes to pronunciation.

In all of my travels through Europe I had a lot of great meals in great restaurants. But the most unique was in England, at an old grist mill that was listed in the "Doomsday Book." This book was a survey ordered by King William the Conqueror in 1086 to determine the worth of his kingdom so he'd know what taxes to levy. I remember that the restaurant was really small, and the ceiling were only about 6 foot high. But the building was listed in that very book, as a mill, with a value of a couple of pennies.

I must add that the beer gardens in Munich are all that they're cracked up to be. Also, the British are just as stuffy as they're cracked up to be. One time I got back to a hotel earlier than expected, and when I went to the hotel restaurant, without a reservation, I was greeted with "it would have been nice if we had known you were coming." You have to imagine this coming from someone who could play the part of a typical British butler with a very heavy British accent.

So many wonderful memories connected with my sporadic travels. However, while traveling to foreign lands has a certain allure to it, that isn't my favorite thing to do.

It isn't "us." For Kathleen and I A huge part of "us" is the faith that we share. Our faith, together and separately, has always played a big part in our lives. Sometime in the late 60's, Kathleen and I each attended a faith-based program in Cincinnati, a weekend retreat called Cursillo. This developed into a support group of men and women in our Holy Redeemer parish, with the purpose of promoting involvement and leadership, in all areas of life.

For Kathleen and I, the Cursillo more than likely resulted in our attending a Marriage Encounter. This too was a weekend program, held at the Maria Stein Retreat Center at Maria Stein, Ohio. The program was led by a team consisting of Fr. Jim Dugal along with Jim and Elyce Cron from Dayton, Ohio. This was an intense weekend aimed at developing a deeper communication between the couple. What an experience. But we thought that was the end of it until the following Ash Wednesday when Fr. Jim came knocking on our door, asking if we would consider working with him as a team to present the next Marriage Encounter.

After much thought, prayer and mostly agonizing we said yes, and were rewarded with a lifetime of experiences. One weekend was followed by many more. With each weekend the list of helpers grew. More couples became team members; while others shared the many talents they had to support the program. It was a great, vibrant community. The summer picnics were a sight to behold when all the children became a part of it.

That led to us becoming representatives for the area from Ohio to Virginia, which placed us on the National Board. We had the opportunity to serve with some wonderful people. It was quite a learning experience, especially for Kathleen. Coming from the corporate world, dealing with meetings and working with different, sometimes difficult personalities, it wasn't such a shock for me. But it was an eye opener for Kathleen. Some of the people could be very intimidating. I think both of us came away feeling more confident about ourselves.

However it began to look like we would be asked to take on more responsibility on the board by taking on the top spot as president couple. We both decided that it had been enough of an ego trip to last us for a long time. So we declined to run for another term. Later there was some talk of changing the bylaws so that previous members of the board could hold that position. We still said no.

We did however serve on the committee for two national conferences, 1985 and 1986, both held at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. It tested our organizational

skills, but both conferences were a rousing success. But it was a test. The two of us were in charge of the entire speaker's program. We needed to find 3 or 4 keynote speakers, and fill 30 to 40 workshop time slots. Plus, we had to design and have the handout program printed. It was an intense time. The memories are endless. So many wonderful people. But by far the neatest part was being part of such a dynamic committee.

In the meantime, our children were growing up, graduating from high school and moving out of the house, not necessarily in that order. I'm not certain which one grew up first, but Linda was the first to leave home. As soon as she had an income, she wanted her own apartment. It was a second-floor unit that has the longest single flight of stairs I've ever climbed.

There were health issues that plagued Linda over the years, which involved stays at the Mayo Clinic and also the Cleveland Clinic. Both of those ended up being very frustrating for Linda as well as Kathleen and I, especially the Mayo Clinic. It seemed like every day it was a new doctor or two, along with new medicines.

Who knows what goes on in the brain. But it seemed like Linda ended up being saved by her talent. She always had a flair for art, which began to display itself as she started making jewelry. There were a number of summer classes at Miami University that really gave impetus to her work. She had some shows at Columbus where she did quite well. This background also helped her when she started working at J.C. Penney's, as she excelled working in the jewelry department.

Steve was next. He was accepted by the University of Cincinnati in their Industrial Design Program. I remember how forlorn he looked as we pulled away that first day after we moved him. Later he told us that if we had stopped and told him to get in the car and come back home with us, he might have done it. There were some struggles for him that first year. But then he moved into a home with some guys who were really good for him, and they became close friends. Plus, he could have a car, which helped also. We knew things were going well when he came home less and less. Or maybe he just found the Laundromat.

Cincinnati was good for other reasons. It was where he met his wife Mary. She is the closest thing we have to a celebrity in our family. She worked at a bank with a Bengal cheerleader. After Steve graduated they married, set up housekeeping and started their family in Monroe Michigan, where Steve entered the workforce, working for the Lazy Boy Furniture Company.

Then we got a call from Steve asking if we could watch Andrew and Abby while they went to Skaneateles, New York for an interview. We met them in Findlay, Ohio. The trip home was memorable because Abby sobbed the whole way saying, "I want my mommy" between sobs. And Andrew was the stoic and consoling big brother keeping his arms around her the entire trip. But they survived it and so did we.

Steve got the job, which was really tough on Mary. She was very close to her family in Cincinnati. This move took her even farther away. She was ecstatic when they finally moved to New Bremen, now she was only 100 miles away.

And then our youngest, Carol, left and we were suddenly "empty nesters." Carol is very talented, did well in most subjects, but seemed to excel in writing. She enrolled at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio which had a very good journalism program. However, college was not a good choice for Carol at that time of her life, plus she found out she really did not like writing. So she came back and worked in the area for a while. She then moved with a friend to Phoenix, Arizona. The friend came back but she stayed. There she met and married Tony Gazell. It didn't work well for either one of them, so they ended up going their separate ways. Eventually, she found her way back to New Bremen, had Zachary and married Joe Stape.

While school didn't work out well for Carol, she has a good head on her shoulders and handles every job with efficiency and enthusiasm. Presently she seems to have found her niche, working with developmentally challenged people. She has tremendous patience and a firm way of handling problem people. Probably comes from living with me. Until 2020 she worked for a company that offered these services. However she recently obtained her State license to work independently.

Carol always seems to be drawn to people in need, or who need care. Hope she still feels that way when I get to be old. Wait, I am old!

What were the three of them like as children? I'm sure I've forgotten more than I remember, which is probably just as well. Linda and Carol, if not rule breakers, at least liked to bend them. If we left for the evening and for some reason told them they couldn't watch television that night, Linda and Carol would just watch it anyway. Steve however would sit around the corner where he could hear it but not watch it. Or at least that's one person's story.

Sometimes when we would leave for the evening, there were those mysterious cracks in the plaster, or holes in the wall, that would astound everyone when it was pointed out to them the next morning. But all in all, we would probably have all

three of them again. But, how could we not? Our three children have combined to bless our family with four wonderful grandchildren. Zach from Carol, along with Abby, Andrew and Alison from Steve and Mary. To add icing to the cake, Abby and Dave have given us Max. Great grandchild number one. I hope the good Lord gives us a few more years to watch our family grow.

I should probably reminisce a bit on our travels. Other than a couple of trips to Canada, sampling a Margarita or two in Mexico a magnificent cruise to Alaska and that Crown trip to Majorca we didn't travel out of the country together. Kathleen toured Germany with her friend Marlene Goudy, trying to research family history. Crown sent me to Europe a number of times, which was enough to satisfy me. I'm sure Kathleen would go to Europe again if she had the opportunity. I am content with the experiences I've had. Actually Kathleen, a Gypsy at heart, would probably go anywhere in the world that was offered to her.

We've been blessed to have the opportunity to experience much of the good ole USA. From Bar Harbor, Maine to Key West, Florida to South Padre Island, Texas to Tucson, Arizona to San Diego, California to Seattle, Washington to Aspen, Colorado to Detroit, Michigan (just kidding) and many, many wonderful places in between.

In 1991 we visited the panhandle of Florida for the first time, staying in a small one-bedroom condo called Mistral, located on scenic Route 30A, between Destin and Panama City Beach. When Kathleen got her first look at the area, which was mostly scrub, she was not exactly a "happy camper." I think her comment was something like "Where are you bringing me, and why." However, when we walked in our condo and she saw the white sandy beach and the emerald waters of the gulf, she was hooked.

Since 2006 we have not wandered around nearly as much, and have mostly been content to winter at the Dunes of Seagrove in Seagrove Beach, Florida. We do not hesitate to say that our fellow snowbirds at the Dunes have become our second family. We don't think you could find a more friendly and caring group of people anywhere. I can't imagine how we will feel when we leave this area for the last time, knowing we'll never return. But we all know that life goes on (or it doesn't), and like it or not, we have to deal with what is.

I haven't written much about hobbies or things we enjoy for pastime. In the early years I didn't really have the time to pursue any kind of hobby. However, when I was promoted to a manager's role, I found that along with the benefits there was a down

side. I no longer had the opportunity to do much of anything creative. It was depressing and left a void that needed to be filled.

I first made a half-hearted attempt at woodworking. But I didn't really have the tools for it. Actually, I didn't have the talent either, or the patience, or all that much interest. So, I scratched woodworking.

Then I took a few classes in painting. It was about the third class when the instructor stood behind me and watched me work. He asked what I did for a living. When I told him I worked in engineering, he said that I would never be happy painting because my job required an exactness while painting needed freedom. So, I scratched painting.

Finally, while taking a class in photography, I found the solution. Here was the creative outlet that I had been missing. It required accuracy in interpreting information and then adjusting the camera correctly to produce an image the photographer had visualized. I can't begin to explain the feeling of sliding a piece of blank paper into a tray of chemicals and watching an image appear. It was magic.

So, when we built the home on Webster, I included a room in the basement to become a darkroom. I don't know how many hours I spent in the darkroom over the year, but it was a tremendous outlet for me.

Interestingly enough, Kathleen enjoyed my interest in photography as much as I did, especially when on vacation. We would hike the area with me carrying my camera bags and Kathleen toting the tripod. When I was setting up, she would sit nearby and read. When I was ready to take a picture, she would look through the viewfinder, and sometimes suggest a slight change. She had a very good eye for composition.

Gradually other things occupied more of my time, film photography faded out as digital took over, and supplies became hard to find and a lot more expensive. There was no market for darkroom equipment, so it was all given to the School For the Arts, in Dayton.

And then along came writing, first at Crown and then for pleasure. I really think this could have been the hobby I was searching for. There was always the thought that I wanted to write, but I never pursued it. After we were married, I went to Sinclair Community Collage to use my GI Bill benefits for some writing courses. Of course, the first thing they did was give me a test. The teacher looked it over and said, "How

do you expect to be a writer when you don't know any English." I know I almost flunked English in high school, and apparently flunked this test miserably also. So, I gave it up. And another thing got scratched off the list.

Later in life I came to realize that knowing punctuation rules, knowing what an adverb phrase is, knowing how to diagram a sentence does not make you a writer. I'm certain if a English teacher were to review this writing, there would be red ink all over it. Who cares?

So, while I've been writing this epic, Kathleen hasn't been sitting in the corner knitting. She has been busy filling a journal with her thoughts. Someday soon, when it's time for her to hand it over to Abby, it will be a treasure.

A few more words about my brother Dick. You probably gathered by some of my earlier writing that he was sort of a loner. That's partially true. He always lived alone and never married, in fact I'm not sure if he ever had a date. He said he was too bashful. However, he was quite involved. He helped lead a scout troop, although I could never picture him camping, he shared a lot of memories about Scouting with Kathleen and I. He belonged to and was involved with all the local fraternal organizations. There were periods of stamp collecting, coin collecting and something involving Indian jewelry. He also spent quite a bit of time with Harry, Eleanor and their family, especially at holidays, at their home in Lima. I never got the feeling that they talked about past issues, but apparently, they were reconciled, or at least okay, with the past.

Dick liked, and was knowledgeable about, almost all sports. But his first love was horses, and harness racing in particular. He purchased a small farm close to Mendon, Ohio so he could raise, stable and train the horses he owned. He ran horses at all the local fairs and had a couple that were good enough to run at some of the big tracks like Chicago, with some success. Eventually, it became too difficult (and probably too expensive) for him to continue being an owner.

Interestingly enough, in 2011 when he was in the hospital for some heart issues, the prognosis wasn't very good. However, there was a somewhat risky procedure that might help him, if he wanted to try it. When asked about it, Dick said, "Well, I always wanted to own another horse, so let's go for it." The doctor said, "Great, let's all go to the Kentucky Derby." But Dick said, "No, no, The Little Brown Jug." The "Jug," as it was called, was one of the three big races for harness racing. It was run during the



Delaware County Fair. Harness racing involved the horse pulling a Sulky (cart) with a driver riding on it.

Dick's health took a turn for the worst early in 2011. He spent some time in the hospital, and then entered an assisted living facility in Celina, in mid-2011. He also started receiving kidney dialysis.

The "risky procedure" gave him a few extra years. In October of 2014 his injured heart beat for the last time. He was entering the dialysis facility when he told a nurse "I don't think I'm going to make it" and dropped to the floor.

One regret I have is that I wasted an opportunity during those final years visiting with Dick. I could have, should have, found out so much more about him and our early years. So many memories lost forever. But then, every generation seems to lament the same thing.

Hopefully this writing will permit some of the contained memories to survive. Not necessarily memories of me, but memories of life. The many people and events of my life, from the 1930s to the 2020s.

Frank Sinatra, in his trademark song *My Way*, sang "Regrets, I've had a few, but again too few to mention." I would have to agree with those lyrics. Also, like Frank, I can probably say that I've lived a good part of my life "My way." I can only hope that enough was lived "HIS way," that the proportions between the two ways doesn't get me in trouble when I meet Saint Peter. Or the other guy. Now if I could just sing like Frank.

Speaking of Frank reminds me of one more thing that has been very important in our lives, music. I don't know when my love for music began, it just seems to have always been there. In my younger days, it seemed as though all you had to do was turn the radio on and it would be filled with popular music. I guess if I think about it, the same thing holds true today, except "popular music" means a whole different thing. So, if I had the radio on it was either for a Red's game or music. There were two movies from the 50's that also had an influence, *The Glenn Miller Story* and *The Benny Goodman Story*. Especially Goodman, I always wanted to play the clarinet, or as he called it, a "licorice stick."

Our stays in Florida provided us with the opportunity to experience quite a variety of music, from big band swinging jazz, to Americana, to a fantastic piano bar trio, to

a ukulele orchestra, to a raunchy singing bartender. As if we needed another inducement to winter in Florida.

I've been asked why I haven't included more about the grandchildren. I'm sure I could use a couple of pages here, going on and on about all our fantastic grandchildren and great grandchildren, but they're just beginning to create their own memories.

So children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, you'll just have to write your own memories. Maybe this will be the beginning of a family tradition. I just wish I could be around to read them.

Oops. Just as I thought I was ready to wrap this little job up and take a nap, the Coronavirus hit. And boy, did it ever hit. If a year ago anyone would have suggested that a virus was going to cause a world wide pandemic, creating social upheaval, economic chaos, riots in the streets and, God forbid, cancelation of some sports, they would have been laughed at. But, even considering the best of scenarios, we're only halfway through this thing. Regardless of how you feel about the way it has been handled, or mishandled by countries around the world, this is, hopefully at least, a once in a lifetime event. As such, newborns today, by the time they reach the ripe old age of 10, will have to use Google to find out anything about it. But perhaps that's as it should be, and I don't need to expound on it. We'll just have to wait and see how the whole thing plays out.

But it does make me rethink some of what I have already written, or not written. What of all the other events, disasters and happenings, a rich history that will be forgotten if someones' curiosity isn't aroused. So, far be it from me to shirk my duty. Here is History 101, the Pulskamp version.

I've already written about the Great Depression. Just so you understand, I DIDN'T DO IT. I was just a baby. But another disaster was occurring during this same time that didn't get anywhere near the coverage. The Dust Bowl was happening. Dust storms across the Southwest made life unbearable. But nothing compared to April 14, 1935, Black Sunday. An enormous, black cloud of dust, hundreds of miles wide and thousands of feet high rolled over Texas, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma, leaving hundreds of dead in a desolate, almost lunar like landscape. Over a third of the population of Oklahoma gave up hope, left their land and became refugees in their own country. Heard of the expression "Okies"? That was them. I would

encourage you to Google “Documentary photographer, Dorothea Lange.” Unbelievable, heartrending photographs from that era.

I wrote quite a bit about World War II. It was glamorized just enough to attract young boys. It seemed like we were either engaged in some sport, or we were playing some kind of war game. Every boy seemed to carry a “gun,” even if it was only a finger. Plus many toys were designed around war.

Today we think of guys who throw touchdowns or hit home runs as heroes. But how about taking off from an aircraft carrier with 16 planes aimed at Japan, knowing you don’t have enough fuel to make it back to the ship. Not a single one refused to go, knowing they would likely have to crash in enemy territory. Doolittle’s Raiders, read about them and encourage all young people to read about what has made the United States the country it is.

But there were many other wars fought during my lifetime. Some of my Florida “friends” have asked if I was going to include my memories from the Civil War? All I can say is they come from Alabama and Minnesota, so we have to forgive them.

One such event I was around for was that little “police action” in Korea? That’s what our government called it because they didn’t want to say we were at war against North Korea. Almost a forgotten event now. But I had a friend who, with his Company, sat on the top of a hill that about a million screaming Chinese tried to take away from them. They didn’t succeed. He and many like him have not forgotten Korea.

While Korea was the forgotten war, Vietnam was the war our country wanted to forget. But instead of the war, we forgot about the men and women who were sent there, many to die there. Instead of being rewarded for serving, they were spit upon and called names when they came home. Read about it.

And gosh, what about Elvis Presley? Many parents seemed to consider him part of an evil movement that was attacking the purity of our youth. And then came “The Beatles.” Don’t those people ever cut their hair? If it weren’t for The Ed Sullivan Show, many people would not have had the chance to see them in action. Somehow, we survived them all. Some of us with our purity intact. By the way, while I was stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas, Elvis took his basic training there. So every time a deuce-and-a-half truck would roll by, we would wave and yell “Hi Elvis.” He never answered.

The assassinations of President Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King were each truly earth shaking events for our country. It seemed as though every segment of our population was affected. For a while it truly was “The day the music stopped.”

And WOW! July 20, 1969. We actually landed a space craft on the moon. And to think it was Neil Armstrong, just a kid from Wapakoneta, Ohio, 20 miles away, who took the “One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” This fantastic voyage was accompanied by many other launches and adventures. Unfortunately there were some disasters also. January 28, 1986. I think the image from watching the space shuttle disintegrate on TV will be forever imbedded in my mind. If you’ve never seen it, take the time to Google it.

Talk about famous dates, December 7, 1941. President Roosevelt referred to the attack on Pearl Harbor as a “Day of Infamy”. I think today that title would now have to be shared with September 11, 2001, the day the Twin Towers went down. We were on vacation in Wisconsin when the stories started coming in, and spent the day in from of the TV. Again, images I will never forget. Some days should never be forgotten.

The Coronavirus and the accompanying quarantining recommendations remind me of a time from my youth. For decades, every summer until 1955, when a vaccine was finally developed, the dreaded Polio epidemic would return. Every year thousands of new cases and hundreds of deaths reported. I think almost every child had this chilling fear of spending his or her life in an Iron Lung. Now those were frightening images.

Oh, the things I’ve seen and the places I’ve been. I have been so blessed. A long life, wonderful family and fantastic friends. But most of all I’ve been blessed to have had the companionship of a beautiful lady to spend these years with. If you’ve meet Kathleen, I don’t have to tell you how special she is. She smiles at my mistakes, cringes at my humor, and has probably cried once or twice also, not because of my humor.

Well, now surely this is the end. We were having a Zoom gathering with friends in Minnesota a few days ago, when I made the comment that I was finished writing. Someone objected saying that I’m not going to stop having memories. Well, I hope not. But I do think I’m going to stop recording them. Besides, I’m concerned they will

become so mundane that I would have to start making things up just to keep it interesting.

But I don't want to go there. So, unless I have second thoughts, this is,

**“The End.”**

## On Second Thought . . .

*In retrospect we can only be thankful to all the mistakes that we made and to all the lessons we learned from them!*

*-Avijeet Das*

If I didn't have Google I would never have heard of Avijeet Das, or read the above quote. But how true it is. I think about how many of the stories and memories that I've shared with you over these pages are based on "mistakes" I've lived through, or to be more generous, "teaching moments."

And isn't that what life really boils down, an accumulation of many mistakes? Granted most of mine I don't particularly want to admit to, after all it's a little late in life to be going to jail.

But, if it weren't for what I learned from those mistakes, even those I made two or three times, what would I, could I, have accomplished?

So, after reading this manuscript many times, and tweaking this and tweaking that, I'm beginning to ask myself "And why exactly did I do this?"

It certainly isn't to brag about my life or any accomplishments, because as I look back, I feel I have been given much but did little. When I read in Corinthians: "Give in Proportion to What God has Given You," I quickly realize I have nothing to brag about. And the Parables about wasted talents, please don't make me go there.

I don't think of it as an ego trip. Heaven knows I've been on enough of those to know they usually turn out to be horrendous, torturous journeys. That certainly has not been the case with this project. This has been fun. Painful at times, but all in all a real feeling of joy, especially as it nears completion.

Of course I could just continue to blame all this on Abby our Granddaughter. However that would be the easy way out. But then if it weren't for her Christmas request, there's a good chance I never would have started this, and you wouldn't have wasted all this time. Just saying!

I must admit to having a bit of an ulterior motive with some of the content. There are quite a few people, places and events mentioned that many readers have never heard of, especially the younger crowd. I hope that some will be curious enough to get on their browsers and do a little research. There are so many events, good and

bad, that are on the cusp of being totally forgotten. That would be a crying shame. And such interesting reading. One example, the "Dust Bowl." Unbelievable! And we complain about the weather.

A final story, probably more of an attempt at a teaching moment on my part. My Aunt and Uncle, Ida and Fred Gilberg (yes, the one I made nervous,) as far as I know had a successful printing business and a comfortable life together. I saw them move from a nice apartment close to the Court House in downtown Celina, to a gorgeous home on west Fayette Street, just a couple of blocks from our apartment, (the one with the black paint on the garage.)

After they turned the printing business over to Ida's brother Herb, and Fred passed away, Ida slowly scaled back on her possessions until she moved into an apartment shared with her sister Helen, whose husband Jack (the car dealer) had also passed away. There they stayed until moving into an assisted living facility in Dayton.

Then finally came a lonely hospital room. Her only possessions left were a few pictures of family on her nightstand, and memories.

One of the final times we visited Ida, Kathleen made a point of asking her if there was anything we could get for her. I remember thinking how often we ask that question of people when they are laid up. Almost always they say, "Nothing."

Ida however, did have a request. She said, "I'd really like to have a drink of water." Wow! Of all the things a person might want, or need, it boils down to a drink of water. It reminds me of Christ saying from the cross, "I thirst."

So if you happen to be around when my last days arrive, if I forget to ask, please bring me a drink of water.

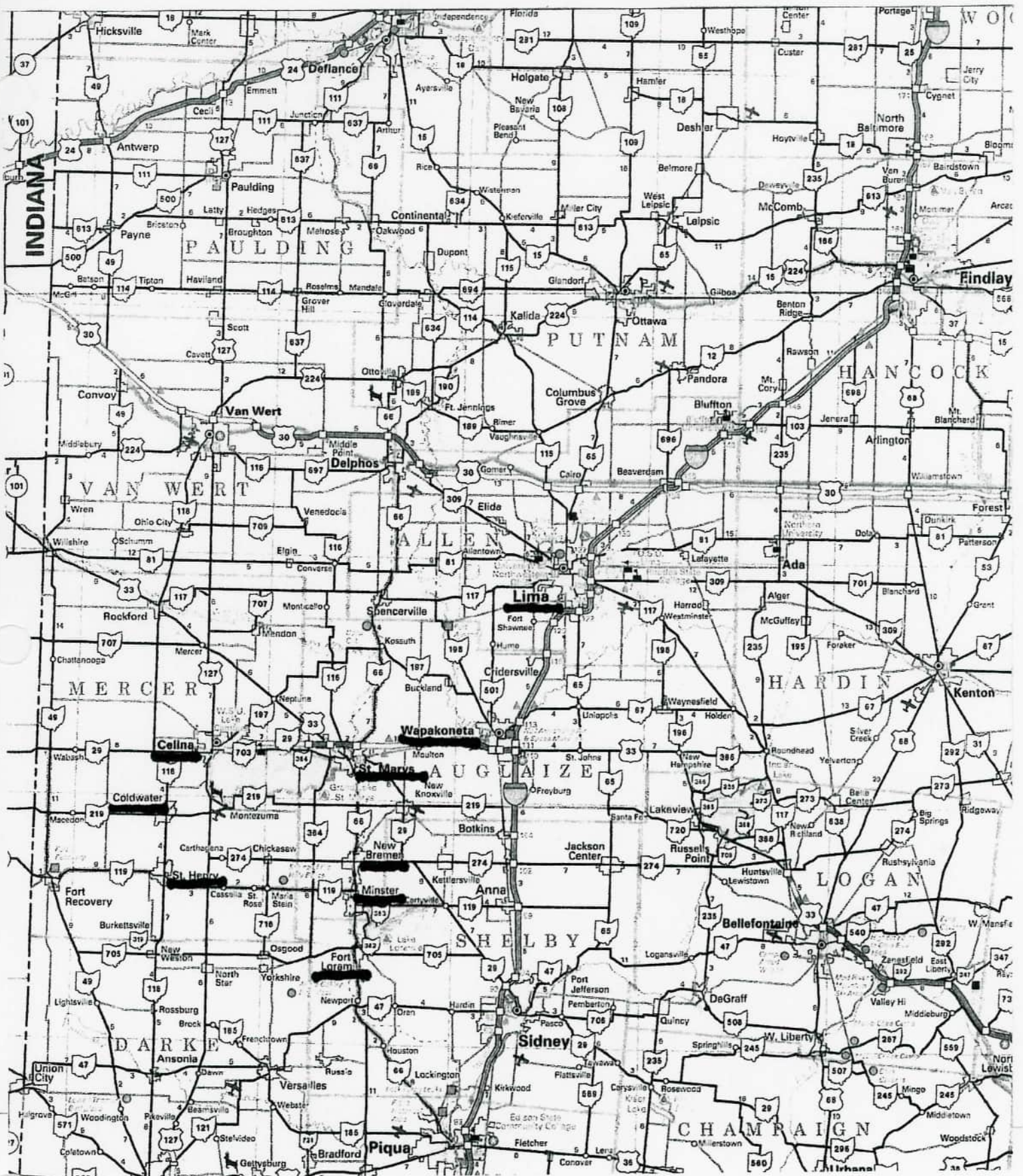
I have been asked why I included this story, and what relevance it had to my Memories. For one thing, it's been 24 years since Ida uttered those words, but I can't forget them. They have helped me become less materialistic. They have helped me define the line between wanting and needing.

So, on that note, this is truly the end. I need to stop. Abby, thank you again. Maybe someday you can read this to Max, if he will sit still long enough. Andrew, Ally and Zach, I hope you enjoy reading through this and are able to pass it on to your children.

The rest of you though, enough. You've wasted enough time. Get out there and do something worthwhile with your lives.

Love you all, Jerry





Subject or Part 6-13-59  
Wedding Expenses

Witness  
 Witness HONEYMOON EXPENSES

Invitations	15 45
Call books for men	13 55
Cards & Envelopes for girls	9 05
Price	4 00
Flowers & scrolls	22 00
Stationery Artifacts	2 00
Thank you cards	2 00
Blood Test	4 00
Stamps	1 95
Bills for men	12 30
Young	95 15
Gift for use of veil	4 00
Call books	4 25
Carols	95
Place cards	70
Rings	50 85
Plates, cups, napkins, cigars	18 40
Mass Servers	5 00
Mass Donations	22 00
Cooks	30 00
Butcher	15 00
Drycleaner	75 00
Table paper	2 00
Wedding Cards	24 00
Suit	11 00
Bakery - rolls, bread, cake	14 00
Chickens & Eggs	73 05
Flowers	67 50
Bier	70 00
<del>Roll &amp; Pop</del>	
<del>Wheat</del>	
<del>Ice cream milk butter</del>	
Copy Paper	120
Label Pressing	120
Fill	74 60
Gift drinks	33 65
Wheat	46 90
Ice cream, milk	16 36
Features	25 50
Stamps	12 45
<u>Total</u>	<u>932 96</u>

Motel (Tray)	8
Gas	10
Dinner	40
Motel (Charleston) W.V.	10 5
Supper	1 6
Dinner	3 2
Post cards & misc	1 3
Gas	5 2
Film	1 1
Motel (Elkins) W.V.	9 2
Supper	3 5
Phone calls	3 3
Gas	4 1
Dinner	3 2
Belt, food cover misc.	3 -
Carls	1 5
Coverings	2 5
Motel (Winchester) V.	6 0
Supper	1 9
Dinner	2 7
Gas	5 2
Supper	2 7
Motel (Winchester) V.	8 -
Candy & misc.	1 5
Dinner	3 0
Popovers	3 0
Misc 5 & 10	1 6
Highway Drive	1 0
Supper	4 5
Motel (Lucas) V.	8 0
Breakfast	1 9
Film	2 0
Lunch	1 3
Motel (Stamilton) V.	8 0
Supper	2 9
Phone	3 0
Gas	4 4
Breakfast	1 7
Gas	3 4
Solar	6
Dinner	2 8
Supper	5 0
Dinner	3 0
Misc	1 0
Supper	3 1
Salute	1 0
Dinner	3 6
Hotel (Charleston Falls) W.V.	20 4
Gas	5 5
Motel (Parkersburg) W.V.	8 1
Supper	2 0
Misc	1 7
Gas	2 9
Dinner	2 4
Supper	2 0
Gas	4 5

10 DAY TOTAL  
 \$214.90

HUSBAND: WINKELJOHN, HARRY RESIDENCE:  
 Born: 6/10/1905 Place:  
 Married: 6/20/1928 Place:  
 Died: 3/6/1986 Place: LIMA  
 Father: AUGUST WINKELJOHN Mother: PHILomenA TEITMEYER  
 Other Wives: ELENORA KNAPKE

WIFE: STUEVE, BERNADINE  
 Born: 12/3/1899 Place: FT. LORAMIE, OHIO  
 Died: 1/25/1936 Place: MINSTER, OHIO  
 Father: STUEVE, JOHN N. Mother: SCHMIESING, BERNADINE  
 Other Husbands:

CHILDREN	DATE BORN DATE DIED	WHERE BORN WHERE DIED	MARRIAGE DATE & PLACE TO WHOM
1 RICHARD	7/6/1929	CELINA	
2 GERALD (PULSKAMP)	6/28/1934	CELINA, OHIO	6/13/1959, ST. HENRY O KATHLEEN NIEKAMP
3 LAURA	1/9/1936 1/9/1936	MINSTER, OHIO MINSTER, OHIO	
4			
5			
6			

HUSBAND: PULSKAMP (WINKLEJOHN) GERALD S. RESIDENCE: NEW BREMEN, OHIO  
 Born: 6/28/1934 Place: CELINA, OHIO  
 Married: 6/13/1959 Place: ST. HENRY, OHIO  
 Died: Place:  
 Father: PULSKAMP, VICTOR (H. WINKLEJOHN) Mother: WINKLEJOHN, LORETTA  
 Other Wives:

WIFE: NIEKAMP, KATHLEEN A.  
 Born: 9/24/1936 Place: ST. SEBASTIAN, OHIO  
 Died: Place:  
 Father: NIEKAMP, ANDREW Mother: BERTKE, ALMA  
 Other Husbands:

CHILDREN	DATE BORN DATE DIED	WHERE BORN WHERE DIED	MARRIAGE DATE & PLACE TO WHOM
1 LINDA JO	3/19/1960	ST. HENRY, OHIO	
2 STEVEN R.	11/2/1962	ST. HENRY, OHIO	9/27/1968 CINCINNATI O MARY HENNARD
3 CAROL A.	9/29/1967	NEW BREMEN, OHIO	10/9/1993, PHOENIX ARIZ ANTHONY GAZELL
4			
5			
6			

1 Victor Palskamp  
 BORN 11-22-11  
 WHERE Celina, Ohio  
 WHEN MARRIED 8-12-35  
 DIED  
 WHERE  
 ORTHO (Det) Winkel John  
 NAME OF HUSBAND OR WIFE

2 Edward H. Palskamp  
 BORN 7 Jan 1875  
 WHERE St John, Ohio  
 WHEN MARRIED 25 May 1921  
 DIED  
 WHERE Celina, Ohio

3 Elizabeth Spieler  
 BORN  
 WHERE Cincinnati, Ohio  
 DIED  
 WHERE Celina, Ohio

4 Herman H. Palskamp  
 1861 to Maria Stern  
 BORN 25 Jul 1830  
 WHERE W. H. Hage, Hanover, Ger.  
 WHEN MARRIED  
 DIED 21 Aug 1891  
 WHERE Celina, Ohio  
 buried St Marys Cemetery, Celina  
 data from headstone + memorial cards  
 Was Mercer Co. Probate Judge  
 in 1887. See signature bkL p 236  
 Death Records

5 Anna Maria Schaefer  
 BORN 17 Nov 1833  
 WHERE Konigreich, Hanover  
 DIED 1 July 1886  
 WHERE Celina  
 Buried St Marys Cemetery, Celina

6 Titus Spieler  
 BORN 1839  
 WHERE Bavaria, Germany  
 WHEN MARRIED  
 DIED 1892  
 WHERE Cincinnati, Ohio

7 Catherine Hoelscher  
 BORN 27 Apr 1843  
 WHERE Ascheberg, Germany  
 DIED 8 Nov. 1925  
 WHERE Celina, Ohio  
 buried St. Marys Cemetery  
 Celina, Ohio

8 Herman H. Palskamp  
 BORN 1804  
 WHERE  
 WHEN MARRIED  
 DIED  
 WHERE Mary C. Steinke

9 John H. Schaefer  
 BORN 20 Jan. 1807  
 WHERE Konigreich, Hanover, Ger.  
 WHEN MARRIED 24 Feb 1885  
 DIED  
 WHERE Agnes Heitmeier

12 Conrad Spieler  
 BORN  
 WHERE Heimbüchental  
 WHEN MARRIED AschaHenburg, Ger.  
 DIED 25

13 Marianna  
 BORN  
 WHERE  
 WHEN MARRIED  
 DIED 26

14 Maximilian Hoelscher  
 BORN  
 WHERE Ascheberg, Westphalen,  
 WHEN MARRIED Munster  
 DIED 29

15  
 BORN  
 WHERE  
 WHEN MARRIED  
 DIED 30  
 BORN  
 WHERE 31

**HUSBAND** Niekamp, Andrew J. *John?* **HUSBAND:** Niekamp  
**WIFE:** Bertke  
 Born Sept. 14, 1891 Place St. Sebastian, Mercer County, Ohio.  
 Chr. Catholic Place \_\_\_\_\_  
 Marr. June 14, 1921. Place St. Francis Church Cranberry, Mercer County, Ohio.  
 Died Sept. 29, 1975 Place St. Henry, Ohio.  
 Bur. St. Henry Cemetery Place St. Henry, Ohio.  
**HUSBAND'S FATHER** John Henry Niekamp **HUSBAND'S MOTHER** Catherine Borgert  
**HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES** \_\_\_\_\_

**WIFE** Bertke, Alma A. *Augusta*  
 Born Nov. 27, 1901 Place St. Francis Cranberry, Mercer County, Ohio.  
 Chr. Catholic Place \_\_\_\_\_  
 Died Nov. 10, 1973 Place St. Henry, Ohio.  
 Bur. St. Henry Cemetery Place St. Henry, Ohio.  
**WIFE'S FATHER** Bernard J. Bertke **WIFE'S MOTHER** Katherine Knapke  
**WIFE'S OTHER HUSBANDS** \_\_\_\_\_

SEX M F	CHILDREN 1st Each Child (Whether Living or Dead) in Order of Birth SURNAME (CAPITALIZED) GIVEN NAMES	WHEN BORN			WHERE BORN			WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
		DAY	MONTH	YEAR	TOWN	COUNTY	STATE OR COUNTRY	
F	1 Niekamp, Ethel Margaret	30	Mar.	1922	St. Francis Cranberry	Mercer	Oh.	
M	2 Niekamp, Lester Andrew	1	Feb.	1924	Celina, Ohio	Mercer	Oh.	Ft. Recovery, Ohio 12 Dec. 1957
M	3 Niekamp, Paul Henry	18	Aug.	1926	Celina, Ohio	Mercer	Oh.	
M	4 Niekamp, Thomas Frank	17	June	1928	Celina, Ohio	Mercer	Oh.	
F	5 Niekamp, Joan Florence	28	Mar.	1931	Celina, Ohio	Mercer	Oh.	
M	6 Niekamp, John	3	Feb.	1932	Celina, Ohio	Mercer	Oh.	Celina, Ohio. Row 9 3 Feb. 1932 Please 29
M	7 Niekamp, Andrew Joseph	21	Aug.	1933	Celina, Ohio	Mercer	Oh.	
F	8 Niekamp, Phyllis Marie	9	Sept.	1935	St. Sebastian	Mercer	Oh.	
F	9 Niekamp, Kathleen Alma	24	Sept.	1936	St. Sebastian	Mercer	Oh.	
M	10 Niekamp, James John	8	Feb.	1941	St. Francis Cranberry	Mercer	Oh.	
	<b>To Whom Married</b>	<b>Date</b>			<b>Place</b>			
1	Elmer Rinderle	10	May	1941	St. Francis Cranberry, Mercer Co., Oh.			
2	Beverly Morris	Jan. 1948						
3	Dorothy Rutkowski	5	Oct.	1946	Custer, Wisconsin R. R. (Shantytown)			
4	Mary Lee Beckman	15	Oct.	1949	St. Henry, Mercer County, Ohio.			
5	Maurice L. Rammel	20	May	1950	St. Henry, Mercer County, Ohio.			
6	Unmarried Died at Childbirth				Buried I. C. Cemetery Celina, Ohio.			
7	Janet O. Willke	14	Jun.	1958	Maria Stein, Ohio Mercer County.			
8	Joseph Miller	9	Aug.	1958	St. Henry, Ohio Mercer County.			
9	Gerald S. Pulskamp	13	June	1959	St. Henry, Ohio Mercer County.			
10	Maria Margarita Morales	9	July	1964	San Antonio, Texas.			

**SOURCE** Information & Explanations \_\_\_\_\_

**RELATIONSHIP INFORMATION**  
 The above Husband is a \_\_\_\_\_  
 of \_\_\_\_\_

**COMPILER OF THIS RECORD**  
**Name:** Thomas F. Niekamp  
**Address:** 571 Columbus St.  
 St. Henry, Ohio  
 45883  
**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

HUSBAND: STUEVE, JOHN N. RESIDENCE: MINSTER, ST. HENRY, OSGOOD OH  
 BORN: 2/1/1854 PLACE: MINSTER, OHIO  
 MARRIED: 10/23/1879 PLACE: EGYPT, OHIO  
 DIED: 7/5/1949 PLACE: DAYTON, OHIO, OSGOOD CEMETERY OH  
 FATHER: STUEVE, JOSEPH J. MOTHER: ARKENBERG, CAROLINE  
 OTHER WIVES:

WIFE: SCHMIESING, BERNADINE  
 BORN: 4/21/1862 PLACE: EGYPT, OHIO  
 DIED: 9/16/1934 PLACE: OSGOOD, OHIO  
 FATHER: SCHMIESING, BERNARD MOTHER: POEPPLEMAN, MARIA A.  
 OTHER HUSBANDS:

CHILDREN	DATE BORN	WHERE BORN	MARRIAGE DATE & PLACE TO WHOM
	DATE DIED	WHERE DIED	
1 JOSEPH	8/18/1880 5/4/1965	ST. HENRY, OHIO DAYTON, OHIO	ROSE HENKE
2 CARRIE	3/9/1882 6/3/1974	ST. HENRY, OHIO MINSTER, OHIO	4/30/1902 BEN OLDING--CHRIS BOERGER
3 KATHERINE	12/5/1883 5/10/1970	ST. HENRY, OHIO DAYTON, OH OSGOOD CEM	11/29/1906 FRANK ALEXANDER
4 CECILIA	4/30/1885 3/4/1986	ST. HENRY, OHIO DAYTON, OHIO	11/18/1908, OSGOOD, OH JOHN C. MEYER
5 HENRY	7/6/1887 4/20/1889	ST. HENRY, OHIO ST. HENRY, OHIO	GRANVILLE CEMETERY
6 ALBERT	12/17/1889 11/29/1969	ST. HENRY, OHIO ST. PARIS, OHIO	6/27/1917, MINSTER OH FRANCIS J. FISCHER
7 HERMAN A.	12/19/1890	ST. HENRY, OHIO	
8 AUGUST	9/24/1891 8/18/1957	ST. HENRY, OHIO DAYTON, OHIO	5/25/1920, NEWPORT OH LORENA LINGERIST
9 CHARLES	8/1/1895 10/18/1969	ST. HENRY, OHIO DAYTON, OHIO	5/21/1918, OSGOOD OH MARY REICHERT
10 LAURA	9/18/1897 7/14/1988	FT. LORAMIE, OHIO MINSTER, OHIO	4/17/1917, DAYTON, OH RAY WESTERHEIDE
* 11 BERNADINE	12/3/1899 1/25/1936	FT. LORAMIE, OHIO MINSTER, OHIO	HARRY WINKELJOHN
12 WILLIAM	8/6/1901 7/22/1975	FT. LORAMIE, OHIO ADRIAN, MICH.	4/16/1926, DAYTON, OH GLADYS KINDLE
13 CLARENCE	10/11/1903 3/10/1986	MINSTER, OHIO DAYTON, OHIO	6/21/1931, DAYTON, OH ONETA BRUCKEN
14			
15			



Harry



Bernie

Biological parents



Vic

Dot

Adoptive parents

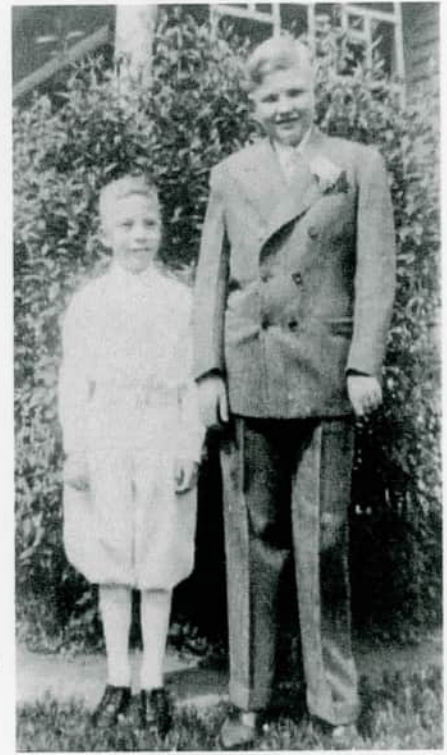


Vic and I, about 1939



**My Step Siblings, with Eleanor & Harry**

L/R: Mary (Angel), Tom, Mr & Mrs Plumber (Sue & Dan), Jim



**Dick and I**  
**My First Communion**  
**Dick's Solemn Communion**



**Winkeljohn Family**

L/R: Sr. Madonna, Dot, Al, Harry, Helen, Ida, Herb





## Niekamp Family

BACK L/R: Jim, Joan, Tom, Paul, Andy Jr, Ethel, Les, FRONT L/R: Alma, Kathleen, Phyllis, Andy



## Love Birds



Linda



Steve



Carol



This may look like the wilds of Vietnam, but it's just the hills of Kentucky.



Even in 1957 the Army was getting us ready for the Covid pandemic.



Kathleen, waiting for me.



Christmas time in the barracks, probably 1958