

TRUE WORTH

The Story of Helen Mary Burnside Zettler



December 2003

True Worth

True worth is in being, not seeming,
In doing each day that goes by,
Some little good, not in dreaming
Of great things to do by and by.

For whatever men say in their blindness,
In spite of the fancies of youth,
There is nothing more kingly than kindness
And nothing more royal than truth.

We get back our meat as we measure.
We cannot do wrong and feel right.
Nor can we give pain and feel pleasure
For justice avenges each slight.

The air for the wing of the sparrow,
The bush for the robin and wren,
But always the path that is narrow
And straight for the children of men.

We cannot make bargains for blisses,
Nor catch them like fishes in nets,
And sometimes the thing our life misses
Helps more than the things that it gets.

For good lieth not in pursuing,
In gaining of great nor of small,
But just in the doing, in doing
As we would be done by, is all.

Through envy, through malice, through hating,
Against the world early and late,
No jot of our courage abating,
Our job is to work and to wait.

And slight is the sting of his troubles
Whose winnings are less than his worth,
For he who is honest is noble
In spite of his fortune or birth.

Alice Carey (1820-1871)

As recited by Helen Zettler in May 2003.

CHAPTER 1: EARLY LIFE (1913-1927)



This is the story of the life of Helen Mary Burnside Zettler (also known as "Torch") as related by her to her daughter, Mary Jo, in several sessions dating from October 2001 to May 2003. Helen was born on August 21, 1913.

What was your first memory?

Sitting on the front steps getting my picture taken. My mother had put my straight hair up in rags to make me curls for the day, you leave the curls wrapped around rags, you dampen it and it makes curls. Mom did that because the lady next door was going to take my picture. I don't remember anything before that. I was probably four or five.

When you went to grade school, what's a memory that sticks out?

I had a real nice teacher that we knew, Kenny and Bernie knew her, Miss Warner. I loved school and I loved her, like you always love your first grade teacher. My worst memory is about Nov. or early Dec., I was always cautious about going to the bathroom, so I asked her, then I decided to go home, and on the way I wet myself. It was real cold, and when I got there I was so cold, and I remember Mom put me in the warm bathtub, then dried me off and said it was nothing to worry about. So I didn't worry about it.

You were a good student?

Very good. Always was, because I loved it, we didn't go places like other people because we didn't have a car, and no money, we would walk to the park, go to church on Sunday. Not many people came to see us, Mom's sisters and a neighbor or two. We didn't have toys. At Christmas Mom would try to get us one, but there was a couple tough Christmases, where she made us some clothes for our doll. Of course she was a lovely sewer, so we didn't mind it. Then we'd have some hard candy, and decorate the trees with strings of popcorn and strings of cranberries. We had a few old ornaments, real shaggy ones, but we loved the tree, thought it was really beautiful. Then one year Aunt Nine gave us an old car

battery and her husband showed us how to connect it, and we had eight light bulbs on that tree. Oh, we thought it was the most wonderful thing. (MJ: Did most people have lights then?)

No, but some people had them, I don't say rich, cause we didn't know we were poor, Mom did so many things for us. We thought everybody's mother did that, cut old dresses to make new ones for us. One year she made me a coat out of somebody's old coats, we just didn't know. We had what you'd call a happy life, we'd make popcorn or have some apples, and on Sundays we'd have meat, either hamburger or liver, which was very cheap in those days. Mom always had a little garden behind the house, including tomatoes. Once in awhile, one of our aunts would bring produce from Grandma's. Of course we loved that, vegetables or seckel pears or plums. I don't see the plums they used to have, they were big pink plums and sweet. Mom used to can them whole in a syrup.

Mom always managed to take us for a walk, and once in awhile have a ice cream cone for a treat, or she had a few friends around there she'd take us to see, on a Sunday afternoon or something, or go to the Waterworks Park. Once in a great while we'd get to go to the McKinley Theater, it was in a poor part of town, and it was 10 cents and they gave you a dish. I think it's called Depression glass now. We only got one for the three or four of us. When we had money to go to the movie, we thought life was good.

We had gas lights in the house, they hung on the side of the walls and were lit with a match. We didn't have electricity until 1925, close to 1930. We didn't have electricity at school, I don't think.

Other than your mom, who was your favorite adult when you were little?

(Pause). Well, a couple of my aunts were nice to us. Some of them weren't so nice to us because Dad wasn't very nice to people, and he was an alcoholic, so I guess our aunts thought we were going to do the same thing, I don't know. But they weren't as nice as they were to the other cousins. The neighbors were nice to us because Mom was so good. There was a little coffee shop

there, I remember going to get Mom a half a pound of 45-cent coffee. That was what she always got. She would use it over again, two or three times. We got a pint of milk either every day or every other day, and that was all the milk we had, but we had it on rice for our supper. We only had meat, usually on Sunday, but Mom made very good soups and baked a lot.

So like I said, we had a very good life and she taught us to play cards, rummy, 500, fish, and war. That was always our amusement, even as we got older. Mom didn't have the money to buy those fancy games. One aunt, a favorite aunt of mine, Aunt Nine, who was a character, but everybody loved (MJ: now she was the one who ran the gambling and whorehouse? Mom made a face and said, "I don't want that put on a record.") And she bought us a Tripoli board, a wooden board with pockets in the corner, and whatever number you got, you moved that many squares, so we liked that very much.

Kenny played football and was the favorite of all the people, cause from the time he was about eight, he had a paper route, and at that time you carried the papers in a cloth bag, and you had to walk somewhere to get them, then walk back and deliver them to every house on the street cause that was the only paper. He got up early on Sunday to deliver them. One Christmas by scrimping and saving, putting money down on it and making payments, Mom managed to get him a wagon to carry his papers in, and he was very, very proud of that.

What did you do during the summer when you were in grade school?"

Kenny had a job with a dry cleaner, Bernie had a job in a drug store, and my first job was babysitting. I babysat all five days, all day, while the mother worked in a laundry and I made \$3 a week. I remember the first \$3 I got, I bought a silk sweater and I was so proud of that, cause our drawers were quite empty. I was in third grade, nine years old. But it was right across the street from our house, so there was somebody there.

So during the summer you went to your Grandma and Grandpa's?

Yes, usually for two weeks, and I came home in the middle of the week sometimes, cause bus service was better in the middle of the week. The way I went, I would walk downtown (I was 9 years old), and there was a certain corner that the Alliance bus, that went through Louisville, and I think it was 20-25 cents, and I'd get on, and it would drive straight through Canton and straight through Louisville, which at that time was only one street and houses going off the side of it and come to think of it, it's still like that. A lot of the houses and drugstores are still there 80 years later. A brick street of course. They'd stop the bus there, and when we crossed a certain railroad I was to go up and tell the bus driver and tell him to let me off at the first house past the red barn on the left side of the street, and the house was painted bright yellow. So they always did cause the buses weren't big buses and they weren't full.

The house was Grandma and Grandpa's house. He was a house painter by profession, and he always painted it the same color. So the bus driver—I don't know if enough grandchildren or my grandma and grandpa took it, no, they wouldn't have taken it, they had a horse. They had a horse with two buggies, and one with a fringe on top. That was our Sunday buggy, and that was the only time it was ever used, oh maybe, for funerals and things like that, I don't know, but Grandpa's only had one horse. The bus driver never missed the house. We'd get off and Grandma usually, or my aunt Katherine, would be standing out there, they would have been sitting on the porch, and when they saw the bus, they'd come down to the corner of the driveway and meet me. And it was so much fun for me, cause we didn't go very many places. Not only did we not have a car, we didn't have any money to go on either. So this was just wonderful.

There were four bedrooms, and one was the guest bedroom, and one the girls slept in, and the wee little one was the one Uncle Ian slept in, and it was way back in the corner. When you went in the house, there was a little hallway, and it had five doors leading out of it. One went to the parlor, that you only used on special occasions. And one to Grandma and Grandpa's big bedroom, and

one to go upstairs, and the dining room, and I think I said the parlor, but that was the other one. If you went upstairs you went straight in the front door, straight up the stairs, and about half way up you made a complete right turn. There was a window in the hallway, and then you went up another five steps and there were the four bedrooms and an attic, which you went by enclosed steps off the front hallway. Grandma and Grandpa's bedroom was on the first floor, it was a big room, and they had an enormous bed that the headboard went almost to the ceiling, and it was all carved. A very heavy thing, I used to think somebody was going to get conked someday, but it never happened.

We had so much fun there. Grandma was so wonderful. She'd teach us to bake pies, or go out and help in the garden. She had a handwasher that had a handle in the top that you stood and put the soap in, then turned the handle halfway round, then back halfway, then halfway round, I suppose it took us a good half hour to do that. Of course, there were not dryers, but they had a clothesline outside that tied to the milkhouse and a post in the yard, and we'd have to take the clothes out in a basket and hang them up. In the winter you'd put snow clothes on and went out and hung the clothes up and they froze, and then you'd go out and get them and they'd be almost dry. I don't remember where we put them to dry. Maybe in the kitchen.

It was L shaped room and had a big table, like for breakfast you had bacon and eggs and home fries. And Grandpa's pie. He had pie at every meal. Every kind of pie you can think of. Every fruit and not many cream pies...pumpkin pie and in the spring maybe we would once in a while have a lemon pie. But she made vinegar pie, where you used vinegar instead of lemon, and LOTS of sugar. Also, pear pies. Of course, you didn't have certain fruit. You couldn't go to the store and have a dozen oranges. Oranges were a treat for Christmas.

They had an orchard of 15 or 20 trees: apple, peach, big pink plums, little yellow plums, also currants and berries. There was no spray or pruning, so you always had bugs. There was an apple press that they made cider vinegar, and they made wine from grapes.

So in the wintertime the fruit pies were made from canned fruit?

Yes, canned fruit or dried fruit. We dried apples and plums, and peaches, pears... (MJ: Cherries? Did you dry cherries?) No. Cherries were canned. (MJ: so they had quite a few fruit trees on the property?) Yes, they had a small orchard in back of the barn. But remember the fruit wasn't like you get it now in the stores. It had holes in where there were little worms inside. And it had marks on it. It was not perfect fruit, but we ate it. And if you found a worm, you just dug him out and threw him outside. (MJ: And you said Grandma dried the fruit on the roof? She had screens on the roof or something?) Yes. And Grandpa must have been clever with wood things and so forth. He had made her...it was six shelves of screen and it went on top of the coal stove. And she may have dried cherries on there. I don't remember them...but she would put the fruit on the layers of screen and then they would eventually dry.

But in the summer, a day like we had today, very warm, she would put them up where I told you they had the window at the right turn in the hallway. You'd climb out that window and it was the roof of the kitchen and they would put paper... Grandpa got one paper a week, which was all that was published over there. And they would spread that down and weight it with stones at the corner and that's where they would lay the fruit. About sometime in the middle of the day somebody would go up and turn it. (MJ: The birds didn't eat it?) You would think so, but if they did I didn't know it.

Of course, I only got to do the things that were easy to do. The other ones I didn't. I wasn't much interested. Like we didn't have electric light. We had oil lamps all over the house and every morning we would go and collect them and bring them down to the kitchen and wash them in the hottest water you could stand and then you'd dry them. Then you'd have to fill them with oil and there was a certain place in the kitchen they sat and we had a great big one on the dining room table. (MJ: sitting right on the table?) In the middle of the table. And one in every room. After we put in the oil, after we had dried them, we would carry them up to the room they

went in. Most of the rooms had lamps with little holders like cups have to put your fingers in to carry them up. And when you went to bed at night you took one up with you and put it on the various kinds of stands that Grandpa made like dressers. The very big dressers, that they put the comforters and quilts in. And the lamps stayed there, but you of course blew it out when you went to sleep. And there where was a basin on the same table as the lamp and that's where you washed in the morning.

Then under the bed was a...well, you can call them various things... slopjars, pots, just whatever you wanted to call them. And those were your toilets. And you put them on the bed. (MJ: What if you missed?) Well, you couldn't miss if you sat on them, your butt covered the hole. But you know, I can't remember having toilet paper up there. Of course, they didn't have toilet paper out in the outhouse. They had catalogues. But upstairs I can't remember. But I know that every room had its slopjar and a basin to hold the water, and a lamp.

And the beds didn't have springs and mattress like we do now. They had ropes...stretched from corner to corner and side to side and then woven. Remember the bed we had that on? And the mattresses were straw. Then they would be refilled spring and fall. They would empty all the straw out and use it for the pigs or something and they they'd wash the cover and after it was dry they would stuff it again. (MJ: sounds kind of itchy.) It was itchy. But the material she used, the stuff was almost like canvas or something. Real smooth but real heavy. And the straw came through, of course and itched you. (MJ: But then you had sheets over that? You used sheets?) Yes. The covers were all made, of course, there were no blankets. There were quilts and comforters...oh, just every kind of cover to keep you warm, but they were all handmade.

(MJ: And the pillows were down?) Some of them. If you were lucky enough to have ducks they were down pillows. Grandma used to make her down pillows. Grandpa would shoot the ducks and have duck for a special meal, and then Grandma would take the down off the chest of the duck as she was cleaning it and put it in a big pillowcase and then she would save that and they would wash those whole. The pillowcase would hold the down and they'd wash

it and then hang it outside on the lawn for, I don't know how long it would take to dry, but they wouldn't blow it. Now if you have a down pillow you can put it in the dryer at low and it gets nice and fluffy.

So what did you eat—you said for breakfast, but for lunches and suppers when you were out there?

Well, I would say lunches were mostly bread and some vegetables, like for instance if we had sweet corn, if it was then, we had sweet corn period. And of course grandpa had his pie at every meal. (MJ: Oh he had pie for lunch and supper too, not just breakfast?) Yes. Of course they always baked a lot. Everybody had their days.

On Sunday we always took the buggy with the fringe on top and went to church. It was a church that, back four generations, our grandfathers were part of that church. They built it and in the cellar, or the basement, were still the stones that they had put there, oh, like 150 years ago. And almost everybody in the church of course had children and they probably would go home and eat their Sunday dinner, which I'm sure was a plentiful one, and then they would go visit aunts and cousins and grandmas and so forth. My grandma, who was Lydia Jane Immel, always called Jenny, said it was so much fun because people didn't plan anything. They just got in their buggies and went visiting on Sunday afternoon. They would go to visit a relative or a friend and of course stay for dinner. I mean supper. Most of them ate about five o'clock. Grandma said what was nice about it was you didn't have to plan the day before and bake and so forth because you always did that.

On Sunday you went to church. On Monday you washed the clothes, on Tuesday you ironed the clothes and they even ironed dishtowels and sheets. (MJ: Oh my God.) And on Wednesday, well, Mary Jo can't remember what we did on Wednesday and I can't remember either, but we followed that routine for years.

Now you said there was a lot of...well, Grandpa ate pies at every meal and there was a lot of fruit. So what kinds of fruits were there and how did they fix it?

How did they keep it in the winter, you mean? Well, they had raised almost all kinds of fruits. Not some of the ones we have now like nectarines and of course they didn't have bananas, but they had apples and peaches and pears and cherries and gooseberries and blackberries and just all of those. And they made pies on Saturday when they baked with all of them because Grandpa ate pie at every meal, breakfast, lunch and dinner. They didn't have glass fruit jars like people do today, the people that can things, which aren't very many. (MJ: So what did they use to can with?) They had tin cans and after they put the fruit in, they put...well, I don't know what you would call it, but it was like a red paste and they made that real hot and they put that around the ridge on top. (MJ: Almost like a wax or something?) Yes. Of course, the wives always knew where everything was. Almost all of them had a fruit cellar and they had the shelves named on what was on them.

(MJ: So they didn't pressurize the jars or anything?) No. And they didn't blow up, or any of them I know of. And they didn't evaporate. And they also dried fruit. My grandmother dried them on top of a roof that she climbed out the window on the upstairs steps and you cleaned the fruit of course, and then you laid it out on this roof that was covered in paper, usually newspaper, and then if it started to rain and if it got real bad or something, we went up and took the fruit in or you turned it over like every noon. They dried everything. My grandmother even dried green beans, which were very, very good. Of course that isn't for pies. But for the pies she dried peaches and pears and apples, oh a lot of apples because they made schnitz pie. (MJ: Schnitz pie being cut up, dried apples?) Yes. They also did stewed schnitz and there was a famous dish that I don't think very many people know now where they took ham, potatoes, and apple schnitz and boiled them together until they got thick-like. Very, very good. The last person that ever made those was Janet Immel, my first cousin. But they would go visit everybody and everybody was always welcome because they didn't have entertainment, remember. No telephone. My grandparents didn't have one then anyway. (MJ: No football games?) No football games. No TV. No radio. No music like we have with records or CDs or any of that.

So when they went to go visit, did the men go outside and talk and the women stayed inside and talked, or did everybody just sit around and talk together?

Well the main thing men always did, and Grandpa always did this, after they talked to the men and so forth, they would go and walk all around the farm. Now Grandpa I think had 20 acres. I'm not sure, but we'll say 20 acres. And the men would go out and if they smoked a pipe or something they would smoke a pipe and talk about their pigs, just the same as today they talk about their football games and the different things they do. Maybe if they work in a factory they talk about that, but the farmers just talked about their farm, what was raised and of course they would always have these little contests, whose tomatoes ripened first.

(MJ: But did the men and women ever sit down and have a conversation together?) Not that I know of. Now they would have these picnic meals, like almost all of them had a big table in the yard some place and they would sit there like we still do. Sit at the table after we have eaten and talk. They would do that, but as for sitting down in their parlor, I never saw them do that. Just like men and women today, their interests are different, so they talk about what they're interested in. Today women would probably talk about their clothes or the TV series they are watching and men would probably talk about their football games. (MJ: I don't think I would talk about my clothes or TV series.) What do you talk about? (MJ: That's a good question, but this tape is about you. You talked about what you did when you were out at the farm in the summer.)

Well, I did a lot of little things that say, girls of eight and ten could do. I did the ironing, like the sheets and pillowcases and stuff like that. Should I tell them about the ruffles? Grandma had these funny looking things, they were a strip of white cloth and then they had like three ruffles on them and she showed me how to iron a ruffle and so I did and that day when she was getting dressed to go away some place I saw what she did with the ruffles. She wore them around her bosom just like women have their falsies now. Grandma was not known for her big bosom. (MJ: Family curse!) She pinned these ruffles around. She would pin them under her

arms to the slip she was wearing and it served the same purpose; she looked buxomy when she would go out.

And of course they didn't have fancy clothes then, their clothes were all made at home, so they probably had one good winter dress and one good summer dress and the rest were all housedresses that they just wore everywhere. And of course they never wore things like shorts. I don't know if they knew what they were, except maybe for underpants. But their dresses were always down between the ankle and knee length. They weren't short and they weren't long, but they always looked nice and they were always clean. I often wondered how they got the shirts as clean and as nicely ironed as they did. But remember besides the ironing they used a thing called starch. Which I don't think is even in the stores anymore. (MJ: People just use a spray starch. It comes in a can and you spray it on. Well, most people don't iron anymore.) No, they don't iron things. Most of the men, like my husband, kept one white shirt with long sleeves and one white shirt with short sleeves. Whenever we went out some place important, or to a wedding or a funeral, that's what he wore. Otherwise there were sport shirts, either knit or cotton, and I notice the men today still do that.

So you said when you were out at your Grandma and Grandpa's, people didn't hug you. Grandma and Grandpa weren't huggers?

Well, that is a German trait. The French people are huggers. (MJ: The French people are huggers? How do we know that? Did you know some French people back then?) (Pause) Well, no. (MJ: Grandma Mary was a hugger and she was German.) Well, she's an exception. I never remember my Grandma or any of my aunts hugging me just for the fun of it.

Anything else about the farm?

I loved to go out there and I looked forward to it. I would say during the winter we never got out there, but in the summer I went the one long time, and we would always go out on butchering day when they would butcher 2-3 pigs and they had, oh maybe, 25 men there

and Grandma and the aunts and mom went out and fixed all the food the day before. Just immense amounts of food. And the men would come out and anybody that has seen a butchering knows what they do. They stayed there and worked all day. Then also there was always an apple butter day. They had a big iron kettle out over an outdoor fire and they would put apples, and I guess sugar and spices, I think that's about all they would put in. And somebody stirred it all day. (MJ: But neighbors got together to do that.) Yes. It was a picnic. It was like now we might go out to the park and take some hamburgers. And they would all talk and all bring something to eat and they even stayed on in the evening.

They used to talk about it, but I never went to one that was a corn husking. That was in the fall. This was the field corn. And the story was, if you got a red one you got to kiss whoever you wanted. They did that on the barn floor. I don't know, maybe they ended up with dancing, as I said I was too little then to ever do it, but I heard them tell about dancing afterwards. That would have been in the fall. I would say in October. So all those things were events, just like we have them now.

The butchering, you said, how did they preserve the meat after they butchered it?

Well, what kind of meat are you talking about? If you're talking about hams and bacon, they soaked them in salt and sugar and saltpeter. What is saltpeter? (MJ: I thought it was what they gave the guys in the Army. Well, never mind that. This is a family story, Mom. So they put them in brine and salt water for a while and then they smoked them for ham. And sausage? They made a lot of sausage too?) Sure, because it kept real good and was easy to fix. Of course they usually had bacon or sausage for breakfast. Because remember they got up a couple hours before breakfast and fed the pigs and the cows and the chickens and whatever other animals. You probably had something in the garden or something that needed done. There was always work to do and you did that first and then came in and ate. You probably got up at 5 and ate at 7.

(MJ: Did they ever do the thing of putting meat in crocks and then pouring lard over them?) Yes. That was the way they kept the loose sausage. See, it's sort of a gory story. I always hated going out to butchering because they shot the pigs and then hung them on crisscross wood and what they called bled them. Let them hang until all the blood was out of them, then take the guts out. Then the sausage was just the pork ground up and they would use very little fat. They would grind it up and then they would put it in casings, which were nothing more than the intestines of the pigs scraped out and cleaned and moist. Then they would grind up this pork and it would come out of the grinder and they would put in the... (MJ: Spices?) Oh, the spices of course were put in when they ground it, but they would put the casings over the head of the grinder and then somebody ground and then somebody forced the meat into the casings, which was just a long, straight gut.

Then to smoke it they had a little house out in the back of the yard that was their smokehouse and Grandpa would build a fire in there in the morning and then they would hang the sausage and their hams up inside of there and they would keep the fire going day and night for I don't know how many days. Oh, I suppose five or six days I expect to go through a ham anyway. For the smoke flavor to go... Of course that is all to preserve the meat some, but that also gave it a nice flavor to any of them. The sausage was in the casing or else they put it in the crock, packed it down, and after they had about three inches of this ground meat they would pour an inch of lard. Then they would put three more inches of ground meat. Then the top layer was always a thick one of lard and that would preserve the sausage. Of course, they'd have done that then, you know, all winter.

They would have their eggs or chicken. And some people ducks or geese. (MJ: So all you ever bought at the store was coffee, sugar...) Flour. (MJ: Flour. You bought flour at the mill you said.) Yes. You took wheat to the mill, also oats to grind into oatmeal. Now remember, you didn't have the things in the store you have now. For instance you never had a head of lettuce or a dozen oranges or anything like that. (MJ: Right. No fresh produce.) Right. That's why people used to go out and dig dandelions as soon as the first green came up in the yard. And they would bring

the dandelion up and clean it. You can buy dandelion now at stores. So it must be raised in greenhouses, I suppose. (MJ: I guess. So they used to eat it like in a salad?) Well, I don't know about other people, but we would always have it with bacon and vinegar and cut up some hard boiled eggs in it, if you had a lot of eggs.

They would have times when the hens would lay more and the cows would give more milk. All the animals are on seasons and they have seasons to mate and seasons to give a lot of whatever they produce. But it is very interesting on the farm because you see every kind of life there is. And you see life and death. They kill the chickens and they kill the pigs and some people slaughtered the cows. My grandparents never did because they only had one cow. But the people that eat beef... When you saw the videotape on how they handled the beef in Chicago, why, everybody is a vegetarian for a while after that.

Houses were very cold then.

Mail was a very interesting thing. You didn't get mail like you do now. You never got any ads except the Sears and Roebuck catalogue. But like all the ads we get—make a lot of money or lose weight or gain weight or any of that—you never got those kind. You might get a letter once in a while from a cousin in Timbuktu that you hadn't heard of for a long time. And you'd get the paper and the town that I know, Louisville, Ohio, they only printed the paper once a week. So like my grandpa, they read it cover to cover. And there was no ads in it. I looked at one not long ago and there was no ads except one little one down the corner that talked about somebody selling their farm and animals. But our Sunday paper is more ads than anything and I often wonder if anybody sits down to read that paper cover to cover. (MJ: Certainly not like the old days.) Oh, no. Those papers were only, oh, 8-10 pages at the most. (MJ: And most of the news wasn't like national news, it was local news, so it was people you know.) Yes. And remember they didn't get news as fast as we do because they didn't have the way of spreading the news. All the gossip we hear on the radio and TV... They make it so much bigger than it is, then they give the same one over and over, but they never had that. In their once a

week paper they would say Mr. and Mrs. Smith went to visit her sister in Toledo, Ohio and things like that. Like a baby was in the paper and deaths of course, and all those kinds of things. If somebody sold a buggy or something it was big news.

CHAPTER 2: HIGH SCHOOL



How about when you were 12 or so? What was going on for you then? The school you went to in 7th and 8th grade was just part of the grade school, right?

Yes I went there through the eighth grade. The only time Mom ever interfered in school, of course she would go in with Bernie to get her to be able to go to Lehman [High School], which was in walking distance, but far. We were supposed to go to the Old Central, but it was an old shabby building and when Bernie wanted something she really bugged somebody until she got it. Mom did that for her. She went to the school board, so then I got to go there when I was two years younger. (MJ: This was high school?) Yes, a freshman in high school we went to Lehman. (MJ: Then why did you switch to McKinley [High School]?) Because it was the only one that had grades higher, it was the only high school in Canton. Lehman had just the freshman year. And McKinley had freshman, sophomore, and seniors. Oh, there's one in there. Juniors. I went to Lehman. Of course, that's where all the rich kids went. But I enjoyed it. I liked school. I tried real hard to get the higher grades.

(MJ: Did it come pretty easy for you?) Oh yes. We studied, Bernie and I. Kenny didn't study too much. Bernie was always so pretty. She had good taste. Mom would make us clothes, but Bernie...one year she had a black and white checked dress. Little checks and then someplace from somewhere we had some red beads, so she strung these red beads and made herself a red belt. So she knew what to do to make clothes look classy, I suppose you would call them. She went through all of McKinley and so did I. She worked in a soda fountain store, just a little one up on McKinley Avenue. Just a man had it and he'd sell smoothies. It wasn't a drug store. They had on the shelf stuff, aspirin and so forth, and then they had candy and a soda fountain that you pull down the handle and make your coca-colas. You put coca-cola syrup in a glass and then pull the handle down on this fountain and it was zzzzzz.... Of course you didn't have Pepsi and that stuff then. You had Coca-Cola and they would make it... you could get a cherry Coke, which meant you put a dash of cherry syrup in. Or you could get vanilla Coke.

And Bernie was very popular. She always had a boyfriend in high school. The one she had that she went with for so long turned out to be one of the very well known lawyers in Canton. (MJ: But she didn't end up with him?) No.

Do you remember Bill Bruce and Irma? (MJ: Did you know them in high school?) Yes. I didn't know Irma, she came from Mt. Washington, which is a little farming town. There was not high school there, so she came to Canton, lived with a family, watched their kids and cleaned. But Bill was from just a few blocks away. I can't remember if he was Bernie's age or a year older, but we played cards with them and went to their house in Florida years later. I don't know what ever happened to them. He's the one that called Daddy one time. He was into old coins and he had a chance to buy some for \$3500. I don't know enough about coins. It doesn't seem to me it was that much, but that's what I remember anyway. He could buy these gold coins that were worth a whole lot more. And Daddy didn't have \$3500. This is when we were married. And as I said, we started going to Florida... Oh, those gold coins, he cashed them or whatever you do and they bought a little house in Florence, Florida and it was a real cute little house on a water way.

So, how old were you when you got a job?

I got a job at the A&P, I'll say it was 14. It sounds better than 13. On South Market. Then they transferred me to the West End down there by the old McKinley theater where there was an A&P. I worked Saturdays from eight o'clock until...I think it was six at night. For two dollars. And you weighed things. They didn't come in boxes and cellophane then. We weighed the prunes in brown paper sacks and you weighed the sugar and the brown sugar. And you went over into the vegetable part and weighed fifteen pounds of potatoes. (MJ: Then you had to calculate how much per pound? Or was there a machine that did that?) You just weighed it. (MJ: How did you figure out how much to charge for it?) It would say on it. Like at times, when coffee was on sale, it was three pounds for a dollar. Eight o'clock coffee. That would be all measured out and the other stuff we were told. The big sacks it came in would have marked on it. One summer I got to work all week because one of

the girls wanted to go away. I think I made something tremendous like 15 dollars that week. I remember I bought a winter coat with it. (MJ: So was that fun working, or was it a drag?) Oh, it was fun. Because after you were there awhile the people would all know you.

The second date I had with Daddy we were having a sale on Del Monte canned goods and he came in and bought his mother a couple boxes of cans. Of course that was a big treat for them. Like canned peas and canned corn. I can't remember any of the others. Oh, I know, he bought just a couple cans of asparagus. His mother thought that was so good. We took it out to her that night. No, working was fun. Because if I stayed home I'd just have to dust and sweep. (MJ: So did you work there all through high school?) Yeah. I would go there after school, which was about three o'clock and work until maybe seven and then Saturdays I would work all day. I'm sure it was fun. That was the only money I had. We wore silk stockings to school and I often wore them with runs in them because maybe I only had two pair and I'd wash them out every night. And all the people in the neighborhood would do that.

So what did you do in high school? What did you participate in?

I wonder where my old annual is? I had it for years. That's funny. I've got a couple of the things from when we would have, you know, like they said they sent you a notice they were having a reunion. I always went to those and I always had a lot of fun planning them and so forth. I had good grades then. National Honor and so forth. And I was in the French Club and women's basketball. (MJ: You played women's basketball? They had a team?) Well, we would just play against Lehman or against the other schools. (MJ: I didn't know you were a jock in high school, Mom.) I wasn't a jock. They didn't play women's basketball like men's. (MJ: They played half court?) Yes. And you could only go or if you were a—what did they call you—but if you were the other one you couldn't shoot the ball. (MJ: You were a guard? Is that what it was?) Yes. I think I got to shoot some, but I wasn't very good.

(MJ: What other sports did you do?) Field hockey. I don't think we had a baseball team. The hockey team, we just played among ourselves up in one of the real expensive houses on North Market there, they let us use their lawn. We made our suits and wore bloomers that came down below your knees. Real full bloomers, blue serge. (MJ: What's blue serge, like cotton?) No. More sort of a wool. And then the blouses we wore were like midi-blouses. They had collars that came down in front like sailors wore, and they hung down way below your waist. There was one store in Canton you could buy them and we were saving to buy one. (MJ: What store was that?) Stark Dry Goods.

What's your favorite memory of high school?

One year they decided to specialize in some courses and one of them was religion. We didn't study...where are they fighting now? What religion is that? (MJ: Islam.) Islam, well, we didn't study that, but we studied the difference in Jewish and Presbyterian and...let's see, which is the one that was the church of England? (MJ: Anglican or Episcopal?) Episcopal. (MJ: Really? That seems pretty progressive that they would teach a course in religion.) Just the one year. That's why I said I was lucky to get to take it. You had to apply for it the year before and not everybody got to take it.

There were two teachers that taught that and drama. We had a drama class, for instance. We acted out these little plays. There were two poems on work. One was like "work, thank god for the might of it, the ardor yearns to be light of it" and then the other was

"let me do my work from day to day,
 In roaring marketplace or tranquil room,
 Let me but find it in my heart to say,
 when vagrant wishes beckon me astray.
 This is my blessing, not my doom.
 Of all who live, I am the one by whom
 This work can best be done .

Well, anyway, that was the idea. The one poem you were to say with vigor and so forth and the other one, she had a rocking chair

there and you sat quietly. And that was what your grade was judged on. (MJ: How well you recited the poem?) And how you differentiated between the one that was...and the quiet one. It was a very interesting class. They never gave it again.

These two teachers, the two Ms. Busby's taught it. I think they probably went before the school board with these ideas. They were two sisters who lived up by Aunt Stella and like these ones that we were talking about the other day, they lived alone there all their lives. And I think that they persuaded the school board and then I think after one year, maybe not enough people wanted to take it. There weren't too many boys in that class. I only remember one. (MJ: They probably called him a sissy.) Well, what I remember about his mother was very interesting. The arts and so forth. She used to let us come to her house and practice. (MJ: Were they pretty well off?) Yes. One of the nice houses up there. And we'd practice in her living room and she'd always have crackers or cookies. Not fancy meals, like graham crackers or something. And we thought he was very much a sissy and forget what he turned out to be. Something in art or theater or something.

I was Secretary or Treasurer my junior year, I was very proud of that. Usually, it was kids that had fathers that had jobs and took them places.

When I was a junior the YWCA had a contest for scout camp on Lake Erie. You had to write it, then you had to get up and recite it. We wrote about camping. And it was a lot like that, it was what I expected. I won and so I got to go but didn't have a way to get there. One of the girls with a father who was a dentist, he said, "You can ride with us." I had some coins, about \$2. We slept in wooden cottages, took hikes, sang, we had a fire at night and sing. Women that were directors came from the Y in Canton. I never would have got to go. It was \$15 for the week. Mom made me, you know, some sporty clothes. We didn't wear shorts, I think we wore skirts with midi blouses. We each got a cap that said Camp Wingfoot. I suppose I was 15. (MJ: Did women wear pants yet?) I don't think so. The first time I saw women wear pants, we made ourselves, they were all one piece. We called them pajama pants. I was in my early 20's.

Any other memorable moments from high school??

I was in the class plays, but not like Monica in the lead. One of them I remember I was dressed in a full skirt and sitting on a grand piano. They rolled one out. "Sitting one day at the altar. I was weary and ill at ease and my heart was...oh my hands wander gently over the noisy keys." That's all I can remember. But I sat there. I didn't sing, of course, I spoke the words. Then some other people came on the stage. (MJ: What play was that?) I don't know. And another one was... (Pause) Oh, I know. It was an operetta. Oh, you would know it. It was very common...it had some common music to it. It has one line about the albatross... (MJ: It's not a Gilbert and Sullivan, is it? No, it's more serious than that. I know what you're talking about but I can't think of the name of it either.) I was just the back guard or something, but I always went out for these things.

And I always had a tough time. It was...well, the girl Rachel who eventually married my cousin Bob Randall, we were trying out for this part and her mother brought her a new dress and her dad took her up to the McKinley in his car, of course, and I had to take a bus from West End and I didn't have a new dress, of course, to McKinley High. I walked part way and got there because I had to work in the morning. I was so angry at her because she got the part, of course. Like you when you came home that day, remember. We all have some of those things I guess. And especially the kids who don't have quite as much money or clothes...Pinafore! (MJ: Oh yeah, HMS Pinafore. So it was Gilbert and Sullivan.) "I am the Capitan of the Pinafore..." (MJ: God, Mom, you remember all this stuff? I cannot remember anything from my school days.) I wonder if Bill ever remembered...what was the play that he was in? Remember he wore Daddy's bathrobe? They were traveling to Europe or something like that. I remember one line, "If this is Thursday it must be Belgium," or something like that.

So who was your favorite teacher in high school?

Oh, I don't think you had favorite teachers. I didn't. I liked all of them. I think we had... Well, we had homeroom and then we had, I'd say six or seven classes. You had mathematics, English, a foreign language and, oh, history, and the last year I remember we had to take history and study government. What was that called? (MJ: We called it Government. You called it Civics I think. Didn't you have to take Civics?) Yeah. We had to take that the last year or so. (MJ: So high school wasn't too different from what it is now?) Yeah. I liked it because, see, we didn't get to go places because Mom worked so hard and Dad was never home and if he was he was sleeping.

So going to high school was a treat. That's what I said about the two bucks that I made. I ate my lunch out of that, bought hose and bought all the things in school you had to buy. So that was fun. And I met all the kids like Ginny and Mary. They weren't rich rich, but they were well to do. Let's put it that way. (MJ: Did you every get clothes from them? Did they ever give you clothes?) Oh, no. I would never take clothes. Mom made most of our clothes and a lot of them Aunt Stella and Eva gave to us and then in the evening she would take them all apart and wash them. Like crepe dresses. And press the material and make a dress of out of it.

When did they start calling you "Torch"?

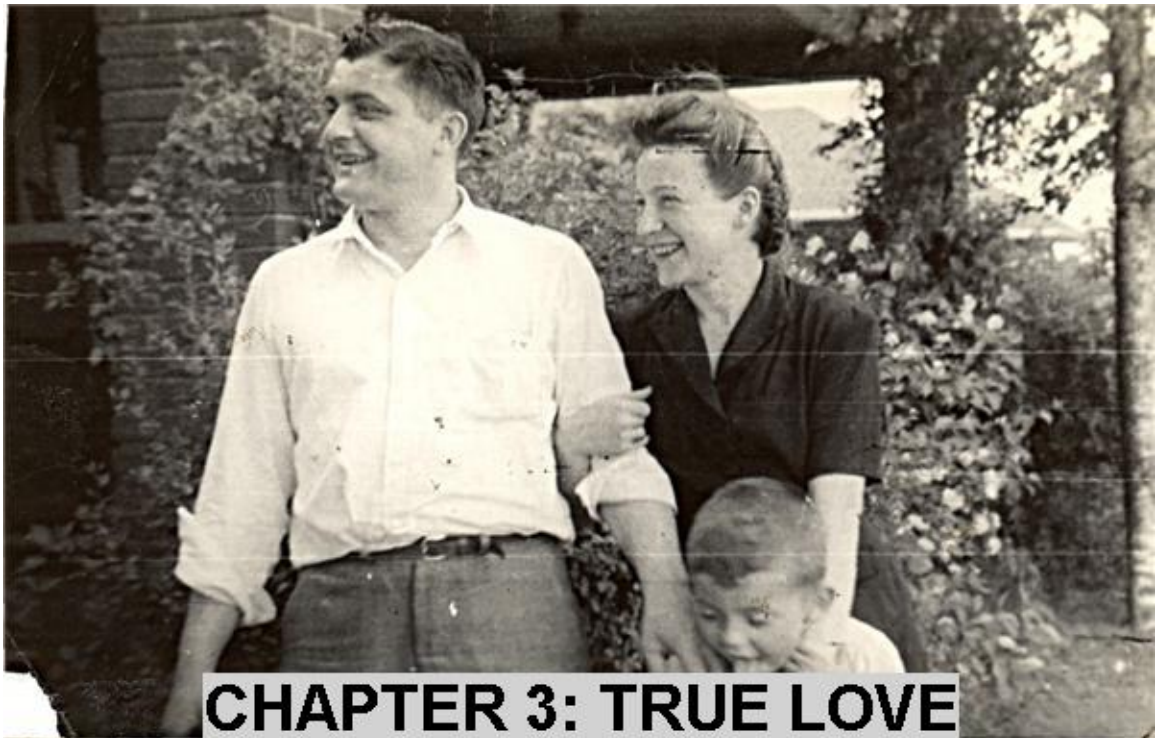
That started in high school. I don't remember who. My hair was bright red. [MJ note: All of my aunts and uncles on the Zettler side always called Mom Torch.]

Did you work anywhere else while you were in high school besides the grocery store? When did you start working for the bank, was that after you graduated? Didn't you work for a bank?

I don't remember. After I graduated I worked for Nelson and Kimberly tree trimming for the public utilities. That's all they did.

So, graduating must have been quite an accomplishment then. I mean, not everybody in your generation finished high school. So that was pretty something that you guys finished even though you were so poor.

Mom insisted, she worked very hard. She cried when Kenny dropped out. She said if he finished high school he could get a job that would make a living and that's what people of our status needed to do. Jackie was telling me one time what a tough time she had, and I didn't know that there was such a separation of black and whites at that time. Like the library let her know that there were certain restrictions; they wouldn't give her a card. And the Catholic Church they lived near refused to let them go there.



You graduated from high school and then what?

Well, I met Daddy the last year. (MJ: When you were a senior?) Yeah. October 24, 1930. (MJ: And how did you meet him?) We had high school dances. And Ginny and I made ourselves outfits for this Halloween dance. We can't remember now—last time we got together—what we were supposed to be, but we had long sateen dresses and we had a big rope tied around our middle. It was something we were studying in school and of course at that time my hair was long and red and the girls braided for me and I had it around the top of my head like that for this outfit. (MJ: Wow, you must have looked pretty glamorous.) Yeah. I didn't go with Daddy. I'm trying to remember—oh, Dick Williams! Do you remember meeting him one time and you thought how good-looking he was? We met him at a library truck where we always went. (MJ: The Book Mobile?) Yeah. The Book Mobile over at that Acme store. We talked a little bit and I introduced you kids. He didn't have any children at that time. But he was real tall. After he left you said, oh, he's good-looking. Why didn't you marry him, Mom? (MJ: Laughing. Well, Dad was pretty good-looking.) That's what I was going to say.

(MJ: So you had long hair then? I don't remember any of your high school pictures you having long hair. Seems like you had short hair in all of them.) I did have short hair, but in that one, see, I would have only been what 17 years old? I think I let my hair grow for that because Ginny and I always had big plans. That summer we planned to each make a dress. Instead of just a plain dress we got a pattern that was cut like that and you sewed these two together then these two together. Of course we never finished them. But we had fun planning them. Of course she had a real nice home and her father was this wonderful pianist and had this beautiful piano and he used to play for us. And then her mother would get mad. She would say, "Those children don't want to hear your music. Yours is old music." And I always felt so sorry for him. He was always such a mild, quiet man.

(MJ: Back to the dance. So you don't remember what you were dressed as?) Neither one of us remember what our idea was. But then, let's see, Daddy called me and asked me to see... (MJ: Now

wait a minute, you were at this dance with another guy, but then Daddy asked you to dance?) Well, you know, high school dances, they would ask anyone to dance.. (MJ: Everybody's talking to each other, meeting each other?) Yeah. Mary Jo, this is John, you know, and so forth. And Daddy called me a couple of nights later. (MJ: How did he get your phone number?) One of his best friends, Dick Leahy. But then he called me the next night and asked if I would go dance with he and Leo [Soehnen]. To a little dance of some organization, like a men's club of some kind. (MJ: Like the Elks?) Yes. And Leo had never danced before. Daddy and I were pretty good dancers. (MJ: What kinds of dances did you do back then?) I think you call them ballroom dancing, don't they? (MJ: Not the Charleston, or stuff like that? That was earlier, right?) I don't know if it was earlier or later. We would do those just for the fun of it. One thing I remember going to was the dances that they danced and kept dancing until they fell over. (MJ: Marathon dancing?) I remember going and watching those. For those we went to Meyers Lake.

They had two big dance halls in Canton. Meyers Lake and up there on 12th street. Once in a great while a big well known band like... Oh, somebody and his Pennies... (MJ: I don't know that one.) Well, you'd know it if I could tell you the leader's name. Sometimes. But mostly we went to the ones that were just bands from Canton. They were probably fifty cents then to get in and the big ones were, oh, not like they are now, fifty bucks, more like... (MJ: So, could you go to a dance without a date?) Yes, but I never did. I always felt sure that nobody would ask me. A lot of girls went, just two girls or four girls or something. But after I met Daddy I never went to a dance with a girl.

(MJ: So from then on you just dated Dad?) No. I had a boyfriend who went to Mount Union and used to take me to their fraternity dances. I remember one time I had a date with him to go over to a fraternity dance and he brought me the prettiest, oh, what are the little flowers in the spring... (MJ: Violets?) Flags or irises! They were little irises about this big and he had had them—I think he worked in a little flower shop. Mom had made me a dark green crepe dress and he had bought me a chain of these. And it was very pretty and it looked really nice. (MJ: So you dated him

through your senior year?) No, I dated Daddy almost always. The other guy we always called Spencer. That wasn't his name. His name was Homer Briggie. His dad owned a... (MJ: Homer Briggie? Boy, am I glad you didn't marry him.) He's a very well known dentist in Cleveland, or was. He probably isn't around anymore.

So at that time Dad was working at the dairy, when you were dating him?

I can remember going to midnight mass with him. It must have been the next Christmas, and he had bought me kid gloves, which I never dreamt of having, and a purse to match. So we went to midnight mass at the Italian church and I lost one of them. That's your mother. Tragedies of life! And I had always thought that if I had a pair of kid gloves you would be chic. Now I hate them because they are so hard to get on. (MJ: So when you went on dates with Dad, is that what you did, went dancing?) Yes. Went dancing or to a show. Then he became more friendly with Leo and we went places with Leo. We went to two operas with Leo. Into Cleveland. The only one I remember though is Aida and they had it in the auditorium and they had real elephants. It was a special, special thing. (MJ: So you did a lot of double dates with them?) No, not a lot because Isabel worked in Cleveland for a priest. She made the wafers for him. I don't know what else she did for him, but it was work connected with the religion.

So, who did you hang out with?

Ginny and Mary mostly. (MJ: So did you double date with them?) Ginny went with a man she eventually married. He was a doctor. Dick...Dick, Dick, Dick... Dick Miller. They married and then he turned into sort of a tragedy. He liked women and he liked women. He would leave the house in the middle of night and come back and tell Ginny he'd been out with some slut. So she was only married to him for like three or four years. But they were well known people in Canton. She lived with him while he was...I don't think in medical school. I think pre-med or whatever it would be. But they went down to Ohio State.

So after high school you went to work for...what did you say, a landscaping company?

They trimmed trees for public utilities, like gas and electric companies. (MJ: And what did you do for them?) Oh, just typing and shorthand. They were just a little company. I think they had four men in the office and then I think about three or four of us girls. (MJ: How long did you work there?) Until I got married. And you couldn't be married and work in those days. (MJ: You couldn't be married and work? Why not?) That was just a rule all over. (MJ: Weird. I mean, I knew that was true in the 1800's. I didn't know it was still true in the 1930's. So, how did you get that job?) I don't know, I suppose I applied for it. I don't remember. (MJ: Was it fun?) I suppose.

(MJ: Are they the ones you used to go to the bank for? So tell that story about going to the bank. About driving the car.) Well, they told me I was to take the money down to the Dime Savings Bank at twelve o'clock noon and I had never driven, so I got in the car, drove down to the bank, put the money in the bank and came home. (MJ: You must have had some idea how to drive.) Oh yeah. (MJ: Just from watching other people?) Well, Daddy had been teaching me. Except for there were different types of cars. I think Daddy's was...oh, I don't know, some cars have things to make them go...clutches. And I don't know if that's when Daddy had the Whippet or what, or if that was when he still had the Ford. (MJ: What's a Whippet?) Oh, a little car.

(MJ: So he had a car from the time you knew him?) Well, the first date with him Carl [Joe's older brother] had told him he could use his car, because you know, Carl was a mechanic and had a nice car. Daddy had a...I forget which kind of Ford. Anyway, when he got home that night and got all dressed Carl wasn't anyplace to be found. (MJ: Oh no, this was for your first date?) Yeah. Of course Daddy was very upset and so we went out in the Ford and so forth. We went to see Disraeli, the movie. Where they sit at the table and eat the chicken and throw the bones. That was King Henry the Eighth, but it was at that time. And then we went out, oh, to a place that was considered pretty nice to eat, and Daddy had, of course, mashed potatoes and gravy. Probably a roast pork

sandwich with mashed potatoes and gravy. I don't know if that's what he had, but anyway I had a cream cheese and grape jelly sandwich and he thought that was so funny. He kept saying, "Have a ham sandwich or something." I think the little restaurant is still there.

They used to deliver ice cream to some places because they had just started to make ice cream. Before that it was just milk and butter and buttermilk and so forth. But when they started to make ice cream then I can remember one Saturday we delivered ice cream one evening to different...one was on the East Tusc and one was in East Canton. (MJ: These were to stores, right? Not to homes.) These were to stores that were owned by other people. Well, they were private homes like a Mom and Pop store and that kind of place. And they wouldn't have anybody to deliver at that time of night of course. Since Daddy had a car and he and Leo were such good friends, Leo would call up and ask Daddy what we were going to do and Daddy would tell him and then he would say, well hey could you drop off twenty gallons of vanilla to this place and that place. And so we would do it. We would deliver the ice cream. Mike remembered one time one Christmas that store on West Tusc called Daddy and wanted some ice cream so Daddy delivered on Christmas Day.

There weren't too many men available to the dairy. I mean, there were Leo and Emil of course, but they would be in church or something. But we delivered a lot of ice cream. Then one thing I remember is there was a woman who worked at the dairy. They didn't have an office, they had a double garage, and in that was their office stuff at first. Now this is very young in the dairy. The big barn place was where they bottled the milk and made the ice cream and stuff as they started going on ice cream. And pretty soon they were making more ice cream practically than milk because it was a more profitable thing. Then also they made what they call "mix" which was ice cream that was ready to made into real ice cream and they sold it just in vanilla, of course. (MJ: And what would people do with that?) They would take that and make chocolate ice cream, or make mixed ice cream of different flavors, not just the vanilla. Of course that ice cream was very good. It was...I forget, seventeen percent or something like that. A lot of

ice cream now is like ten percent butterfat. And the ice cream, well you probably don't remember, but the ice cream that Daddy used to bring home was super-duper because it was so rich. It probably wasn't good for you because of the butter content, but it was mighty good tasting.

And then they went into the business of ice cream bars and what do they call it...they make different kinds of—you probably don't remember, but they made something where they had a cherry on the inside, and then vanilla ice cream and then chocolate. Very, very, very good. But they only made those a short time. The trouble with making those is the machinery to make them was very expensive and then everyone who made them had to have a different big machine. They had those cherry ones and then they had different kinds of ice cream bars. They had ones...oh, just all kinds. I can't think of all the different kinds they had. Some with chopped nuts on the outside. Of course there was that one inside of a cone, but the cone was filled with vanilla ice cream and covered with chocolate and nuts. (MJ: Oh, drumsticks.) Yes. And as I said every one of those that was made was a big expense for the machinery.

(MJ: So were they making those before you guys got married?) No. No. They weren't even making ice cream. That's what I said, when we first started delivering ice cream they were just going into ice cream. (MJ: So that was like 1931 or 32) Yes. Uncle Rog [Berkshire] worked at one of their stores in Louisville on Main Street there. He worked in one of those, and that was when they made the pointed ice cream. The cone instead of being dipped with a round thing on top, they would turn it someway and it would come to a point at the top. So they tried all kinds of things. Of course at this point they were getting a lot more people working for them. More trucks and the plant was growing by leaps and bounds. (MJ: But at that time, 1931-32, how many people were working at the dairy?) I'd say they had 25.

During those years between the time you graduated and the time you got married, was there anything else you were involved in, any clubs or anything you did with the girls?

Well, I did different things with the two girls, Mary and Ginny and we did things like sit on the porch and sing to each other. And we took a lot of walks up around McKinley Monument, which is a famous place in Canton. And we'd see different people. There was a real fancy restaurant up there that is now closed. And we'd just sort of peek in because it was the kind of a place that sixteen, seventeen year old people wouldn't go in. But we would go to each other's houses. We didn't go out a lot because money was a problem then. Remember that was like '32 something like that, in the middle of the depression and we would...like a new pair of shoes was a big thing. The girls, all except me went on to college that September after we graduated and I cried the whole month of September I think. Because I had always thought that there would be some miracle and I would find some money some way and go to school with the girls.

(MJ: now didn't you tell me that Aunt Nine offered to send you to nursing school?) One day she said to me, I always thought she might have had a little bit to drink. She said, "Oh, I'll send you to nursing school." She didn't have any money, of course. (MJ: Oh, she didn't? I thought she had money.) No, her daughter kept her. Her daughter paid her rent. Her husband, I mean, who had a good job at Timken Roller Bearing Company and he kept Aunt Nine and bought her clothes and so forth. (MJ: So she didn't have the gambling whorehouse anymore?) This was after that. (MJ: So she said she would send you to nursing school, but she really didn't have the money to do it.) No.

And I always thought she just said it. We were talking and I sometimes would go to the store for her and stuff like that. And we were just talking and I said, "Gee, I'd love to go to nursing school," and she said, "well, go." And I said, "Dad doesn't have any money and Mom doesn't make enough at the candy factory to do anything like that." And she said, "oh, how much does it cost?" And I think I said two hundred dollars or something. And she said, "well, I'll send you." Knowing that she could barely keep herself and that somebody else was keeping her. He was a very nice man and he always had kept her ever since she went out of the bad businesses. So I always kept that in my mind that Aunt Nine would have sent me, but she never would have, I'm sure. (MJ: I thought

you said you turned her down because the nursing school had a curfew and you were going out with Daddy and you didn't want to have to come in that early or something.) No, that was one of the reasons I told her I didn't want to go. But it wouldn't have been possible. I should have known then that she was just talking. And I would have liked to have been a nurse, I think.

Then I got a job at Nelson and Kimberly working in just an office. There were just four girls. I never liked it too well because it was a hard job for the fact that the one man who was sort of the boss, liked to stand behind you and dictate a letter and you typed it as you dictated it. And that was very hard for me because I was never too good of a typist. I could type okay, but not... (MJ: Not with somebody standing, watching you typing?) Yes. It was a nice office, nice and clean and everything.

I worked there, well, until I told them I was going to get married. And they did not hire married women. That's when Daddy and I decided to get married. And that was August 30, 193... [September 30, 1933] Something like that. We were married by a priest at St. Joseph's church. It was not a wedding... I mean like a big fancy wedding with the long dress and so forth. I had a new dress, but it was a white top, and a dress that was navy blue. They fit together. Then I had... what we called... I forget the name, but anyway, it was a blue hat with a big white feather on it. (MJ: Must have looked nice with your red hair!) Yeah. No food. I did have, Joe bought me a bouquet of violets, like a corsage, only it was bigger than a corsage. It was a nice sized bouquet, but I didn't want to carry it so we pinned it onto the coat that went with the dress. Father Kotheimer married us. Then we took a car and we stopped out at Grandma Immel's. She was ill at the time. She was ill a lot of the time then. She was old and tired, but we stopped out there and knocked at the door. I don't think Grandpa knew us at fist. And we went in and Grandma gave us her blessing.

And we left and drove up into Pennsylvania and stayed all night at what they called then, it was like a, oh, a house where you rent just one room for the night. I forget what you call them. Tourist homes. And we stayed there all night and she gave us breakfast, or I don't know, maybe we paid for it. Then we stopped up near Buffalo at a

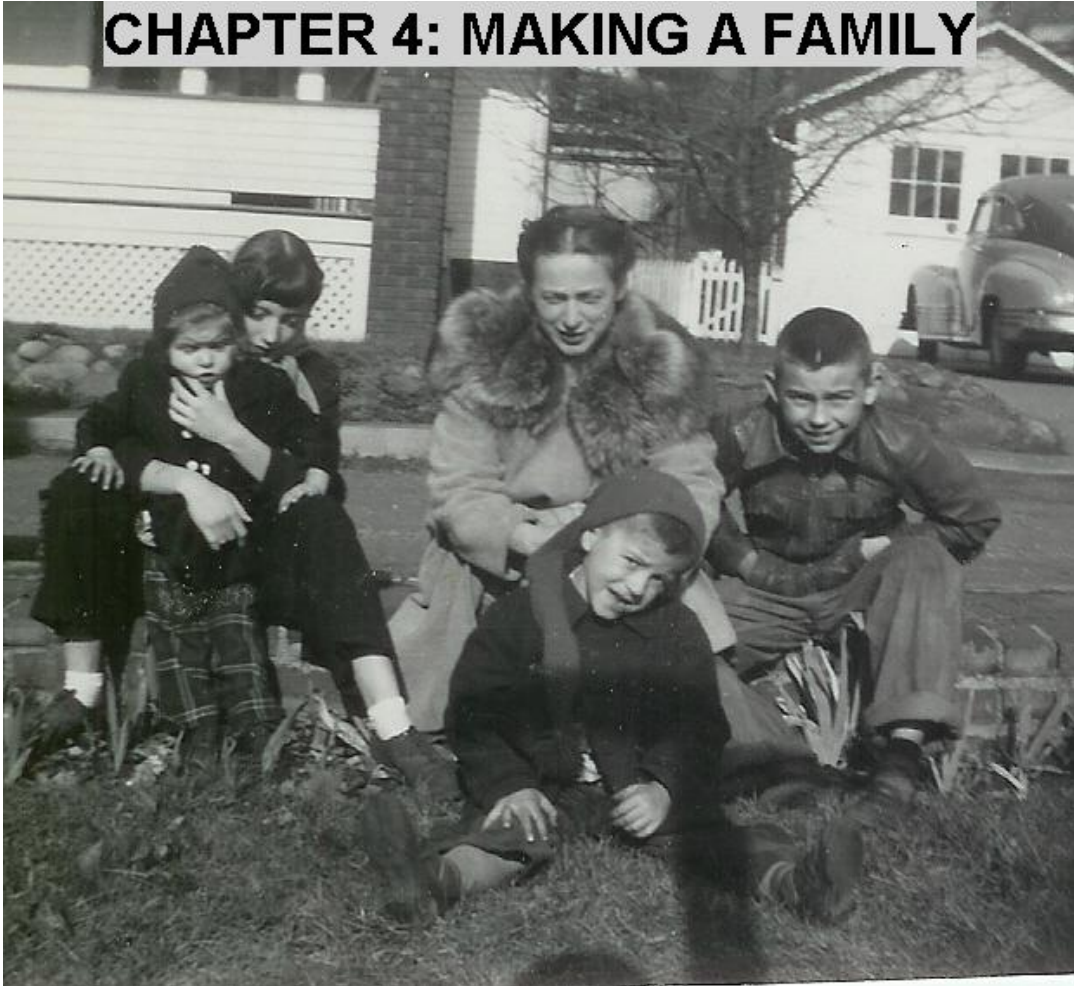
friend's we knew who used to work at the dairy. Then we went from there to Niagara Falls and went in the boat underneath the falls and drove all around that part of the country. I think Daddy had two days off, I think.

(MJ: You had never really been anywhere out of Canton, had you?)
No. We never went anyplace. Except maybe to aunts or uncles with another aunt or uncle. But as for going out of town...Daddy and I had gone to a couple ball games, but then we went to a couple of theaters with Isabel and Leo...the priest that she worked for gave her tickets. Some of them were for operas. Isabel liked the operas, so we went to two of those; one was Aida and one was Carmen. Of course Daddy and Leo were very bored and we came home before the one was ended I remember.

So you guys got married and then you went to live in an apartment? And you weren't working anymore. Nobody would hire you because you were married?

I did work after...well, I don't know. I don't really remember how long it was, but there was a little restaurant down on High and Tusc that was very small and very clean. Just a neat little restaurant and I would go down there at like, oh, ten o'clock in the morning and I would type the menus for the day. Just very simple menus. I would type those, put them out on the table and lay out the stuff for the girls who worked there. I would lay out the silverware in a drawer and then, as somebody came in and sat at a table they would go over and get the silverware and put it on a table. Of course, it wasn't silver, it was some metal. And I worked there...I want to say ten months or something. And by that time I was pregnant, so I didn't work anymore.

CHAPTER 4: MAKING A FAMILY



Were you happy to be pregnant?

Sure. I had never been around a baby in our house, of course there were no babies and I had no aunts that had babies that were close enough that I could see. We would visit and I don't know of any babies that I knew well enough to pick up and rock or something. So we were real excited. Of course Daddy wanted a boy, like most men do, so we had a girl. Like Leo wanted a girl and they had a boy. So...that's sort of the way life is. (MJ: Who picked Monica's name?) Oh, I think Daddy probably picked that. We had decided on Toby for a boy because we had read a book about being on a boat and traveling around the world. Both of us had read that book and liked it. And the hero's name was Toby. That's where we got that. And then I always liked the name Monica cause I had never heard it before. Of course we were very fond of Grandma Zettler, so that's where we picked the name.

I had a very pleasant time in the hospital because Lucy Soehnlén, Leo's only sister, was my nurse and she stayed with me all night the first night and then after that, she would come in all the time between the work she had to do and so forth. She was a nice, quiet gal. She finally married someone and I think they had like four children in four years or something like that. But now nurses could keep on working. She kept on working for a while. But teachers couldn't teach and most stores wouldn't hire women who were married.

So once you had Monica, were you scared? Did feel like you didn't know what to do with her?

Well, no. Mom came over a lot. She only lived like two blocks. Well, it was wonderful. And then I had a lady on the other side of the house who I disliked very much. They had no children. She would keep coming over and just look at Monica. I wouldn't let her hold her. She was the landlady and I didn't have much use for her. It wasn't anything she did, she was nice. (MJ: You just didn't trust her?) I just didn't like her, period. It was funny. She was a person that would eat candy and do everything all day except work and as soon as it was time for her husband—who worked in the steel mill—to come home she would quick sweep the floor and fix some

food and put flowers on the table and so forth. But all day she would sit around on the davenport and read a book. (MJ: Sounds like my kind of woman.) She was a very pretty little baby and very good. (MJ: She didn't cry a lot or anything, she wasn't crabby?) No. And almost every day when Daddy would come home he would be very tired because he got up at two and went to work and he would always take you to bed with him and lay him on his tummy. (MJ: Me or Monica?) Oh, Monica. Excuse me. Lay her head right here and they would take a nap. (MJ: After he came home from work?) Yeah. That would be three o'clock or four o'clock depending on what kind of day it was and whether it was raining... (MJ: Because he was delivering milk. Is that what he was doing?) Yes. And he started early in the morning. And then often we would go collecting after he got home and we had supper. And we would take her along with us. And he would get out, of course, and go up to the door and knock and say he was collecting. It was bad time because he had a lot of women who had like six kids and no money. The milk was delivered at the back door usually. I remember.

I don't know why I remember...Bellflower, I remember that they always brought the milk to the back steps there. It was a side step, you went inside. You probably don't remember, I'm sure you don't remember, we went in a side step and went into the kitchen. He always opened the back door and put the milk in there. We got four quarts a day. So...my life was fun. I had a good life.

So then you got pregnant with Toby?

Yes. So that was...I don't know how long afterwards, three years? (MJ: About two and a quarter.) Something like that. And of course he was the one I was so sick with. I was in the hospital ten weeks for him. (MJ: Now that was childbed fever, right that you had and some of the other women died?) Yes. I think three of the five or something like that. I knew one that died, but the other ones I didn't know. The fevers were very high. (MJ: That kind of fever you get it right after the baby is born, right?) Yes. They call it...childbed fever was one name for it. What's the other name? I remember Lucy read to me how it was started by doctors that

weren't clean. They just wore their suits to take care of people instead of a uniform or anything. (MJ: They didn't wash their hands good enough...) That's right. Let's see, now to come in to see me you had to put on a uniform... (MJ: A gown and a mask?) Now he wasn't in the same room like they do in some of the hospitals now. (MJ: Toby wasn't. But you were in the hospital for ten weeks. So you didn't really get to see him as a newborn?) No. The bought him to the door the first time I saw him.

Then Bernie took him. She lived in a wee little apartment down on West Tusc. (MJ: Now had she had Judy yet?) No, Judy's about a year younger than Toby. And she had him. I remember when she came to see me she told me that she had like a sideboard, or like a dresser, but without a mirror on it, and she had Toby there in a basket. She had taken, oh, like a clothesbasket and laid a pillow in it. You know she was real good with sewing and that stuff. And I think she must have kept him for a couple of months.

Let's see, when I went home...we lived on 11th street there, and Monica had a regular baby bed, but he was in the basket before that and then we finally had two baby beds. (MJ: How long until you really felt well enough to be up and around? Do you remember?) No, I don't remember except the doctor... You know, I had three blood transfusions person to person. Ed Bast was one and Dick Leahy was one of them and one of the men at the dairy. And the man laid on the davenport, that kind of bed, and they put a tube from your arm to his arm and then gave you blood through that tube. It seemed to me like, oh, I don't know how much it was, probably half a pint. But the nurse and doctor stood beside you while you got the blood. It wasn't like they do now.

As I said, people that came to see me like Mom, she got so mad. You very seldom saw Grandma Mary get angry, but she got mad at the nun up there and told her off. She came in to see me and she asked this nun, who was a nurse, how I was today or how I was doing and the nurse said, "right now she's in the hands of God." Oh, and Mom was so mad. You know how those very strict nuns were. (MJ: That wasn't the answer she wanted?) No. Of course, she walked down, of course it wasn't far, say five blocks, I think she came down almost every day and sometimes they wouldn't let

her in if it was a bad day. Because one time the fever was 106 and so they had...well, there was almost always a nurse in the room sitting there filling out the papers and such. I can't remember any of the things that they fed us or any of that. (MJ: You probably weren't eating very much if you had a high fever.) Probably not.

(MJ: So then you went home and you had two babies.) Well, Monica was...(MJ: About two and a half.) Yeah. She was walking. And she always liked, even at that age, she liked to sit on the floor with her legs spread apart and have a magazine. Just to look at the bright pictures. The only magazine I remember us getting was...and that they used to bring to the door for a nickel...the Saturday Evening Post. And she would look at the pictures. (MJ: She was a little intellectual right from the start.) Right from the start. That's pretty fun. (MJ: What else did she like to do?) Well, either Bernie or I took her for a nap everyday. That house we lived in then had...I always said they were cabbages, it was sort of like dark paper and then it had these big red flowers on the wallpaper. Very unusual, but she was...you were both quiet babies. (MJ: I was a quiet baby?) Uh-uh. (MJ: That's surprising)

So, what about Toby? What was he like as a baby?

Well, see I don't remember too much. Bernie had him for a long time. (MJ: So when you got him home he was already a couple of months old.) Where did we live then? I don't remember that...we didn't live in the restaurant yet. Hmm... And we didn't live at 21st yet. Golly, I don't remember where we lived.

So what was a typical day like for you at that time?

Well, of course Daddy was still delivering milk, so he got up early, but I always got up around seven. I'd get up and feed him and change his pants. We always took the baths at night. I remember that. And we had a baby buggy. It was an old-fashioned baby buggy that George Simon gave us. It was a great big thing and it was real hard to take down the steps, I remember.

So would you get together with friends on weekends?

Yes. Even then we would play cards. Like with Bill Bruce we'd play bridge or...what was the game that you used to have...buy cities and that. (MJ: Monopoly?) Yes. We played a lot of that with Bill and Irma and at our house a lot. Isn't that silly, I can't remember where we lived, not at all. It wasn't on 21st, that was later. Mike was born at 21st. He was born and we had a lady stay with me for like two weeks or something. She was like a nurse, but I don't mean like a nurse. (MJ: More like a nurse's aide or something?) Yeah. But I don't think we lived up at 21st then. Because we moved up from 21st out to Genoa. Isn't that silly, I can't even think of the house...

Who were your friends in those days? When Mike and Toby were little, or when Mike wasn't born yet?

Well, I saw Ginny and Mary then and we used to take the kids down to the park once in a while in the summertime. Because we always laughed at Ginny, she always took some elaborate thing. Mary and I would always take peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, but Ginny would always come up with Jello with ice cubes around it, or she used to make where they sliced the sandwich bread this way then put ham salad here, then a layer of bread, cheese spread here, then a layer of bread, until they had about four layers of bread and the spread in between, and then they would frost the bread on the outside and it would look like a cake. They frosted it with cream cheese. I only made it once, I had a bridal shower, believe it or not, for one of Joe's cousins.

(MJ: What did you do on the weekends?) Well, we played bridge pretty often. With Bill and Irma. And let's see, Daddy may have been working for Metropolitan then. He worked there I think two and a half years. We won that trip to New York.

MJ: So now when Mike was born he was the one that the nurse kept telling you to quit complaining and then all of a sudden he was there [in the bed].

Yeah, but he didn't weigh as much at three months than he did when he was born. (MJ: Really, what was wrong with him?) I don't remember. It wasn't anything serious. He didn't have encephalitis until he was seven or eight or something like that. And he looked thin and skinny because he was the one Grandpa said we would never raise him. (MJ: This was Grandpa Zettler?) Yeah. He and I never got along. (MJ: Why was that?) Well, I don't know. It think because the first time I went out there I had on high heels and I didn't know what kind of people they were. I had just seen Joe. I probably had lipstick on and my hair in a braid, so I think he got the wrong impression right away. He thought I was fast and was going to... (MJ: Steal all Dad's money or something?)

Yeah. No, they were taking his money. We went out a lot on Saturday nights, no Friday nights, and got the stuff. I told you about that. Rice and dry beans, rolled oats and flour. I don't think we got sugar. (MJ: This was in big bags or something?) Yeah, well, 25 pounds. And Daddy also bought their milk.

But grandma made very, very good bread. And she got up in the morning before everyone else was up and did her exercises. As hard as she worked and everything, she had a record that she had bought when they were rich. She had taken some exercising and one of those kinds of records and she had one on exercises. And then maybe go to the cellar and wash clothes. (MJ: She was an amazing woman, wasn't she?) She certainly was.

So was Mike a good baby?

I don't remember. Remember he got lost once and went up to Cleveland Ave. and...I think it's 22nd, no, after 22nd, probably about 24th. He walked up Cleveland Avenue and we couldn't find him. He was like three, so finally I called the police and some woman had him up there standing at the corner, just holding his hand and talking to him. Of course then I called the police and they said they had a little boy. (MJ: That's the most terrifying feeling.) Oh, yeah.

(MJ: So by this time were you thinking maybe three kids was enough?) I don't think I thought. There wasn't any methods of

birth control except condoms. There weren't pills, there weren't patches, so those twelve or thirteen kids in the family, just... (MJ: Condoms weren't acceptable?) Well, we used them at times. But of course most men don't like them or didn't. (MJ: Still don't. So, how did people stop having babies then? I mean, not everybody had 12 kids. You didn't have 12 kids.) Well, Mike was digging into the Immel family. None of Grandpa's brothers or sisters had more than three or four kids and they had eight. He couldn't understand why. (MJ: Some families had a way of dealing with it. I don't know how. Maybe just abstinence. What did you and Dad do after I was born?) Well, that's a long time ago. You went to the doctor, they were round rubber things, they had to be fitted [diaphragms]. Dr. Weaver sold it to me.

So now we're in the early 40's...

We were living in Genoa and Bernie lived just down the street. It was fun. We used to have some pictures of birthday parties and stuff with you kids. And Judy was at our house, she says, more than she was home.

When about when Billy was born?

When was he born? '44. It was the second world war and you couldn't have a private room unless you were ill, so I forget. I think there were four or five of us in that room. And the girl beside me was a Jewish girl, very small, and while she was in there she got notice that her husband was killed in the service. And of course she was...well... So they asked me if I would move in—they had a semi-private room—would I move in with her? Because she had talked a lot to me and I said sure. It was a rough time for her. (MJ: I guess. Now at that point how long did you stay in the hospital when you had a baby?) I think a week. Maybe a little longer. You didn't stay two weeks, after Monica. She's the only one I stayed that long. Now, what, they kick them out at the end of the day, don't they? (MJ: The next day.) The next day.

What about being married with kids during the war? Anything about that stand out in your mind?

We used to have rations. I think we each got five pounds of sugar a month, I forget what it was, but Stella—Aunt Stella—Uncle Ed and them only got three, you know, for three people. Of course they always had pie. They liked pie. So I used to give them a coupon and they would always bring me some apples. Because on Saturday and Sunday they always drove all over. They would drive, maybe 20 miles this way to a little old cemetery and spend the whole day there getting—you know, some of the cemeteries where they knew some of the people.

And I think I sometimes gave them... You got ration points for cans of stuff and for meat. And for sugar. Oh, and coffee. Because I know one time one of Daddy's friends gave him some coupons for coffee and I took one down to Mom and Charlie because we didn't get very much and Mom had been using her grounds over again. Of course, she never made strong coffee. (MJ: I'm surprised you didn't run out real quick. So were the rations usually enough? Did you run out at the end of the month?) They were skimpy. (MJ: Did you get them once a month or how did you get them?) I think they mailed them to you.

(MJ: Did you ever buy any on the black market?) No. We found out we were buying meat on the black market because one day I found out that I paid for, oh say 30 pounds of hamburger and I got 26. So I called the meat place they told me, well, it was black market. Didn't I realize I had been getting that all along? They just sent it to you and just charged you more and a lot of times somebody wouldn't notice it. Because if they said it was ten pounds, you put it in the refrigerator and think it was ten pounds.

You know on 21st we had a little excitement. Toby climbed up the cherry tree, it was a tall tree. And I didn't know what to do. Daddy was working of course. And then those people next door who were cousin-cousin-cousin of Monica's [Grandma Zettler], he came over and climbed up the tree and got Toby down. (MJ: Toby got up but couldn't get back down?) Oh yeah. He was up there sitting on a limb, crying of course. But that man went up. They were real nice to us. She used to bring me her special kind of dressing for lettuce. I remember you used a can of tomato soup. And some vinegar and I think sugar. And oil. I didn't make it then because

she would bring me some over every couple of weeks. In the first year after we moved they bought you kids all a Christmas present. When we lived on Genoa.

Throughout this whole time were you close to any of your aunts and uncles?

Well, Stella and Eva we saw quite a lot. That was when I was at home. we used to play cards with Vinnie, Dana and Lois...that family. Let's see, who else? (MJ: So you saw your cousins a lot too. They were the Burnside cousins, right?) Yes. And Ian and Janet used to stop by. And Ethel. And I would once in awhile go out to Grandma's. And sometimes they would have reunions down at Waynesburg Park, where there was swings and a crick [creek]. In fact I have our picture someplace. One of the few I have of my father. He's holding Judy. That's why it is a memorial thing.

Throughout this whole time we've been talking about, you never saw your dad, right?

Kenny brought Dad out to see us when Monica learning to walk. He was the one who always took care of Dad. I saw him that one time I had Toby downtown. Toby remembers it. And I said hello to him. He looked and looked and looked and I finally told him who I was. Of course by that time I was crying. But I think he worked in one of those cheesy restaurants, he washed dishes, down in the northeast or southeast then. And he lived in one room. Aunt Nine took him breakfast, she lived downtown. And when I took those meals to him he was living in one room down on East Tusc and Uncle Pearl called me and said that he didn't have a car at that time, so I think for about, oh, two weeks or something, I would go pick him up and we'd take him supper.

He had a pile of dirty clothes in his room. I took them and washed them. I was going to bring him to Troy to live in the attic. But the doctor said no. He said he knew him and he had TB and syphilis and he said he shouldn't be in the house with the kids. (MJ: This was towards the end, when he was real sick?) Well, he wasn't real sick then, because he went up to what we called the poor house. But it wasn't like the places now... Don't you remember going there

as a girl scout? (MJ: Yeah, I do. I remember like twenty beds in one room. Just one right beside the other.)

Were reunions a big thing?

Well, we had the Burnside reunions. (MJ: You went to those?) One or two of them. And then Mom's side of the family, they had quite a few. Slusser-Stonehill was one. The Stonehills were, not Amish, they called themselves something else, but they were one of those... (MJ: Mennonites?) Maybe that was it, because I remember one of the girls had on a orange dotted dress and of course they didn't wear those bright... And everybody was in a dither. And we had a reunion, I remember, out in Grandma's barn in that middle space. We put a big long table. And also Aunt Hilda had one in her barn one year. I don't think Dad went to either of those because I told you that Christmas he wouldn't put on a white shirt. He had a white shirt. And of course all the other men were dressed up and poor Mom felt so bad. I mean, he would just do little mean things like that. Beside the bad, bad things he did. That's why I told Mike I have absolutely no feeling for him.

When Bill was born did you already own the restaurant?

Now you're getting me confused. Let's see, Bill was born... (MJ: You were still in Genoa.) Yeah. We went from there to the restaurant. (MJ: When he was just a baby?) Uh-huh. We had a nice girl next door there in Genoa called Helen and she would go over and stay with you kids, but only when I was there. I think she was only like 11 or 12, but her parents were real nice to me. And she gave me a dress one time that somebody had given her that was too big. I was going to a dance and her mother said, would I be insulted if she gave it to me, because she knew I didn't have any nice clothes. It was a pretty dark green. I used to wear a lot of crepe dresses. Sort of silky.

So there's five years between Mike and Bill. Is that when you lost a couple of babies?

Yeah, I think that was the time. (MJ: Because all the rest of us are just a little over two years apart.) Yeah. And those babies weren't

quite babies yet. (MJ: Like miscarriages.) Yes. So it must have been at that time. (MJ: So, was Bill a good baby?) I don't remember, but we had a dog then named Butterfly. We had a dog then that had about three kinds of pups. She had about five pups and it's really wonderful how all the animals do, like the ponies did, but she had one of these pups and she carefully took by the scruff of the neck and put him in the corner and he was dead. And how that mother knew... (MJ: Isn't that weird?) It makes you know that there is somebody up there watching over us. Because it didn't touch any of the other ones, just instinct. We had this, it was a cocker spaniel, and I forget what we called him, but Butterfly was the... Butterfly had real long ears and was tan and white spotted, but a real light tan, and these big long ears and a different tail than the mother had. And he was a funny looking dog. Very funny looking. I don't know, but every dog was different. And they say this is very common because dogs can have more than one mate. And I liked that dog... Hmm... I find that it's another wonderful thing that all that is back in our brains someplace and you can't think of it for the world and you'll be laying in bed that night and turn over... The name will be there, right in front of you.

During the war is when Dad went from working for the insurance company to working at the steel mill, or something?

Yeah, Hercules. He bought tools, I don't know what kind, but I know he bought a box and it had tools and he did some fine work of some kind. I never knew he could do it, but he did it. And he was really in with a bunch of... Well, I told you a lot of them didn't have any money left at the end of payday. Because at 11 o'clock at night they would go across the street to this bar and a lot of them would eat there and drink there and charge it. They aren't allowed to, of course, because of Ohio laws, but they would. I can just remember one lady crying because her husband had no money. (MJ: Now is that when Dad started drinking real heavy? Or did he drink real heavy all the way through?) No, I think just about when he was working at Hercules, it started. (MJ: When it started to be a problem?) Yes.

And then you bought the restaurant? Right after Billy was born you bought the restaurant?

Let's see, we bought the restaurant... I'm going to have to think awhile. That's when your mother had a boyfriend. This one guy down at Hercules, just, we were sitting on the floor playing poker one night. I had a pretty brown dress that I had bought on sale at Stern & Mann's. It was a pretty shade of brown and then it was trimmed with, oh what's the blue that has a little bit of green in it? (MJ: Like turquoise?) Yeah, sort of like that. It was trimmed in that and had like a Chinese embroidery. It was a pretty dress. Anyway, we were playing poker and he came over and took my hand. I didn't think anything of it, I just showed my cards. Then the next afternoon he came up to the house and brought a bottle of wine. So we had a couple of drinks and then he said... (MJ: Now Daddy wasn't there?) Daddy was working 3-11. And he said, "Do you suppose Joe would mind if I took you out to dinner? And I said, well I've got the kids. And I said, no, he wouldn't mind. And he said, "Can't you get a babysitter, I'll pay for it." So I called one that worked for us quite a bit and she came over. We went downtown to one of the real nice restaurants and had a nice meal. I can't remember, but I just remember it was good.

And then he was driving me home and he said, "You know, I'd like to marry you." And I said, oh, you know...I'm going to go tell Joe. And he knew Joe had been drinking quite a bit. And he said, "I'll adopt the children, we'll go to court"... and I said no, I wouldn't even think of it. Another man. And he kept talking and talking and then he went to his house, his wife... (MJ: He was married too?) Yeah. He had a wife he didn't like. He went down and got a book of poems. And we read poems and we memorized the one... You cannot make bargains for blisses... Do you know that one? (MJ: I don't.) Let's see, who wrote it? I don't know if it was Yeats or who it was, but he said, "Now I just don't want to go to a hotel with you. That isn't what I want. I want to marry you." And I told him just to take me home. And "I own a house in..." He was from New Philly. And so I just said... and then when I got home I wouldn't let him come in, so he said, "I'm going down to tell Joe." He says, "He'll be over at that bar and I'm going to tell him that I'm in love with his wife." I said, "if you do there may be a fight. Why don't you just skip it and I'll see you at the next party you have."

So...I guess he went home, but he came to see me once when he came back. He went to the Army and he came back on leave and he came out to wherever we were living, I thought that was Genoa... I guess it was before then... And he came to see me and he wanted to know if I'd go out again and I said no. But that was enough of that. He was...I think he was much younger. I think because I was older and more... more calmer.

Those men were all real heavy drinkers and they went bowling after work sometimes. I never liked Daddy to go out with them because they drank too much. Of course if all of you go across the street, why, you're likely to drink too much. (MJ: So, this guy really had the hots for you?) Well, I guess so. I was trying to think of his name the other night. It was Bob. I liked his wife too. She was a very pleasant, very young girl. (MJ: So was it even a little tempting?) No. (MJ: Wasn't it unusual to go out to dinner with a man who wasn't your husband?) Oh, I imagine it was. (MJ: Were you just mad at Daddy, so you decided to do it?) Oh, I don't think I was mad at Daddy. This guy just came up to visit, you know, and he was going to work. I mean, he worked the other shift and... But I had known that night we were playing poker, because he kept...Oh, not making advances, but coming over and sitting beside me, you know. Ask what you've done in the afternoon. "Oh, you took the kids to the park, well, that was fun." They didn't have any children. And he says, "I'll come up someday and we'll take the kids to the park." And I said, "Oh, I'm not often home." I mean, I didn't dislike him, but I didn't like him...

(MJ: Wow. Is that the only time that kind of thing happened?) I think... Daddy's boss at Metropolitan made a pass. We were on our way someplace far...to the dance hall in Youngstown. And there were about six of us in the car. But I just told him off. (MJ: Dad was there?) Yeah, Daddy was driving. (MJ: So you told him off in front of Dad?) Oh, I'm sure Daddy didn't hear because we were sitting in the back seat. I didn't like him anyway, He was big and fat. But I was sort of cute, my hair was really bright then. (MJ: I bet you were a dish.) I didn't have beautiful clothes, but I tried to have one nice dress. I tried to do that, because every place Daddy worked there were always men. At Metropolitan, we went to New

York that time and there were, I guess, five men and four women. The boss's wife didn't go. Then Hercules, of course, was all men.

So those trips with Metropolitan, that must have been fun for you to be able to go places like that. You went to a couple of conventions.

Yes. Oh yes. It was fun. That time we stayed in the...what did you call it, it looked sort of like those ones they blew down. Tall, square... well, I don't know, but it was a real nice room up on the fifteenth, twentieth floor. See, Daddy won that [1940?]. He sold more insurance than anybody in the state of Ohio that year. And that's how we got that trip. (MJ: Pretty fun. I often wonder if it hadn't been for the war, if it hadn't been for him having to go to Hercules...It seems like your lives would have been very different.) Well, it would have been. (MJ: Seems like he would have climbed the ladder there at Metropolitan.) Oh, yeah, he would have been... what did they call the next step up? He would have been that next because he was in line for it.

And those were nice guys, but now they... This is what a lot of men do, they drink a lot over the weekend, but during the week they never drank. They usually worked in the evening. In fact, at dinnertime and up until about eight o'clock was their best selling times. (MJ: Because they went door to door?) No, they would go... Well, I guess you would call it... Not door to door like that. If they went collecting they might go to the next-door neighbor, but I don't think they ever went down the street and went one house and then the next house. But Daddy always was a good salesman... Selling that stuff. And then he would collect it. And his book had to balance at the end.

Speaking of odd things... The night Norm was killed Daddy went down to be with Monica [Grandma Zettler] because Bill said he was too sick to go to the hospital. See, Norm's head was real, real bad and so Joe went out and got Monica and took her to the hospital and they stayed there with him. So I told Joe, "Oh, I can do this book tonight." Oh, it was about this thick. And you had to go through and balance the money you turned in with what you sold. You only got paid for what you collected, not what you sold. And

so I did. And it never came out right. It was always a few cents off or a dollar off. That night it came out to a penny. And I always thought it was some kind of a miracle because I had never done it before where it came out exactly right. And I was just sitting at the dining room table. Oh Toby has that, he took my dining room table and my big chairs.

So when did Norm die? What year?

Well, it was, I think before World War II, wasn't it? Let's see, Mike was born the 24th of May. I don't know, but I know it was warm. (MJ: So was that really hard on Dad?) Oh, you know like any brother. Of course we had been closer to Norm than some of them because he had that girl who had a niece the same age as Toby. Within a couple of days. And she used to bring him up and they would take the two little ones down to the park or something. And they had a lot of fun together. So they'd stay and we'd have, oh, sandwiches or something. He helped me a couple of times in the yard. He was a good-natured kid. I think they were drinking that night. Nobody ever said anything, but... Because they were going real fast. Let's see, how many of those boys died...? I think three of them.

You bought the restaurant. What was that like?

Well, you know, we lived up there and it was very crowded. Do you remember when we had bedbugs? You don't remember that, when we sealed the apartment off, I mean they did, and they put bombs in there. You kids went out to Grandma's. I can't remember where Joe and I went. But Judy was staying there too. They were in that bedroom that the boys slept in. They woke up one morning... (MJ: And had bites all over them?) Yep. I'm sure they were there when we came. I try to forget those two years. (MJ: Is that right? You don't like to talk about those?) Oh, that was terrible. I got up about 4:30, took a bath, got dressed, went down and served breakfast. Came up and got the kids to school, typed the menus, well, wrote the menus first. And there were always calls to make for things to be delivered. Those old coots from the fairgrounds used to always come down for breakfast. (MJ: The

guys who kept the horses?) Some of them lived up there. They would have cot in one of the stalls.

So it was a restaurant with a gambling room next to it?

Well, Daddy put the gambling room in. It wasn't in there. That was the dining room when you first went in there. Then Nikki McKinney talked him into doing that. (MJ: So we did alright on the restaurant side, but we lost money on the...) No, we didn't do alright on the restaurant side. We didn't know anything about it. You can't go into a business... They say if you go into a business like that you should have enough money for two years to live on. Oh, I just hated it. We just worked all the time and I couldn't give you kids what I thought you needed.

Now, what grades were you in there? (MJ: I wasn't born yet. I was born, I think, right after you sold it. We still lived there for another two years in the apartment?) Was it that long, it seemed like ten years. Then we moved to Troy, right? Is that where you started school, in Troy? (MJ: No, I started school in Bellflower.

At that point you didn't have to run the restaurant anymore, but you had five kids in a tiny apartment and a husband who was drinking a lot and who disappeared once. Was it only once?

Yes. I knew where he was because he sent me some money. He was down at our friends in Dover. (MJ: I thought he was up in Cleveland.) That's where he went from his friend down there. He went up to Cleveland to a hotel. When he told me about it when I went up. A man called me and told me his name and so forth and said he had Joe there at an alcoholic hospital. And Joe had come through there from one of the big hotels in Cleveland and that somebody in the hotel, somebody who worked there had brought him. He was drinking a quart of whiskey and a quart of wine a day. That's what he said. So I called Uncle Bill and we went up the next day. I wanted to be sure it was him because he wouldn't talk to me. So Bill and I went up there. That's what Uncle Bill used to always tease me about cause the man at the desk where we had to fill

things out said, “this is your oldest son?” (MJ: About Uncle Bill?)
Yes. He thought that was so funny.

You didn't bring him home?

No. I went up the next Saturday and brought him back. We stopped at an AA meeting at St. John's Church and went to his first AA meeting. He did a lot of work with them for about six months. And we came home... Oh, I have to remember more here... I'm trying to think if he went right to work at the dairy because Leo knew where he had been and so forth. But I can't quite remember. I guess he went right back to work at the dairy. Because we were still living behind the restaurant there.

I assume it was a great relief when Dad stopped drinking.

Of course it was great. As I remember the reason I don't think he was drinking when we moved to Troy or up there because that's when we met the Lehmillers and we very seldom drank. We played bridge night after night, but didn't drink. Because Norma never drank anything and John would drink a glass of beer, is all. Oh, I remember moving. I think we just moved the stuff up. I don't think that was a moving van... And Mary Jo [Shane] came over and wanted to know... And we said we had the children and what we had named them. And she started to giggle and laugh and laugh because they had a Michael and a Mary Jo too and she thought that was so funny. But I don't think Daddy drank when we lived in Troy.

So what was it like living on Troy for you? At that point you had five kids, 2-14. But you weren't very far from Grandma, were you? You were within walking distance of Grandma. That must have been nice.

She would come over some nights when we would go play bridge and stay with you kids until we came home. It was real nice living that close because she'd bring a pie over and mend my—mend the jeans. I remember telling Aunt Stella that, then one night she came

over and I had a pile of jeans this high and she said “I don’t think I’ll ever get all the jeans mended.”

So did you have any friends that lived on Troy? In the neighborhood there? You said you went out to play bridge with...

That’s when we met the Lehmillers. (MJ: How did you meet them?) Well, we went to a bridge game with... You remember the Bruces? (MJ: I didn’t remember they played bridge.) Oh yes, we played bridge with them long before we played duplicate. We went with them and Kenny, Kenny was playing bridge at that time, to a duplicate bridge game. And they asked us to come down Saturday night to their house, so we went down. (MJ: When did you and Dad start playing bridge? Was that when you first started playing?) Oh no. We played bridge before we were married. With Bernie and Rog and so forth. We played bridge... Oh, I suppose Bernie and I started when we were fourteen. But we didn’t play duplicate. We didn’t play duplicate until we went with Bill [Bruce] and Kenny, and Daddy and I went. Irma didn’t go.

(MJ: That was after World War II then. That was when you started playing duplicate?) Yes. (MJ: When did you join the Bridge Club? The Canton Bridge Club?) Shortly after that cause Daddy was the first president of it. Then when we all joined duplicate bridge, see there were millions of people who played it all over the country. And there was a big organization and first we paid fifty cents a year to belong to the big organization and then I think by the time we left it was five dollars a year. (MJ: You played at least once a week forever, didn’t you?) Yes.

Then later we got into serious bridge. Duplicate is what I call serious bridge cause people go into it very seriously. And there are a lot of people who make their living on it. They will take you and go to one of these expensive bridge tournaments, like we used to go to once in awhile, and you would pay them as much as \$100 to play with you and then you would get points. I had something around 1000 points when I quit. That was the last number I had. I just tore up the card when I tore up the mortgage papers I had. I

had saved them all. I tore them up about 2-3 years ago. They were all paid of course.

(MJ: So bridge was a big part of your social life?) Oh yes. About the only social life we had. We would go to football or baseball games and stuff with uncle Bill every once in awhile. We played bridge with Kenny and his first wife. What was her name? Adele. (MJ: And then you had your group of eight that you played with. That was once a month, wasn't it? At somebody else's house every month.) I don't remember how often it was. Maybe every other week. And we would put so much in and then nobody would win anything. And the money would go toward Lake Erie vacations. I think we went three years with that group to Lake Erie, didn't we? (MJ: At least three.) More than that. It was about the time that Toby and Eleanor were married. They came up and stayed at a little...not with us. They were married in '55.

(MJ: So that was what you guys did for entertainment was the bridge?) Yes. But then Daddy taught Wayne and Mary to play bridge. They wanted to know what it was that we were playing. They didn't know how to play, so Daddy...we went out several times to their house and just played for the fun of it.

So bridge and then... Lake Erie in the summertime?

Yes. Remember we went to Lake Erie just by ourselves that one time that Monica let you get sunburned. You were only like 3 or 4 then, weren't you? (MJ: I was pretty young. I figure if I ever got melanoma I knew who to blame. We pretty much went every year somewhere for a week.) Yes. Daddy insisted on a vacation. One time we didn't have a car, so Daddy paid rent to one of his friends. And then coming home it gave out so we didn't know who to call, so we called Uncle Carl, but Uncle Carl was busy that day. We were over in Wooster. We always went... Remember Bear Lake? We always took a vacation. I cooked up a bunch of cookies and baked beans, a baked ham, and so forth. (MJ: I remember baked beans with pork chops in them. Cold pork chops. That was good. And friend egg sandwiches for the road.) Yes.

(MJ: So that was fun for you too? It just seems to me going on vacation with five kids wouldn't be much fun.) Of course it was fun. Remember we used to go down to the lake and cook sometimes on the shore. (MJ: I don't remember it. We have that picture of a barbeque on the lake, but I don't remember doing that. Who made the fire?) Oh, I suppose Daddy. I'm not sure. (MJ: Kind of hard to imagine Dad making a fire.)

At Troy you were renting, right? You didn't buy another house until you got to Bellflower?

The first house we bought was out in Genoa [between Massillon and Canton]. (MJ: Then you sold that to buy the restaurant?) Yes. We paid \$5000 for that house and it had an acre of ground. But then Daddy wasn't making that much. I mean, compared to what the people make today. (MJ: So when you lived in Genoa did you have a big vegetable garden?) Well, we planted one the first year we went there and nothing grew. And then we found out that... Let's see, what is topsoil? Is that the ground that is good, right? And they had plowed it in or dug it up or something. Anyway, we didn't have topsoil and that's why nothing grew. Of course, Daddy and I were too dumb... It wasn't that big of a garden because we didn't have a plow. I mean, Daddy dug it up. But we did plant beans.

That was the year out there that Mom and Bernie and I decided that we would can peaches together. It would be easier. We would all get together and then one person would go outside with the kids. They lived there in Genoa too. So we bought these, I can't remember how many bushels of peaches, I believe eight. And it was so sticky! Halfway through our pump broke. Which means we had no water. So it meant we had to go across the street and borrow water. We were partway through, but by the end of the day we were so sticky. Every kid was sticky and dirty. We decided after that that it wasn't a good idea. (MJ: That's pretty funny.) It wasn't funny then.

So any other memories about Troy?

Well, I remember the Shanes and then Mc something. McArdle? Well, I don't know... Anyway there were three of them [Shanes]. Oh, Honey was the aunt. What was Mrs. Shane's name, Mary, I think. And her mother. But if I would go out to empty the garbage or do anything they would come out and want me to come back in for a cup of coffee. I would have washing and so forth to do and I didn't want to spend two hours with them. So I got to the place that I didn't empty the garbage all day. I would wait until it was dark. And by that time they were usually in the living room, which was in the front of the house, and I could go out our back door and take our garbage. I liked them. They were nice and they were nice to us. (MJ: But you didn't feel like you could take the time.) Well, and I just didn't want to. If I had that much time I'd rather take you kids and go to the park or something. I can remember waiting and looking out to see that one of them wasn't in the kitchen.

(MJ: Well, you've got some of the introvert in you too, Mom.) Yes. I guess I don't mind being alone in the evening. I would like to in my home someplace. But I know I can't. But even here I stay in the room a lot rather than go do something. And I've always been that way. Even Pinky there was so good to me and we walked every morning when we lived on 38th. And I would hide from her because I would get tired of talking.

What about Bellflower? What are your memories about Bellflower?

Well, at Bellflower most of the memories are nice. I think that's my favorite house. (MJ: Why is that?) Oh, I just liked the room. It seemed we had so much room. I loved that house, the bigness, the sun parlor, and the backyard with the hedge around it so people couldn't see. But I had a little girl who went through the hedge and picked the neighbor's tulips—bright red and yellow ones. (MJ: Mom, I never...) Yes you did. She didn't like it at all. I made you go with me to apologize to the neighbors. Of course we had the attic finished. It seemed we had enough room. That was the first nice house we had. I remember the boys carrying papers. (MJ: I remember you carrying them half the time.)

Why did you decide to move from there?

Daddy wanted to raise ponies. He had seen Leo doing it and so forth. I didn't want to move from there. I was very much against it. I liked the house and the street and the fact that you kids could walk to school, which I think is a big thing. Now Curt and Robbie, their kids can walk to school, even Rusty. And Dante's kids can walk to school and I think that's a wonderful thing. Well, one thing besides being able to walk to school, their entertainment is there close to home and they know the people, you know. (MJ: Know the other kids.) Yes.

(MJ: At Bellflower I remember we had a routine. On Mondays you did the wash, Tuesdays you'd iron, what did you do on Wednesdays? I don't remember Wednesdays. Thursdays we had to all clean our rooms, including wiping the baseboards down... including wiping the baseboards down. That seemed a little excessive, Mom. Then Fridays would be getting groceries. That's what I remember. I don't remember what Wednesday was, though. Do you?)

Well, you said you cleaned your room, I probably cleaned the rest of the house. (MJ: Well, maybe that was what Wednesdays were. I remember drying our clothes in the basement before we had a dryer. And the root cellar where you stored your canned goods. And the the laundry chute.) Remember the time you couldn't find your Easter basket? (MJ: Yes, I do. I was pissed.) I wonder if people still do that with kids. Did you do that with the girls when they were little? (MJ: Yeah.) Did you? Well, maybe they still do.

Anything else about Bellflower? Any other memories?

Well, remember, we had Monica's wedding there. It was snowy. And then Deirdre came and lived there the next year and stayed every day. (MJ: You were a hell of a grandma.) Oh, every grandma does that. You did that. (MJ: Not every day and with three kids at home.) Well, I thought it was sort of fun. I think it would be sort of fun now. (MJ: Is that right? Of course you always liked babies.)

You saw two of your kids married while you lived there. Was that weird?

I don't know. (MJ: To see your kids married, that didn't seem weird to you? It just seemed like the natural order of things.) Yes. What different ages bring you. (MJ: and then your first grandchild.) Of course that was while I lived there. That's when she came. I remember them dropping her off and some days she hadn't been fed and hadn't had her pants changed yet. Because they would sleep in a little bit. Just bring her out and drop her off. I wonder if they could do that at these day care centers.

Before we go on with the history, I want you to recite the poem you recited yesterday when we were out by the lake.

What was life like on Beatty Road?

Very bad because I didn't have a car at first and it was very lonely. You kids would be gone all day and so was Daddy and no car. I could take a walk but that was all I could do. There was no bus service or anything. And I was very lonely there. Cause I didn't know any of the people around. I tried to get to know some of the women and I finally knew a couple up on Beatty, up close to Amherst. I sort of remember some of those people. (MJ: So then Dad bought you a car, right? Without asking you what kind of car you wanted.) I may be mixed up there, Mary Jo. You know your memory gets sort of mixed up. I seem to think that I had Mike's car when he went to school. (MJ: I remember Dad showing up with the Rambler. That mint-green Rambler.) Yep. And the first or second time it was driven Bill drove it out and banged the front back end of it. He opened the back door thing and hit it on something and it had to be repaired. Remember the guy brought that out, Daddy paid him cash for it and when we went to drive it, it didn't have enough gas to get to the filling station. You'd think he'd fill the gas tank up. I never did like that car.

I remember at Beatty, you started doing more bridge stuff. Teaching bridge, directing bridge...

Yes. What was her name? Joyce Taken was her name. She asked me if I would take over while she went on a vacation of a couple months or something. That's when I started teaching. So she told me a little bit about it, gave me a book, and I just went in with a lot of nerve to do it. (MJ: You were scared the first time?) Well, sure, because when we learned to play bridge we just learned by sitting down and playing. And that's the way Daddy and I had played. But to get the rules and so forth. There are a lot of rules in bridge and you have to learn to count your hand down and so forth. And it got rougher as the years went on as they added a lot of these famous bridge players and it got into the money deals where they had these big tournaments. Some of them would cost us like five or seven dollars to play.

What about the horses?

That's where we had Sugar, the horse, and we had the first ponies we had. Remember taking them over to...and showing them? There's a girl here who did that too. She doesn't remember you and I said you only went two or three times. And I guess they showed them every week or something. And our first pony was born and was he blind, or was it just blind in one eye. But we sold him anyway. We got I think \$500 for him. Now that's just a memory. What did we call him? (MJ: Was that the one that was all black?) Yes. The name of that dancer... The stripper. (MJ: Gypsy?) Yes. We called him Gypsy Rose Lee. That was his name on the papers.

We had him for quite a while and it was quite an experience, seeing a pony being born, because they get up right away. First the mother, who was only a year old, knows exactly how to give birth and how to take care of the little pony. She takes the afterbirth over in the field and throws it away. And the pony starts to walk immediately. Within five minutes, why, he's trotting around his mother and looking for something to eat. It was quite an experience. I had never seen anything like that. And they play right away. I mean they are up lifting their legs and started jumping around. Yeah, very cute. And I can't remember, Mary Jo, how many did we have? (MJ: At one point we had seven because we

had four and then three babies. That's what I remember.) Well, then you remember better than I do, because I don't remember.

(MJ: Do you remember when they'd get out? When somebody would leave the gate open?) No. I don't remember that. (MJ: You don't remember running across the golf course hoping nobody saw them trampling up the greens? Oh, I remember you running across the golf course screaming at these horses. It was hilarious. And the cows. Remember the time we put the fence in?) Yeah. I remember I was so scared of those cows. They were such big hunks of things and they liked to come up close to you. (MJ: So what did you do?) Ran. Basically. Ran for home. (MJ: That was pretty funny.) Yeah, those ponies were a funny experience for us. Your father had these ideas. Like the restaurant and the ponies. (MJ: I don't remember him taking care of the ponies very much.) No. I don't think he did. I remember you kids doing it and me doing it some.

During this time you started teaching bridge. Were you directing at that point as well?

Yes. The afternoon games, which weren't quite as large as the evening games. And now they do it with a computer, of course. You don't have to do the pencil work we had to do. We had to write down the list of the names of the people playing and their bridge numbers. We all had bridge numbers. And that all had to be reported to Memphis. We sent in a report every week at the end of the game with their numbers. And I guess that's all. And there was a lot of bookwork with it. But now, this game that Rose [Mokodean] has, she does it all with a computer that they have.

So then we bought the house on Woodvale Circle.

And we wanted to move in right away. (MJ: Yeah. Poor Dad didn't have a chance on that one.) No, he didn't really. But it was a nice house. (MJ: It was a great house.) Very impressive. And then while we were there remember Bill and Nancy came and stayed with us. They had just been married and they came up and stayed before he went back to Columbus for school. And Nikki was born while they were at our house. On our anniversary,

September 30th. I really don't remember what year it was. (MJ: I don't remember that. 1966.) 1966.

CHAPTER 5: THE GOLDEN YEARS



So then Woodvale Circle the last of your kids left home. Then what did you do? You didn't have to take care of little brats anymore.

I can't quite remember what the years were. I was doing a lot of bridge and I taught bridge at home. I had several groups that came to the house. Just like four people would come and take lessons together. And I made a little money off of that. Not much. But it paid eight dollars for each table. But it was fun. They were all nice people. They wanted to learn. And most of them came and played duplicate. Of course that teaching wasn't duplicate. We didn't have to have any reports. That was all just done at home. Then that was before I taught the big game. I mean before I directed the big games. (MJ: The night games? Like the Thursday night games?)

Now when did you start leading tours with the YWCA?

Well, I was leaving a bridge game one day and Mary Watkins and I were good friends and I just went in and said goodbye and to talk to her and she said, "Oh, I'm so upset..." Somebody had just taken a tour up into New England and they had another one scheduled and she couldn't go because of some reason. Her husband was ill or something. And, "I don't know what I'm going to do. Why don't you do it?" I had been doing day tours, which was, just like down to Zoar and over to the jelly factory. I had done those for quite a while. And she said, "Why don't you do it?" and I said, "I don't know how to do that." And she said, "all you have to do is tell them about the place you're going and then when you get there the plans are all made and you just go into the hotel and register them and then the next day you take them that much farther and see the trees and so forth and talk about them."

You had to read ahead of time. For instance there was a town of...oh say, where we were today you would read up on the town ahead of time and find out when it was founded and if they had any business there. And then on the bus you would talk about that. You'd talk about the factories they had or the historical parts. Some of them had things from the revolutionary war, like statues or monuments and you'd tell them about that and then you'd stop. On

the bus you'd stop and look at the monuments. Then you'd just see that everybody got into their rooms at night and got to eat. Because the tours all... They always got dinner. But it seems that most of them, they paid for their own lunch.

And we always had problems with the bathrooms because they were so few men and so many women. We would sometimes get somebody to stand outside of the door of the men's and hold it shut so that none of the men could go in unless the ladies go in. And those were fun tours. I mean they were things to see. And the ones to New England the trees were very pretty and so forth. (MJ: And you did some overseas, didn't you?) Oh, yes. That was later on maybe the same year. Mary planned those trips and knew where you were going and it was all written down for you. We went to Spain twice and to Yugoslavia twice and to Hungary once. And when we were in Spain one time we took, if they wanted to go, a boat went over to... Morocco. On the northern part of Africa. And we just stayed one night and one day there, but we saw the markets and so forth.

(MJ: So how long did you do those tours?) About two years. (MJ: It was longer than that, wasn't it?) Well, maybe longer then. (MJ: Seems like you did it for a long time.) Well, you weren't home. (MJ: No. So it was after I left. But then I don't remember when you stopped doing them. Did you stop doing them when Dad had surgery?) I really don't remember, but I imagine. When did he have the first surgery? Oh, I was down visiting you when he had the first one, remember? Megan and I were down at your house in Eagle Pass when they called. And I don't remember what year that was, do you? (MJ: 1975.) He had the first surgery. (MJ: so you would have been 62. I don't remember if you did any after that or not.)

Any other memories of living on Woodvale Circle?

Well, of course the neighbors there. Nancy and Mink Adams. Very fond memories of them. And their mother and father while they were living, but they both died there. (MJ: and they were from Spain?) Yes.

So while you lived at Woodvale Circle, other than bridge and giving the tours, was there anything else that you and Dad were doing? Were you taking a lot of trips then?

I don't know. I think that's when we started going down to Florida. For the first three years we were alone there I think that's when we started. We first went down and stayed on the other side of the street in Fort Myers Beach. The first time we went down we stayed in a big house on the beach and we could have bought that for \$100,000. That's like everybody's story price. And it was right on the beach in a great big house. In fact, it was so big that Nancy and Bill came down with all their children and stayed for I think one week. And Nikki still remembers it. At that time there were a lot of dolphins out in the bay there. And they came right up to the children. They would wade out into the water and the dolphins would come up and nuzzle around them. And they also made friends with the people next door who were very rich. I forget how and why, but they had children. Nikki and Zorba. And the other two were too little of course. One was a baby in arms, didn't walk yet. Who would that be? I don't remember if it was Zooey or... But I remember them coming down and they each carried a baby. That was a real nice week. Nancy and I didn't do any cooking. We just carried out or brought out, bought a can of spaghetti sauce. Cooked like that. And just fed the kids very easily, no big deals. But we were out in the front a lot, out in the water. It was a lovely place.

(MJ: I thought you didn't like going down to Florida.) I didn't at first, but after of course we had that big house. About the second year we went into one of the apartments and John and Norm went with us and then Rose and George went some of the years. And that was fun because we would do something every day like go down into the Everglades or around those wood walks they had. Rose reminded me of one of the walks in the woods we took when we saw these that looked almost like earthworms to us, they weren't very fat, and then when we got up close to them, there were two little thin snakes having sex. And we couldn't believe it. It was in the middle of the day and the sun was shining and here were these two snakes, oh, about as big around as your thumb and maybe a

foot long, and they were having a good time right in one of the trees that didn't have any leaves. And then we went on those boats one time out into the Everglades. And then at night we would play bridge.

And one year George's sister came down so we made up some games. I remember one was between the sheets and we made it up that you had to guess, if you had a seven you had to guess what two cards would turn up, whether they would be higher or lower than your card. And we'd bet like a nickel or something on it. And it was a lot of fun. And as I said every day we'd do something. George and Joe would often go play golf, but if they did, why, we'd play some bridge. They had a bridge club down there that was open to everybody.

But I liked it after somebody was with us. I didn't like it when we went alone, because Daddy would go play golf. The way it was, why, in the afternoon we'd always have something to do. Something we thought of. And then we'd always watch the sunset in the evening then we'd eat dinner out on the porch. We would eat out about, oh, once or twice a week at these very, very good restaurants. We were always down there, it seems, I guess cause we went down there in January, that we had a Super Bowl Party. And whosever house we went to bought the shrimp. Then the rest of us would bring something else and they'd go and buy the shrimp over at the dock and then just boil them and do them that way. Yum, yum, yum. We used to do that at Aunt Bernie's. We would buy the shrimp that were assorted. There would be some little ones and some great big ones and they were cheaper. We would buy those and cook them and eat them all. We would play bridge or something. Florida was fun then.

But as for the trips to Europe, they were fun too. We had a lot of excitement. Mary Yokes almost always went with us. And that Eleanor Reynolds went several times and one time her sister and her husband heard about them and came up from wherever they lived in southern Ohio and went with us. And so there were always a lot of people we knew on the trips. And we saw a lot of things. A lot of churches. I remember _____, Spain that was just beautiful. And they had a big... Oh, like Uncle Dave's had, but it

wasn't quite as formal. But it was a big church-like place where they wore robes. And I think they took vows like Dave did. What were they, poverty and...? (MJ: Priests do poverty, chastity, and what's the third one?) I don't know. (MJ: Obedience?) Obedience. (MJ: Well, I'd have trouble with at least two out of the three.)

At some point you moved to Perry, bought the Perry duplex. That whole era. When did you guys start buying duplexes?

Well, we built that one on Perry. (MJ: Right, but you had bought the other ones before that, hadn't you? You already had the other ones?) No, I don't think so. I think we bought those after we built the one on Perry. Well, we went up on Sunday to look at those. They were for sale and we were only going to buy one, and then before I knew it your father had bought four of them. (MJ: He bought four of them instead of one without telling you?) Oh no, I was with him. But we were talking around, looking at them and deciding what to do and so on and so forth. And the man that built those and sold them to us was quite a salesman. Before I knew it, well, we had those four up there and the one on Perry. (MJ: Were these brand new ones then?) Yes. (MJ: So everything you bought was brand new?) Yes. (MJ: I don't know that. So you didn't really have that much in the way of repairs and stuff?) Oh no, very little in the way of repairs and stuff. Now some of them had tenants, but they were not more than say a year old.

(MJ: So you had those for about eight years, didn't you?) I don't know when we sold them. (MJ: But you made money on all of them, didn't you?) Yes. (MJ: How did you have enough cash up front to buy four of them?) Well, we didn't need much money up front. That's why we paid so much interest. Because we had not very much money up front on those. (MJ: How much interest did you pay?) I don't remember, but I remember it was high because he figured it every month like instead of figuring at the end of the year or so forth, like most are figured. But it was high. I think we paid \$275 a month on each one of them. (MJ: Each building?) Each apartment I think. Or each building. I just remember that amount in my head, I don't know why. By the time we completed the deal we had all of them rented. The one that... Ray and Pinky

bought theirs almost immediately. Daddy was showing one to Ray, so we only made \$5000 on that one.

Then we had one, I went out one time because they hadn't paid the rent so I was going up that way so I stopped and she came to the door and said, oh, I can't talk to you now because I'm packing my wedding dress. Of course the things that upset me a lot more than they ever did Daddy, so I just went home. (MJ: You didn't say anything to her?) Sure, I said I was there to collect the rent. But I wasn't going to stand in the street and argue with her. So Daddy then went up to where he worked, which was a jewelry shop, and he got some money. (MJ: But that was the only time you ever had trouble with anybody?) Yeah. They were all good, they all paid on time. (MJ: Who handled all the books and stuff on the duplexes?) Well, I kept most of the...all the books. The income tax and so forth we had Oscar Bartlem. (MJ: But you tracked monthly the expenses and stuff? Daddy didn't do that.) Yes. We really didn't have that many expenses because they were all brand new.

(MJ: Well, that was a pretty neat thing to do, really. Finally one of his ideas panned out.) After all those years... all the trials and errors. Yes, I was a rich woman when Daddy died. If I hadn't had the stroke and the nurses, why, I would have been fine. But that's another, what did we call it...luck? (MJ: Luck of the draw. But it was nice not to have to worry about money. Sometimes when the husband dies the women find out there is nothing there to do anything with.) Well, Daddy made some money on the stock stuff too. And then from the dairy, you know. When they broke up they all took all this stock and that. And Daddy took all the utilities. So they did pretty good for a few years.

When you were still at Perry that's when Dad had his surgery, right [1975]? And that was an awful time because you had to take care of him.

Yes. (MJ: And then you took care of Uncle Kenny too, right after that, didn't you? When he had eye surgery or something?) Well, he came out and stayed at our house with his two little dogs, or for six months or something. (MJ: Was it that long?) I think that's what it was. Before he went back. But I kept thinking I could have done

more for him when he was alone and blind. I used to go in almost every day, but it would be such a horrible thing to be blind. And to be alone in the house. (MJ: I think you did just fine by him, Mom.)

**Anything else about that period when you lived on Perry?
What made you decide to sell Perry and start renting?**

That was a nice house. That was a comfortable life. I walked...what was the dog then, I think Jake? I walked him everyday. Except for the bad neighbor next door, I knew all of them. And of course I didn't like the Morton's, but they didn't move there until later. Daddy sold the lot to them, you know, without telling me. (MJ: I remember you being pretty upset.) Yeah. I just never liked that man. (MJ: I didn't either. I didn't like working for him.) I don't think many people liked him. (Pause) I don't know why we decided to do that, to tell you the truth. (MJ: Just so you'd have the cash?) I don't know. Because first we moved into the terrible one that I hated up there. (MJ: The one with the tiny windows?) Yeah. The one we lived in when Daddy died [1987] was all right. I don't know now why we decided. It's hard to remember.





AFTERWORD FROM MARY JO:

The book ends here, at least for right now. It got harder and harder to get Mom to talk about the later years, but we may send additional installments. So I'll just mention a few facts.

Mom and Dad sold the Perry house in the early 1980's and moved into a townhouse close by. Dad died in 1987, so Mom moved into the other side of the duplex they had sold to Ray and Pinky Freidmann years before. She lived there until 1995, when she decided to move in with her daughter Monica because she couldn't drive anymore. In July 1998 she had a stroke and has required nursing care ever since. In October 2003, at age 89, she moved into Crandall Medical Center in Sebring, Ohio.

For those of you who didn't know Mom when she was younger, there is not much here to tell you who she really was as a person then. Here are a couple of important things that come to my mind:

- She was not a leader, but she was not a follower, either. She had her own mind but wasn't showy.
- She had a passion for reading and books that she passed on to her children.
- She believed in helping others: for many years she volunteered with the county association for the mentally retarded.
- She was strongly opposed to racial and ethnic prejudice. She once chewed up and spit out a six foot 200 lb bridge player, in front of 40 people, when he used the word, "nigger".
- She had a special place in her heart for children and spent countless hours playing games of fish and rummy.

These are just a part of her true worth.