Looking Back

Looking Forward

The memoirs

of

Kenneth Rush

2nd Edition

Looking Back Looking Forward

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Printed in memory of Ken & Doris Rush.

Kenneth Rush 1031/1927 – 5/11/2014

Doris Rush 12/1926 – 12/28/2014

United together on earth 3/4/1950.

Reunited in Glory for all eternity with the Lord they served.

# Forward

The purpose in writing these memoirs, is so future generations of our family can look back to their roots, and see what life was like for their parents, grandparents etc., and track part of their genealogy if they so choose. I have not only facts and history of my life, but have tried to include some of my wife Doris, and some of the family and ancestors on both sides. The pictures, and information in the back pages of this book will perhaps be a help for any of our future family generations, if they wish to look back at how their past family members lived.

The events in this book are not all in chronological order, since I tried to tell the events in one place and some overlapped with another time. Yet I think the reader by careful reading can determine about when certain events took place.

I am not an extraordinary person, but I have had an interesting life, at least it has been interesting for me. So since I am now in my twilight years, I thought I would write down a few of my experiences, family, and acquaintances, especially for future generations of my family.

The family, after reading the first edition of this book, asked me to add things told to me by my dad and other family members, so in this second edition, I have added some of these things, as well as more that I have remembered. Again these are not in chronological order:

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**Chapter 1 - My Grandfather**

I don’t really remember my birth, but I have been told that I was really born. It was Halloween night in nineteen twenty seven. My mother and Dad were living on my grandfather William Rush’s farm on Cadillac road in Holland Township, Missaukee County, Moddersville, Michigan. Dad was working for grandpa at that time.

The house they lived in was just a shack a few hundred feet behind grandpa’s house. Dad had been working on the house, and had a scaffold attached to it. That night a strong storm tore the scaffold off the house. Dad was at the barns doing chores, and my mother was very frightened of storms. That probably contributed to the fact that I was born that night. All this of course was told to me by my parents.

I was always afraid of my grandfather William Rush. My Dad didn’t like his own Dad, because when Dad moved away, after working for grandpa, Dad said that grandpa cheated him out of much of what belonged to him. Dad was working on shares with grandpa, and was supposed to get a portion of the hay, and some of the animals for his work. He said grandpa would only give him a small portion of what was agreed upon.

My remembrance of my grandpa was, of him sitting by their hard coal burner in the winter. (The hard coal burner had doors on three sides, with small isinglass windows in the doors.) Grandpa would sit by that stove, and every few minutes he would open one of the doors and spit his tobacco into the stove. He liked to argue, and had very foul language. Both mother and dad used some foul language in those days, but if any of us kids had ever uttered any such language, mother would have washed our mouths with soap.

Dad told how when he was young, one time, grandpa offered all his kids a nickel to go to bed without their supper. Since they didn’t have any money, they all accepted. During the night grandpa stole the nickels back.

The next time he made them that offer, they all hid their nickels. But the next morning, when they all awoke hungry, not having any supper, grandpa asked them, “how many of yo**u** kids will give a nickel for a big bowl of oatmeal?”

Whenever any of grandpa’s family worked out for someone else, he required that they bring all the money back to him.

One time Uncle George and Aunt Goldie, were working in Flint. Aunt Goldie was under age, (about fifteen or sixteen), the authorities picked her up because she had no supervision. George found out about it and called grandpa. Grandpa told George to go down to the station, and get her, he said when you get there they will release her. Then Grandpa called the police, in Flint, and told them in no uncertain terms that he knew where his daughter was, and what she was doing, (using many cuss words,) and they were to keep their \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ nose out of his \_\_\_ \_\_\_ business. They released Goldie.

Dad said that one time Grandpa’s pumpkin crop was really prolific. After he had cut the corn, the field was still filled with pumpkins, so Grandpa sent word out that anyone who wanted pumpkins, could have all the pumpkins they wanted.

One woman came over with all her kids, and a team and wagon, and they loaded all the pumpkins on the wagon that they could get on it, and as they drove away each of the kids were holding a pumpkin on their lap. Grandpa was furious, but he didn’t say a thing, because he had said they could have all they wanted. No one ever knew what that lady did with all those pumpkins.

One time grandpa was made justice of the peace. A young man was brought before him for stealing gasoline. In those days you could drop a hose into the gasoline tank and siphon out the gasoline.

This young man was known for stealing before, but never convicted. So when he came before grandpa, grandpa said, stick out your tongue. When he did, grandpa said ‘You’re guilty’ and with that the young man confessed. I guess he thought grandpa had some way of telling by just looking at his tongue.

My Grandfather, William Rush, at one time owned a laundry business in Decatur, Michigan. I understand that it was a good business, but grandpa, wanted to do better, so he sold that business and purchased a larger laundry business in Decatur Illinois. However, much of the equipment in that laundry was not as good as expected, so Grandpa got a loan to purchase better equipment.

He was unable to pay off the loan, by due date, and Illinois had a debtor’s jail, for those who couldn’t pay their debts, so he loaded his family on a train, back to Decatur Michigan, and he walked back so they would not catch him and put him in jail. He came back completely broke financially, and the family picked fruit etc. to survive.

Finally he homesteaded a farm in Holland Township, Michigan. (It was that farm where I was born years later.) When the family moved from Decatur to the homestead in Holland township, (around two hundred miles. They used a covered wagon. The girls rode most of the time, and the man who was driving the team, but the rest of the boys walked. It took a couple of weeks to make the move.

Once while we were living on the homestead, Grandpa asked dad and George to go to the Lake City horse auction and get him another horse. They held a yearly auction there and brought in wild horses, mostly mustangs from Wyoming, and sold them there. Grandpa would only have western mustangs. They were small, like a saddle horse, but very tough. At the auction one cowboy would be in the center of the corral and swing his rope running the horses around the perimeter of the corral. When you bid in a horse, you gave your rope to a cowboy sitting on the gate post, and the cowboy in the center threw out his lariat catching the horse by his front legs and dropping him right in front of the cowboy by the gate. That cowboy then would jump down at the horses head and make a halter for him with your rope, toss you the end of the rope and open the gate.

You had your horse.

Usually several men would grab on the rope with you until the horse calmed down, then you could lead him away.

When dad and Gorge left with their horse to lead him home he soon began to quit fighting and led along very well. So dad told George that he would go home and do his evening chores and then come back and relieve him.

When dad got back he found George about where he left him, instead of several miles down the road where he should have been.

He asked George what the problem was and George told him that since it was starting to get dark, the cars coming into town had their light on, and those light would frighten the horse, and the horse would run back the way they had come, and by the time he would get the horse stopped and return a ways another car would come toward town and the would start the same thing all over again.

Dad told George to take the car and go home to do his chores and he would lead the horse. George said you can’t handle him alone. But dad insisted so George left. Dad had about fifty feet of rope on the horse, so he put a half-hitch over the horse’s nose, and when the next car came, dad found a strong fence post, and snubbed the end of the rope over the post, and turned loose of the horse. Well the horse started back at a dead run. But when he got to the end of that fifty foot rope he tumbled end for end. Dad said he only had to do that twice and that horse wised up, and he had no more trouble leading him.

One time grandpa took his buggy and went to the grocery store. The horse he used was his favorite buggy horse, so as usual he just let the horse stand while he was in the store. He came out and put his groceries into the back of the buggy, and went back in for a sack of flour. When he came out of the store the horse was near the road, about one hundred feet away eating grass. Grandpa carried the sack of flour to the buggy and just as he prepared to set it into the back of the buggy, the horse took off, ran about another hundred feet, and started eating grass again. This was repeated again, and again. Grandpa had to carry that sack of flour all the way home.

# Chapter 2 - Life on the homestead

My first remembrance of anything in my life was after my dad had homesteaded one hundred twenty acres, in Aetna Township, Missaukee County. The farm was on what is now Nine mile road, about two miles south of M-55. All of the farmers there were poor according to today’s standards, but we were in the great depression.

I was not quite two years old when we moved there. Dad had built a tar paper shanty roof shack, about ten feet by twelve feet that we moved into. I don’t remember living in that building, but I remember the building, because it became our horse barn.

The following year Dad built our house, although it was covered with tar paper, and had bare 2x4 walls inside, it was our home. It was much larger, about sixteen feet by twenty feet. It had a kitchen, and a living room. We slept in the attic. We had a home-made ladder straight up which we climbed to get to the attic.

A few years later, we had a bad windstorm and the house began to creak and sway. Dad braced the west wall with 2x4's and even braced himself against it. When the storm subsided, the house leaned at quite an angle, but it still stood.

After that dad used wire cable, and straightened the house what he could, but he was not able to get it completely straight. He then built a stairway to the attic crossways of the house which braced the house quite well. He also built a small lean‑to on the east side, which became my bedroom. We slept on straw tics, which my mother made by sewing large pieces of cloth into what looked like a large pillow case, then stuffing it with straw.

Actually it was quite comfortable, except for the bed bugs, which nearly everyone in the north had at that time.

Since our house had no footing, (it just set on timbers on the ground, and a dug cellar underneath,) we had mice and rats. We had a cat, which would catch and kill either mice or rats, but could not keep up with all of them.

I remember many nights, waking up with something nibbling at my toes, and would find a mouse or rat there. However, I don’t remember ever getting a bad bite by one. Such things didn’t frighten us, as that was part of the norm for those days.

## The Owl

I was probably two or three years old, that I remember going to the chicken coop to gather eggs. I liked doing this for my mother, but I seldom took anything along to carry the eggs in. So I would put them into my pockets, and you can imagine by the time I got to the house, one or two of the eggs were broken in my pockets.

I also, very well remember, that between the house and the chicken coop a large owl often sat in a tree, and I was really afraid of that owl, so when I would go to the chicken coop to gather eggs, or close the coop for the night, I would look that tree over very well to see if the owl was there. When I couldn’t see the owl I would proceed on my way to the coop, and about the time I got under the tree, the owl would let out Hoo, Hoo, and nearly frighten me to death. I now think that old owl was just having fun with me, knowing that I was afraid of him.

There was not much way to avoid going near that tree because there was mostly woods on the other side, and the path actually went between the tree and the barnyard fence. I didn’t dare go close to the fence, because one of the horses was dangerous, even to adults, and I was ordered by my dad to stay away from the fence. Dad only kept that horse because he couldn’t afford to buy another, and the horse was a good work horse.

We had a windmill to pump our water, and water for the livestock. The well was one hundred and forty feet deep. I remember dad putting that well down. I tried to help, but was probably in his way most of the time. Dad made a sand pump from a piece of pipe and worked almost day and night for two weeks to get to water.

By the time I was about five, dad had taught me to operate the windmill, and it became my job to water the stock. When the wind wasn’t blowing, we had to pump the water by hand, that was a real job, it took all my weight to push down the pump handle because of the one hundred forty feet of rods, to bring up the water, sometimes my sister would help in pumping. (However she had many other chores)

When the wind began to blow, the windmill would begin to turn a little, even though it was in the off position. I then would have to watch the pump rod and when the hole lined up with the one above the pump, I had to slip a bolt into the Rod so it could start pumping. However, the difficulty was that as soon as I had slipped the bolt in, I had to remove the bolt in the pump handle, or the rods jerking on the pump handle would break it. If I didn’t do it right I could lose the pump rods into the well pipe, and that would be a major operation to retrieve them.

Dad showed me exactly how it must be done to avoid such a catastrophe, and I never lost the rods. When it was real cold, it was hard to hold the bolt with bare hands, but it would be impossible to do with gloves or mittens.

I would often follow my dad when he was plowing, and then I would get tired and fall asleep in the plow furrow. When dad would come around plowing the next furrow, he would be very angry because I was asleep, in the furrow. One of the horses was that dangerous one. Had dad not seen me asleep in the furrow, that horse would have killed me. That happened several times.

We had a buck sheep we raised from a baby, we had bottle fed it when it was just a babe. As it began to grow, my sister and I would butt heads with it just for fun, soon it got to butting too hard for us and we quit, but he didn’t. When he was full grown, he was still our pet; but wouldn’t quit butting. We would stake him out to eat, and when we wanted to move him, we would get him at the end of his chain, and then hold him while we pulled his stake and re- staked him.

I used to get on his back and ride him, but in order to get on him, I had to get him to the end of his chain so he couldn’t butt me, and I could then get on him and ride. One day I had been riding him and I fell off and got tangled in his chain. My sister happened along and held him while I got untangled or he might have killed me by butting me, he was that strong. But that didn’t stop me from riding him, I was just more careful.

One day he got loose, and headed for my mother, he went between her legs and she ended up on his back. She didn’t dare get off until a neighbor happened along and held the sheep while she got off him. She was always afraid of him after that.

We had thirteen cows when we lived on the homestead, most were Guernsey cows, a couple of them were Jersey cows. Guernseys and Jerseys are known for having a lot of cream in the milk, and dad sold cream. We had a cream separator, and when dad finished the milking, he dumped all the milk through a strainer cloth into the large stainless steel bowel on the top of the cream separator.

Mother would then take out the milk needed for the day, and my sister and I would enjoy a cup of warm milk. Then my sister, or myself would crank the separator and the milk came out one spout and the cream another. If mother was going to make butter, she took out enough cream for that, and the rest of the cream was put into a large milk can and stored in our well pit until the week end when dad took it to the creamery to sell it.

The skimmed milk was fed to the pigs, except for some mother would set aside to make cottage cheese. She made the best cottage cheese I have ever tasted.

When we made butter, I remember many hours pumping the churn handle up and down to churn the butter. As poor as we were, we had real butter to eat, and home-made bread. My sister really liked butter, and we used to say, ‘she likes a little bread with her butter’.

We also had jams and preserves that mother made. Mother would make jams from any fruit she could get, and she made preserves from water melon rind.

Mother canned any food she could get. We raised our own dill for dill pickles, and she made many of them.

She also made bread & butter pickles, she called them mustard pickles. I still like them. I was a young man before I knew there was any other kind of pickle than dill or mustard pickles.

Dad would get up early in the morning, milk the thirteen cows by hand. (No electric milkers then, in fact no electricity.) Then he would feed the cows, horses, and sheep, then clean the stables, before he came in to breakfast. At breakfast Dad would eat some bacon, potatoes, twenty pancakes, with bacon grease on them, and a couple of eggs, plus coffee.

When I was about six years old I used to eat six pancakes, two eggs, a couple pieces of bacon, and some potatoes, plus my sister and I would also eat the bacon rinds that mother and dad left. (Not because we were that hungry, but because we liked to chew on bacon rinds.)

We usually ate sugar and milk on our pancakes, however I don’t like them that way anymore. Sometimes we had maple syrup, which we had made in the spring. On occasion we had oatmeal, or cornmeal, for breakfast. But Dad always had his pancakes. Those pancakes were not small either, they filled the plate.

Dad never got overweight, from eating those pancakes. In fact Dad was about six feet tall, and never weighed over one hundred eighty pounds.

## Free Shows

On Saturday nights we often went to Lake City to see the free shows, put on by the town merchants.

One Saturday as we were about to leave and ugly rooster we had among our chickens, attacked my mother. Dad picked up a stone and threw it at the rooster and the stone hit the rooster and killed it. So Dad had to clean the rooster before we could leave for the free show.

My sister and I were quite anxious, because we didn’t want to miss the comics, before the regular show. The comics were usually Felix the Cat and Mickey Mouse

## Clothing

In the winter we had long wool underwear for under garments, but in summer I didn’t wear any underclothes, shoes or socks, except when we were going someplace special, then we wore our ‘other clothes’, which consisted of clean shirt and jeans that I hadn’t started to wear to work yet. And shoes if we were going someplace special, like to a big city.

Even going to Lake City to the free show on Saturday night. I wore my ‘other clothes’ but no shoes. We could not afford shoes for such minor occasions. I was eleven or twelve years old before I started wearing shoes in the summer.

I remember one day at school, I had torn the seat of my pants on a fence, and when we went home I walked ahead of the rest of the kids, and walked backward so no one could see my bare bottom through the hole in my pants. I was terribly embarrassed and the other kids realizing how embarrassed I was, continued to do things to embarrass me more. However, by the next day it was all forgotten, and I guess I had no lasting effects from it.

## Credit

The store where we purchased our groceries, (which were only the very necessities,) was owned by Mark Jenima. And when Dad was laid up from that sunstroke, he was unable to pay for the groceries. So Mark carried Dad on credit for a long time.

When we had to leave the farm because Dad couldn’t farm anymore, Dad had a grocery bill of nearly five hundred dollars. Dad sold the house on forty acres for five hundred dollars, and signed over the sellers, portion of the contract to Mark Jenima. Then told Mark that he would guarantee the payments.

After some time the buyers quit paying, so Dad went back up north to see them, and let them know that they must pay up what they were in arrears, and keep up the payments thereafter or he would evict them and take the place back, because that payment to Mark must be made.

They never got behind again, and Mark finally got his money with interest. Mark Jenima was a very good man, I don’t know how we would have lived without his help.

In those days, a man’s word was his bond, and if you didn’t make good on it, you would not be able to show your face anywhere

I remember several cowboys would come to our home and try to ride that dangerous horse. Her name was Gyp.

They would get on the horse’s back, and the horse would throw herself over backward and then try to roll on them. When the horse got up she would try to bite or strike them with her front feet.

Dad finally stopped letting anyone try to ride her. Dad was the only one who was ever able to handle her. He was a great horseman.

## Nobe

Dad had a black and tan hound that he hunted with. The dog’s name was Nobe. He was old and mean. My sister and I never played with him, because he would bite us if we did, in fact he did bite my sister once. I think Nobe was just so old that he didn’t want to play with anyone.

Dad would take that dog, back to the woods to hunt jack rabbits. Dad would send old Nobe into the woods, and then sit down on a stump or log, and wait until he heard the slow rumble of Nobe’s voice. (Nobe was so old, his voice was quite low.) Nobe knew his business, he never crowded the rabbits or they would hide under a brush pile. After a while a rabbit would come hopping out of the woods seeming quite unconcerned, because it was well ahead of old Nobe.

Dad would take his 22 rifle and shoot the jack rabbit, and wait for another. Dad usually came home with about four rabbits, a good meal or two.

One day some men came to see Dad. One of the men owned the Porter Ranch, and Dad did chores for them.

They wanted to go hunting, and they knew the reputation of old Nobe that he was a great hunter.

Dad said he didn’t have time to go right then, but they could take the dog. They said they didn’t dare go near Nobe without Dad. So Dad got Nobe for them and handed one of them the leash, and told them that Nobe would be fine with them.

They took Nobe and went hunting. When Dad went to do chores for them that evening, he saw Nobe in their car at the barns, He looked in their car and saw no rabbits, and since Dad was quite early anyway, he took Nobe out of their car and went back to their woods and got two rabbits. When he got back, their car was still there, so he put the dog and the rabbits both in their car, and went into the barns to do chores.

They asked Dad what he wanted them to do with Nobe. Dad said just put him over in my car. Dad’s car was an open touring car, but they put Nobe in the car, and he stayed there, but they wouldn’t dare go back to Dad’s car then, because Nobe was again on his own turf.

Dad never told them about the two rabbits, he just let them figure out how they got there.

Farmers are always looking for more pasture for their cattle. One of our neighbors had several hundred acres of property about three forth of a mile from our place, and they agreed to let us pasture our cows there if we took theirs also. They had probably about twenty cows, and we had thirteen. To get to the property we had to drive the cows down a trail through some woods and open a gate, and let them in.

It became the job of my sister and myself to drive those cattle there in the morning, and go and get them in the evening. One evening when we went after the cows, one cow was missing, so we went looking for it. Cows always know the way home, so when you find a missing cow, you follow it and it will go home.

This time we couldn’t find the cow. While hunting it, we saw an animal, which looked as tall as a horse to us, coming toward us really fast. So we ran as fast as we could and when we stopped, there was no animal in sight, but we were lost.

It was beginning to get dark, the cows has all came home but we were not with them, so Dad came looking for us. He came to the gate and called to us, but we didn’t hear him, so he went down to the next road that bordered the property and called from there.

We finally heard him calling, and answered him, then walked toward his voice, as he called every few minutes until we came out. By the time Dad had found us it was quite dark, and we were about a mile and a half from home.

It is really frightening to be lost in several hundred acres of woods, when you are small kids. Later when we described to Dad, what the animal we had seen looked like, we took Dad back to where we had seen it, and there was a large brush pile there, so we finally determined that it was a fox, coming over that pile that made it look as big as a horse.

We were in no danger, when that fox saw us, he probably was as frightened as we were.

We also used to pasture our cattle along the road in the summer. They would eat the grass between the road and the fence.

Iva & I had to stay with the cattle, to make sure they didn’t stray too far, or get into a neighbor’s field.

One area, when we pastured our cattle there, that neighbor would send her daughter out with brown sugar sandwiches for us. We really enjoyed them.

We usually only pastured an area a day or two until that grass was gone, so we covered quite an area, but the neighbors were all friendly to us.

## Iva & Mrs. Coogan

One boy who went to our school, was Dorman Marsh. He and his mother were living with the Coogan’s who had a place about an eighth of a mile from us. They evidently were a little better off financially that most, and Dorman thought he could do as he pleased.

He often threw stones at some of us, while coming home from school. One time my sister Iva, got tired of his meanness, and beat him up hitting him with her lunch pail.

His grandmother Mrs. Coogan, who was known to be very mean herself, laid wait for my sister the next day, lying on the ground among some weeds so she could ambush her, Iva ran home, and Dad went out and told Mrs. Coogan to lay off or deal with him.

That ended the problem. Mister Coogan was a pretty nice gentleman, and his son Harry also. Harry was a grown man then as well. Years later Mister Coogan shot himself, I guess he couldn’t stand his wife anymore.

## The Beech nut tree by Aetna town hall:

By the town hall where we went to school after the school house burned down, there is a Beech nut tree, and we enjoyed picking those beech nuts in season, when we could beat the Squirrels to then That tree is still there and still producing nuts these seventy five years later.

My mother always kept a small can of kerosene, (it contained about a cupful of kerosene), by the kitchen stove, to start the fire in the morning. One time when I was about four years old I happened to notice that can, so I drank it. When mother noticed what I had done, she made me drink milk, to cause me to throw up the kerosene, which I then did. She was really worried, but I didn’t know that I had done anything wrong, and had no after effects from it.

In about 1933 or 1934. Dad was working a distance from home on a hot day, When he came home he was very thirsty. However he didn’t drink the cold well water, but came into the house and got water from our water bucket. He took a swallow, and said it hurt his throat going down, he took another swallow and sat down in his easy chair and fell over on the floor.

He had suffered a sunstroke. My mother and sister, carried him out in the front yard, so he could be under a shade tree where it was cooler.

A neighbor stopped by and offered to do the chores, but dad said he would be able to do them if we would help him to his feet. We got him on his feet, but he couldn’t walk. So it became the job of my mother, sister and I to do the chores. Thirteen cows to milk, 30 sheep to care for, and the two horses.

We could not go into the barnyard with Gyp, so we fed her in the barn, putting hay in through a door in front of the manger. My sister and my mother did most of the milking because my sister was three and one half years older than I. She was 10 or 11 then. I did help some, but not much with the milking.

Dad had previously plowed up a portion of land that needed dragging before we could plant it . So a neighbor boy, `Johnny Rayment’, about twelve years old, came down to drag it for him.

We got dad to his feet and helped him to the horse barn, and he harnessed the team for Johnny. Johnny had only worked a short while when he had to stop and clean sod from the drag.

While doing so the reins got tangled and the team started to run. The other horse `Dick’ was not dangerous, but with Gyp pulling the drag near his heels he had to run also. Johnny started after them, and soon realized that they were turning and coming after him.

He ran for the barn and one of the trap doors where we put hay in on the cow barn was open, so Johnny dove head first into the cow barn. By that time Gyp was on her hind feet, frothing at the mouth and flaying her front feet, trying to kill Johnny.

Dad heard the noise, and we got him on his feet and out toward the barns, where dad let out a loud war-hoop to the team to stop them and they stopped. Gyp was afraid of Dad, and therefore, would obey his commands.

Dad put them into the barn and Gyp never worked a day after that. In fact when we moved away, my grandfather wanted to buy Gyp because she was a western mustang, and he would have nothing but Mustangs. (They are tough horses).

Dad warned him about Gyp but he insisted he wanted that horse, so dad sold her to him. Grandpa took her home and put her in a barn stall, and she kicked grandpa out of the stall.

My uncle Ernest then tried to harness her, and she kicked him out twice. These men were both used to handling wild horses. They turned Gyp into their pasture, and couldn’t get near her again. So the horse died without ever having to do another day’s work.

The other horse, Dick, was very gentle, and my sister and I used to ride him. Dad had built a trip-cart with buggy wheels, and after school my sister and I would hitch Dick to the cart and go to the woods and pick up pine knots for the kitchen cook stove. At that time the woods were full of pine knots left from a fire that went through the upper part of Lower Michigan years ago.

In the summer time we would ride Dick to our schoolhouse (Aetna School) a mile away so we could play on the swings, slide, etc. During school term I don’t remember ever getting to use those things. The smaller kids such as myself were let out for recess fifteen minutes before the older kids. We had to take turns on the swings or slide. By the time it was my turn, the older kids got our and took over the playground.

Although we were as poor a people can get, so were most of the neighbors. Perhaps a little worse for us because dad had not recovered from that sunstroke, and was not able to do much work. However, Dad was not a quitter, and he would find a way to earn a dollar occasionally. Since we had raised our own meat, and vegetables, we had enough to eat. Sometimes what we had to eat, was not what we might desire, but as Dad often said, “it is not what you like that makes you fat, it’s what you get”.

One real treat that we would have, in the spring when wild strawberries came on, we would pick a lot of those strawberries, and mother would make a shortcake. Then with our good Jersey milk, we would make ice cream. (Dad would cut ice in the lakes in the winter, and we put ice up in an icehouse.)

An icehouse was a building we insulated with hay, straw or whatever was available, then put the ice in covering each layer of ice with a good layer of sawdust. When we wanted ice, we had to uncover a lot of sawdust from on the ice, take out a block of ice and re-cover it with the sawdust. Then we had to break it up for the ice cream freezer, then crank the freezer for about an hour.

My Aunt Mable, Uncle Harley Apps, and their family would come over and we would all enjoy the shortcake and ice cream. There is nothing better than wild strawberries. Uncle Harley and their boys would bring their violins, guitars, and even play music on a washboard. We had a great time. I don’t think my sister and I ever realized how poor we really were.

We raised our own potatoes, and I remember several times during the winter I had to go down in the cellar, and sort potatoes. If we didn’t remove any rotten potatoes, the rest would all spoil. Also near springtime some of the potatoes would start to sprout, and we had to remove the sprouts. We would put a hundred bushels of potatoes in the cellar in the fall, and barely had enough for seed in the spring. We often ate potatoes three times a day.

In our corn field we planted pumpkins, squash and watermelons, along with the corn. We used a hand corn planter, and it had a slot along the side, so every few hills you just dropped the pumpkin or melon seeds in that slot and it planted with the corn, so in the fall when we harvested the corn, we had a lot of melons, pumpkins etc.

We cut our corn with a hand corn sickle, and tied small armfuls into bundles, and put them into a corn shock. Then we harvested the melons, squash, & pumpkins which we piled up and covered with potato vines to keep them from freezing until we could bring them in.

It was a common thing for young fellows to `coon’ melons from a neighbor’s melon patch. They usually weren’t destructive, and so it was really a lot of fun for the fellows, and no one really cared about a few melons. I remember one year, when a car stopped a few hundred feet down the road from our driveway.

It was quite dark, so Dad expected it was someone who planned to coon some melons. We watched as two fellows sneaked over near the woods and back toward the melon patch.

Dad decided to slip down where the car was, to see if he knew whose it was. He recognized the car as belonging to Mark Jenima, the store keeper where we purchased groceries, about three miles away. So, he knew it was Jay Jenima, Mark’s son and a friend. The next day Luke Rayment said he was going to the store, so Dad decided to have some fun. He told Luke to mention at the store, that Dad had recognized the car, and knew the boys had taken the melons, and say that he was going to Lake City on Saturday, to see the Sheriff.

That evening the boys came to our house, bringing the melons, to beg Dad not to report them. Dad just laughed and told them he too was having fun, he had no intention of going to the sheriff, and they could keep the melons. They all had a good laugh, and parted friends.

While we were living on the homestead, we visited the Uncle Harley and Aunt Mable, Apps, (Mable was Dad’s sister.) They lived just east of Merritt, Michigan, about ten miles from our homestead. One evening, while there we had a bad windstorm. My sister, myself and the Apps kids were playing in a lean to, attached to the back of the house, and our parents made us come into the house. We couldn’t understand why, but is those days kids didn’t question their parents.

The wind became so strong, that the house actually moved about two feet on the foundation, while we were in it. We stayed overnight, because of the storm, and when we went home the next morning, we found a window blown in, in our kitchen, and dishes on the floor, as well as some trees blown down. I remember several bad storms in those days, including the one I mentioned earlier, where our own house was nearly blown down.

In nineteen thirty five the schoolhouse burned down. Most people believe a family who wanted school consolidation with Lake City schools, burned it down. But with no real proof, nothing was done.

We finished the year in the Aetna Town Hall which was about three hundred feet from the schoolhouse. That town hall still is in use today, as a town hall.

That winter, of nineteen thirty five, and thirty six was the worst winter I have ever seen. Our road had been plowed and the snow where it was plowed up was over my head, of course I was probably not more than four feet tall then.

I was eight years old and in third grade, and small for my age. (I didn’t start growing tall until about thirteen.) One day it started snowing about noon, and the teacher let school out about two o’clock because it was storming so badly. My sister and I stopped at Rayment’s, and they sent Johnny home with us to make sure we got there okay.

Dad had taken mother to the doctor in Cadillac, and they got in the storm coming home. Dad was driving his Overland six, which was a fairly good car for that day; probably cost him twenty five dollars.

When they turned on our road the snow plow had broken down, so they drove right on past it. Dad would back up make a run at the snow go a few feet, and back up and go again. He soon burned up his engine.

He then carried my mother back to a house, where the farmer had a team of mules, with which he drove then home. They wanted mother to stay there, but she would not hear of it, because she was worried about us kids. As soon as they got to our place the farmer had to turn around and go back home before the storm got so bad he couldn’t make it.

When mom & dad got home, Dad went right to the barn, to break ice around the barn door, and let air in for the cattle. A storm like that will seal up a building where fresh air cannot get in. By the next morning no fences or fence posts were visible. Dad’s car was completely covered, and kids walking out to M-55 to catch the bus, walked over the car, not even knowing it was there.

Snow was over four feet deep on level ground, and much deeper in the road where it drifted full between the banks left by the snow plow earlier. The temperature dropped to forty degrees below for several days.

The school teacher moved in with a family who lived about one eighth of a mile from the Town hall where we had school, and so school re-opened. We walked to school in temperature as low as thirty degrees below zero, but when it was colder than that we were allowed to stay home. Dad had told us to never stop by a snow bank where we would be out of the wind, and it would feel warmer, because if we stopped, we could freeze to death in a few minutes.

When walking to school, we would walk in the fields instead of the road which had filled up with snow above the snow banks that I mentioned earlier. We would walk on brown snow; the snow was brown because it had a thick crust frozen on it, and we could walk on it without breaking through.

We carried our lunch in syrup pails, because we could not afford a regular lunch bucket, in fact I’m not sure they had lunch buckets then, at least I had never seen one, but I was just a country boy who didn’t know much of the rest of the world.

Sometimes in winter my sister and I would carry small jars of cocoa, made with our Jersey milk, and we would bury it in the snow, so by lunch time it had crystallized, and tasted really good.

We had no well at school, but someone furnished a container of water each day, about three gallons. Probably the teacher brought it. My sister and I each had a collapsible tin cup that we could drink from.

If we had been playing hard at lunch time, we would come in thirsty and the teacher had to ration the water to us. Sometimes we only got enough water for a few swallows, and it didn’t really quench the thirst.

I remember one of my early days in school, I guess my hair was all messed up, and the teacher told me to look in the mirror. (There was a mirror hanging on one wall,) but I didn’t know what she was talking about because at home mirrors were called looking glasses. I was a real country hick.

In the winter when the roads were plowed, the frozen snow would leave a hard icy surface on the roads. Some evenings, my sister and I, with neighbor kids, usually about six in all, would go to a hill on the road about three fourths of a mile north of our place, and build a bonfire in the middle of the road. (There were so few cars that it was no problem,) then take our hand sleds and slide down the north side of that hill.

With a good start we could slide over three quarters of a mile. Then walk back to the bonfire to get warm. Two or three trips in an evening was all we could do, but it was sure a lot of fun.

Another thing I remember about that hill, is when we were with dad in his model T Ford, he would stop, turn around and back up the hill. Being just a kid, I assumed that was just the way it was done. In later years my dad explained to me that the reason for backing up that hill was, that the model T gas tank was under the seat, and the gas was gravity fed to the carburetor. So unless you had nearly a full tank of gasoline, you couldn’t get gas to the carburetor. When he was backing up the gas could flow down to the carburetor.

## Toys

I had a small toy die cast metal car, that someone had given me, which I really enjoyed, and my sister had a doll or two, beyond that we made most anything we wanted to play with. Dad showed me how to make a hoop and wheel. I had a metal ring off of a barrel, and I took a piece of board, about 1 inches wide and 2 feet long, and nailed a cross piece at the bottom about 10 inches long. I could run with this pushing the metal ring guiding it with the cross piece. That was a lot of fun, and I spent hours playing with it. We had enough work to do that we didn’t need any more toys. In those days we contrived things to have fun.

Another thing we made is, we would take an empty thread spool, carve it to a taper, and put a stick or pencil in it and it became a top to spin. I think we really had more fun than the kids now days who have about everything.

As most of the farmers, we raised a field of corn each year. To harvest the corn, we cut the corn with a corn knife or corn sickle. A corn sickle was a small hand held knife, with a circular blade about ten or twelve inches long. The blade was about a quarter of a circle, and the handle slightly offset, to manage it.

As we cut the corn, we gathered it in our other arm, until we had an armful, then we tied twine around the center of it and placed it into a shock. After several armfuls of corn we had a reasonable sized shock. We then tied that shock with twine, and left it until we had time to pick the ears, from it and husk them, later in the fall.

When we began to husk the corn, we brought our wagon near the shock we were working on, and threw the corn into the wagon, as we husked it.

We made ourselves corn pics or corn huskers, which were a round stick about three eighths inches in diameter and about five or five and one half inches long. We sharpened them to a point on one end, and made a groove around the stick about an inch behind the point and another groove near the opposite end. We then took a strip of leather about one half inch wide and put a slit into it at each end, so the leather would fit into the grooves, leaving room for our fingers to slide between the strip and the pic. We could then slip our fingers around the pic under the strip and we would slide that pic from top to bottom of the corn ear, stripping the husk in one motion.

After a while you could get pretty good with it. I made many corn pics in those years.

Occasionally when we opened a corn shock, we would find snakes hiding in them. The corn shocks were also a great place to take a nap when you got tired

# Chapter 3 - Moving Downstate

Dad was still not able to farm, because of his stroke, so in nineteen thirty six we moved. Dad traded eighty acres of un-cleared land to our neighbor Luke Rayment for twelve acres with a house about fifteen miles north of Lapeer. Our address there was Otter Lake, Michigan. Which was about four miles away, and we were about two and one half miles from Fostoria.. Dad had gotten a job with a wrecking company in Flint. However, he missed a day’s work while we were moving and they fired him. People were lined up for jobs in those days.

We loaded all we owned including a cow into a four wheel trailer, and loaded our car, (a model T Ford) to over capacity. I laid down on blankets and clothing piled in the back seat just squeezing between the blankets and the ceiling of the car. Dad, mother and my sister rode in the front.

Can you imagine three people in the front seat of a Model T, for over one hundred and fifty miles? If I remember correctly, we had sixteen flat tires on the way down. Dad would jack up the car, remove the rim from the wheel, take the tire off the rim, patch the tire, put it back on, and then pump it up with a hand tire pump. Our tires were not very good, and the load very heavy. Tires in those days were not as good as today’s tires anyway.

When we reached our new place, on what is now Briggs road, (it didn’t have a name then,) we found another family living there. They had found the house empty and just moved in. They moved without problem, but left a terrible mess, even using one room as a toilet, instead of going to the outdoor toilet, which was the normal toilet in those days. My mother was really upset.

I started fourth grade in Cyclone School, about a mile and a quarter away. The first thing I noticed was the school had a water pump. At the Aetna school, we never seemed to have enough water to drink. So this was a great improvement.

Our teacher my first year there, was Doris Elwanger, from Mayville, Michigan. I didn’t like her, and as I look back I don’t think she was a very good teacher.

Two years later we got a teacher from Otter Lake, Michigan. Only about five miles away. Her name was Marion Sellick. She was young, and just out of school, but she was an excellent teacher. She made every subject interesting. When I graduated from the eighth grade there, I was an all ‘A’ student.

While we lived in that place, Dad worked any job he could find to make a living, because we were still in the depression. I helped Dad after school and on weekends. We installed furnaces, put up eaves trough, put on roofs, cleaned sewers etc.

I remember one barn we were putting eaves trough on. The barnyard side was so high that dad took a twenty eight foot extension ladder, and tied a twelve foot section on top of it. We could reach over thirty feet with it. We would measure the eaves, and dad would make the trough up in one long piece.

My job was to keep the torches going, and the soldering irons hot. That sounds easy, but the irons must be just right, hot enough, but not too hot or we would have to re-tin the irons. When we were ready to put up the trough, dad would fasten ropes to the trough in two places about one third the distance from the center, and attach a small pulley to the roof above that point. I would take one end of the trough, and dad the other, each of us also held a rope from those pulleys, as we climbed our ladders each carrying our end of the trough, we pulled the ropes to bring up the center of the trough. When we got to the top, dad would secure his end of the trough, move to the pulleys and secure the trough there, then he would climb my ladder, reach around me, and secure my end.

That was a lot of work, for a man recovering from a stroke.

Shortly after moving to our Otter Lake address, my Uncle Dale died. Dale was my dad’s brother, (he had been sick and in the hospital for a long time.) The funeral was held at Moddersville, so we had to make the trip back up near our old homestead.

The trip at that time took between five and six hours, one way. Dad had very little money, so when we needed to get some food, we stopped at a grocery store, and got a loaf of bread, and some bologna, to make sandwiches. We then drove a few miles to find a good place to stop to eat. (There were not many parks at that time.) We pulled off the road at a grassy place and mother started to make sandwiches. She found the bread was moldy. She was really angry, but she picked out the moldy parts and made the sandwiches anyway.

There were three or four cars of us traveling north for the funeral, so at one time they let us kids switch cars, and they got to visit with some they hadn’t seen for a long time.

I remember that while riding with people I didn’t know, someone gave each of us an orange. It was a real large orange, but before I had a chance to eat it, I fell asleep. When I woke up my orange was missing. We looked all through the car, but the orange was never found. Evidently someone had eaten my orange, thinking I wouldn’t remember it when I awoke, and the searching was just to help satisfy my disappointment, I was really disappointed, because I had never had an orange before.

There was a place near Fostoria where we could buy day old bakery goods. Actually some was probably a week old, but we could get a burlap sack full for a dollar. We took whatever we wanted for ourselves to eat, then gave the rest to our pigs. That was the first time I ever had coffee cake. This may seem ridiculous to some, but the food was still wrapped in the original wrappers, and was quite a treat for us.

When I was thirteen years old, I was chopping up some tree roots for kindling wood, the axe glanced off the wood and into my foot. It went right into the joint behind my big toe. (Fortunately it didn’t cut any tendons.) I went into the house and told my mother, and then had to help her to a chair, she almost fainted. My sister had heard that salt was good for a bad wound, so she got me a pan of salt water to soak my foot. That really made it bleed.

My sister then went to a neighbor’s to try to get a doctor, and call my dad, who was then working in Pontiac (we had no phone.) It was Saturday, and not many doctors available, but we found one in Mayville who would take me. My sister then had to find someone who would drive us there because dad had our car in Pontiac. She finally found a neighbor who would drive us to Mayville. Many could not get out because the roads were too muddy.

When we got to the doctor’s office, we had to wait in his waiting room for quite a while, my foot was bleeding all the time, and when the doctor saw the blood on his floor he became quite angry. He then examined my foot, and said this boy has to go to a hospital. With that he re-wrapped my foot in the same bandage we had on it and sent us home.

Dad got home Saturday night and took me to the Lapeer County Hospital Sunday morning. The hospital at that time was a two story building with no elevator, so dad carried me up to the second floor. They put me in a bed, and didn’t even look at my foot until Tuesday.

The doctor who they assigned to me, opened the bandage, and said that it had already started to heal, so he had to cut away some tissue, and then sewed it up. Since we had no money, they didn’t waste anesthetic on me, he just began sewing. However all healed well, and after a couple weeks on crutches, I was back in good shape.

I walked to school on crutches. One day I even walked into Fostoria, to get a haircut on my way home, a total of about four miles on crutches. I learned to run on crutches, and work and play on them.

The first year at our Briggs road home, my sister and I caught about all the childhood diseases. We hadn’t had any of them on the homestead. Here we got two kinds of measles, Whooping cough, scarlet fever, and some I hadn’t heard of. Yet we came through everything fine.

In the fall when the farmers would dig their potatoes, I would get a job picking up potatoes. It paid three cents per bushel. The farmers used a horse drawn digger, and it left most of the potatoes uncovered, but we had to run r fingers through the sand, in case some had been covered by the loose dirt.

We would take potato crates, one man on each side with the crate between the rows, picking up the potatoes, then each would grab a side to the crate and move it forward a way. It was hard work, and each two men worked as a team. My dad had told me if I ever got fired for not doing enough, I would be in trouble with him, so I always worked really hard,

On one job, we got rained out at noon, so the owner said, “give us your count, and I will pay you for the day”. We usually got paid at the end of each day. Well I told him that I had thirty two bushels. That meant sixty four bushel between me and my team mate. Some of the men said, “you can’t have that many, we didn’t get nearly that”. But, my team partner said, “count ‘em”. So then they said to him, “you must have helped him” (meaning me). He said, “No, I had trouble keeping up with him”. So they counted, and we were right. When the owner paid me off, he said, “I’m sorry but I have to let you go, because if I don’t, the rest of the men are going to quit.”

I was only eleven years old then. I was worried when I went home and told dad I had been fired, but when I explained, I wasn’t in trouble after all.

The next day I went to another farm that was digging potatoes. I had been told that he paid five cents per bushel, so I asked for a job, and told him I had heard that he was paying five cents. He said “No, I don’t pay five cents, but I will pay you a dollar and a quarter a day”. (He had already heard about what happened the day before.)

When we stopped for a coffee break mid-morning, the man doing the digging asked me how much the owner was paying me. I told him a dollar and a quarter. (The digger became real angry, and said, “He is only paying me two fifty, and I am furnishing the team and the digger.”)

I thought, my big mouth, now I’m going to lose another job. I went to the owner and told him what the digger had said, and he said, “Don’t worry about it, if he doesn’t want to work he doesn’t have to. I can find another, you still have a job.”

After that I didn’t tell anyone what my wages were.

## Folsoms

By this time Dad had a job in Pontiac, and he would stay there all week and come home on weekends. So dad would assign me work he wanted done on our farm (only twelve acres) and when I would get that work done, I could go work for a neighbor. I had a steady job working for a neighbor, Lynn Folsom any time I could come. He said, “Anytime you can be her by six o’clock in the morning, you have a job.”

I got paid a dollar a day and meals, and they fed good. So I would work as fast and hard as I could to get my work done at home, which I usually finished by Tuesday evening, then by Wednesday morning I could go to Folsom’s.

Every day I had to milk our cow, feed both cow and horse, and clean stables at home before I could leave to go to Folsom’s, about a mile and a quarter away, so I had to get up pretty early.

We had planted about twenty fruit trees which I had to water as well. They were about six hundred feet from the house, and every evening, I pumped the water, a ten quart pail full for each tree, and carried it to the orchard and watered the trees. That might sound like a lot of work, but young boys worked hard in those days, and it did us no harm.

One week dad said he wanted me to set out a half acre of rhubarb, (he had planned to start a rhubarb cellar after it began to grow.) On Tuesday evening he arrived home with a friend from Pontiac, who wanted me to ride a horse he had purchased, to Pontiac for him. It was about nine o’clock in the evening, getting quite dark, and I was back in the field planting that rhubarb.

Dad’s friend couldn’t believe that I would be working that late, without dad being there. I was trying to get the job done so I could go to Folsom’s the next day.

Working for Folsom, I had several jobs, sometimes driving his team cultivating, discing, or in season mowing away hay in the hay barn. I liked the work and they were good people to work for.

The household was run by Lynn Folsom’s mother, (Lynn’s wife was a school teacher.) One day I was cultivating a field for him about three fourths of a mile from their home, when Lynn came to call me for dinner. (Dinner was served at noon, the evening meal was supper.) (Lynn was a cripple from infantile paralysis. He drove an Oldsmobile using a piece of 2x4 to push the clutch and brake.) Well Lynn came driving back to the field where I was working, and waived to me to come to dinner.

I had about two more rounds to make to finish that field which took ten or fifteen minutes, so I finished the job. When I got to the house a few minutes late, Lynn’s mother really read me off for being late. I was never late again. She was really a nice person, but she insisted we must eat when the meal is ready and hot.

I usually made three or four dollars each week, depending on how much free time I could get to go to work. When school started in the fall I had enough money to buy new clothes for school. Usually a pair of shoes, two pairs of pants, and two shirts.

It was a real joy when dad would take me to the clothing store, and I could buy my own clothes. Dad usually told the store keeper, that I was buying those clothes with my own money. That made me feel really proud.

One time while working for Lynn Folsom, I had gone to the field with them for a load of hay. Lynn had told me I didn’t need to go to the field, since I had enough work mowing away the hay, but I used to go with them to the field for the first load. I was on the wagon stacking the hay when one of the fellows pitched up a hay cock with a rattle snake in it. It didn’t take me long to get off that wagon. The Folsom boys chided me about that for a long time.

Perhaps some explanation is in order here: The hay in those days was all loose hay, I don’t believe hay bailers were invented yet, if they were, I had never seen one. The hay was mowed, with a hay mowing machine, then raked into windrows with a hay rake. Then we would stack the hay in small stacks called hay cocks.

A hay cock, was not just a pile of hay, but it was a small stack, stacked so rain would run off it, and so a man could push a fork into it and leaning backward raise most of the hay over his head and onto the wagon.

Usually a strong man could load about half a hay cock with each fork full. Then the man on the wagon stacked the hay in layers so it would not slide off when hauling it. We would place a ‘sling’ on the wagon bed, and stack hay until we had a full load, which usually was about two ton.

Sometimes snakes would crawl into a hay cock to get out of the summer heat, that is how the rattle snake happened to be in that hay that was thrown up to me on the wagon.

When the wagon was loaded, the team pulled the wagon into the barn between the hay lofts, and they had ‘hay forks’ attached with a rope and pulleys to a track at the peak of the barn.

Horses pulled that hay up to the track, and the man mowing the hay away, (in this case it was me) would pull the hay car over to the hay mow, and pull a trip rope dropping the hay in a pile in the hay mow.

Then it must be mowed away, which meant stacking it in proper order in the mow. That again was my job.

When all the hay that we could get with the hay forks was unloaded, the ends of the hay sling were fastened together by a snap in the end rings, the slings were then raised to the car on the ceiling track and like the hay forks, I pulled it over to the mow, and pulled a trip rope and dumped the slings. (You don’t want to be under those slings when you dump them or you will get buried in the hay.) Mowing away hay is a hot dirty job, but I loved it.

When I would come down from the mow, I would be wet with sweat, and covered with hay chaff, so would go to the well house, and wash off with cold water and get a good cold drink of water. Within a few minutes the wagon would be coming with another load, and I would start all over again.

## Shotgun

When I was twelve years old, my dad got me a shotgun. It was a sixteen gauge, single shot gun. I used that gun for years afterward. Until it was stolen in a break in at our Hadley area home.

One of the neighbor boys I used to hunt with was Charlie, Thatcher. He had a ten gauge shotgun, That to re-load he had to pull down the trigger housing, pull out the used shell, and put in the new one. Then pull the trigger housing back up. The spring the held the housing in place was broken, so he had a piece of inner tube rubber, he used as a large rubber band to hold it in place.

The barrel of that shotgun, had cracks in the end about an inch and a half long, and it kicked something fierce, but he could get his share of the game with it.

One day I was out hunting alone, and I had been gone quite a while, and I was tired, so I sat down on a log to rest. I leaned my shotgun against the log, but it slipped and fell in the mud, clogging the barrel. Since I was tired I decided to go home and I would clean my gun when I got there.

Just before I got home I jumped over a fence and a pheasant went up. I forgot about the mud in the barrel, and I drew up on the bird, but the gun miss-fired. I praise the Lord for that, because if it had fired, I may not be here today

# Chapter 4 - Move to Pontiac

In nineteen thirty nine, dad had gotten a job in Yellow Cab. (Later purchased by General Motors and became GM Truck.) They had a long line of men looking for a job, and dad got in that line. The employment manager would open the door and ask a few questions, and if not satisfied would just say ‘can’t use you, next man’.

When dad finally reached that door, The employment manager asked dad what he had been doing for a living, dad answered ‘odd jobs’ The employment manager said, ‘no one makes a living doing odd jobs, next man.’ Dad can be a very determined man, and he wanted a job. So he found out the name of the employment manager, it was Mr. Storm.

The next morning dad put on his suit, and showed up at the plant, about 6 o’clock, walking up to the time clocks which were at the entry, dad asked a guard, Which one of these doors goes to Mr. Storm’s office? The guard evidently thinking dad was supposed to be in that office that day, said ‘that door there.’ Dad went into Mr. Storm’s office and sat down.

About 8 o’clock a man (Storm’s assistant) came in and started to take off his coat, and noticed dad sitting there, and asked ’what are you doing here?’ Dad answered, “I’m looking for a job.” The assistant said “you are supposed to be in that line out there.” Dad said, “I was out there yesterday.”

The assistant said no more until all the office help were at their desks, then he said “step up to that desk right there.” They gave dad a job, and he worked there for twenty six years, until his retirement, in 1965.

In nineteen forty one we moved to Pontiac, near where dad worked. I had a kid brother by that time, he was three years old. Dad had rented a garage from Mrs. Creager, The garage was about twelve by sixteen, not large enough for a full size car today. Dad, mother, my brother, and, myself lived in that garage for about two years. It was a little crowded but we didn’t mind, we were all together again. My sister had gotten a job, and rented a room from Mrs. Creager.

Actually Mrs. Creager didn’t own the property, she rented it from L. H. Cole Oil Company. Her and her late husband had lost the property in the depression, and Cole had rented it to her at a very reasonable rate.

The property included about two acres, a nice house, the small garage that we rented, and a two family flat, on the north edge of the property, which she rented out also. I think these rentals provided the bulk of her income.

In about nineteen forty three, Mrs. Creager died, and dad purchased the property from Cole, for four thousand five hundred dollars. He paid five hundred dollars down and the payments were seventy five dollars per month.

When dad got off work in the afternoon, and I got home from school, we went out on jobs installing or repairing furnaces. As a result we were able to pay about two hundred dollars every month on the place and it was soon paid for. I think my sister loaned dad some of the money to help pay the place off sooner. None of us Rushes like to have a mortgage.

I didn’t bring books home from school, because high school was not much more than a review of what I had learned in that few years at that little one room schoolhouse, “Cyclone School.” I do wish I had studied more in my English class. Neither did I participate in any school sports, because my after school work took all my spare time.

Since World War II was underway, the metal shortage, made it impossible to get new bicycles etc. So I started going to junk yards and dumps, and getting old bikes and tricycles, using the parts and building bikes and tricycles from the good parts, painting them and selling them. I had quite a business going for about a year, before I went into the army myself.

Shortly after buying the house, dad decided it needed painting. He had a small air compressor, I think it only had a quarter horsepower motor. He had me cover all the windows and spray paint the house. It was an oil base paint that took forever to dry. I could only spray a little, then I had to wait for the air pressure to build up because the air compressor was too small. It took me four or five days to paint the house that way, and each night when I was finished for the day, I had to wash my hair in kerosene to get the paint out.

We had a coal furnace, and I used to take dad’s car and trailer, and haul coal from Tex Coal Company which was just a few blocks away. I also used the trailer to haul cinders from the city dump, to put in our driveway in the spring because of the mud. However, I don’t recommend that, because those cinders do not hold up long.

I often wonder where we got time to do all that we did in those days.

I helped dad build a cabin on the Muskegon river on some property that dad had purchased from Ernest. On one trip up to work on the cabin, a friend of mine, Pete August Jr., went along. We got our lumber from Ernest’s saw mill.

Once while dad was helping Ernest at the mill, Pete and I hauled a load of lumber back to the cabin site. Dad told us to just throw it into a neat pile, we didn’t need to stack it because we would be using it that same day.

When we went back for the second load, dad came back to the cabin site with us, and he became angry as soon as he saw the first pile of lumber. He said “I told you to put the lumber in a neat pile” We looked and the lumber was strewn, all over. I said, “We did put it in a neat pile.”

Then I realized that we had eaten our lunch there earlier, and left some scraps on the ground where we had placed the lumber. While we were gone for the next load, a bear had come and threw that lumber all over to get to those scraps.

There was a man dad worked with at GM, whose name was Lou Lacalamo. (I’m not sure I have spelled the last name correctly.) One time an article came out in the union paper, “Champ” Entitled- “Pig Iron Lacalamo” According to the article, Lou was bartending in a bar in the upper peninsula of Michigan, when some of the men decided the “drinks were on the house.” Lou refused, and a fight started, and when the fight ended, the only man left standing, was Lou Lacalamo. So after that he was known as Pig Iron Lacalamo.

## Trout Ponds

Dad retired from General Motors in 1965, he was 63 years old. He purchased some property on Jeffs road about three miles from M55. It was all swamp. He hired a man to dig him some ponds and with the dirt built up the ground so he could build a house.

Then built a well machine and put down several wells, He had to go down about 90 feet to get water but all the wells flowed a full 2" pipe full (all Artesian). This is how he filled his fish ponds. He raised rainbow trout.

In later years Aunt Goldie got MS and was confined to a wheelchair. So dad built her a house by the ponds with no steps, so she could run her wheelchair in and out.

Then he stocked the fish ponds and told Bert he could sell the fish, just keep the ponds stocked, very little expense and they could have a good living there. Well Bert sold the fish but never re-stocked the ponds. So when Aunt Goldie died, Dad told Bert he had to move. He said he didn’t mind providing his sister with a living, but since Bert didn’t re-stock the ponds, he was not going to provide him a living also.

Dad was always willing to help anyone, but if they weren’t willing to help themselves, he would not help either.

## My Dad’s early years

Dad often worked in the logging camps in the winter, and whenever a new man came into a camp, he had to fight the bully in the camp. In this one camp, they had a bunkhouse, and I guess nearly everyone thought they were the best fighter or bully. So dad was invited outside. He stepped out and as soon as the first (bully) stepped out dad didn’t wait for anything, he just hit him really hard and knocked him out of commission, so the next man stepped out and dad hit him just as he was coming out the door.

There was about six men there, and he had floored five of them. He said he was a bit worried about the last man, because he knew of him, and knew he was a known good fighter, but as the man stepped out he offered dad his hand, and congratulated dad on what he had done. They became good friends.

Dad once worked in the cedar swamps with Chief Pontiac. (I heard that he was the last of the pure blood chiefs of that tribe, his son was a half breed.) At that time about all the chief had to do as far as the tribe was concerned, was to keep the Indians out of trouble, which sometimes became quite a job.

Dad, Chief Pontiac, and other men were working in the cedar swamps cutting cedar, and the boss was a hard man to get along with. One morning it was extremely cold, and the swamp had snow hanging on all the trees, and dad, Chief Pontiac, and another man decided that enough was enough, and were going to quit.

They started back from the swamp and met the boss coming down. The boss asked where they thought they were going. They said they were quitting. The boss said “you can’t quit.” But they convinced him that not only were they quitting, but that he better come back with them and make out their pay checks.

So the boss came back with them, sat down behind his desk, and just sat there. One of the men asked the boss, why he wasn’t making out their pay. And the boss said, “I can’t do that with you men standing around, you go back to your tents and I will make out your checks when I get ready.” With that Chief Pontiac grabbed an axe that was on the wall opposite of the desk, then reached across the desk with his other hand and grabbed the boss by the throat, and picked him up out of his chair with one hand, brought the axe close to his head, then threw him back in his chair.

The boss began making out the checks immediately. Dad said he thought the chief was going to scalp that boss.

The men lived in tents, even in below zero weather. Dad had an old model T Ford gasoline tank with one end cut out of it, and a smoke pipe in the other end that he used as a cooking stove.

Dad said when he would wake up in the morning, the water in his water bucket would be frozen solid. About four o’clock in the morning the boss would call out “daylight in the swamp”, meaning it was time to get up for another day. He would reach out from under his blankets, (no sleeping bags yet at that time,) and he would put a few pieces of pine slivers in the homemade stove, light it and in a few minutes the tent was extremely warm. He would then cook his breakfast on top of that tank.

They got paid a penny a log, and if you couldn’t cut one hundred logs a day, they didn’t even want you in the swamp. Those trees were cut with a one man saw, a two man saw, and an axe, chain saws were not invented yet. When they cut down a tree, they trimmed off the limbs, and blazed their mark on it.

Dad’s axe was a double bladed axe. He used one edge for chopping, and one edge for trimming. He kept it razor sharp. I have used that axe many times, but I was never good enough with an axe to know which edge I should use.

Sometimes I would miss what I was chopping, and drive that axe blade into the ground, that was a no-no with dad. That was the same axe that I cut my foot with when I was thirteen years old.

My dad and his brother George were in the Navy together at the end of world war l. Dad told how, often a new recruit would ask some of them how to get his white uniform white.

They would tell the recruit to put his whites in a bucket of water and dump in a can of lye, let them soak overnight, but not to reach into the bucket to get his clothes but rather use a stick to take them out. By the next morning all that would be left of the clothes was a few shreds, most eaten up by the lye.

Fortunately the recruit didn’t have to buy his own clothes, all their clothing was government issued. However is was embarrassing to have to go and ask for another issue of clothes because of their being so naive.

Dad and George served aboard the Battleship USS Arkansas. The USS Missouri sailed with them. One time they had left the coast of South America and had been at sea for two days, when a bad storm came up.

The USS Missouri was just ahead of them and they pointed the ships into the storm away from land at full speed, He said when the Missouri would rise on a wave, you could see the props turning out of water, and when they went into the valley between the waves, all you could see was the crow’s nest. Their ship of course was doing the same.

After two days the storm subsided, and they were closer to the shore they had left, than they were the four days before. I understand that the USS Arkansas was reconditioned and put into service in world war ll.

## Aunt Dorothy

My aunt Dorothy was living with her family near Mesick Michigan. When I was about fourteen, my sister and I went to visit them. While we were there the decided to go fishing, there was a lake nearby they called Bullhead Lake, it was full of small Bullheads. We could catch them about as fast as we could get our line in the water. We caught a large washtub full of bullheads. I was concerned that we would be up all night cleaning those fish, but Aunt Dorothy showed me how she cleaned them. She had me cut off the tail fin. She skinned and cleaned them and tossed them to me to cut off the fins, and I couldn’t keep up. I learned a profitable lesson that day.

## Uncle Ernest

My dad’s oldest brother Ernest Rush, never married. He lived alone in a small cabin on some property left to him by his dad, William Harry Rush. He had a small saw mill, and often didn’t have enough money to pay his electric bill. He ran his saws with a 1923 Cadillac engine, but he needed the electric to run his plainer.

When the electric company would turn off his electric for non-payment, he had two steel rods he would hang over his incoming lines and run his planer. When he got enough money he would go and pay his bill.

One day the man from the electric company had just turned off the power when Uncle Ernest, returned from paying his overdue bull, and he had to turn it back on. After that they no longer turned the power off, they just waited until Ernest got enough money and he would pay them.

Dad was building a cabin in the Muskegon river, and he hired his brother Ernest to help him. Ernest was a very stubborn man, (never wrong). While laying the blocks for the basement, he told dad that he should mix some cement with the mortar or it wouldn’t set hard enough.

Dad didn’t do it. So when they had most of the blocks laid, dad asked Ernest to clean away some of the mortar that had dropped down on the footing cement, while they were laying the blocks. (The mortar didn’t need to be cleaned up because it would be covered when they poured the cement floor.) Dad had just did that to prove to Ernest, how hard the mortar would set.

Ernest chipped away at the mortar for about half an hour, and then told dad, “If you want that cleaned up, you do it.” Dad proved his point, but Ernest never admitted he was wrong.

Another time Ernest was using dad’s Ford tractor to move some brush and other debris, he drove the tractor up on the pile of debris, and the tractor turned over backward, fortunately Ernest fell into the brush and the tractor didn’t crush him. He crawled out from under the tractor and went home, and never drove that tractor again.

Ernest made a subdivision out of his property, and sold some of it mostly in five acre lots. Our sons, Steve and Dan were in college then and wanted to invest some of the college money they had saved, to make some gain.

So I purchased five acres from Ernest, for six hundred dollars. At the same time my friend, Orlo Sprik, purchased five acres. A year later Steve and Dan needed their money, so I passed the word around they had the property for sale. A fellow where I worked was interested so I sent him up to see Ernest, knowing Ernest would show the property for me. We sold the property for fifteen hundred dollars. Not bad for a one year investment. Two years later, Orlo decided to sell his property, he went to a real estate office near Lake City, but they would not even consider listing it because the subdivision had not been recorded. Orlo was somewhat depressed about it, and came to see me. I told him we would go see Ernest, and he would sell it quicker than the real estate company could, but I thought he should pay Ernest a ten per-cent commission. Orlo agreed to that, and Ernest sold it for him within a few weeks for three thousand two hundred dollars. Still not bad for a three year investment.

Ernest lived in a really small cabin just off Cadillac road, and he didn’t have any screens on his windows, yet no mosquitoes. Since there were hoards of mosquitoes around, I asked him why he didn’t have any in his cabin.

He pointed to a light on a pole about fifty feet from his cabin, and said that when it is dark, he turns off his cabin lights and the mosquitoes go to the light pole. It worked.

# Chapter 5 - My Army Life

I was a senior in- high school, when World War two ended

I graduated in January of nineteen forty six. The draft was still on and I had received notice, so I went down to the draft board and asked them to move me up on the list so I could get my military time over sooner. They did that, and I entered the army on February fourteenth nineteen forty six. I was sworn in, in Detroit, and sent to Fort Sheridan Illinois, for processing.

I was sent with several others to Fort Lewis Washington for Basic training. The put us on a train with Pullman cars, so we traveled pretty well going out there. We had a coal burning steam engine pulling the train, and when we reached the Rocky Mountains they brought two more steam engines up behind the train to push.

We were going around on bend, where we could see the front engine turning at about a one hundred degree angle to us. In other words the engine was almost going back the way we came and in between we could look down a long way to the tree tops. On the opposite side of the train, was a solid wall of rock going straight up, so we were actually on a cliff, and it looked like the front engine would pull us off.

Some of the fellows were getting quite nervous, but I said, “nothing to worry about, they do this every day”. In a few minutes the porter came in, and I asked him, “how long has it been since a train has gone over this cliff?” And He answered, “Well suh, I have been down there three times”. I didn’t feel quite so brave after that.

We went through several tunnels, most quite short, but some up to three miles long. As I mentioned we were pulled and pushed by coal fired steam engines, and we had the windows open most of the time. When we would start through a tunnel we would close the windows, but many were short and as soon as we got the windows closed we would be out of the tunnel. So sometimes we didn’t bother to close them.

When we got into the Cascade mountains we came into a tunnel and thinking it would be short, we left the windows open. Soon we were all gagging on the smoke and finally closed the windows, and found out this tunnel was three miles long. By the time we got through the mountains the seats and our clothes were covered with soot.

## Fort Lewis

Fort Lewis was (then an engineer base) where we received weeks of basic training. They put us in quarantine for two weeks, before we started basic. While we were in the quarantine area, I met a fellow who had been there for several months. His records had been lost, and he had gotten tired of waiting, so he hitchhiked home to New Jersey, and back again. They still hadn’t found his records when we left for basic training.

I felt sorry for some of the city kids; the training was difficult for them, but being a farm boy, it was mostly a breeze for me. I loved the calisthenics.

### Bivouac

During the last of our basic training, they sent us on bivouac for two weeks. One of the training exercises there we were sent out on a hike, and the leader of the group had the only compass.

Every two hours the leader was to send one man back to report our position. After a few hours I was sent back.

On the way I heard someone talking in the woods, so I crept in to see if I could see what company it was and report their position. I didn’t want to get caught by them, or I might end up digging their fox holes for them for the next two weeks.

I crawled up behind a log and peeked over to see if I could read the number on their helmet. (We had our company letter and division number on our helmets) mine was “C 1" Company C of 1st division. While training on bivouac, any other company was considered our enemy, for training purposes.

I was only behind that log for a few seconds, when someone spotted me, and they all scattered. I knew they would try to capture me so I started running as fast as I could. I was a good runner and after about fifteen minutes, (it seemed like an hour), they all backed off.

By that time I had no idea where I was. I climbed a tree to see if I could spot anything, and all I could see was more trees. I was somewhere in ninety two thousand acres of mostly woods, called Fort Lewis. That was pretty scary.

I started walking in the direction that I thought our encampment might be, and after a while I spotted two outpost guards. Not knowing what company encampment it might be, I sneaked passed the guards, thinking that if I removed my helmet, to conceal the name of my company, I might be able to ask someone if they knew where C of the 1st is located, without them knowing who I as. When I got to the CP tent, (Company commander’s tent) I saw C 1 on the flag. I had sneaked into my own company encampment without knowing it.

I liked the state of Washington, except that during that season, February, March and April, it rained some every day. Just enough to get you good and wet. People there say it quits raining on May first, but we shipped out from there on April twenty ninth.

## Fort Belviour

I had signed up for an engineer’s school in Fort Belviour Virginia. It took us four days and five nights by troop train to get there.

We stopped at a train station in Chicago one evening, and the officer in charge announced that if anyone had family in that area and wanted to see them, that we would be leaving the station where we were in five minutes, and they could meet at the next station, where we would be for half an hour.

Well we stayed right there for about one and on half hours, and only stopped at the next station for a few minutes. (That’s typical army hurry up and wait.)

We arrived in Fort Belviour Virginia, still wearing our wool OD uniforms, and it was HOT. We could hardly wait to change into our khaki’s. We again were put into two weeks quarantine, this was usual on any transfer to isolate any disease those coming in may have. When our isolation was over, (the engineer school was still not ready for us, (army hurry up and wait.) So they attached us to the Four Hundred Tenth Engineer Construction Battalion.

This was an outfit that had been in the thick of war all during world war two. I enjoyed working with these seasoned men, and the food we got there was great. Sometimes pork chops for breakfast.

We were finally assigned to our school, where I would be studying Topographic Drafting. (Making maps from aerial photographs, and surveyor’s notes.) The first day, they told us that if we hadn’t had algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, we should drop out now because we would never be able to handle the class.

I had some algebra, and some geometry, but no trigonometry. However, even though I hadn’t had all the math they said, I liked math and I refused to drop out. I found it a little hard to do some of the math involved, but I figured a way to do the problems without too much difficulty, and completed the course with good marks and no help.

At Fort Belviour I met a fellow GI named Floyd. We became pretty good buddies. We traveled many places together. One weekend we decided to make a visit to his home in Scranton Pennsylvania. But we missed the bus in Alexandria, and since it would be a long while before another bus left for Scranton, we decided to catch a train to New York City. We arrived in New York City at Grand Central Station about one o’clock on a Saturday morning. We went down to the subway and one sign pointed up town, the other pointed downtown.

We had no idea which way to go, so we flipped a coin. I don’t remember whether we went uptown, or downtown, but after riding a way, we got off and found ourselves in a residential district. So we crossed the street and caught the next subway back the way we came from. I finally noticed a sign that said Broadway and Forty Second Street. I had heard of these streets so we pulled the cord and got off. Looking back we could see Grand Central Station where we had come in.

We wandered around a while, not knowing what to do at that time of morning. We spotted a phone booth and opened a book, where we saw an ad for “Ching Lee’s Restaurant The Heart of Chinatown.” I said, “Let’s go to Chinatown.” Looking back that was quite a stupid idea. But we found the restaurant, and had an early breakfast. I don’t know what we ordered, but it was some kind of muffin. Leaving the restaurant we found an all night movie theater, and went in there for a few hours.

About six o’clock I phoned my parents in Pontiac, Michigan. It was the first time I had talked to them since going into the army. After that we began touring New York City. First Coney Island, where we rode what was at that time I believe, the two largest roller coasters in the world. The Cyclone and the Tornado. I’m sure they have many larger today.

Next we went to see the Statue of Liberty, and took a boat trip to Staten Island. After an enjoyable, long and tiring day, we decided to get a hotel room and see more on Sunday, but at the hotels they said, “We don’t rent rooms to soldiers.” What a slap in the face. We decided we didn’t want any more of New York City, so we boarded the train back to Alexandria Virginia, never to return. We slept in our train seats all the way back.

Another experience at Fort Belviour; There was a swimming pool on the post, so one Sunday afternoon, we went swimming. Then we lay down on the sandy ground and went to sleep.

We slept for three hours, I had been sleeping on my stomach, when I woke up I was sunburned. I didn’t notice it much at first, but a couple of hours later, I felt like I was on fire. Floyd was a little darker complexion and didn’t burn.

I didn’t go to sick call, because I would have been court marshaled for not protecting myself from the sun, but I sure suffered for about two weeks. The blisters would break and then blister again.

The very next morning we had a full dress parade. I really suffered and could hardly wait to get to the barracks and get my shirt and tie off. Every day for about two weeks, when I got off duty I would take my shirt off, and skip evening chow, because it was too painful to wear my shirt.

While we were in this school, the army offered us an opportunity of a re-enlistment for one year, plus a thirty day furlough, thus we would know when we would get out, and as it was we didn’t know how long we must serve. I talked to my commanding officer and asked if I could complete my engineer school and then enlist. He said that would be good. So I stayed until I graduated, and then took the re-enlistment. Only two of us did so, Marshall Hecht and myself.

## Fort Dix

After the re-enlistment we were sent to Fort Dix New Jersey for processing before going home on furlough. While there, they lined us up to get a GI haircut. Up to this point I had never had a GI haircut. I had always kept my hair fairly short and neat, and somehow they missed me when the GI haircuts were given at my first induction. So as soon as the officer who had told us to get into that line for the haircut, walked away, Marshall and I ducked around a building, through the fence, and went into town, where we spent the day.

That night we were the only two in the barracks without a GI haircut. We had learned that in the army the word does not get around to all the officers about everything, so we were gambling that they didn’t know whether or not we were supposed to get that haircut. We got away with it.

The train company had a policy that they gave a special price to GI’s when they purchased a round trip ticket, just to help soldiers going home on furlough. The round trip ticket was considerably less that a one way.

When we went to board our train, Marshall tried to get a one way ticket at a reduced price because he was going to Chicago, and would not need a return ticket. They not only refused the reduced price for the one way ticket, but refused to sell him a round trip then. So he ended up paying more than I did for my round trip ticket to Pontiac, Michigan.

After I got home I found a navy man who was going to New Jersey, and gave him my return half of the ticket, and still saved money.

## Fort Sheridan

After the furlough, I had to report to Fort Sheridan Illinois, for re-assignment. When arriving there, I had one day less than a year to serve. They told me that anyone with less than a year must be assigned to the fort closest to home.

For me that was Fort Sheridan. I sure didn’t want that, because most of the meals were served in a consolidated mess hall that served from five hundred to a thousand every day. That meant long lines, and the poorest of food.

I was assigned to the Surplus Property section, at Fort Sheridan, and we would always have to GI the barracks (scrub the floors) every Friday evening.

One Friday Horace Bilby, myself, and another fellow, all from the same barracks, had opportunity to get off duty early on a Friday, and we wanted to go home for the weekend. So we made agreement with the rest of the fellows, that we would GI half of the barracks, and they could do the rest when they got off duty. We moved all the bunks to the other side, of the barracks, and I took two cans of lye and spread it on the floor of the one side, then we threw two or three pails of water on the floor and scrubbed it down with our brooms, then moved the bunks back.

It looked really good when we left, however, when we got back the sergeant in charge, was quite angry, asked me what in the blank we did to that floor. I told him what we did, and asked what the problem was. He said that the next morning, our side of the barracks, the floor was completely white. They had to wet the floor down for inspection, and we were never to do that again.

Under the circumstances we got off pretty well, by wetting the floor it all looked the same, and so they really covered for us even though they were angry.

While we were temporarily assigned to Surplus Property. Which meant loading trucks with whatever, was being purchased from surplus. There was a civilian named Sam in charge of the warehouses, and he didn’t know much about warehousing. Often times our loading sheet would call for perhaps two bundles of field jackets, and we would find them in a bin, with a couple hundred bundles of trousers on top of them.

One day, I was very tired. And a situation just like that happened. There was two bundles of an item wanted and about two or three hundred bundles of something else on top. I was quite quick tempered anyway, so I told Sam (in front of everyone including a civilian from Chicago Headquarters,) how stupid I thought he was. I told him “when there are only a couple of an item in a bin, we should remove them, put in the hundreds of others, and then put them back on top, It would save time and be easier to move the two bundles several times that to move the hundreds to get to them.” It made a lot of sense to me.

After that incident a couple of the fellows got me aside, and asked me if I knew who that civilian was. I said I don’t know, and I don’t care. They said, his name is Kelley, and he is a VIP from fifth army headquarters. I was a little worried then. But in a few days I was promoted to corporal and I found out that Kelley was instrumental in that happening.

A few days later Kelly said he needed a driver. He asked me if I had a GI driver’s license, I said no I don’t. He sent me to the motor pool, and said a license will be ready when you get there, and for me to check out a pickup truck which would be assigned to me thereafter. I drove him to many specific places, and when not needed for that, I drove work details to their jobs.

## AWOL

Most of us had class “A” passes by then, which meant we could leave the post anytime we were off duty. But to get a three day pass, was different. Often on weekends my friend Horace and I would apply for a three day pass, and they would give us one, but tell us we would only be allowed to be gone for two days because we were needed on our jobs. The problem was that there was a limit of either three or four three day passes in a year. They were charging us for three days and only giving us two. So one weekend when we got our three day pass, we stayed home three days. When we got back we had been reported a.w.o.l. (absent without leave). The sergeant in charge of our outfit tried to cover for us, but Major Garrett, our detail commander had called for me with the truck.

As soon as we reported for duty, Major Garrett called for us to report immediately to him. He chewed us out royally, and threatened court martial. However, He said, Instead, I am going to see if you men can soldier, report to Major Michael, at one o’clock in class “A” uniform. Major Michael was our company commander. Looking back I don’t think he wanted to court martial us anyway. We reported to Major Michael. He took our class “A” passes, and he sent us to the M.P.’s headquarters. There we found that they had taken two men from each outfit to replace the 728th M.P’s who were going on parade. They didn’t know that we were sent there as punishment, which we realized we really we were not. They assigned me, as corporal of the guard on one shift, and said, Pick your men and assign their posts. So I assigned my friend Horace to guard the finance office, he could sit in an easy chair for his whole shift.

We had two hours on and four hours off for twenty four hours, and then twenty four hours off, for over a week. We carried a forty five pistol and even slept with it. We could even leave the post in our off time, as long as we were in uniform with our MP arm band, and carried our pistol. If that was punishment, bring it on.

At the end of our assignment to the M.P.’s I reported to Major Michael, and asked if we could have our class “A” passes back. He asked, “Have you two learned your lesson?” I said, “Yes sir,” and he returned our passes. I really think both Major Michael, and Major Garrett, were sympathetic about the three day passes, but could do nothing about it.

When coming home for a weekend, I would hitch hike into Detroit, and I would often find myself right downtown Detroit, waiting to catch a north bound streetcar. It was not a very good area, and I felt quite uneasy during the late night hours. So I stopped in a store there and purchased a switchblade knife, which I carried thereafter on such trips.

One time someone started breaking into our barracks and stealing wallets which we usually put into our pillow case during the night, so, I started sleeping with that switchblade knife in my hand. The thief was very bold, and stole wallets in our barracks three times in a week.

Everyone in the barracks knew that I had that switchblade knife, and I was the only one that didn’t get my wallet stolen. As a result I thought it was an inside job. A couple of days later they caught the thief. He had stolen from a barracks next to us, and they caught him going over the fence, with the wallets.

After things settled down a couple of the fellows told me that since I hadn’t had my wallet stolen, that I had been under suspicion. I hadn’t even realized that I might have been suspected, so I was glad they caught the real thief.

I often hitch hiked home on weekends, I could often get a ride with a trucker, and they moved those trucks right down the road. We would come into Detroit on highway 12, or sometimes 112. In Detroit, GI’s could ride the streetcars free, so I would catch a streetcar to Woodward Ave. and then another north to seven mile or sometimes Royal Oak.

On weekends when I would hitch hike home, I would take a train back to Chicago, because I dare not be late. When I got into Chicago, I would catch the El north to the Fort. There would be several soldiers, going to Fort Sheridan, and several Sailors going to a Great Lakes Naval station just beyond.

We would try to sleep on that trip, usually about 45 minutes. Each car had two light bulbs hanging from the ceiling. One time one bulb was out and the other was bothering our sleep so I screwed the bulb loose so it would go out. I sat back down in my seat, and being loose, the bulb began to arc, as the car jolted along the tracks. Soon lead began to melt from the light fixture, and by the time the conductor came in the fixture had burned badly. No one told who had loosened the bulb.

I had a good friend while at Fort Sheridan, Horace Bilbey, in fact we are still friends today. On payday Bilbey would often leave most of his money with me and go into “Whisky Junction” and get drunk.

One night a couple of fellows woke me up, they were all shook up, and said that Bilbey had been hit by a train. They said he left the bar drunk and walked right in front of this fast moving train that went through there. They couldn’t find his body, and assumed that the train had pushed it on down the tracks. I got out of bed, and began to get dressed, to see what had happened, and in walked Bilbey. He was drunk, but said he hadn’t seen any train. He evidently stepped in front of the train, and another step passed it without even knowing the train was there.

One night I got off a streetcar at seven mile, and started walking across to the side of the street where, I could hitch hike. I was not paying attention to traffic, and I walked right in front of an oncoming car. I must have jumped because my right foot was struck by the car’s bumper, throwing my feet up and I think slid down the passenger side fender. I landed on the pavement without a scratch.

Looking back I don’t see how I could have avoided being killed. I now believe that God sent an angel to help me. I was on my feet before the driver could get his car stopped. He was shaking all over, he said he had run over me. I told him he hadn’t run over me, and I was alright. He was so shook up his wife had to drive. They wanted to take me to a hospital, but I refused, so they asked me where I was going, and I said, “Pontiac”. They then drove me all the way to Pontiac. I didn’t realize that they were not going to Pontiac themselves, until I got out of their car and they turned around and started back. I now believe that The Lord saved my life there so He could save my soul later.

Sometime later I was talking with another friend and from our conversation he found out I could type. (I could type better then, than I can now.) I got a call the next morning to report to Captain Bergscycle, who in turn sent me to see Captain Wiseman in the sales commissary. I reported as ordered, and he assigned me to a desk, writing out milk reports. About as boring job as there was. However, my friend was going on furlough, and when he left, Captain Wiseman assigned me to his job, as receiving clerk. That was a very difficult job at first.

On the first day, there was a ten thousand dollar shortage. No one had stolen anything, we didn’t handle any money. It was just a mistake on paper, and being new on the job, it was difficult to find, but in a couple of hours, I found it. Captain Wiseman then told me, that that would be my job hereafter. I was concerned because I didn’t want to offend my friend. It had been his job, and he was the one who had gotten me in there in the first place. What I didn’t know was that his time was up, and he was getting out of the army shortly after his furlough, that’s why he recommended me for the job.

I found I could make a few shortcuts in my job load, and began to enjoy that job. When I began to get some free time, I asked Captain Wiseman’s secretary to teach me how to type a military letter. I learned many different aspects of the commissary.

A little later the Chief Clerk of the commissary, (a civilian), retired, and they hired a new one. I helped him some with his new job, and also I repaired many of the typewriters, which were getting worn out. (Something I learned while working for Mitchell Typewriter, while in high school).

When meat and other perishables arrived in un-refrigerated trucks, all the office staff was supposed to help unload those trucks. One day Captain Wiseman came to my desk and told me that when those trucks arrived, that I didn’t need to help with that, I was doing enough work.

Captain Wiseman had a car assigned to him, which he kept parked just outside the commissary building. He used to ask me to drive him to court martial board meetings about twice a week, then take his wife home to Highwood, about two miles, then I could use the car until 10 pm, when I would pick him up at the board, and he would drive me back to my barracks.

One day he said, “I have noticed that you are carrying your dry cleaning into Highwood often, you don’t need to do that, anytime that car is there you take it for whatever reason you wish.” That was a real surprise, and a real privilege. I used it only occasionally, because I didn’t want to take advantage of a good thing.

One day I was in Highwood, (we called the town “whisky Junction” Because it was a small town, with thirty seven bars in it.) Anyway, I met Horace there and he was looking for a ring for his girlfriend, and he wanted me to help him look.

While we were looking, Marge, the Captain’s secretary, came in all out of breath, and told me the Captain wanted to see me immediately. (She had run all the way to town.) Neither of us had any idea what he wanted. So we got in the car and hurried back.

When I reported to the captain, he asked me, “Have you ever stamped my name on any receiving reports?” I answered, “No sir.” He asked “are you sure?” I said, “Yes sir”. He said, “That is all.” There were two officers with him from Fifth Army Headquarters in Chicago. I had a stamp with his signature, with which I stamped commissary cards for those who were allowed to purchase in the commissary. But that was all I was allowed to use it for, and all I did use it for.

The problem was, Captain Wiseman, signed his name exactly the same every time, and the men from headquarters thought the signature must be stamped. They had Captain Wiseman signing, “Joe R. Wiseman Captain Quartermaster Corps.” for about two hours before they were satisfied.

Right after I was assigned to the commissary office, I was given a pass to eat in the cooks and bakers school, just across the street. We had very good meals there, and at breakfast you could order eggs any way you wanted them. I really had the best of everything. I didn’t even have to stand reveille in the morning, I just got up went to breakfast then to work. I was off on Saturday and Sunday. The only thing I didn’t like is we had to inventory the entire commissary once every month. We would be up until about two o’clock in the morning on those days, but I guess every job has some drawback.

## Discharge

About seven months before my military time was up, some of the men I knew at Fort Belviour, came through on their way out. They chided me some because they were getting out, and I still had time to serve. However, when the Korean War started, the draft board called up those that had less than eighteen months of service. I had nineteen months and sixteen days at that time.

I really liked my job, and Captain Wiseman had to give me a pep talk about re-enlistment, when my time was nearly up. He said he would give me a promotion and try to keep me there, but we both knew he could not. So he said “well I have given you your pep talk, enjoy civilian life.”

They brought in a master sergeant to replace me, and after spending one day with me on the job, he said “I can’t do this job.” Since I had gradually taken on many extra tasks, it was easy for me, but looked like a mountain of work for someone new. They finally replaced me with that master sergeant and two civilian employees.

There is usually about two weeks of processing before being discharged, and usually those being processed have to do KP every day during that time. I went to Captain Wiseman and told him that if he could get me off KP, I would come in and help while I was in processing. He said, “Okay, you won’t have to report for any KP, nor will you don’t need to come here either, just enjoy your time.” So I had two weeks of free time before discharge.

Before going home I stopped in Chicago to buy some civilian clothes. I went into a store to buy a new suit. They didn’t have my size, but had one larger, the man said no problem, he took my measurements and said come back in an hour and it will be ready. I then went to a shoe store and purchased a new pair of shoes. I put them on and went back to the clothing store, he handed me my suit all boxed and wrapped.

On the way home my feet began to hurt from the new shoes, which then didn’t seem to fit as well as when I purchased them. By the time I got home I had corns on several toes, which took years to get rid of.

I unwrapped the suit and put it on to show my mother, and all they had done was took in the pants at the waste, and the bottom of the coat. It looked terrible. I had paid sixty five dollars for that suit, and thought I was getting a good one. My mother let the seams back out, and later an uncle came to visit, and it fit him, so he gave me thirty dollars for it. I would have given it to him. I found I had a lot to learn about shopping in those Jew stores in Chicago. I later became friends with some Jewish merchants in Pontiac, and really enjoyed, bargaining with them.

# Chapter 6 - Back Home

After returning home, I needed a job, so I went down to the unemployment agency to see if anything was available. They said I would have to sign up for unemployment, and two weeks later when I received my first check they would look to see if they had any jobs, in my category. That made me very angry. I told them, “I didn’t come in here to sign up for money or anything else, I just wanted to know if any jobs were available.” They wouldn’t give me any satisfaction, so I left, and I got a job within the hour.

I stopped at a place called “Harry White & Sons, Landscaping.” They asked me if I could drive an army 4x6, I said I could. They said be here at seven in the morning and you have a job. I went to work the next day, driving truck, and cutting sod, with a hand sod kicker. That was really hard work, but within two weeks I had gained enough strength doing that work that I felt great.

One time they sent me to Croswell, Michigan to work on a project there. Harry White rode up with me, because he planned to drive one of their trucks back when he returned. As we approached the village, I noted that they were putting in guard rail. We watched a few minutes, and Harry asked one of the men why the “dead man” wasn’t closer to the bridge cement. (A “dead man” is an anchor post with a cross member on it to hold the end of the cable.) The man told Harry they couldn’t get it any closer. I had never seen those “dead men” put in before but I asked Harry if the cross member should not be away from the bridge, not toward it. He said “yes, wasn’t this one?” I said, “No, but it seemed to me it would work better away from the bridge where the pull was against the cross member rater than away from it.” He asked me if I was sure, and I said, “Yes I’m sure”, so he told the men to dig it up. I was right and they just had to turn it around and it fit properly.

After that when Harry got out the blueprints he would call me over to go over the prints with him. I guess that little observation made quite an impression on him.

Some of the men didn’t like to work for Harry, because he was a preacher. (He actually didn’t have a church, he was a layman preacher such as I have become.) However he was instrumental in starting the Pontiac Rescue Mission, which years later I preached in many times. While working for him, he asked me one day, if I was born again, since I didn’t know what he meant, I said that I guessed I was not, but that started a conviction, that I couldn’t get away from.

One day they sent me down near Royal Oak to pick up a large tank, probably about a one thousand gallon tank. When I returned with the tank, they asked me if I could mount the tank securely, and put a pump on it to spray water on the roads. I said, “Certainly”. When I finished about ten o’clock that evening, they said, “Be back at five in the morning, we are sending you to Lansing to take over a crew we have there”. I told them I didn’t want to go to Lansing, nor to run their crew, I wanted to stay in Pontiac. They had really planned on me for that, so they had to find someone else in a hurry.

In the late fall Harry White & Sons went to Florida for the winter, they had a business there also. I was offered a job to go along, but declined that also.

Shortly after that I got a job at GM Truck, where I worked through the winter, then quit when I was offered a job a t a lawn service. That job didn’t last, because the owner didn’t have enough work to keep us busy. I then got a job at Chrysler, in their Detroit Kertcherval plant. I didn’t stay there long, because my car was not very good, it burned oil terribly. I used to say I could get forty miles to the gallon, and that was on oil, plus gasoline. I would leave home about five in the morning and get home about six in the evening. It was winter and I never saw daylight at home. So I quit that job.

Being young, I changed jobs often, but never had difficulty getting a job. I started hauling scrap iron with a Model A truck that belonged to my dad. It was hard work, and the lifting was not good for my back. Many people saw me lifting heavy machinery, and said you will pay for that with your back someday. I just laughed then, but they were right. I have had three back surgeries since.

I got another job with GM in their Pontiac Motors plant. They had me stamping fenders. I would take a fender from one press, walk over to another press, put the fender on it, and stamp the lever, and go back and get another, nine hours a day. I would use up two pair of leather gloves a day, which I had to buy myself.

It paid about a dollar an hour, but I was so weary from hearing those presses, pounding that when Pete August opened a service station at the end of our street, I helped him on opening day, doing his mechanical work and he offered me a job, I quit GM immediately.

That was nineteen forty eight. I worked for Pete August until June of nineteen fifty when I got a job at National Twist Drill and Tool Co. In Rochester, Michigan.

# Chapter 7 - Salvation & Marriage

A girl I dated a few times in nineteen forty eight asked me to go to church with her. I went, and even though we quit dating shortly after, I continued going to that church. It was the Perry Park Baptist Church.

The preacher, Hilding Bihl was blind, but had a really good memory, and had memorized much of the scriptures. He was preaching on the subject of being born again, (that is what Harry White had asked me about when I was working for him,) and from Pastor Bihl’s preaching on that same subject, I realized I was a sinner, and certainly not born again.

I decided to attend a different church. However that preacher was also preaching about being born again. I went to a third church, and still the same message. It was like that message was being saved for me in whatever church I attended. In the Perry Park church, they gave an altar call at the end of the service, for anyone who was convicted, and wanted to be saved. By then I knew I was as sinner, but I couldn’t bring myself to walk down that isle, thinking I would be a spectacle, and people would look down on me.

Each week I would determine that on that Sunday, I would walk down that isle and get saved. However when the time came, I couldn’t get out of my seat, for fear of becoming a spectacle in front of all those people.

One Sunday Pastor Bihl announced they would have a short business meeting following the service. I had been attending long enough to know that when they had a business meeting at the end of the service, that the pastor didn’t give an invitation. My heart sank, because as on previous Sundays, I wanted to respond to the invitation and get saved.

As we were singing the closing song, Pastor Bihl said I feel the Holy Spirit has been working here this morning, and so on the last verse of this song we are going to extend an invitation to anyone who might want to be saved. I don’t even remember leaving my seat that morning, but I went down that isle. The pastor took me by the hand, and said boy am I glad to see you. When I turned around and looked at the congregation, I immediately realized that they were not looking at me as a spectacle, but they had been praying for me. It was as if the whole service was just for me. That morning I told the Lord that I was a sinner who needed salvation, and He granted me that salvation, making John 5:24 a special verse for me*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

That was a real turning point in my life. Not just another page, but a new life. I have not forgotten that special time, and although I’m sure not all my life has been pleasing to God, He has been faithful, and my life has been forever changed. Praise God What a wonderful Saviour.

I attended that church regularlyfor a long time.I dated several of the young girls who were there, and there is where I met Doris Fields, who became my wife.

I had seenDoris around the church, but had never had a chance to speak with her. I was curious as to who she was, because whenever I looked around she was already gone. I didn’t know it yet, but she had graduated from Moody Bible Institute, about nineteen forty eight.

Finally one Sunday I spotted her, and after talking to her for a few minutes, I ask her to go bowling with me that afternoon. I was not a bowler, but being young in the Lord, I didn’t know where to take a Christian girl. She was quite hesitant because she knew I had dated several of the other girls from the church and therefore, considered me some kind of playboy. I finally convinced her to go. We found a bowling alley, but it was smoky, and neither of us enjoyed it much. We never went bowling again.

That evening there was an evangelistic meeting down town, in the Oakland Avenue Tabernacle. This building was at that time used for most such services, because it was very large. I didn’t know what church was sponsoring the meetings, but I really didn’t know much difference at that time. Anyway I asked Doris to go with me to the meetings that evening. She said okay. I also asked her to go to dinner with me, but she said her mother would be expecting her.

When I took her home, her mother asked me to stay to dinner, I tried to excuse myself, saying my mother would probably expect me, but Doris spoke up and said his mother won’t be expecting him, because he wanted to take me to dinner. She really didn’t care whether I stayed or not, but since she had said that, I had no excuse not to stay for dinner.

Her mother was a good cook, and friends tell us that is what got us hooked. That evening we went to the Tabernacle, and afterward I asked her if she would like a hamburger, she agreed to that, and as we drove toward the hamburger place, I put my arm on the back of the seat, so she could slide over into my arm. She said you can drive with both hands Ken.

I tried for several weeks to get a date after that, but she was always busy. However I didn’t quit, she was a pleasant challenge for me. I would call for a date, and when she said no, I would take someone else, then call and tell her how much fun we had. Then I would try for another date.

Finally I got a date to take her roller skating. We had a good time, and after that it became easier to get a date. It was now near the end of nineteen forty nine.

We often went places with Ruth & Jim Reynolds, who were married the year before. Ruth was a friend of Doris from childhood. They went to school together, and also Moody Bible Institute together.

In December of nineteen forty nine, I asked Doris to marry me. It took her several days to give me an answer, but I was sure enough that I told some of my friends that we were getting married. Just before New Years of nineteen fifty, I gave her a ring. We showed it to Ruth and Jim, and on New Year’s Day, we showed it to her mother and dad. Her mother exclaimed, ‘Oh Kenneth, my little girl’. Her dad said, ‘I approve’.

Her dad and I got along well. He was interesting to talk with, and often when Doris & I had a date, she would be standing at the door waiting to go, while I was still visiting with her dad. It took her mother a long time to really warm up to me, I guess she thought that I was not really good enough for her daughter. I don’t think I ever really was.

Next to getting saved, marrying Doris was the best thing that ever happened to me.

We were married at 4:00 pm on March fourth, nineteen fifty. Our wedding was at Perry Park Baptist Church, we were both members there then. Pastor Bihl performed the wedding, and it was in the church basement, because the upper part of the church had not been built yet. We had the reception in the back room, and after cutting and serving the cake, we walked out through the church and left. Ruth & Jim drove us to our car which was parked in the pastor’s garage. We left the gifts for our parents to take home, and no one even noticed that we were leaving, until we were gone.

We went on our honeymoon at her parent’s cabin at Otsego Lake, near Gaylord, Michigan. We got there late at night, and there was about fourteen inches of snow on the small road up to their cabin. I got stuck right in front of the cabin. Doris said that no one lived beyond there in the winter, so we left the car for the night.

Next morning about five o’clock someone living beyond the cabin, knocked at the door and asked me to move the car. He helped me dig it out and I got it into the driveway, only to find that all the water from the radiator, was in the oil pan. I had a cracked block in the engine. I thought it might be a blown head gasket, so I drained the oil, put in more oil, and water, and drove into Gaylord and purchased a head gasket, and more oil.

I didn’t have many tools, but I used my wheel wrench to remove the head bolts, and replaced the head gasket. It still leaked, so we left the car set, until we were ready to return home, then I put in new oil, and water and we started home. Near Flint the rods started to knock, but we babied it and got home okay.

We moved in to an unfinished house that dad had built. There was no well yet, so I carried water from dad & mother’s place across the street. I had gotten a ten gallon (milk can) and put a spigot in the side near the bottom, and made a shelf to set it on.

I put another engine in the 39 Buick, but a short time later I had a chance to buy a 1940 Pontiac from a friend. It had a broken engine head, and the engine needed rebuilding, which he could not afford. I think I paid $150.00 for the car. I rebuilt the engine and it proved to be a good car.

I later put down a well at the house where we were living, using dad’s model A truck. I removed a rear wheel, and put a rim without a tire on it. Then set up a tripod, with a pulley, and I would wrap the rope one turn around the rim, being careful not to cross the rope. I would pull the rope and that would tighten it on the rim and raise the well hammer, then release it so it would slip on the rim and drop the well hammer on the pipe. Of course the wheel was turning all the time. One time I accidently crossed the rope and it threw the one hundred fifty pound well hammer completely over the truck, throwing the tripod on the truck. No one was hurt, nor was the truck. I went down about fifty feet to get water.

In June of nineteen fifty, I got a job in National Twist Drill and Tool Co. In Rochester Michigan. I hired in to the center-less grinding department, at one dollar and ten cents per hour. Two weeks later I got a raise to a dollar twenty five. That amounted to fifty dollars for a forty hour week. I thought that was pretty good money.

# Chapter 8 - Our First House

In nineteen fifty one we purchased two lots, in a subdivision just off Sashabaw Road in Drayton Plains Michigan. The two lots together totaled one hundred by one hundred fifty feet. There we began building our first house. We had very little money, in fact we had just, a hundred and fifty dollars, when we started. I paid fifty dollars down on the lots, bought two kegs of nails, another fifty dollars, and fifty dollars worth of cement in bags.

Dad and I had earlier purchased a large cement mixer. It had four wheels and hard rubber tires. It had a three horse engine, the old style, hit and miss engine, with the big flywheels. I had remade the mixer into a two wheeler, with a ball hitch. So we could pull it behind our cars.

Since I had now spent my hundred fifty dollars on material, I took a shovel and began digging the footings by hand. We had to get water to mix the cement from a neighbor, and had to pump it by hand. That wasn’t working very well, so I quit working on the footings, for a while, and put down a well, using dad’s truck again. I got water at thirty two feet. I got a used pump for five dollars. It was a piston type pump, the jet pumps were not readily available yet. The pump was noisy, but did the job, and I finally got those footings done. I also poured a footing for our chimney at that time.

I got so interested in building that house that one Sunday I decided to stay home from church, to work. I was building a well pit/cellar for the pump and some storage for canned goods etc. in the future. I had two walls poured with cement, and started preparing to pour the other two walls, and floor at one time. But I dug too close to the bottom of the footings of those walls, and the two walls tipped and came down. Thankfully they caught and bound on each other and stopped before they crushed me.

I think The Lord was trying to tell me that I was putting my house before Him, in taking that time to work. I had to break up all that cement from those walls, and throw it up and out. Then it rained and washed the chimney foundation down into the cellar hole. It was so large that I couldn’t break it up, so I had to dig a hole and bury it, under the cellar floor. I lost much more time than I had thought to gain working that Sunday.

I was watching the newspaper for a good buy on used building material, when I spotted an ad for (one lot of used lumber $300.00.) I went to see it. The lumber was all thrown in piles, so it was hard to tell what was there, but I was certain there was plenty. The man who was selling it, H.P. Sutton, told me that it came from two very old houses that he had torn down in Pontiac. He said that he had made his money just from the fancy moldings etc. that he had taken out of the houses, and he wanted to get rid of the lumber, but he also said that two lumber dealers had already turned it down. I bought it.

We were planning to go up to Doris’ parents cabin at Otsego Lake, where they were vacationing at the time, to spend a week with them. (I didn’t have vacation time at the factory yet, but the factory was closing for a week.) I paid Sutton fifty dollars down and agreed to pay the balance when I started hauling it, a week later, I also agreed to get it all out of there within two weeks. I then went to the Credit Union to borrow money to pay for that lumber. They said they couldn’t loan me money to build a house, but would loan it to me for a vacation. So I decided to borrow the money for a vacation, and used what I had saved up for our trip to Otsego Lake, to pay off Sutton. We stayed four days with Doris’ parents, then went home and started hauling lumber. By midweek I decided I wasn’t going to be able to get it all hauled by that weekend, which would be the time I had promised, so I bargained with another fellow (Dick Wingate) for him to use his truck to help me. I agreed to pay him in lumber. We worked each evening, and all day Saturday, but got it done. Dick needed some 2x8s for bleachers, so I gave him fifteen hundred feet of 2x8's for helping me. He was well satisfied. I had enough lumber to rough in our house, with more left over. The lumber was still full of nails, so I had a lot of nails to pull.

My neighbor was building a garage, so he asked if he could buy enough lumber for his garage roof, which I sold him for a hundred and fifty dollars. Then a friend from where I worked wanted lumber for the roof of a house he was building and offered to help me, to pay for it. So I let him have the lumber, and told him he could help me until he figured he had paid for the lumber. He helped me one evening, for about two hours, I guess he thought he was worth pretty good wages.

I set aside some of the best boards, and made window frames from them. So I had very little cost to frame in our house. I was putting up rafters in January of nineteen fifty two, and a neighbor came over and said that he wouldn’t put his dog out in that cold. But I needed a house, so I continued. Doris’ dad died in January of fifty two, so we moved in with Doris’s mother to help her for a while. I would go directly from work to Drayton Plains, and work on the house until about 10 pm, then go back to Pontiac, eat a quick meal and go to bed, and get up again about 5:15 am. Eating and going right to bed doesn’t help much for good digestion.

During the time we were at Doris’ mother’s place, I helped with the upkeep repairs, and even changed a clutch on her sister’s car. The engine block on my car cracked, (those GM engines in those days had too thin a water jacket between the cylinders,) and I had to change the block while there also. I had left an old Oldsmobile engine behind the garage where I used to work, so I went and got that, and used that block, had it re-bored, and put the pistons, crank etc. from my engine in it, and put it in my Pontiac.

I finally got our house roughed in, and we moved into it, bare walls, no ceiling, rough floor, but it was ours, and we didn’t have any house payments. By that time we had paid off the Credit Union, and the property. Doris’ mother had purchased a smaller house in Pontiac, and so she moved there. (The larger house was too much for her to care for, and too much upkeep.)

After we got moved into our house even though we still had bare studded walls, and no ceiling, I began working on the house Doris’ mother purchased. It was very small, about sixteen by twenty.

There was a basement, but to get to it she had to go down a steep stairs outside. Her only bathroom was a toilet stool inside a clothes closet. I added an extension on the house closing in the stairway, and making new stairs, that were not steep, and two landings, where the stairs turned. I also built a new kitchen for her, and made a bathroom where the old kitchen had been. The chimney was bad, so I built a new chimney as well.

She wanted to hire a neighbor who was a carpenter to build her kitchen cupboards, but I convinced her I could do it. She showed me a picture of the style cupboards she wanted, and I built some very similar. She really loved her new cupboards. I also re-did her living room, and re-sided her whole house. She invited many of her friends over to show them her home. She was really proud of it.

I soon added a new utility room to our house, and a room above it, for our boy’s bedroom. We now had a three bedroom home. I also added a two car garage. The property had a side hill on it, and I had to fill much of the area, to build the garage, and driveway to it.

I bought a dump truck. It was a 1945 Chevrolet truck. The truck was actually built in 1942, but purchased under priority during World War ll, in 1945. This was about 1953, I got the truck for $225.00. It was still a good truck, and I did a lot of work with it. I would bring a load of fill dirt from a nearby pit, and back up to the edge of where I was filling, and dump it over the edge.

One day I backed too far, and the truck went part way over. One front wheel was spinning in the air, and gasoline was running out of the filler pipe on the other side. Doris had been watching, and couldn’t stand this, so she went back inside. I looked the situation over, got into the truck and backed it to the bottom of the bank. Thankfully it stayed upright.

On the lower lot, (that would be down that bank,) I built some toys for our kids. I built a set of swings, monkey bars, and slide. Then I built a merry-go-round. I welded a truck front wheel spindle to a piece of I-beam and set the I-beam in cement. Then I put cross planks on the wheel, and plywood over the planks. It worked well, and all the neighborhood kids enjoyed all these things. I set down rules so no one would get hurt, and then enforced the rules. One boy started climbing on top of the swing framework, which was against our rules, so I sent him home for a week, before he could return. Those rules worked well, and all the kids respected them. Rules are no good if not enforced, but as soon as the kids found out they must obey the rules to play there, we had no problems.

I decided I wanted a garage door opener, so I wouldn’t have to get out of the car to close the door, or to open it when I returned. I knew we couldn’t afford to buy one, so I built one. I had an electric motor, some bicycle sprockets, bicycle chain, a bicycle wheel (used as a pulley) and some long springs. Our neighbor called it a sputnik, but it worked.

I started digging a basement under our house. For this I built two conveyors to move the dirt out. One conveyor brought the dirt out from under the house, and dumped it onto the second conveyor which dumped it over the bank, filling in more of that area. I showed Steve and Dan, how to load the conveyor, and soon all the neighbor kids wanted to do that too, So Steve and Dan would line up the kids so they could have their turn digging dirt and putting it on the conveyor. All Steve & Dan had to do, was supervise and the neighbor kids did their digging for them. They all had a lot of fun.

Before we moved into our house some of the neighborhood kids had taken some boards from my many piles of wood and used the boards to build tree houses. When I found out who some of them were, I told them I didn’t want to call the sheriff on them, so I wanted a meeting with all the kids who were involved. The next evening about a dozen kids showed up, very concerned, and very nervous about what I intended to do. I told them the first thing they must do is tear down those tree houses, and return the lumber.

After they had done that, I told them, that since some of the lumber had been cut up, they must pay for it. I told them that each one of them could come over whatever evening was best for them and each was to give me one hour’s work, to pay for that lumber. I created a job for each of them, and when they were all done, I sent word that I wanted another meeting with them.

When they came I had built a bonfire and we had a marshmallow roast. I then told them that we were all square, I was satisfied the lumber they had destroyed was paid for, and I showed them some piles of lumber and told them that they could take any lumber they wanted from those piles and build all the tree houses they wished. I only asked that they take the lumber while I was home so no one would think they were stealing it. I believe I won over all the kids in that neighborhood, because from then on they were very friendly, and confided in me for many things.

One day, two of the boys came to me, and told me that another boy (a troublemaker) who lived about a block away, had broken a window in his own home, but told his mother that they had done it, and she had called the sheriff. They were quite worried. I told them I will do what I can. The sheriff came to their home and picked them up, and as he drove past our place, I flagged him down. I told the sheriff, that although I didn’t know the circumstances, these boys were not troublemakers, but the boy whose mother called him, was a troublemaker.

Afterward the boys came and told me that the sheriff picked up the other boy, and when he got into the car with them, the sheriff said, alright, I already know who broke the window, so the sooner you admit to it the easier it will be. The boy who was a troublemaker, broke down and admitted it immediately. His mother could hardly believe it. I stood up for those kids whenever necessary, and they were really good kids. Many years later, we got invitations to their weddings.

In 1954 a couple purchased the lots next to ours, and had a house built there. (Chuck & Jean DeClerck). We became good friends, and are still friends these many years later.

Chuck and I would be working on things in our garages, sometimes until quite late. Chuck helped me learn to paint a car that I had fixed up, and I helped him to learn to build. We both had air compressors, but if one was broken down we just ran an air hose out one garage window and into the other.

Chuck eventually built a new house about a mile away, and when we purchased a place in the Hadley area, we both moved about the same time. We still visited many times over the years. Chuck has passed on now, but we still see Jean occasionally.

## Wheeler Dealer

When Doris and I were living in Drayton Plains area, I saw an ad in the newspaper for a five horsepower electric motor for fifty dollars. I am a sucker for a bargain, if it is big enough bargain I will buy it even if I don’t need it. This was the case here. I tried to call the place but it was a wrong number.

After about a week I saw the ad was still in the paper, and also noticed that it was at Union Lake, which had a different exchange than the Pontiac exchange it was listed under, so I phoned them using the Union Lake exchange, and they answered. I asked about the electric motor, and was told that if I wanted it I could have it for twenty five dollars, so I went out there immediately.

That motor was an old one with starting brushes, which made it a very good deal. We loaded it into the trunk of my car and the back end of the car went down really low. I would estimate the weight of it a t at least four hundred pounds.

I really had no use for it and I was talking to Uncle Ernest one time and he said he needed a larger motor for his planer for his saw mill. He had a newer three horse motor on the planer which had come with it when he purchased it. It worked well, but to do work commercially, it was just not enough power.

I told Ernest of the five horse motor I had, and told him I would trade. The three horse being newer model only weighed about sixty or seventy pounds. He was pleased with the idea and so later when dad made a trip north with his pickup, we using a hoist loaded that large five horse motor into his truck and he brought it up to Ernest and brought the three horse motor back to me.

Ernest said the larger motor did a very good job, and he was well pleased.

I still had a motor I didn’t need. So I finally put an ad in the Pontiac paper. ‘Three horse electric motor will sell or trade for, what have you?’ I had offers of guns, and many other things I didn’t want. But finally a man came to see me and said he needed just such a motor to run a small planer up at Drummond Island. I explained that it was off a planer, and that wasn’t satisfactory to run one commercially.

He said he was certain it would do his job, and that he would give me, a nine horse power Briggs engine, a six inch shaper, with a one third horse power motor on it, and one hundred twenty five dollars cash for it. However, he said the shaper and the engine were up at Drummond Island and I would have to trust him for them until someone coming down could bring them back. Well with only twenty five dollars invested, I couldn’t lose much, so I agreed.

He paid me the one hundred and twenty five dollars, and we shook hands on it. About three months later a man who lived at Union Lake (near where I got the five horsepower motor) called me and said he had some things for me. I went over to his place and he had the engine and shaper. I had already sold the shaper to a friend for thirty dollars, so I took that to him, and took the engine home.

I then advertised the nine horsepower engine for sixty five dollars and sold it within a few days. So I actually turned the twenty five dollar investment into two hundred and twenty dollars, and everyone concerned was pleased.

# Chapter 9 - Starting Again

We lived in the Drayton Planes home about nine years, and then purchased thirty acres with a basement house near Hadley Michigan. We wanted to get out in the country to raise our family. We had no money to buy anything with, but we trusted The Lord, and looked anyway. I saw an ad for an old schoolhouse in the Hadley area, so I called on it. The salesman, Truman Smith, said if you don’t like the schoolhouse stop and see my place, which I want to sell.

As we were driving out that way, we came over a hill, and we could see an old barn and silo off in the distance. I pointed it out to Doris and said, How would you like to live in an area like that’ it seemed very secluded. She agreed that it looked good. As we approached the road, we saw it was the road the real estate salesman told me he lived on. It was in fact his place.

We went and looked at the schoolhouse, and didn’t like what we saw, so we drove back to the salesman’s house. The original house had burned a few years before, and they had built a walk out basement, and ran out of money to complete it. There was a fireplace in that basement, and they had been burning anything they could find to keep warm, the ceiling was black from smoke, I think they had burned tar paper in the fireplace. They had a hot water heating system, but all the heat radiators had frozen and broken, because they couldn’t afford to buy fuel.

When we arrived, they had two tables in the kitchen area, full of kids, I asked if they were having a party. The salesman’s wife, Mrs. Smith said, no these are all our kids (they had eighteen). The roof was leaking, they had a wood burning stove to cook on, and the water from the melting now on the roof was dropping down on the stove sizzling as it hit. I noted a couple more leaks also. The floor was cement, but was so rough it looked like a dirt floor.

They had only a couple of light bulbs hanging from the ceiling, which was all black from what they had been burning in the fireplace, so there wasn’t much light. They had clothes hanging on the studding to serve as partitions, and no inside bath facilities. They had a three sided building about one hundred feet from the house with the opening away from the house that served as a toilet.

The well wasn’t working properly, therefore they could not get any water pressure. So to draw water, they climbed up on a milk crate, turned on a switch on the ceiling, then climbed down, turned a pipe that was loosely fastened in the side of a tank, and drew the water in a bucket. Then climbed back up on the milk crate, and turned off the pump.

They had a kitchen sink setting on 2x4's on a wall, and a bucket under it to catch the waste water. Even though it was a real mess, I could see some great possibilities, so within about two weeks we worked out a deal. I traded him our house in Drayton Plains and one thousand dollars for their place. Even though our place in Drayton Plains wasn’t finished, it had heat, and they needed a warm place.

We made a verbal agreement that I would have two weeks to install a furnace, in that basement, before we moved. For the next week I spent evenings installing a used oil hot air furnace in that place, I turned on the heat, and they had a heated house for that last week that they were there. As a result, they all caught colds.

I had begun moving things from our place, each evening I would haul a load of lumber or things from my garage, and cover it up outside there.

When our moving day came, Smith agreed to rent a large trailer, and I agreed to pay half of the rental. We loaded my trailer with all I could put on it. And just as we finished loading, Smith pulled in with the rented trailer full of their goods. We unloaded their things, and loaded the remaining part of our stuff, and both drove to the farm. There we unloaded the trailers, and loaded the rest of their belongings on the rental trailer, for their trip back, and that quickly, we were all moved.

After we were moved in I decided our first priority should be the well, so I called a well man. He came over and said the jet was lime’d up and he could possibly blow it out. He hooked up his air compressor, but could not get enough pressure to blow it, so he went home to get his well machine so he could pull the jet pipe.

While he was gone I hooked up my compressor, which I had stored in the well house, and when the air pressure got up to about 120 pounds the jet blew. So I called the well man, and he came right back. He had an air tank with a large opening, so we could fill it with air pressure, then release a large volume of air into the well, each time blowing more lime out of the jet, until no more lime came. He then put new brushes in the pump motor, and re-connected everything. We had water with pressure again. It was about 1:30 in the morning, so I had to get some quick sleep and get up about 5:20 to go to work.

The next evening after work I began installing a toilet stool, and hooking up a septic system. In two days we had an inside bathroom. I enclosed the bathroom and, ran garden hoses across the ceiling of the living area, to the bathroom for water. We had moved in on November 11th, and by Thanksgiving, I had built kitchen cupboards, with all the plumbing, completed the kitchen, and new copper pipes to the bathroom. Linoleum on the floors, and wallboard on the room partitions, and covered the ceiling with a foil covered paper to make the place brighter. We had the whole family (parents, in-laws, brother & sister, and their families, over for Thanksgiving dinner in our new home. That was a lot of work in two weeks time, but we were still young enough to stand it.

The following year 1962, I was ready to start building the house on this basement. I borrowed a few hundred dollars from the Credit Union (home improvement loan) to get enough material. I had some used plywood that I had brought with me from Drayton Plains, which was almost enough to sheet in the side walls and roof. I purchased all the 2x4s, 2x6s, etc. from Wickes lumber in Davison. I knew that when I started driving nails, that the basement would leak, so I cut all the studding, and rafters, before starting the building. I put a four way hip roof, on the house, so I had to cut jack rafters, which have two angles at the top, plus the angle and notch at the bottom. I had never cut jack rafters before, but I figured it out and they fit fine.

A crew of about seven men from where I work, and Charlie DeClerck, my neighbor from Drayton Plains, as well as my dad came to help me put up the house. We got rained out about noon, but we had the side walls up and sheeted, and the partition studs in. Two of the men from work (Larry Gary, and Roy Hacky,) came back several times to help me until I got the roof boards on. I made a slide of 2x6s about 32 feet long, with a plywood car, to slide up and down the 2x6's. I put a pulley at the peak of the roof, with a rope to the plywood car. We used a tractor to pull the car up loaded with lumber, Roy even rode it up a few times. It also worked well when I was ready to put on the shingles.

This part of the house we were building was 30 ft, by 60 ft. It took about 32 squares of shingles to cover the roof. Dad and I put on the shingles.

Having the building up cured the leaks in the basement. But it took me three more years before I had the upper part done and we could move in there. So we lived in that basement for four years. That really wasn’t bad, because as I mentioned earlier, the basement was a walk out. The other side which was the house front was much higher ground. And we had only a few steps to the main floor.

In building the main part of the house, I built Doris a large kitchen that had Formica covered cupboards with no exposed hardware on the cupboard doors. A kitchenAid dishwasher, Doris’ first dishwasher, a built in oven, and enclosed stove top. It took all one summer to build that kitchen.

While building the kitchen cupboards, I had my table saw set up in our front yard, making it a much shorter distance to the kitchen. One day, a neighbor’s cat ran into the yard. Most of our friends know I don’t get along with cats, so when I saw that cat coming, I picked up a piece of 2x4 about 6" long and threw it at the cat, I hit that cat right in the head. Probably the first time in my life I ever hit what I threw at. Anyway that cat flipped over with its feet straight in the air. I thought I had killed it, so I would finish the cut I was making on a piece, and then take care of the cat. But in about 30 seconds, the cat jumped to its feet and took off at as fast as it could run. It never returned again.

We had a large Living room, large dining room, and four bedrooms on that floor, the master bedroom being quite large, we had 1-1/2 baths, plus the downstairs bathroom.

I had the entire main floor walls, and ceiling plastered, not regular drywall, but wet plaster, with coved ceilings in the dining room and living room. I had to borrow six thousand five hundred dollars from the local bank, to finish. I feel the Lord had given us knowledge beyond our own ability, and having this large home finished with only a sixty five hundred dollar mortgage was beyond our expectations. We paid this off in just a few years and it is a great feeling to have your own home free and clear.

Although we often called our 30 acres near Hadley ‘the farm’, we really didn’t farm it except for raising a few beef animals, and a milk cow and a couple of goats, but we did have a great garden.. The soil there was very good, and our garden produced enormously. Each year we would clean out all the weeds in the garden by the first of July. Then we would get some old hay and put it under all the plants. This would stop most of the weed growth, and hold the moisture, and give the tomatoes a place to rest instead of on the ground. This done, we would take our vacation, and when we returned most of the garden was ready for harvest.

One year when we were looking for old hay, one farmer told us to go and see a farmer just north of Hadley, he said he had a lot of old hay. We went to see this man, and he said that in a field just down the road he had a large stack of baled hay that had been there for two or three years, and we could have all we wanted. Doris and I went there with our large trailer, which would hold twenty bales easily. Doris got on the trailer to stack the bails, and I took them from the stack and tossed them up to her. Every bale had several snakes in it, so I had to shake each bale to get the snakes out before I tossed them up to Doris. Even then, there were a few snakes in some of the bales I passed up to her. She never flinched from them even though she doesn’t like snakes. There were even some snakes left when we got the hay home. (I don’t know what the law is on importing snakes.)

We got two loads of that hay, and our garden did very well that year. After harvesting our garden, we would leave the hay to rot over the winter, then plow it under in the spring. That also helped fertilize our garden.

A friend, Joe LaRue, (Joe was Ruth Reynolds dad,) gave us a couple of rhubarb plants, which we broke apart and set out in the garden. It grew very well, and each year, I would take our disk and run it over the rhubarb plants. This caused them to really do well.

When we first moved to our Hadley home, we were buying eggs, from a neighbor, and one day when we went to buy eggs, she gave us a couple of large parsnips. I didn’t like parsnips then but Doris did, but after she cooked them I ate a little and got somewhat of a taste for them. Later we purchased parsnip seed and planted some. I got to really like them. We would dig enough in the fall to last for the winter, and then dig the rest in the spring. They are much sweeter when left in the ground all winter. We had some that were over thirty inches long and about four inches in diameter at the large end, and they were not pithy inside.

There was an old orchard on the property at our Hadley home, and it had not been taken care of, so in the fall of nineteen sixty two, (Our second year at our Hadley home.) I picked apples with a chain saw. I would cut off a limb, lower it with a rope and then we would pick the apples off it. I took several limbs off each tree that way. It was a real shock to the trees and as a result two of the trees died, but the rest of them produced fruit that was almost unbelievable. We had some apples that were over five inches in diameter.

The thirty acres we had near Hadley was a great place for our kids to grow up. We were bordered on the west by several acres of state land, and the kids liked to hike and ride horses there. We had a lot of work for them to do, but a lot of room for fun also. We would have young people’s parties there, and some hill sliding in the winter. At one of the parties Doris made sixteen pizzas for those kids.

We had a large house, and twice we had fifty girls including their sponsor overnight. We often had missionaries at our home, and that was good for our kids and for us as well.

Once a missionary named Martin Edelman and his son stayed with us for a few days. It was winter and we went ice skating, and he took pictures of us skating and throwing snowballs to take back to Africa to show to kids who had never seen snow. He also got a picture of me where I broke through the ice. It was shallow so I didn’t get in quite knee deep, but he was glad to get that picture.

# Chapter 10 - Our Animals

We didn’t farm the 30 acres; we had not planned to, but we did raise our own beef. We would buy five three day old calves in the spring, and raise them until they were ready for market. I always gave one to the kids, and when they were ready for market, we sold three, and kept two for our own freezer. The kids got the money for their steer, and it was usually a tidy sum.

At first I was taking the steers to a slaughter house and then the meat would be sent to a food locker, but I got ripped off on that once, so from then on we butchered them ourselves.

I purchased a Biro meat saw, from a grocery store that was putting in new equipment, and got a meat grinder from a meat cutter that had an extra that he wanted to sell. When I would sell a beef, I always told the one who purchased it that they would have to come and help me wrap it. That way no one could accuse me of not giving them all their meat.

One time a friend that I used to get calves from asked me to take one of his steers to the butcher about 20 miles away. The steer was real gentle, but his truck was a half ton pickup and the steer weighted about eighteen hundred pounds. Every time the steer moved in the truck, the truck would veer over in that same direction. I was sure glad when I got that steer unloaded. When I arrived at the butcher’s place, there were several men standing around waiting for the butcher. I had untied the steer, and seeing the size of the steer, some of the men asked me if I needed help. I said I thought I could handle him okay, but I didn’t realize that I hadn’t opened the tailgate quite all the way. When the steer’s hoof hit that tailgate he kicked it right off the truck. Then he took me for quite a run before I could get him stopped. All those who volunteered to help disappeared when that steer kicked that tailgate off.

We bought our own cow, a Jersey. She was a good milker, and the milk was rich with a lot of cream. We pasteurized our milk, although we didn’t feel that we needed to because we only had the one cow and she had been tested. But since we had friends that would drink milk when they came to visit, we thought they would be more comfortable if it was pasteurized.

We had the cow bred, which is necessary if you want her to continue giving milk, and in the spring, she had a calf. Our whole family had opportunity to watch as that calf was born. It was good experience for the kids. It was that cow’s first calf, and when she first saw her calf, he eyes got almost as big a saucers. Something to behold. As soon as that calf could get on his feet, about two or three minutes, he wanted to eat, and he knew right where to go to get his milk. (God evidently has this knowledge built into the newborn.) The mother didn’t want to let him suck, but the calf was persistent, and in a few minutes he was drinking like a pro. When the calf was three days old, I showed the boys how to teach the calf to drink from a bucket. This one learned easily.

Earlier I mentioned that I didn’t get along with cats, but our first summer there we had rats in the barn and barnyard, several of them, so we decided to get a cat to get rid of the rats. A friend Orlo Sprik told me he could get us a young cat that was born in a hollow tree, and was completely wild. He brought the cat over in two potato crates fastened together. I started to take the crates from him, and he said, wait!, put on leather gloves first, this cat is really wild. It was snarling, and fussing something fierce. We put the crates in the house, and fed it while in the crate.

The next day when I came home from work, Doris had the cat on her lap petting it. I could never get near that cat. We kept the cat in the barn, and soon got rid of the rats. Later the cat had kittens. They were born in the loft of the barn. The kids would go up there and play with them, but I never went near them. When those kittens grew up, if I came into the barn, they would jump up on our grain bin, and then jump past my face snarling and striking at me, I often felt the air rush past as they struck at me. I had not ever touched them, but I guess they instinctively knew that I didn’t like cats.

We had an old barn about three hundred feet from the house, and it had some broken boards in the end of it, and one day while some of us were walking toward our garden we saw an animal looking out of the barn through one of those broken boards, so while the family kept slowly walking, I went around the barn to see what it was. But it got out of there before I could get in, and when I saw what it was I was glad I didn’t get inside because it was a bobcat. He was really moving when he came out of there. Another time our son Steve, told me that there was a wildcat asleep in our grain box. The kids had heard and seen a large cat out near a pit where we dumped garbage, while filling in the pit. He would snarl at them when they went out there in the evening.

Evidently this was that same cat. He had been hanging around our barn cats. I told them to stay away from that area, until we could catch that cat. (The grain box was fastened to the wall for the cattle to eat from.) I got a rifle and shot the cat, and when the bullet hit him he jumped clear up to the ceiling before falling dead to the floor. Those wildcats are pretty tough animals.

We got a couple of riding horses and the kids had a lot of fun riding them on our thirty acres, and about three hundred acres of State Land, that bordered our property.

One of the horsed we named Dusty, was only two years old when we bought him. He had never been ridden, and I was too heavy to ride him since he wasn’t completely full grown. So I asked Dan to break him. Dan was about eleven years old then. I had Dan get on the horse, (without a saddle) so he wouldn’t get tangled up if the horse threw him. I held on the bridle, and when Dan got on the horse, he lifted me right off the ground. However, in a few minutes we got Dusty calmed down, and then Dan rode him like a pro. He was a really nice horse, and really fast.

Later Steve bought a horse named Prince, it was about four years old. I got him for Steve from a fellow I worked with, John who was known as a horse trader. This was his wife’s horse, but they were short of money, and couldn’t afford to winter it. The following spring John wanted to buy the horse back, but Steve wouldn’t sell, he liked that horse.

Dan used to build rockets, just as a hobby. One time the school had him come and show some of the school kids how to make rockets. Some of Dan’s rockets would go really high, almost out of sight, then a parachute would open and the rocket would come down. Sometimes one of the boys and myself would get on the horses, and go get the rocket when it landed. One time, one of the boys, I think it was Tom. Was riding Prince, and I was riding Dusty, we had recovered a rocket and brought it back, and just as we were almost back both horses, looked at each other, stopped, and then bucked us both off. Then the horses just stood there to see what we would do. I think they were laughing at us. Pretty smart horses.

At one time John, the horse trader, told me that he had several Shetland ponies that had been given to him by people who could not afford to winter them. He said he couldn’t afford to winter them either, so all that was left was to send them to be slaughtered for dog meat. Since I had meat cutting equipment he asked me if I would butcher them for half. I readily agreed. He brought over three Shetlands that were nice and fat. We butchered them and ate the meat. It was almost like beef. I gave some to our pastor, and they liked it also.

Sometime later we had a work day at our church, and we agreed to provide Sloppy Joes to feed all the workers. We served our Bronco burger as we called it. The only other person who knew what it was, was our pastor. Everyone liked those Sloppy Joes. We didn’t tell anyone for ten years. When the church invited us to come down to their mortgage burning. At that service the man who was pastor then, asked if anyone had anything of interest from the past to tell about. I stood and told them about our bronco burger that we made the sloppy Joes from. Everyone had a good laugh, and one man stood up, and said that this was the first time that he ever got sick on something he had eaten ten years before.

We eventually sold our cow and got a couple of goats. We got them from Steve & Ginny. I guess they didn’t have any place to keep them anymore. I was having severe back trouble when we got them, so Doris asked me if I could come to the barn and show her how to milk the goats. I did, and from then on she took over the milking for most of the time. She liked milking and playing with the goats. We had a small stool about two feet long, and we would put a dish of grain on one end and the goat would stand there and eat while we milked it. We didn’t pasteurize our goat milk. Goats don’t carry many of the diseases that cows do. And pasteurized goat’s milk becomes so strong that it doesn’t taste good to drink. We would chill the milk, immediately after milking, and it tasted as good as Jersey cow milk.

We really enjoyed the goats. Some people say goats will eat anything, but we found that isn’t true. We could offer the goats an apple and they would nibble at it while we were holding it for them. But if we took a bite out of the apple before we offered it to them, they would smell it, and would not eat it. We had an old orchard I fenced in for the goats. They would stand on their hind feet to get apples from the trees. If they found rose bushes, they would eat even the thorny branches.

One of the goats had two kids. (Goats usually give birth to twins) We would let them out in our yard to play. Our son Tim would play with them a lot. We had a pile of stones in the yard for decoration, and Tim would jump from one stone to the next, and the little goat kids, would do exactly the same thing. We had a picnic table in the yard, and the kid goats would jump up, turn completely around and land on the seat of the picnic table, then jump again, turning completely around again and land on the top. It was a lot of fun to watch them.

When we were getting ready to move, we offered the goats for sale. Only one man came to see them, but he didn’t have any money to buy them, but we could tell he really liked them, so since we didn’t get a buyer, I called him and told him he could have them. We really made that man happy.

# Chapter 11 - Our Church

We lived in that home for twenty three years. We attended the Baptist Church of Hadley, and I served on the Board there for sixteen years, being chairman of that board for twelve of those years. I also served on four pulpit committees, and was chairman of three of them. I taught a high school age Sunday school for a short while, and worked with the young people, taking them to their parties etc. We had several pizza parties at our home, also having bible study at those parties.

Later I began teaching an adult class which I taught for many years. I didn’t use Sunday school quarterlies, but used only the Bible, that way I was not limited by time on any subject. During that time I was asked to fill pulpit for several different churches, while their pastor was away, or between pastors. I also had a regular night at the Pontiac Rescue Mission for several years.

These were all good for me because I had to study, and it was a service for The Lord. I don’t mention any of this to brag, but rather to show the life I had, for which I am eternally grateful to God.

Doris sang in the choir, (she has an excellent singing voice.) All our kid have sung in the choir at some time, but I have no ability along that line. The whole family was active in some way. As a result of learning sound doctrine as children, all of the kids are now serving The Lord in one way or another. Steve, Dan and Janice and Tom, all went to Bible College. Steve is active in his church, in music, and does the tape ministry. Dan does a tape and CD ministry for our church, Janice works in music, with a Christian group, and Tom has been a preacher now for about thirty two years. Tim teaches the adult class in his church, and fills in for the pastor when needed. David works in their church, helping with people who have been in prison; helping them to get a new start in life. David’s wife Amy, is an excellent pianist, and also helps, with these former inmates, often keeping them in their home for a time. Also David sometimes preaches in his church when his pastor is away.

Since moving to the Grayling area, I continued substituting for pastors as well as serving as a prison chaplain for many years. However because of age and infirmities I am no longer able to continue doing so.

# Chapter 12 - My Work

I was working at National Twist Drill and Tool Co. In Rochester. It was exactly 25 miles from our driveway to the parking lot at National. I worked there a little over 33 years. I had started in the center-less grinding department. But after about a year and a half, I transferred to the reamer grinding department. The work was completely different, but I liked it better. I started there as a shank grinder, but was soon put on specials. Special grinding entailed everything that was needed to complete the grinding on a part.

Most of our tolerances on specials was .0002 thousandths of an inch. That’s two ten thousandths of an inch. A person’s hair is usually about three thousandths of an inch thick, which is about fifteen times thicker than our limits in grinding. Some jobs were actually one ten thousandth of an inch. We also had many angles to grind in this work. This was fussy work, but I enjoyed the challenge, and in specials often the jobs were only one or two pieces, so they were never boring. I learned quickly and made some machining parts that made the job easier to do, and with those parts I could easily get much more work done.

A few years later they asked me to become a leader in that department on the night shift. I started out with twenty seven new people that had no grinding experience. That was quite a challenge, but eventually it all worked out well.

Things slowed down after a while, and I had to go back on days, on a machine again. A short while later they had more cut backs, and I was offered stock reamers, but that was quite a boring job, so I opted to go back to center-less. After a couple months things picked up and I went back on my leader’s job on the afternoon shift. This time they asked me to become leader over the reamer department, the end mill department, and the center-less department. Since I like challenges, I accepted it. I was really busy, but I liked the work. I always liked to stay busy, it seems to make the time go faster.

The center-less department had their lunch time hour after the reamer and end mill departments. So if someone in the center-less department needed help during my lunch time I would go help them. The union had fits about that. But I told them, I can’t let someone stand idle for a half hour waiting on me, but don’t worry, I will take my lunch time. And I did. Sometimes it would be an hour before I could get back to my lunch, but I took plenty of time to eat. We had no supervision on the night shift, but sometimes a superintendent would come walking through. If I was sitting down eating my lunch, I just waved to them. And they never questioned me.

After everyone was pretty well trained on their jobs, I had some free time, so I would often go out to the machine shop, and make something for our machines, or sometimes someone wanted something made for themselves, such as a router table top. Even some of the day superintendents, or the plant guards, would ask me to make them something when I had time. I would leave the phone number of wherever I would be on the desk so if anyone in my departments needed me, they could call me. This was not something done on the sly, but even supervision was pleased with it.

In the early seventies one of the vice presidents asked me to take a foreman’s job, which I declined. In nineteen seventy four another vice president called me at home and asked me to take a job in engineering. I accepted that job, and soon found that the other engineers sort of looked down on me behind my back, because I didn’t have an engineering degree. After a short while we were asked to take an engineer’s aptitude test, put out by Perdue University. I scored highest of all on that test, so that changed the feeling somewhat. I stayed in the engineer department for a year and a half, but I didn’t like it, because most everything we started would soon be cancelled.

They were actually getting ready to move, but not telling anyone, so that was the reason for cancelling many projects. I could see the handwriting on the wall. So I went in to see the vice president who hired me there, and asked to get out. He said they had never had a cut back here. I told him “yes but you can create one.” He said he would think about it, and about a month later, he called me in and said “we’re cutting back two people, but would like you to stay, if you will.” I took the cut back, and shortly after I got back to my department they put on a night shift again, and gave me back my leader’s job. I was happy again.

I really liked my job at National Twist Drill, but along with work we must have some distractions to keep things interesting, and we always have a few pranksters in every crowd. I was no exception. I always figured a little good fun helps morale. I had a friend who worked near me when I was running a machine in the reamer department, before I became leader there. His name was Joe. I had pulled a few un-harmful tricks on Joe, and one day he said “I’m wise to you now Ken, and you won’t be able to pull anything on me anymore.” For anyone who enjoys a prank, that was a real challenge. So before the day was over I started a set up for another prank.

This was near the end of October, and Joe had been working all the overtime he could get during the year, where I had been turning down the overtime. So I said to Joe. “Joe, I heard that they are giving Christmas turkeys to those who have been working a lot of overtime.” Joe asked where I had heard that, and I said “Oh just a rumor going around.” Each day thereafter I would mention something about those Christmas turkeys. Things like, “I heard several men in the cutter grind department were supposed to get turkeys.” (The whole cutter grind department had been working overtime for nearly all year.) Finally on the last payday before Christmas, I typed out four 3X5 cards, which read: “Stop by the office and pick up your Christmas turkey.” I gave these cards to the foreman, with some paper clips, and asked him (Bill Hall) to clip one to Joe’s check, and named three other fellows, who I had already tipped off to the scam. The other three got their checks first, and made quite a show of those cards. When Joe got his check and card, he said, “hey Ken I got one”. I said, “Got what Joe?” Joe said, “A Christmas turkey.” Then he asked where I thought he should go to get it. I said, “Why don’t you ask the boss?”

About that time the general foreman (Frank) came by, so Joe asked him about it. Frank not knowing what was going on, but suspecting a joke, said, “probably up to the employment office.” Then Frank went to Bill Hall, and asked him how far he wanted to let this go, and Bill said we should probable keep it in the department. So Frank stood by the isle where Joe would have to go, to get to the employment office, and when the time whistle blew, Joe started for that office. Frank stopped him, and said “Joe it is all a trick.” Joe turned around and pointed at me and said. “And you did it didn’t you?” He took it very well.

Shortly after the EPA ordered up to get safety glasses, and wear them at work. One of the ladies started selling glasses cleaner, which came in little containers similar to inhaler tubes. I purchased one from her, and from that, I was inspired for another prank. I got an inhaler tube, and removed the contents, and replaced it with some felt which I had soaked with machinists’ bluing. (The same blue that artists use in painting pictures.) It really smears. I would ask someone if they wanted to try my glasses cleaner, and I would hand them the container with the bluing. I got a few takers, and I decided I would try it on our plant superintendent. (Later, vice president) Louis Metzafield. Some of the men said, “He will fire you if you do”

That was too much of a challenge, so, one day the Superintendent, stopped in the department to speak to our union steward. I walked up to him, looked at him, and said, “Lou your glasses are dirty, come with me and I’ll give you something to clean them.” He followed me to my machine, and I reached into my tool box, and got out the cleaner, cleaned my glasses, dropping the cleaner back in the drawer. Then I reached into the drawer and got the bluing container, handed it to him and said, “Here you try it” He rubbed it on his glasses, looked at them and said smart \_\_\_\_. I offered him a cloth to wipe it off with, but he refused, and used his clean handkerchief to clean them. He was quite angry, but I knew he would get over it soon.

The following summer, we had our annual Credit Union meeting in a park pavilion in Rochester. Our Credit Union President “Ray” had asked Louis Metzafield to be our guest speaker. I happened to be chairman of the credit committee, and made my report, just before the speaker was called on. During my report I mentioned that we had added two more members to the credit committee, so some of the committee could, get a break from the work, and I said, “I see our plant superintendent is here, and perhaps he could consider a similar plan so we could have more time off.”

Behind the speakers lectern was a fireplace, and a fire laid, which only needed to be lit. However it was a hot summer day. So I also added, that I had heard Mr Metzafield ask Ray, how long he was supposed to speak, and Ray had told him, “as long as he wanted,” but I said, “what he doesn’t know is when he gets up to speak we are going to light that fire”. Well when Mr. Metzafield got up to speak, the first thing he said was, “Don’t trust Ken Rush” then he went on to tell them about how I got him to blue up his glasses

When I went up to engineering, my reputation for tricks followed me. One of our secretaries came to me and said she wanted to pull an April fool stunt on her boyfriend, and would I help. I asked her how elaborate she wanted it to be, and she said it would have to be quite elaborate to keep him from suspecting, because he was quite sharp. I asked her what her boyfriend did for a living, and she said he worked with organizations to help under privileged people.

So, after a little thought, we decided to put on a fake dinner in his honor. One of the other engineers made a letter head, “Citizen’s Betterment Bureau” We told him in the letter, that his presence was requested at a dinner in his honor at Cooper’s Arms, in Rochester Michigan at twelve o’clock noon on Tuesday April first. Nineteen Hundred Seventy Five. The vise president of Citizen’s betterment Bureau, would phone him on Monday, March thirty first, to confirm this appointment.

This was the Friday prior to that so we stamped the envelope, cancelled the stamp, and the secretary sneaked it in among his mail. She said he was on cloud nine all weekend. Monday afternoon I phoned him, to confirm the appointment. He asked a few questions. Such as what our organization does, and I told him that as an example last year we honored a lady who worked with disabled children, and our purpose was to get recognition, for these people who do so much work, and get no recognition at all.

Well he showed up at Cooper’s Arms at noon on April first, and his girlfriend was the only one to greet him. She said, “April Fools.” She told me that he was a little upset at first, but after a bit joked about it. Later that week I phoned him, and told him I thought he was a good sport.

Lear Siegler had purchased National Twist Drill, from MacGregor, (who was almost sole owner.) I understand they gave him several shares of Lear Siegler stock and a position on the board. It was good stock and a good move for MacGregor. Since Lear Siegler had purchased the largest tool company in the world, their stock about doubled overnight. So they actually made money purchasing it.

They then bled the factory for all they could and decided to move it to the Carolina’s to get away from the union. They let the plant get so bad that they had to put plastic over the electrical buss run, so when it rained the leaking water wouldn’t short out the electrical system. They began by moving the taps, and small drills, then proceeded to move the rest.

They hired moving companies to move the machines, because they had a smoother ride. The jolting of a regular truck would destroy some valuable machinery.

They had most of the equipment shipped out when I was laid off in August of 1983, In fact I helped pack up some of it. Had I said the word, I could have gone with them, but I had family and all here so I decided to stay. I don’t think I would have liked South Carolina anyway.

While in the process of moving the factory equipment to South Carolina, a foreman called me and ask me to send a few items he needed. They had a truck waiting to load whatever was needed on that trip. So I put the items he wanted in two boxes, then I took another box about the same size and packed old gloves, rags, and any broken or useless items I could find to fill the box, and sent it along, with a note in the box saying, “Just a few more things I thought you might need. Word of that got around and several people got a good laugh including the foreman.”

The man who was day foreman in the reamer grinding dept. came from another department, and didn’t know a lot about some of our machines, especially the really technical ones. So I told him that if he had a problem he could call me, which he did a few times. Before he left he asked me to design a different kind of wheel dresser for one grinder. I designed it, and sent it to special tool to have it made. Then I told him that if it worked well, it was his design. He asked why, and I said “because you are the one who is going, you might as well have one feather in your hat.” We got a chance to try it before he left, and it worked well.

While we were in the process of moving everything, they had laid off so many people that I only had 9 or 10 people left in my departments, and being the older seniority they knew their jobs pretty well. So one day, the day superintendent ask me if I would go in to the special tool room where they had some Huffman grinders and try them out for them. No one here had ever run them. These were the very newest technology and I had never even seen them much less run them. They were computer programmed, and every change had to be logged properly, otherwise in case of a power failure or other stoppage, it would take days to set them up again.

I left the phone number of the special tool area, with my crew and went in and worked there for a while. It took me several days before I felt comfortable in what I was doing, but had no accidents. After about three weeks the superintendent called me and said they had some special work coming into the reamer department, and I would be needed there. He asked me if I had any suggestion of who may be able to learn the work on the Huffmans. I suggested one man Bill who was working in the center-less grinding dept. But I said Let me talk to him first because I was sure he would think he couldn’t do it.

When I asked Bill about it he said, No I can’t do that I said, Bill, you are a pretty sharp man, it will take a little while, but you can learn this job, and when you get laid off, with that experience you can get a job in any grinding shop, so he agreed to try. After about three days Bill came to me and said Ken I can’t do this job I said Bill I know you can, just stay with it a little longer After about a week Bill told me he liked the job, and was really glad, to have the chance to learn it. Sometimes we don’t know what we are really able to do until we give it a good try. I found in teaching the grinding work to many that they were able to do better than they thought they could.

In April of 1983 I had nearly 33 years of time at National Twist. I was called into the office and asked when I wanted to take my retirement. Since they were moving, those of us who had enough points, (years plus age over 85 total,) the contract for settling our final time required that we give them a date we wanted our retirement. I told them I would take my retirement in August 1984. My final layoff was in August 1983. The final contract stopped our accumulation of seniority at April, at which time I had 32.8 years time, so by layoff, I actually had over 33 years. Which meant my retirement was based on 32.8 years, and at that time our insurance also stopped, so I had to pay my own insurance from April on.

About a year after I was laid off, Doris & I made a trip to Florida, to visit my dad, and on the way back we came through South Carolina, and stopped at one of the factories where they had moved to. One of the supervisors gave us a tour through the shop, then took us out to dinner that evening, and we stayed at his house overnight. He liked it there, however, they had to keep much of their food sealed in plastic boxes because of the cockroaches. Two and a half years later Lear Siegler sold the factory, and all those who moved to the Carolinas with them, were out of a job again.

I had known for several years that they were going to move, even though they didn’t make it official until about 1983. Since we had a large home we made some changes, and began to take in elderly residents who didn’t want to live alone, nor with family, neither did they want or need a nursing home. We started this in 1981. We put the business in Doris’ name so I could still draw my unemployment when I got laid off. This made a lot of extra work for Doris. She got the meals, cleaned the rooms, and did the laundry for the residents.

We averaged six residents, but had seven at one time. It was quite confining, because even when were away we had to have someone dependable there, and call and check on things often. Randy & Janice came to live with us. (I built an apartment for them.) They took care of things when we needed to go somewhere. They were very reliable, but we still felt the pressure, and I wanted to take the load of work off Doris. So In 1984 we decided to sell, and find a place up north.

In the meantime, one time when I went to get my unemployment check, they sent me to job service. I was on my second six months, so, if I turned down a job, I would not get any more unemployment checks.

They sent me to a factory called Thread Forms. I really didn’t want a job, so when I went in and was introduced to the superintendent, who handled the hiring. I told him “I don’t want to waste a lot of your time, I’m sure I can do any work you have here, because of my extensive experience, but I have my home up for sale, and when it sells, I will be gone.” He thanked me for being so forthright, and we visited for about a half an hour. (He knew many of the supervision at National Twist Drill, that I had worked with.) I then left, and was not called for the job, for which I was thankful.

# Chapter 13 - Doris’ Mother

In nineteen seventy eight Doris’s mother went to California to visit Bettina, her other daughter. While she was gone someone tried to break into her house. This was the second break in at her place, and this time they cut the phone wires, evidently thinking she might be home. Thankfully she was not. Twice before she had been mugged while walking home from downtown.

Realizing how dangerous that area was getting, I had already started building an apartment for her attached to our house. I had not told Doris’ mother that I was building it for her yet, the reason being, we didn’t think she would want to move, but we realized that she would have to move sometime, because the area where she lived was getting quite bad. When we found the break in, and saw the cut wires we decided that was enough. Doris picked up her mother when she arrived back in Pontiac, took her to her home to get a few of her things, and brought her to our place.

We had a camping trailer, and Janice moved into the trailer and let her grandma have her room until I could finish the apartment. Doris’ mother didn’t like to move there, but soon got to like her new home and was quite happy again.

She lived there for six years, until she was not able to live alone. Then we moved her into our house. We had planned to have her come with us when we moved north.

I had partially prepared a room for her that could be kept warmer, than the rest of our house, where she could go to watch TV or to just be alone when she wanted, because she liked the room temperature in the eighties, and that is too warm for us. But she died before we had completed our move.

Steve & Ginny took her into their home while we were in the process of moving, and she passed away in Ginny’s arms. We are very thankful for the loving care that they gave her.

# Chapter 14 - Our Final Move

All during the time we lived in our Hadley area home I had continued to build. I previously mentioned the mother-in-law apartment I built for Doris’ mother, and the apartment for Janice and Randy, when they came to help with the business. When we sold the place the house was 102 feet long, with the apartments we had a total of eleven bedrooms, five and a half bathes, three laundry rooms, four kitchens, and four living rooms, totaling almost five thousand square feet.

In 1984 we sold the place to Joe & Judy Borgert, long-time friends of ours. They had a home near Hadley which they traded in on our place. Within weeks we sold that home on a contract, for the same price we allowed them for it. We had the income from the two homes, totaling eleven hundred fifty dollars, my retirement pension of about three hundred fifty dollars, and one hundred dollars a month from two acres I sold to Greg Mann, (Greg had earlier purchased four acres from me and built a home on it, and he wanted more land. He had previously paid off the four acres.)

So we retired with about sixteen hundred dollars per month income. We purchased a 14x70 mobile home near Grayling, for twenty five thousand dollars, paying ten thousand down, and five hundred per month payments. Also our health insurance at that time was about six hundred fifty dollars per month. That left us four hundred fifty dollars per month for living expenses, fuel electric, taxes etc. We still did well on that. I purchased two ten acre tracts of land near our Grayling home, on land contracts, and soon sold them at a really good profit. I sold them for one dollar down, on contracts with ten percent interest. This was a good start.

After we turned sixty five, I changed to private pay Blue Cross insurance, with Medicare. This saved us considerable, and then we also had started drawing Social Security when I turned 62. I think I got about six hundred dollars Social security, and Doris got about two hundred eighty at that time. However, my pension then dropped to just over two hundred fifty dollars. With the extra income I began purchasing more vacant land. I purchased five and ten acre plots, with lots of trees. These I could easily sell for one dollar down, on contracts. We made very good money on the properties, getting us back on our feet again.

I was fifty six years old when we retired, and moved to Grayling area, but could not draw Social Security for six years, however, we never lacked for anything. The Lord is so good, He provides through all times.

We moved into our mobile home in August of 1984, and in April of 1985 I began putting a roof over it because it had a few leaks as most mobiles do. I put 4x6 treated timbers about four feet into the ground to support the roof. There was still snow on the ground, but we have almost no frost here, so I could quite easily dig the holes for the timbers. I used two 2x12 planks at the top of the timbers to set the trusses on. I built my own trusses for the roof, and extended the roof to twenty five feet wide, for future expansion of our home. When the inspector came to inspect, he said, we get a lot of snow, but not enough to ever bring that roof down.

We also put in new insulated windows, and insulation. We cut open the metal siding because we were putting in larger windows than the originals. Then we put the siding back in place with duct tape, then covered those sides with sheet insulation, and structure wood. We painted the structure wood white, and stripped it with wood slats, making it Alpine style. Later when we could afford it, we removed the slats, and covered it all with vinyl siding. The insurance company then accepted our home as a house, rather than a mobile, making the insurance much cheaper.

In building the roof, I had help from Randy, Dan, and David,

Before we purchased our home here, I went to visit the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church to make sure we would have a good church home. We had a good meeting, and I was impressed that we had very agreeable views. (I figure that anyone who agrees with me, must be right.) A couple of years after moving here, I began serving as a volunteer chaplain in the prison system, at Camp Lehman, near Hartwick Pines. I served our Lord many years there. I also preached a few times in Calvary Baptist Church, when our pastor was away, a church in Frederic, Michigan, and more recently, in a church in Hillman, Michigan, however, due to my age, I do very little of such things now.

Several years ago I started writing, Ken’s Commentaries Just small booklets about different bible subjects that are often overlooked in preaching. A few years ago I decided it would be good to put those booklets into books. Each booklet being a chapter in a book. I now have volume one and two of ‘Precious Truths From Scripture’. I built book binding equipment and by trial and error learned how to bind my own books. I have them registered with bar codes, but have not put them in bookstores to sell, although I have given copies to the Grayling public Library, and the Crawford County Senior Center. My booklets have gone as far as India, and Costa Rica, and a Church in southern Michigan is printing some of the material from them.

At this writing, Doris & I have been here at our Grayling home for a little over twenty five years. I have added to the house, building Doris a new kitchen, a sewing room, and built a study for myself. Our son Dan is now living with us, and running a computer business from our home. He helps with any work where he is needed, and gets, the meals occasionally. He is a good cook. Doris & I eat out often, so that leaves Dan to make his own meals then. I have also built quarters for Dan’s computer office, storage room for computer parts, and bed and bath room for him.

We now have over twenty five hundred square feet in our house, not counting the attached garage. Plus I have built another garage across the driveway, to park our van in, and to that I have made and extension large enough for Dan’s car, also attached to that garage is my workshop, and a storage room for our riding mower and other things. I have another building for my Jeep plow truck, and my backhoe. Another building for my dune buggy, and a smaller building about 10x12 that I purchased for storing some of Dan’s things.

# Chapter 15 - Aunt Goldie & Uncle Bert:

My dad’s sister Goldie, married Bert Jones. He drilled wells for a living. They had a very small house on Cadillac road east of Ernest Rush. I remember us visiting them when I was quite young. We stayed overnight. Their house actually had only one room on the ground floor, which was used as kitchen, dining area and living room. They slept in the attic, which had a ladder to get up there. So when we stayed overnight, my mother and dad slept on the floor, and their son Glen, another cousin Cecil, and myself, went down and across the road a ways where they had a barn. The hay in the barns in those days was all loose hay (no bales). We slept in the hay, and even though it was really cold outside, all we had to do was get a little deeper down in the hay and we were warm as toast.

Once when we were both teenagers, my sister and I came north to visit some of our relatives. We were at Aunt Goldie and Uncle Bert’s home, which was about a mile from where Uncle Ernest lived. And Ernest had a small saw mill there, which he ran by an old nineteen twenty three Cadillac engine. While we were there Uncle Ernest stopped in and visited a while also, he said he was on his way home from Lake City. He told us that he would take us to the show (theater), but he had spent all of his money while he was in town. About an hour later he came back and asked us if we wanted to go to the show. I said Uncle Ernie, I thought you were broke. He said that when he got home a fellow was there waiting for him to cut up a deadhead that he had stolen down by the river. So Ernest charged him a dollar to saw it up, and that was enough money for all of us to go to the show.

For those who are not acquainted with the older logging business, I better explain what a deadhead is. In past years the loggers used to float logs down the Muskegon River. Sometimes a log would get caught in the river bottom and bury itself there. Years later some of these logs began to stick up from the bottom these they called deadheads. Those finding them would take two rowboats, and put one on either side of the log, or deadhead as they called it, then put a long plank across the boats and run a cable or chain down and fasten it to the log. They would then tighten that cable until the boats were very low in the water, then leave them set a few days, and go back and tighten the cable. Once the log came loose from the bottom, they would drag the log up on the bank and leave it to dry out. Whoever brought the deadhead for Ernest to saw, had found it drying on the river bank and stolen it.

Just a note about these rivers, The Muskegon, the Manistee, and the AuSable. Years ago, loggers used to float logs on all of those rivers, in this area. In fact Grayling is also called Milltown USA, beause of all the sawmills they had here.

Today there is not enough water in those rivers to float logs, especially the Manistee, and the Muskegon. Yet our Global warming crowd try to tell us that the Ice caps are going to melt and cause a great flood. These rivers could use some of that water.

# Chapter 16 - Leo & Helen Kitchenhoff

Leo Kitchenhoff was my cousin by marriage to Helen Apps. Leo was known as a good hunter, but could no longer get a license because of his many violations. One time a man, I think from Detroit had seen a deer with a really nice set of antlers, and knowing Leo, he offered Leo one hundred dollars to get him that set of antlers. So Leo went hunting, and Bert Jones, Aunt Goldie’s husband, went with him. They found a deer and Leo shot it, but it was not the right one. Bert went to get his truck to haul the deer, and Leo stayed with the deer. While Bert was gone the game warden came on the scene. When Leo saw the game warden coming he ran into the woods, and hid. About that time Bert showed up with his truck. The game warden asked Bert if that was his deer, Bert said it was. (Bert had a license but hadn’t put his tag on the deer) The game warden asked Bert who that fellow was that ran into the wood, Bert said he didn’t know who he was. Then the warden asked Bert why he hadn’t tagged the deer. Bert said because of guys like that, meaning Leo who had ran into the woods. So the warden let Bert tag the deer and take it. Leo stayed in the woods all day, because he knew the game warden would be looking for him. He was sitting on a log for hours and when he stood up, the deer he had been looking for jumped up right in front of him, so he shot that ono also, then went and found Bert to help him get it out of the woods. He then told Bert, that he would split the one hundred dollars with him. Until then Bert didn’t know anything about the one hundred dollars. Even though Leo was known for selling the antlers and other such things, they never wasted the meat. The deer meat supplied most of their food during the winter

# Chapter 17 - Doris’ family

Doris’s dad, and mother, Howard and Christine Fields, Moved up to the Keweenaw bay, near L’Anse, in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, in the early nineteen twenties. Howard was working on a project for Ford. They lived in a tent in the summer while they were living there, and rented a house in winter. One time the funeral director from L’Anse, told Howard that someone had found a dead Indian in a field near the small Indian town of Pequaming, probably about twelve miles away. The funeral director couldn’t go, and needed someone to go and get the Indian. So Howard agreed to go if someone else would go to help him. Another man volunteered, so they took the funeral director’s team and sleighs, and left for Pequaming. Howard told the story like this. “It was winter, and we found the Indian, dead and stiff from the cold weather. We had a long narrow basket that the funeral director sent, to put him in. The Indian was quite tall, and when we put him in the basket, his head stuck over one end and his feet over the other, and he sort of sagged down into the basket. They started back, and since they had taken their time coming, it was getting late, and the shadows were already starting to fall, so they started the team at a faster pace on the return trip. There were many snow drifts on the road, and as the team lunged to get through one drift, the Indian sagged a little deeper into the basket, and a big moan came out of the Indian, The other fellow was driving, and he jumped down on the double trees between the horses and said git, git, git, to the horses. I don’t remember which one they buried first.”

Doris’ dad was quite a story teller. In Pontiac they lived across a narrow street from the cemetery. It was quite a secluded place. Doris always says, the cemetery was her playground. Her dad often told the story that one Halloween night some of the neighborhood kids were playing in the cemetery, and he had placed some gourds on some of the grave stones. He had carved holes in the gourds to look like skulls. When one of the kids picked up a gourd, he was hidden behind a grave stone and called out, aweee my skull, and the kids all ran. He had many, many stories. Who knows which were true and which were not, they were just good stories.

Doris’ dad, Howard Fields, went out west when he was a young man. He said he worked with the cattle drives, and his job was to provide meat for the men on the cattle drive. That meant hunting for animals, usually using a forty five pistol. He told me to use a pistol, he said, you don’t aim it, you just point it. You try pointing your finger at an object, and when you look down your finger and find you are pointing where you think you are, you can shoot a pistol accurately.

# Chapter 18 - The Fergusons

We had some friends, Don & Delilah Ferguson, who purchased property from us and eventually built a house on that property. In the meantime they were living in a rented house about six miles away. Don told me once that he needed some electric wire to go from his house to the pasture, to connect to his electric fencer unit, where he was pasturing some animals. It was over one hundred feet, and electric wire was expensive. I told him that the phone company had put in underground wire in our area, and left the old wire which was just lying on the ground, and they had said anyone who wanted the old wire could have it. So one afternoon, Don came over, and seeing a good looking piece of wire, he cut it, rolled it up, and took it home. However what he didn’t know was that a new family, Lamont’s, had built a new home and ordered a phone, and since the ground was frozen, they laid a temporary wire on top of the ground to wire in that phone. It so happened that Mr. Lamont, ‘Sunny’, was talking on the phone when Don cut the wires. Lamont looked out the window and saw Don rolling up the wire, and not knowing Don, or what was going on, Sunny drove into town and called the police. When I heard about it, I realized what had happened, and called Bob, the service man for the phone co. and told him what had happened. Bob in turn called the police and got the situation straightened out, then proceeded to replace the phone line. Later that afternoon, I had to go to Flint, and my route took me by Ferguson’s place, so I stopped and asked Don if the police had come to see him yet. He asked what for, and I told him for stealing phone wire. I told him that the wire he took was a new one and someone was talking on the phone when he cut it. Don was a little worried at first, then after thinking about we both had a good laugh.

The Fergusons had problems raising their 7 children, really not much discipline. I’m not sure that any of them ever got saved, and the two youngest became devil worshipers.

# Chapter 19 - Winter in Hadley area

One winter while living in the Hadley area, we had a real blizzard. Bob Brown was riding to work with me, and when I went to pick him up, he was standing beside the road by his house, and visibility was so bad, I drove right by him without seeing him. When I approached the end of the road, I realized I had passed him, and went back. We still got to work on time, however, many who lived much closer were late. After work that day, his road was impassable, so I had to let him out at Hadley road, and he had to walk over three fourths of a mile. I then got stuck on Hadley road about one half mile before I got to our corner, so I had to walk about a mile to get home, then I went back with my tractor, and pulled the car out, and parked it in the parking lot of the Lutheran church at our corner. The next morning when I got into my car, I started the engine, but couldn’t get the transmission shift to move. After a while I finally got it into first gear, and drove it into Hadley that way. I took it to a garage, and the mechanic, just let it warm up enough to melt the ice which had formed on the transmission shift levers.

Another blizzard that same year, I had started home, and when I got to some hills on Orion road, they were full of stuck cars, so I turned around and took another route. There I came upon several stuck cars, including a police car, which had stopped to help and became snowed in. One man stopped me and asked if I had a pair of jumper cables, his car had stalled, and he had run his battery down. I said, I didn’t have any, but jumping it would not start it anyway, since it had stalled by getting to wet. I offered him a ride, but he wanted to try to start his car. I had no way to help anyone, so I kept going, and got through, even though I had to turn around a few times and try different roads. The next day I was talking to a friend who had gotten through also. He said he stopped for a few minutes and spoke to the policeman, who asked him if he could get his face and hands inside his car to warm them. He told the officer to just get into his car, and get warm, but he officer declined, saying he was not allowed to do that. I really felt sorry for those who had to be out in such weather.

Another time I was riding home from work with John Rountree, and we were in an ice storm. When we came down Hadley road about miles from home there was a very large tree across the road, So we had to turn around, and fine another route. This route took us through a wooded area, (not a good place in an ice storm.) On one road we stopped on top of a hill and walked down the road a ways to see if it was clear. It was after dark and the only light we had was from the lightning, which was almost constant. Every few seconds we would her a cracking sound like a shotgun, which was another tree falling from the ice. We founds one the across that road, but the branches were holding it up off the road.. So John said we are going to do it. We got into his pickup and he gunned it and drove between the branches, however he flattened both side mirrors right against his doors. A little farther on we slid to a stop on a hill. So I took my lunch bucket and got some sand from an area that wasn’t frozen, and put it under his tires, and we made it out, arriving home about three hours later than usual.

# Chapter 20 - Life on the 12 acres near Fostoria

When we lived near Fostoria, dad became good friends with Al Slough, who ran the hardware there. One day they were sitting near the heating stove talking when a customer charged something that he purchased. Dad ask Al how he knew who he could trust. Al said I have this little book with all the names of the deadbeats in the state in it. Dad said my name is in that book then. Dad wasn’t sure whether it was or not, but during the depression, dad borrowed three dollars and sixty five cents from the bank to purchase fruit jars to can some steers and sheep we had to slaughter. Dad always cut the kindling wood for the bank each fall, and that year it was supposed to pay for that loan. However, dad delivered the kindling wood one evening, and the next morning the bank went into receivership. Everyone knew that dad had delivered the kindling but no record had been made, so with the bank takeover, the new receivers, did not recognize it, so the books showed that he still owed three dollars and sixty five cents. Al looked in his little book and sure enough dad’s name was there for three dollars and sixty five cents. Al opened the door of his heating stove and threw the book in. He said this book is no good, you are no deadbeat.

I started high school in Columbiaville, Dad had a small furnace shop in Columbiaville also, and I often had to clean furnaces after school. So I would ride my bicycle to school, and then go to the shop, get the cleaning tools, and clean a furnace. I would then take the tools back to the shop, and ride my bike home. When I got home I would be covered with soot from head to toe, from the furnace cleaning.

My brother Jerry was born in nineteen thirty eight. When the time came, dad had to go about a mile to a neighbor’s home (Frank Dwyer’s) that had a phone to call the doctor. When he got to the neighbors, about one o’clock in the morning, Frank was outside in a white nightgown putting in his sheep that had gotten out during the night. Dad said when he saw that white nightgown he thought he saw a ghost. Dad called the doctor, and the doctor was there in less than an hour. Dad asked the doctor how he made it so quickly, because the bridge over the Flint River by Columbiaville was out. The doctor said that was the way he came, he didn’t know anything about the bridge being out. In checking later, they found the bridge really was out and the doctor evidently drove across the two beams that held the planks on that style bridge. Just a few inches one way of the other, and he would have been in the river.

We dug a basement under our house, near Fostoria. When we moved there it had a small cellar with a trap door in middle of kitchen floor. We made outside stairs with doors to cover them. Then we dug the basement carrying the dirt out in buckets. Then we put in cement forms and poured the walls with cement.

Our first electric, was a battery system dad rigged with several six volt batteries, then he made a propeller and put it on a car generator to charge them. However, we had a bad storm when dad wasn’t home and mother worried about the batteries, so she found a piece of sheet metal and covered them. That shorted them all out, but mother didn’t understand electricity, and her intentions were good. Later dad purchased a 32 volt system, it had light bulbs that looked like our regular bulbs today, but were 32 volts DC rather than 120 AC.

Mother also had an electric iron for ironing clothes, her first one.. We also had a radio, but mother always made us keep the volume turned real low, because she thought the radio would use too much electricity otherwise. Our clothes washing machine was not electric. It had a lever on the side that we pumped back and forth to make it work.

We had two pear trees in our yard there. They produced an average of sixteen bushel per tree each year. Dad decided to take some pears to Flint and sell them. He loaded them into his car, and started going from house to house in Flint trying to sell them. After working all day he hadn’t sold any pears. He was tired so he sat down on the running board of his car to rest, and noticed some children playing, so he called them over to the car and gave them some pears, and told them to give one to their mother. He sold the whole load right there without moving his car.

When I was about ten years old, we made a trip to Flint. Michigan. I had never seen such a big city before. When it got dark, there was a policeman directing traffic with a flashlight that had a red plastic lens on the end about eight inches long. Dad said look at the policeman directing traffic with a red hot iron. I had never seen a flashlight, so I believed him, and for a long time afterward I told my friends how they direct traffic in Flint with an iron that is red hot, so it can be seen in the dark.

Also, that time in Flint, I saw a lighted, moving sign advertising Wrigley’s chewing gum. The light went down a strip, and pointed to a pack of Wrigley’s Spearmint Gum. The logo said ‘nine out of ten people choose Wrigley’s’. That was the first time I had seen anything like that, and I was really fascinated.

# Chapter 21 - Our Kids

Steve (our oldest son) attended Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College, Flint branch of Michigan State College, and Maranatha Baptist College in Wisconsin. Received a Bachelor’s degree in Christian education. He taught school for a while in North Carolina, Married Virginia (Ginny) Love, daughter of Kenneth and Janet Love. Ginny spent 15 of her young years in Brazil where her parents were missionaries. She can speak Portugese quite fluently. They ran a foster care facility for several years, and now Steve sells and sharpens scissors for salons. He also has a tape ministry in his church.

Dan our next oldest son, Lives in our home where he runs a computer repair business, as well as helping us when needed. He also has a tape and DVD ministry with our church. Dan spent two years in Maranatha Baptist Bible College.

Janice our only daughter, is married to Randy Clark. They have four children, Jonathan, Jessica, Joshua, and Jeremy. Jessica now lives with us and does all our cooking and cleaning, besides driving us wherever we wish to go. Janice works with a Christian musical group, and Randy teaches in a charter school in Waterford Michigan. Janice spent two years in Bible College,

Our son Tom has had many experiences that I think may be interesting. When our son Tim got married, the wedding was in Florida. Doris and I drove down, but Tom was living in Tottenham Ontario, Canada, where he was the pastor of a church. So he flew down to Orlando. After the wedding, we took Tom to the airport in Orlando, and we proceeded to drive home. Tom’s plane made a stopover in Atlanta, and since they had some time on that stopover, Tom bought a lunch and walked out to a nearby park to eat.

It was late evening, and as he approached, he saw two men dragging a young girl into the bushes. He hollered at them and they let go the girl and turned on him. One of the men had a knife, and so Tom got cut up some, but when the police arrived Tom was holding both men down. Since Tom was holding those men down, the police thought Tom must have started the fight, so they put him in jail. He told them he was a pastor in Canada, but they would not listen, but the next morning they found the knife and it had his blood on it and the other men’s finger prints. So they let Tom go. However Tom’s plane ticket was not refundable, so it took all the money he had to get a ticket home.

After Tom got home he wrote a letter to the governor of Georgia, and told him how he had been treated, and that he thought they should reimburse him for his plane ticket. He also mentioned that he thought the newspapers would like to hear his story. He soon got a letter from the governor stating, your check is on the way. I guess they didn’t want that kind of publicity.

Tom was also on the volunteer fire department in Tottenham. This is a small fire department, and they don’t pay their volunteers anything. Rather they use that money to equip the department. Even so they have a waiting list to become a volunteer. They are well enough equipped and trained that they train men for the Toronto fire department. One day we got a letter from the landlady, where Tom rented his residence. She stated she was worried about Tom, and sent us newspaper pictures and articles of a fire, Tom had been involved with the fire department in. This was a hotel fire, and it was an old building. They went in to evacuate the building and Tom was running down the hall with a man over his shoulder, when there was an explosion, which knocked them down. Tom scooped the man up again, and just as they got onto the stairs that hall floor collapsed. When outside, they worked in two man teams to put out the fire. Tom’s partner told tom to handle the hose, and he would watch the three story wall, if he slapped him on the shoulder, to run. In a few seconds he slapped Tom on the shoulder, and they ran. As they looked back that wall hit the ground right behind them. Later the chief said he thought they were under that wall. As they were finishing putting out the fire, they were in the wine cellar, and the boilers blew, blowing bottles through the wall on both sides of them, but they didn’t get hit with any of them. God looks after his own.

At one place where Tom was living, his landlady’s daughter was living in the next house, and they had seen men who were evidently stalking her house. She had some young children who had to be left alone when she went to work, and was therefore, very concerned. So Tom stayed at her house while she was gone to work.

One night he heard some sound, and looked out and saw three men trying to break in the lower level door. There was a deck just above that door, so Tom jumped off the deck on to them, Tom got beat up somewhat, and they got away, one with a broken leg, and one with a broken arm, for which they had to go to the hospital. The police told Tom that they couldn’t do anything because it would be his word against the three of them, and there was nothing illegal about going to the hospital with a broken arm and leg.

While on the volunteer fire department, they got a call to be on the alert for a 747 plane coming into Toronto, with engine trouble. (They were in the flight pattern that would be used for the plane’s approach.) The chief said pray nothing happens because we are not equipped to handle anything of that large scale. They expected the plane in about one and on half hours. In about one and one half hours, they got a call. Plane down on highway nine. That was the expected area, and Tom lived on highway nine, only a few minutes away. So Tom immediately drove down there, and found a small Piper Cub, that a man had tried to prop start in his field, and hadn’t blocked the wheels. The plane had started with no one inside, and the wheels hit the fence and the plane turned over on highway nine. He called the chief, and told him there was no one there, but the chief would not call off the emergency until he arrived, because he thought Tom must be panicking. As soon as the chief arrived, he called off the emergency. They have a picture of that small cub plane on the wall of the department. The 747 got in without trouble.

Once when Tom was home for a visit, He and another pastor (Blake Lasslett) went to a pastor’s conference, and on the way home they saw a car in the ditch. So they stopped and Tom found the driver choking on his own blood, so he told Blake to go and call an ambulance, and he helped to clear the man’s breathing passages, and saved his life. Later Blake said that he had been told of Tom’s many experiences, and now he was a believer.

Tom is now a pastor in British Columbia Canada.

His wife Kathy, has a Doctorate in nursing, and teaches nursing in a university in their area. They have one daughter, Kessia.

Tim spent thirteen years in the Navy, Nuclear submarines.

While in the navy Tim married Ruth Woodward. They have one son Timmy. Tim works for a factory in Petoskey taking care of all their computers. Tim also teaches the adult Sunday school class in their church, and substitutes for their pastor when he is away. He is also a good automobile mechanic. He was certified as a mechanic for many years.

David, our youngest son, has many abilities. While working in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, he married Amy Beckman, they have two children, Christine (Crystal) Wallin, and Ryan Rush. They built a business to be the largest of its type in the nation, and now they help other’s to grow their businesses. They are both active in their church, David has substituted for their pastor at times, and Amy is an excellent pianist.

With each of our kids I mentioned their service for our Lord. I mention this because we consider serving our Lord a very important privilege, since he has done so much for us. He has given each of us repentance, faith, and salvation by his glorious grace. He paid our penalty for our sin, and has given us assurance of a new life with him in glory.

# Chapter 22 - Our Family and Ancestors

My mother’s parents were, William James Barney, and Mary Ellen Gleason. Following: are the children of this union.

Hannah June Barney Mar.14 1878- Apr. 5, 1947

Almira Adell Barney Oct. 8, 1879- Feb. 7, 1961

Susan Ann Barney Mar. 4, 1881-Aug. 28, 1953

Silas Benjamin Barney June 19, 1882-Sept. 8, 1937

Carrie Elsie Barney Jan. 26, 1884-Sept. 18, 1903

Lyman James Barney Mar. 3, 1886-Dec. 30, 1925

William James Barney Sept. 11, 1888- Sept. 7, 1953

Rubin Josiah Barney Mar. 8 1891- May 4, 1910

Mary Ellen Barney Feb, 18, 1893-June 26, 1958

Ida May Barney April 7, 1896-Oct, 13, 1959

Colon Coley Barney April 29, 1897-Aug, 23, 1963

Flora May Barney June 4, 1901-Dec. 11, 1971

Nellie Alberta Barney May 1906- May 1964

Nellie was adopted out (their mother was dying) Nellie’s name was changed to Elizabeth May Blue.

More Barney Ancestral Notes:

Edward Barney Bunkinghawshire, England died in 1645

Jacob Barney (son of Edward) Born in England in 1601, came to Salem Mass. In 1634, died in Salem Mass. In 1673. Often a representative to he Colonial assembly, Wife’s name Elizabeth.

Jacob Barney, Born in England, before 1634, died in Rehoboth Mass. In 1693. He was a farmer, and one of the earliest Baptist ministers in the colony, organizing several early churches. Married Anne Witt, daughter of John and Sarah Witt.

Joseph Barney, born March 9, 1673 in Salem, Mass. Died Feb. 5, 1731 in Rehoboth Mass. Married to Constance Davis, daughter of James & Elizabeth (Easton) Davis. Joseph was a lieutenant in the Colonial Militia.

John Barney, born April 2, 1703 in Rehboth, Mass. Married Hannah Clark, daughter of Aaron, and Sarah (Lang) Clark.

John Barney, born May 1, 1730 in Rehboth Mass. Died Feb. 19, 1807 Married Rebecca Martin, daughter of Edward and Rebecca (Peck) Martin. His wife Rebecca was born Dec 21, 1709 died Feb. 10, 1807. John was captured in the Colonial Militia in the French and Indian wars, He was one of the founders of Guilford VT. He was a Captain, and re-entered service in the Revolution. (His descendants are egible to be members of the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution.)

James Barney, born March 18, 1757 in Guiford VT. Died there in April 1805. He lived for a time in Halifax VT. Where his children are recorded. His Wife was Thankful Marole of Brattlebors, VT. They had 8 sons & 4 daughters.

James Barney, born Sept. 6, 1776 In Halifax, VT. He settled in Elisburgh, N.Y. Married Hannah Bennett, Their children born in NY, state were: James Barney, Lyman Barney, Joseph Barney, Hannah Barney, Harriet Barney, Lynn Barney. Hannah married , James Littefield.

Josiah Barney’s wife, Hannah Mosher, died in 1840, and in 1841 he married a woman with last name of Johnson.

Silas Barney, born in 1838, Married Mary Blmus.

William Barney, born Mar. 17, 1839 married Mary Ellen Gleason. (This was my mother’s parents.)

Benjamin Barney, Born Dec. 2. 1840 married Ida McFadden.

Anne Barney, 1841, James Barney, Lynn Barney, Eustus Barney, Most likely Children of Benjamin & Ida Barney.

My Father’s Parents were, William Harry Rush & Mary Etta Hapman William was born in Elkhart, Indiana, July 13, 1873, died in Michigan in 1937 . Mary was born Sept. 19, 1877 in Kalkaska Michigan, died December 15, 1915. Both are buried at Modersville, Michigan. After Mary died William married a woman named Pansy. She was actually the only grandmother I knew. Pansy was a mail order bride. She was a good wife to grandpa, and he was a very hard man to get along with. She had a daughter Ruth, when she came to my grandpa, and my uncle George married Ruth. They had one daughter Lois who Married George Haveman. George and Lois Haveman, owned and ran the Home Acres, Airport at Lake City Michigan.

William & Mary Rush had seven children. Ernest, George, Leslie, Dale, Mabel, Dorothy, Goldie. Ernest never married. George Rush married Ruth (Pansy’s daughter, and after Ruth died he married a woman named Mamie. Leslie Rush, married Flora Barney. Dale died young and never married. Mabel Rush married Harley Apps. They had five children, Robert, Leo, Helen, Floyd, Evelyn. Robert Apps married a lady named Melvina, Robert died young having contracted malaria while in the army in W. W. ll. Melviana died shortly after. They had no children. Leo Apps married a lady named Lucille, they had two children, Helen, and David. Helen Apps, sister to Robert, Leo, Floyd & Evelyn. married Leo kitchenhoff, They had an son & daughter, I don’t remember their names, but the son died very young when he was run over accidently by a car driven by his aunt Evelyn. She was backing up the car and didn’t see him. Floyd (Pat) Apps married a lady named Audrey, I didn’t know their children. Evelyn married Wayne Creger, They had one girl, possibly more. Leslie & Flora Rush, had three children, Iva, Kenneth (myself,) and Jerry. My sister, Iva married John Potter, they had two girls, Patricia, and Terri. Patricia married Tom Sturgeon, they had no children. Terri married Randy Hines, they have two boys, Randy and Joel. I (Kenneth Rush) married Doris Fields, we have five boys and one girl. Steven, Dan, Tom, Timothy, David, Janice. Steven , married Virginia Love. They have two girls Rachael and Annette. Dan never married. Tom married Kathy, and they have one daughter Kessia. Timothy married Ruth, and they have a son Timothy. David married Amy Beckman. They have a daughter, Christine (Crystal) and a son Ryan. Janice married Randall Clark. And they have three sons and one daughter. Jonathan, Joshua, Jeremy. Jessica. My brother Jerry married Janet Rice, They have a son Alan and a daughter, Brenda. They are (Twins). Alan married Pam, they have two daughters, Lindsey, Holly, one son Jacob. Brenda married Larry Good. They have three daughters, Melissa, Elizabeth, Emily. Two sons Darryl, Ryan.

More Rush Ancestral Notes:

Peter Rush, born in Penn. In 1754 died in Ohio 1817, married, Mary Slaughter in 1784 Mary was born in 1764

Son, Jesse Rush Born in Penn. 1791, died in Elkhart Indiana, Sept.3, 1838. Married Mary Sumption in April 1812. Mary was born in Kentucky 1791, died in Elkhart Indiana, March 1, 1856. Son, Peter Rush born in Ohio (date unknown) died July 1878. Married Susan Heasley Sept. 26, 1872. Susan was born in Penn. May 24, 1838, died Feb. 20, 1905. Their son, William Harry Rush born July 13, 1873. Died Nov. 1937. William was the father of my dad Leslie Rush.

William Heasley, born April 28, 1809, died Nov. 3, 1868.

Married, Mary ?? Daughter, Susan, who married Peter Rush. They were the parents of William Harry Rush.

George Hapman, Married Nancy ? They were parents of Mary Etta Hapman born September 19, 1877. In Kalkaska Michigan. She married William Harry Rush. She was the mother of Leslie Rush.

Leslie Vern Rush Married Flora May Barney (my dad & mother) Mother died in 1971 at age of 70. About two years later, dad married Elsie, who was my mother’s niece, about the same age as my mother. A few years later Elsie died and dad married Ella Madeline Morton Coell. Ella was born in Clarksburg West Virginia, January 19, 1913. She died Nov. 29. 1995. Leslie was born in Decatur, Michigan, March 9, 1902, died Aug.9, 1993.

Leslie Rush had a cousin, Emmet Rush. Emmet’s wife Myrtle did some ancestral research and she claims the Rush family were related to Dr. Benjamin Rush, who was a physician to George Washington, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

My Wife was born, (Doris Marie Fields,) Daughter of Fred Howard Fields and Christine Irene Weydemeyer., Doris was born in Highland Park, Michigan. December 23, 1926. Doris had one sister Bettina (Betty) Pauline Fields. 1925-2006. Howard and Christine had another daughter Madeline, Born Dec. 21, 1924, Madeline died while still an infant.

Bettina, married Ed. Sharpe, in about 1948, That marriage broke up, and She married John Sourell, in 1953. Several years later She married Wayne Smythe, That marriage lasted over twenty years.

More Fields Ancestral Notes:

Madison Fields, born in Iniskin Canada married Mary Ann Dunbar. Born in Wauseon Ohio. Nov. 12, 1860. They were married Feb. 9, 1880. They had Two Children F. Howard Fields, and H. Otto Fields. Otto married a lady named Josie. They had no children. We have heard, but cannot confirm that Cyrus Field (who laid the Atlantic cable) was a distant relative. It seems that one of the Field family moved to Canada, and changed their name by adding an s making the name Fields. Also there may be some distant relation to the sea captain Cook.

Christine Irene Weydemeyer born Feb. 14, 1897. Daughter of Homer Weydemeyer and Flora May McLain. Christine married F. Howard. Fields. On July 24, 1922.

More Weydemeyer Ancestral Notes:

Philetus R Wedemeyer Enlisted in Custer’s first Michigan Calvary on Aug. 14, 1861. He re-enlisted in Dec. 1863. On June 12 1865 he was wounded and was discharged in July.

He and his family lived for a while in Sherman, Texas around 1880. They went to Washing D.C. where he served in the post office department under President Benjamin Harrison. In about 1900 they moved to Montana later sending for Harry Weydemeyer at Cass City, Michigan, to join them. Philetus Weydemeyer and his wife Mary (Nash) were parents of Harry and Homer Weydemeyer. Harry Weydemeyer had married Margaret Campbell, daughter of William Campbell. Harry soon sent for his brother Homer Weydemeyer. Philetus’s brother Warren with his wife and children joined them also. Then Margaret Weydemeyer’s parents, The Campbells joined them also.

Harry & Margaret Weydemeyer had a daughter named Olga born in 1901. Olga when grown married a man last name of Johnson. (Olga would be a cousin of Christine, Pauline and Mack) Homer died in Montana in1906. His body sent back to Michigan for burial. Flora McLean (who was Homer’s wife,) her parents were Hugh McClean who had come from Scotland, to Canada, where he married Katherine Graham.

Christine’s Father had died in 1906, and her mother died early also, So she, and I assume her sister Pauline and brother Mack, went to live with the Henry Copenhaver family in Pontiac Michigan. The Copenhavers were related to the Weydemeyers, I think perhaps aunt and uncle to Christine, but I cannot confirm that.

The following notes were compiled by Olga Johnson, (Daughter of Harry and Margaret Weydemeyer, and cousin of Christine Fields:)

John, George, and Eberhart Weydemeyer, arrived in Pennsylvania from Rotterdam, Holland, having come from Germany, On October 17, 1764. One of these men may have been the father of Jonas Weydemeyer. They settled in Mew Jersey, calling themselves the New Jersey Dutch. Jonas served as a Captain during the American Revolution. John, son of Jonas, born in 1800, married Ann Kane who was born in 1815. daughter Sarah Elizabeth, born 1833, Son Warren Born 1846. Son Philetus, born 1839. Elizabeth married John Chapman Laing. Son, C. Laing, Daughter, Minnie, daughter Harriet. Minnie married O. K. Janes. Daughter Harriet Laing, married \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Predmore.

Warren married, Harriet E. Fredrick. Philetus, married Mary Nash. They had sons Harry, and Homer. Homer married Flora McLean, daughter of Hugh Mclean & Katherine Graham. Homer had son, mack, daughter Christine, and daughter Pauline.

Christine married Howard Fields. They had two daughters, Bettina, and Doris.

Doris married Kenneth Rush. Kenneth & Doris had sons, Steven, Daniel, Thomas, Timothy, David, and daughter Janice.

Bettina married Ed Sharpe, (divorced) married John Sourell (divorced) married Wayne Smythe,

Pauline married George Caverly. They had a daughter Eloise, and a son George Jr. (Jack.) Eloise (Lois) married Lyle Howard, daughter Lee Ann, Son Kris. She then divorced and married William Muller. George Jr. Married Joyce Marilyn French.

Mack married Helen Acker, they had daughter Beverly, son Donald, and son Stanley. Beverly married Donald Diller. They had sons Donald, & Timothy. She then divorced, and married Dale Worden, they had Daughters, Vicky, & Judith, and son Fredrick. Stanley married Patsy Dunnavant, They had son, Kelly Mack, daughters Sharon & Cynthia. She then divorced and married Patsy Kane.

Donald married Mary Mclean, they had son Michael & daughter Jan. Then they divorced. Donald them married Georgiana Simpkins.

William A. Johnson (sometimes spelled Johnston) married Rebecca Rawlings. Their daughter Mable, married Roscoe Johnson. Son harry, son Vernon. Harry married Florence Derrick. Vernon married Hope Hackett, son Howard, son John, Daughter Connie, and a second daughter not named. Howard married Reva Daniels. Vernon, (evidently widowed) married Florence, the widow of his brother Harry.

The second daughter had a son Harold. Harold married Evelyn Beamer. They had a son Harold Glen, and a daughter Carol. Carol married \_\_\_\_\_\_\_Brandson. They had a daughter Alice, who married Wayne Mayfield. Their sons, Patrick Wayne Mayfield, and Paul Dennis Mayfield.

**Appendix A - Pictures**

This was the house that my dad built on the homestead, when I was just a baby. You can see that it still leans from the windstorm that we had while I was still quite young. Dad had straightened it some, but could not get it completely straight. This house looks very crude by today’s standards, but it was about all that could be done with the little he had to work with. Originally the outside was covered with tar paper. (15 lb felt.) Later dad put wood shingles on the outside. When this picture was taken, the house had been vacated for some time, and the wood singles had been removed, perhaps to be used on another building.



Our oldest son Steve & and his wife Virginia Rush & their daughters, Annette & Rachael. Virginia (Ginny) is the Daughter of Kenneth and Janet Love. Ginny, spent fifteen years of her youth in Brazil, where her parents were missionaries. Steve sharpens and sells scissors to salons.



Christine Weydemeyer Fields. Doris’s mother as a young woman.

This is the house I re-modeled for Christine Fields, after her husband Howard died, and she bought this smaller house.



Christine (Weydemeyer) Fields



F Howard Fields



Bettina (Fields,) with her husband Wayne Smythe, Bettina is Doris’s sister, Howard and Christine Fields daughter.



Pauline, (Weydemeyer) and her husband George Caverly. Pauline is a sister to Christine Fields.



H. Otto Fields. Howard’s brother. WW1



F. Howard Fields WW1



Our son Tom, with his wife Kathy, and daughter Kessia, taken about 2005. Tom is a preacher in British Columbia Canada



Annette Butterfield, with her sons, Tyler and Joey. And her friend REB. Annette is divorced from her husband, Timothy Butterfield. Annette is the Daughter of Steven & Virginia Rush, and she is our granddaughter.



Rachael and Eric Gregory, at their wedding, also pictured is Eric’s parents. Rachael is the Daughter of Steven and Virginia Rush.



This is a picture of my dad, Leslie Vern Rush, He Married Flora May (Barney). This was his birthday in March 9, 1991. Dad was 89in this picture. He died in August 9, 1993. My mother Flora had died in 1971. At this time dad was married to Ella (Coell.)



My Mother Flora May (Barney) Rush.

Mother was born in 1901. And died in 1971.



Back row: Jonathan Jessica Randy

Front row: Jeremy Janice Joshua

The Clark Family: Janice (Rush) Clark, is the Daughter of Kenneth and Doris Rush.



Tom & Patricia (Patty) Sturgeon. Patty is Iva (my sister) and John Potter’s Daughter. Tom is a Church of Christ Preacher



This picture taken in 1928, Back row: My dad Leslie Rush, holding me, my mother Flora, my aunt (dad’s sister) Mabel, Rush Apps, her husband, Harley Apps. Center row: George Rush’s daughter Lois Rush Haveman, Helen Apps Kitchenoff, Robert Apps, Leo Apps, front row: my sister Iva Rush Potter, Floyd (Pat) Apps.



.Ken & Doris Rush, shortly after their marriage in 1950



The Harry Weydemeyer family,

Winston, Lucretia, Donald, Mother Margaret, Olga, and Marian.



Harry & Margaret Weydemeyer, Parents of those pictured above.



Philetus & Mary (Nash) Weydemeyer, Parents of Harry, and Homer Weydemeyer.



Homer Weydemeyer. The Father of Christine Fields



Mack Weydemeyer, Christine’s brother.



Howard & Otto Fields mother.

Mary Ann (Dunbar) Fields, Wife of Madison Fields



David & Amy (Beckman) Rush. David is the youngest son of Kenneth & Doris Rush. Dave and Amy are both very active in their church. Amy is an excellent pianist. They run their own business, as a service to the Lord, more than for themselves.



Timothy & Ruth Rush. Tim is our son.

They have one son Timothy (Timmy.)

Tim does all the computer installation, and upkeep,

for a factory in Petoskey, Michigan.



F. Howard Fields, as a young man.

He married Christine Weydemeyer. He was Doris Rush’s father.



Our son Dan, He never married.

He lives with us, and runs a computer service from our home, He also helps us with many tasks we are getting too old to do.



Jerry Brenda Janet Alan

Jerry Rush is my brother, He married Janet Rice. Their two children are Brenda and Alan. Both now married, Brenda married Larry Good.

Alan’s wife is named Pam.



.My Wife Doris (Fields) Rush. Picture was taken about 2001



Susan (Heasley) Rush, Mother of William Rush

Grandmother of Leslie Rush



William & Mary Etta William & Mary Ellen

(Hapman) Rush, Parents (Gleason Barney, parents

of Leslie Rush Of Flora (Barney) Rush



John & Iva Potter, (my sister,) and parents of Patty, & Terri



 Crystal (Christine) & Ryan Rush,

Children of David & Amy Rush. Crystal works in a bank where she has received promotions for here efficiency. Ryan is in his senior year in High school, where he is an honor student, and has received State achievement awards



Back row Eric, holding Joshua, Rachael

Richard (Ricky Melody, Laurie, Ethan

Family of Eric & Rachael Gregory.

Rachael is the Daughter of Steven & Virginia (Love) Rush.

Steven is the son of Kenneth & Doris Rush.



Timothy Jr. (Timmy) Rush, Our Grandson. The son of Timothy & Ruth Rush



Back row: Howard Fields, Mack Weydemeyer, George Caverly. Front row: Christine Fields, Helen Weydemeyer, Pauline Caverly. Children unknown. Howard (Doris Rush’s dad) died a year after our wedding, he had Hodgkin disease.



This is the Fields cabin at Otsego Lake where Ken & Doris spent their honeymoon, in March 1950.



This is the first house we built, in Drayton Plains Michigan.

As is very visible, the front porch has not been built, nor any yard work done when this picture was taken. As mentioned earlier, we built this entire house from the used lumber I purchases for three hundred dollars

.



This is the walkout basement with thirty acres that we purchased and moved into in 1961



This is approximately the same view of that basement with therest of the house built on it, just a few years later.



This is the front view of the same house. It is 102 ft. long

Almost five thousand square feet. The section on the right is the apartment Randy & Janice lived in. Behind it is the mother-in-law apartment.



This is the mobile we purchased in 1984 when we moved to the Grayling area. We purchased a mobile because we needed something to move into immediately. The following pictures are the same place after we converted the mobile into a house.



Same place, about five years later





The above pictures are our home today, 2010. What started as a mobile now has over 2500 square feet of living area