



# Lee (Bill) Roberts: A Country Boy Looks Back

**Journeys down memory lane for my family**

**December 2011**

## Bill Roberts – A Country Boy Looks Back

	Introduction	2
1.	My Farm Childhood	3
2.	My Father – Dave Roberts	16
3.	My Mother – Sarah Roberts	21
4.	My Nain Cambria – Ruth Roberts	29
5.	My Taid and Nain - Evan T and Jane Evans	34
6.	Ann – How it All Started	38
7.	War Service and My Education	41
8.	Austin and St Cloud, Minnesota	47
9.	Phoenix, Arizona	52
10.	Cherokee, Iowa	61
11.	Mankato, Minnesota	65
12.	Adelaide and the Trip Home	69
13.	Tucson, Arizona	73
14.	Recent Years	77

*Note: This memoir was compiled by Bill's daughter, Becky Llewellyn, from interviews recorded with him over 15 years and transcribed in 2011. The original interviews have been digitised and stored at: [http:// billrobertsstory.com](http://billrobertsstory.com). Other material, including an audio recording of Bill singing with his wife Ann playing piano in 1982, a video interview of Ann and Bill recorded on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, and family photographs will also be found there.*

## Introduction

When you are born into a family with four older siblings, as a young person you never think that in the long journey of life, you might be the last representative of that generation. That is precisely what has happened to me. It is a position in life that gives you a lot of time for reflecting, for ruminating on life and the people you shared it with who are no longer present.

This story is one way to share with readers some of my life journey, influential people, values and experiences. It is not all I have lived, but it is what I can tell you at age 86. You of the future who are descended from me, to whom I am an unknown or known ancestor, I send you love and this poem, *Yesterday* that I wrote in 1986 for Ann, my wonderful love of my life:

*Yesterday. When I first saw you.*

*Yesterday you entered my life.*

*Forty five years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday. First we set up house.*

*Yesterday Becky was born.*

*Next came Dave and Ned*

*Thirty six years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday. We bought a house.*

*Yesterday Jim and Sue were born.*

*Yesterday. Mothering was what there was.*

*Thirty three years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday. Phoenix bound we left our home.*

*Yesterday we met the desert.*

*Twenty nine years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday. Cherokee came once again.*

*Yesterday we had a second chance.*

*Twenty seven years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday. Mankato became home for us.*

*Yesterday we lost our Dad.*

*Twenty one years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday. Martin came and spent a year.*

*Yesterday we made a plan.*

*Eighteen years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday. Australia met us then.*

*Yesterday our view was broad.*

*Seventeen years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday Tucson now and years to come.*

*Yesterday new life began.*

*Fourteen years was yesterday.*

*Yesterday. Yesterday, where did you go?*

*You were here a minute ago*

*Making me happy – fulfilled.*

*Yesterday. You remind me*

*That you weren't feeling well.*

*Yesterday don't ever leave.*

*Yesterday. My darling it's gone.*

*But yesterday it's also here.*

*So is tomorrow.*

*Yesterday I was with you.*

*Today and tomorrow I will be too.*

*Tomorrow is forever...Whoopee!*

*A blessing indeed.*

## Chapter 1 – My Farm Childhood

I was born in Lake Crystal, Minnesota on a farm about 6 miles northwest of Lake Crystal on July 10<sup>th</sup> 1925. I've always liked being born at that quarter century mark.

My mother's name was Sarah Eunice Evans Roberts and my father was David Roberts, both of Welsh descent. Our relatively small community, around 1,000 people, Lake Crystal, Minnesota, I learned in my fifth grade history book, was settled by Welsh people. The local phone book had long pages of Joneses and fewer Roberts and a few Johnsons but not nearly as many as Joneses. There were almost no German-sounding names. The Welsh names really predominated in the community when I was young.

There were problems created in our Welsh naming traditions. There were five John Joneses in the Lake Crystal area. One would be called John B. Salem, who lived by a little church called 'Salem' or John Bunyan, his second name, or Johnny Jump-up. Heaven knows – some teacher must have named him because he jumped up in class all the time. John Tinner Jones was a man whose occupation was being a tinner. He fashioned tin for eaves and drain spouts. I'm sure we could think of several more John Joneses but that gives you the idea.

William was my paternal grandfather's name, William Roberts. I don't know if he had a middle name and I honestly don't know, other than that his ancestors came from Wales. My father had one brother named Evan. He had no middle name and neither did my father. I was named after my paternal grandfather, William and another distant relative whose name was Lee. At home I was always called 'Lee' by all my relatives and all the people in the family.

I don't remember many things about my very first day of school, but one was that my teacher called me 'William'. I about jumped out of my seat. I didn't even realise she was talking to me. No one ever called me 'William' and I said it's 'William Lee' and from that day on until 6th grade when the teacher went along with my friends and started to call me 'Bill', it was always 'William Lee', not one or the other.

I liked being called 'Bill' and felt quite grown up and my joy in that name has continued. My brother Earl, 4 years older than I, always calls me 'Lee' and so do some other more distant relatives. He was my last family member to die. I have one niece, Kathleen Kelley Knight, my sister Dorothy's daughter who at this time is 68 years old. She calls me 'Uncle Lee' and that's just fine.

I didn't get any name from my mother's side of the family but I got almost everything else. Her family was a large one: 12 brothers and sisters. I remember Aunt Esther used to check my ears every Sunday before church. My maternal grandfather came back from California in 1934 and died in 1935. His name was Evan Theophilus Evans. 'Evan T' he was referred to in that small country area which had at its centre the Jerusalem Church and the cemetery which is still there. I was known as one of the 'Evan T's'. There were a lot of Roberts' but the Roberts clan was a lot smaller than the Evans clan.

My home was located on the top of a hill, just above a little town called Judson, where I went to school for the first eight grades. I've had fantasies about buying that land, overlooking the river and becoming a posh settlement with homes. One problem that I know of in doing that, in drilling for water for that farm, they had to go as far as the bottom of the hill – 500 to 600 feet. There was a road on the hill. When I was going home on the school bus, the bus driver used to let us out. He'd allow us to bring our sled and we'd slide down that hill. We'd be at the bottom of the hill waiting for him. I remember one time he ran into a bank on the side of the road because it was so slippery on that hill.



But getting water to those fancy houses I visualise was next to impossible. My guess is that the farms that went west from that place that overlooked the Minnesota River valley had less difficult situations.

The farm where we lived was where all of us were born except Dorothy, my oldest sister. My parents moved into their new home in 1918. My Mother and Dad had planned this house. The house is a nice square white building that was really comfortable. Although I've seen homes that looked like ours on the outside in our area, I was never in a house like it. It had a neat place if you had a tricycle! I wore out the trike by the end of its life. There was a great place to go right around the circle from one room, to another room, to another room, back home to the kitchen again. And the kitchen was probably home. It was where we had most of our meals, unless it was on Sunday or a day when we had extra workmen helping with threshing in the summertime.



This is a picture of our farm the year before I was born – 1924. Most important in our house, there was a piano. Dorothy played the piano and my Dad sang in a quartet. I remember the men coming to our house to practice. There was a large sofa that we called a davenport, made of some kind of vinyl at that time, leather or imitation. That's where I sat to listen. It was very typical that we would all be involved in a family sing-a-long.

Our farm that I grew up on was 120 acres. The farmstead now belongs to someone else as my brother Earl sold the building site of 18 acres. My brother rented out the remaining 102 acres of land to a sharecropping farmer and consulted with him about crops to plant. In contrast with how it used to be when I was growing up, there was a large pasture area, then 25-30 acres of corn and 25-30 acres of oats and an area of wild hay, wild prairie grass that had never been ploughed before. That was considered to be good hay for the horses. Alfalfa was better for the cattle.

We had chickens, pigs, sheep, cattle and of course horses, because we didn't have a tractor. The horses pulled the plough, corn planter, cultivator and the manure spreader – all of the implements that were needed to do farm work. They did all the heavy work.

The farm home site had a 24' x 28' house, with a basement, a first floor with a kitchen, bedroom, living room and dining room with a porch on either side of those rooms and then an upstairs where there were three bedrooms and a storage room. The house was made of lathes with plaster attached to the lathes and framework. The paint was a type of calamine.

It was heated by a furnace in the basement and had one register on the ground floor in the centre of the house where all of the heat came in. Everything else was generated by the cook stove in the kitchen. Whether it was 95°F or 25° below zero, the kitchen stove was the extra source of heat. The basement furnace was heated with timber cut from mother's home farm, where Uncle Edwin and Aunt Esther lived and for years, they furnished us free of charge all the wood we needed to heat the house.

On the south side of the house were bridal wreath bushes with white flowers in June and July which were very nice. There were pink peonies outside the front door that had very beautiful large pink flowers in the spring. There were also other trees around. Four were separate from

the grove and they were young when I was young so they were probably planted within a few years of my birth in 1925.

The house had lilacs behind it in the backyard and a big beautiful grove of evergreen trees and some other box elder trees that made a big L-shaped grove on the west and north sides of the farm. That was a standard way to plant a grove and my Mother and Dad had planted all those trees before I was born. I wasn't alive of course, but it has been easy for me to visualise and picture them working as a team together on many things. Somehow it is the planting of the trees that symbolises their love. Those evergreen trees were beautifully lined up, framing the house to help prevent against the coldest winter winds and storms which was typical for most of the farms in that area.

The kitchen was the place where people entered. I remember very few, if any, people coming in the front door which was off a porch on the south side of the home. We all used the door at ground level. Just to the left was a stairway that went to the basement and straight ahead was a 4 step stairway that went into the kitchen. There was a little cloak hall at the steps where we could hang our work clothes or other winter gear.

It was a warm place, in contrast with many homes. We had an upright stove for heating as well as a range for cooking and a furnace in the basement to heat the house. The cook stove added more heat. It was trimmed with pine wood around the doors and frames. We had built-in kitchen cupboards that were better than lots of people had and better than the home where my Mother grew up.



Those early years, I probably have more memories of my grandmother, my father's mother than I do of my parents. But I did have brothers and sisters and I was the youngest of five. My oldest sister was Dorothy Jane. She was born August 19<sup>th</sup> 1917. Then there was David Newton Roberts (Newt) who was born March 9<sup>th</sup> 1919. Earl Theophilus Roberts was born July 28<sup>th</sup> 1921. My sister Helen Ruth Roberts Meredith was born August 13<sup>th</sup> 1923 and I came along on July 10<sup>th</sup> 1925, a memorable day for some people.

I was born at home and a lady was hired to come in and help my mother for a couple weeks. My oldest sister Dorothy was only eight years old and although she would have been helping a little, there was a need for someone to come in to manage the house. This was summertime, so it was a time of very much activity on the farm. Possibly it was early harvest for some of the grain and that called for crews of people: neighbours who would come and help. At the time of my birth, my brothers and sisters were from the age of eight down, so there wasn't a lot of work that could be expected of them.

I do remember that about the age of 8, I started gathering eggs. I started carrying food to the pigs and started milking cows. Once you learn how to milk cows, that is a twice daily chore-

morning and night, every day and always for as long as you have dairy cows. I remember looking forward to the time I would be able to do that, so I would be considered much more grown up. I don't know whether that happened, but that's how it seems to me at this point.

Milking time was between 6 and 7 o'clock in the morning, probably closer to 6 and around 5:30 – 6 in the evening. If I remember right, we always used to do the milking before supper. Supper was the meal from 6 – 6:30 in the evening. We did that a little differently than lots of our friends. We had friends and even relatives who did their milking at 8 or 9 o'clock at night. That means they didn't finish til 10 or 11 because they had dinner and would sit around before they went out to finish the chores.

When I was little and visited the home of a good friend of mine, Eldon Jones (brother-in-law for almost 60 years now!) I remember they did milking later at their house and I thought it really was odd, because we did it a different way. That was one of the early lessons in finding out there are different ways of doing things. Sometimes they are good and sometimes they are not so good.

Noontime was the time for meat and potatoes, but so was suppertime, just not so much. The noon meal in the summer time most always would start with meat, potatoes, gravy and other vegetables and almost always finish with some kind of homemade pie. And of course there was my mother's homemade bread. She baked three times a week, seven loaves every three days in a stove fuelled by wood or corn cobs that we gathered from the pig's feedlot. And we always got rid of all of it. It was very rare that she had to use the leftover bread in a tomato dish to use it up. I have no idea how she managed to keep the temperature even for baking by making a fire from those other sources. It still amazes me as I look back!

That wood stove was also the place she heated the three flat irons to use interchangeably. Ironing always involved 3 or 4 white cotton shirts every week when my Dad was alive. On Sunday, you wore white shirts to church. This was before the age of polyester and wrinkle free clothes. It was a big job ironing before electricity came to Minnesota as almost everything needed ironing. The kitchen was a fun place to be, a place where there was generally laughter and singing. There were a few spats between Dorothy and Newt after my Dad died, but I don't remember any arguments before that.

At home my mother was responsible for the housework, but we were all responsible for doing dishes. We were all responsible for milking cows and other farm chores. My mother helped my Dad in many ways. When it came time to butcher a pig, our main meat supply, there were a few years when someone helped my brother learn how to do that butchering after Dad died. That would be a time when extra leaves would be put in to extend the dining room table, a round table. It could seat easily up to twelve people and felt like more.

We didn't have electricity when I first remember our home until 1938. We didn't have a refrigerator. Foods were kept cold by having them in a cooler, running off the pump that was operated by the windmill that kept cold water running through in the to a stock tank where the livestock drank. There wasn't a need for a refrigerator in the wintertime because you could easily put something outside so it would freeze or keep cold.

In the winter of 1935, I remember looking out of our upstairs windows, which would have been about twenty feet high and the top of the snow drift came up to the window. It blew so much that it made a horseshoe around the house!

In the family home, the water from the roof would run down eave spouts into a cistern under the back porch. We had soft water from a pump to a sink in the kitchen, but we didn't have running water. When we needed water for drinking or cooking, we got that at the pump that served the cattle at the well. My mother and dad had the well drilled. The water level was at 40-50 feet. That contrasts with the well which our daughter Sue and Tony had dug in Arizona some years ago and I think that is between 400 – 500 feet. So there was a lot of difference about where water was available. It was good water, tasting good. When you wanted to have a drink of water on the farm, you could go put your hand under the spout and drink from your hand and pump at the same time. The pump squeaked if it wasn't oiled. Sometimes it was oiled but mostly, it squeaked.

As far as toilets go, we had a real outside toilet, with two seat holes. I remember seeing my mother and father being in the toilet together. I suppose that was the ultimate in semi-closeness! That little back house, as we called it (there is a Welsh word for it) "Tŷ Bach" is not to be confused with "Te Bach", which means having a little tea. You have to be very careful to have the right Welsh vowel!

That outside toilet served all of us in the family, all year round, summer and winter. For night-time, we used a chamber pot which was fine for urination. But if anything more had to happen, it was outside. Toilet paper consisted of a Sears Roebuck catalog. Eventually, sometime after 1940, we may have gotten to regular toilet paper on a roll. But before that it was generally newspapers or a Sears catalog. It was kind of fun to have the Sears catalog, because you could take a little time and see the women in brassieres and Who! Really exciting. It is kind of a different experience than most kids have who grow up with rolls of toilet paper.

The barn was a multi-functional hub, 60 feet long with no basement, which held 14 – 20 cows and a little calf pen for the calves after they were born. They would stay there a while. The cows' heads would go into a station and the cows knew exactly where they were supposed to go. I don't know how they learned it except they were put in a certain place, and they remembered it. Behind the cows, there was a gutter for the manure and a walking path behind that. After we got electricity, I remember a radio being up on the side of the barn. The insides were not finished, in the sense of wallboard on the inside of the barn. The studdings were all open so you could build a little shelf between them if you needed to put something up.

Above the cattle was a hay mow. Like a second storey, it housed the hay and served as a granary for the oats. The barn was divided into the north and south sides with a pathway down the centre, which had mangers in the front where we used to put the hay or feed. Some really ultra-smart barns, not ours, had individual watering places, so they had running water through the barn so each cow could stand there and have its own water and feed. I thought that was special.

The horses were in their stalls, not individually locked in like the cows. Locked is too strong a term. They just couldn't back out of where they were. A horse had his or her stall – two single stalls and two double stalls, so we had room for six horses. Usually we had four or five horses for all the heavy work.

I remember getting in real trouble with Daddy one time when I was walking by our horse named King. There was a pathway that went from the cow barn to the horse barn – an open space where you had to walk beside King. I remember walking beside him and saying loudly, "Move over, the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory!"

Daddy grew up in a church that was rigid about a number of things. For me to use words from The Lord's Prayer in connection with trying to move my horse, somehow wasn't the right thing to do. My Dad didn't think it was funny at all! It was sacrilegious and bad. He told me, "Never, ever, ever say that again!" It didn't take very long to learn when your father lets you know what is expected of you and what isn't acceptable to him.

The horse in the next stall was called Florey. In the next one were Babe and Queen and then our Shetland pony named Beaut, a little black beauty who at one time had kicked my brother Newt in the forehead when he pulled his tail. Newt retained that scar for as long as he lived, which unfortunately wasn't very long. I'll tell you about Newt another time.

The big stock horses were no fun to ride for pleasure. I rode Beaut, who was more my size. My brothers were fonder of our little pony than I was. When we had to get the mail, which had been delivered to our mailbox half a mile from our farm, I used to take Beaut. That horse was so obstinate. I could never get her to trot or gallop at all in going to the mailbox and I could never get her to do anything less than a total, total, full trot going home. It didn't make any difference how I used the reins – she had a mind of her own.

She was never ridden with a saddle. She refused them or bucked off anyone who tried. She'd stand on her head or her front legs or whatever was needed to get that saddle off her back. We had one neighbor boy, the same age as Newt who on two occasions broke his arm riding on Beaut, attempting to ride behind my brother. Everybody isn't a slow learner, but I have the feeling that he was. It was unfortunate. But that was Beaut's nature and I must say, she did get me to the mailbox and back, usually very quickly.

The mailbox was at an intersection of a road where a mailman, driving his car, could leave the mail and continue along on a township road rather than driving on a county road that served the neighbors closest to us. He stopped at three mailboxes located together. They were for us and the people who lived on a one mile stretch going west from where that mailbox was. There was a little metal flag you'd put up if you put a letter in the mailbox so he'd know to take that.

These days it is illegal to put things other than US mail in mailboxes. At that time you could leave notes for the mailman and do all sorts of things that were kind. You could leave a note for the neighbor, tell them and they could stop to pick it up.

Back to the barn; there was a hay mow above the cows and horses. It was really a secret place. It had two staircases up to the top upstairs. In the summertime when we harvested all

the hay, the barn had a carrier with ropes and pulleys that allowed the hay we harvested to be pulled up the side of the barn through a big door and taken to any place in the top barn, then dumped, so it was filled with hay by the end of the summer.

There was also a granary in the barn with a spot for oats, which was the only small grain cereal crop we harvested. There was a shoot running down the side where you would pull down a little lever and you would collect oats for each horse in a little pan. It was a very simple but helpful little device I didn't see in many other barns.

In the summer we used wild hay for feeding the horses. Now it would be called 'prairie grass', land that had never been ploughed. The grass just grew there. Blue Earth County, Minnesota prairie was rich stuff. We also raised alfalfa, a great crop for building strength in the soil. Both of those types of hay were put up into the barn and we used them during the winter months for feeding the cattle. I look back now and find it hard to believe my family and I were the first European people to harvest the indigenous hay.

In the summertime, the cattle lived in the pasture. They ate the grass there because there was never a time we didn't have sufficient rain to make good grass for them to eat.

I remember once when I was about 6-7 years old, being in the hay mow with my two brothers and my younger sister and we were having some sort of a game – some sort of game that was explorative. If I remember right, we didn't have any clothes on and my oldest sister appeared up the ladder. When her head came out and she said, "What are you doing!" that was the real stop to that game of exploration. Nothing serious was happening that I recall, but I certainly remember the incident!

My sister Dorothy had auburn hair like I did when I was little and I always felt like I was her 'pet' and she was a sort of 'second mother' in the house. There were so many things to do in our family, the house and farm. I thought she was my special pal and I remember feeling a little embarrassment that she caught me without any clothes.

The cows were milked by everybody in the family. Milking involves squeezing the tits of the cow that come off the udder and the cow gives its milk. Mostly they like it – they don't kick. That's what they want to have happen. Each of our cows had a name and their special place in the barn. One was called 'Edwin' even though it was a female cow, not a bull, but that was because we got it from Edwin Jones. I remember the names Maggie, Mollie and all sorts of names. Every cow had its name and its same place.

I started milking with the easy ones and graduated to all the cows in the barn. I never milked by myself. There was always at least one other person and usually four, sometimes five milking together. It was not solitary. We talked and after we got electricity, we listened to the radio. That was fairly pleasant. And of course we sang as we worked, every once in a while.

I remember the cats being in the barn at milking time. They had a dish with milk and there were plenty of mice. We had one cat who used to catch rabbits – a really able hunter. The cats were always ready to receive fresh warm milk. We could take the teat of the cow and squirt milk into the mouths of the cats directly. One of our cats was particularly adept at it. You

could move the stream of milk around a bit and the cat would move too. That used to be one of my special joys, almost like a mean trick on the cats, but they seemed to love it.

We had two 10 gallon cans full of milk when all the cows were milking at their maximum. I do remember having a four or five gallon can also just about full. After getting those 20 gallons, we took it to a building that was near the windmill, called a shack with a cream separator – a machine where you turned a crank and in that process, separated the cream from the skim milk.

The cream was a cash crop for us and as with many things, we co-operated with neighbors to take our cream to the creamery, located in Judson. In my early days, before I started school, I went either with my uncle or a neighbor named Tom or my Dad, taking the cream to the creamery. We would stop at three or four other farms and take their cream in to the creamery.

Raising pigs also brought in cash, as did eggs. We had maybe 60 chickens at a time. It was my responsibility from the time I was six to feed the chickens and gather the eggs. It can be kind of tricky sometimes because you had to reach in the nest where a hen might be sitting and I was always afraid she was going to pick me. Once in a while they did, but it was never anything serious, I usually gathered 18-20 eggs every day. When we got a case full, that was 12 dozen, we took it to the grocery store. The grocer would accept the case of eggs and we would buy groceries with the money that we got from selling the eggs.

We also had sheep, not very many, 30 at most. I do remember one time I was helping Earl paint the barn and somehow I leaned over and a ram butted me, knocking me over. It was one of those odd things that hardly ever happened, but did happen! They usually weren't near to the barn. I don't remember anybody having responsibility for feeding the sheep. I don't know what they did in the wintertime but in the summer, they ate grass.

Eventually it was also my responsibility to feed the pigs, using skim milk and ground up oats or corn to make what was called 'slop' and feeding those pigs. The crops we raised were hay to feed the cattle and horses and oats which we ground to feed the pigs and some to the chickens and corn the same way. We fed ear corn to the pigs, as well as the slop I mentioned which was put into a trough. Normally there was crop rotation with 25 acres of each of these crops and a large pasture which lay fallow.

When I was young, pre-school age, I remember walking across the pasture to my Grandmother's Nain's house. "Nain" (pronounced 'nine') is the Welsh word for grandmother. I'm surprised really because there was always water standing in a slough, a kind of muddy swamp, even in the summertime and ice in the winter. I would think that knowing my Mother, she might have been a little leery about me going across. I must have had good coaching because I never remember testing the limits and walking out into the water.

My Nain somehow had a way of making me feel special, like my Mother did. I remember early on helping my mother iron handkerchiefs. I was alone with her for a few years before I started school as the youngest one in the family. We had a kind of closeness then.

When I was eight, in October of 1933, my father died, after a 6 month illness. He had what was called 'spinal myelitis'. He was lying in bed almost all those six months. I remember going for a ride with his brother, Uncle Evan, taking us in the car and going around the countryside a bit, just to get him out. He was essentially paralysed with that illness which today would have been treated with antibiotics and he would have been fine.

It was different after my father died, because mother had the major responsibility, not for doing all the work, but for all of the concerns, money, paying the mortgage and that Depression time was so severe. In the spring of 1934, after a bitter winter, all of our hogs died. They got hog cholera, a severe illness for hogs and it was again a really tough time as we depended on the pigs to bring us money. When they all died they were worth nothing. That got to be pretty difficult.

Our family were home fairly often in the evenings. Every Sunday, we sang around the piano. We had popcorn in a big dishpan, nearly 2 feet wide and 10 inches deep. That would be filled up and eaten. If there were some leftover, we might have it for breakfast with cream and sugar on it, to make it especially delectable! As you know, I loved popcorn and still do! It isn't as much fun now that I feel restrained about not having butter and salt because some restrictions apply, so I can't eat it that way.

In addition to being home, we would go to the homes of neighbors. We didn't invite ourselves; we were constantly invited and welcomed. A man named Lew J. Lewis and his wife Nell, were close neighbors who hired first Newton, then Earl and me to do the heavy work. That involved me for at least three weeks, hauling manure which was rotted from a straw stack when the threshing machines separated the oats from the chaff. If that stayed there, it eventually rotted and became compost. So there was that and there was manure that was put out from when the cows were put out of the barn in the winter time, so I did that. I drove his team of horses at threshing time, when we harvested the oats.

We had a group of eight farmers in the neighborhood who had what we called a 'run'. We went to each of the farmer's places. We all did all of his work for the harvesting oats and then onto the next place and so on. The thing I remember most about these runs was not the work, but the eating because the women really outdid themselves. They had lunch in the morning - a big dinner with one or two kinds of meat, two vegetables at least, potatoes, gravy and pie, always pie at lunchtime. Then there would be lunch in the afternoon which would be coffee and/or Kool-aid or some type of cold drink, like lemonade, cookies and sandwiches. Then there would be supper, which wasn't quite as big as the noon meal, but which probably had meat and potatoes anyway.

I didn't start working for Lew J. until I was 13. By the time you are 13 and working on the farm, you are ready to enjoy those big meals and all the camaraderie with that many men being together and enjoying themselves while they accomplish a lot of work. During the summer, work was a social outlet.

The major source of interaction with other people was at Jerusalem Church, three miles to the northeast and about two miles from the place where my mother was born and grew up. It became the home of my Uncle Edwin and Aunt Esther Evans - brother and sister, never

married, who lived on that home farm that their grandfather had bought when Minnesota was opened up for settlement.

Almost every Sunday, we would go to Sunday School in the morning at Jerusalem Church at 10 o'clock. Then in the afternoon, at 2:30pm we would be back for the sermon. That is when the Minister would be there, having serviced two other nearby Welsh churches on Sunday morning.

It was tradition for Jerusalem to have the 2:30 service. Between Sunday School and that service, we almost always went to Uncle Edwin and Aunt Esther's home and it was probably a roast beef or a big chicken dinner. That was a special treat because we didn't have beef at our house. We raised pigs and we butchered them. My mother canned the meat. It was delicious and wonderful, but it was nice to have beef.

Not only were we there for Sunday dinners, but for every holiday – Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter. I don't know how Aunt Esther did it. There were ducks and turkeys and chicken and beef and those meals. I always overate and felt almost sick in the afternoon. After the dinner at 12 – 1 o'clock, almost all the adults would go to sleep. Probably some of us children did, even then.

I don't remember when I was one, or two, or three or four but starting maybe some time when I was four years old, I had the measles and I remember my father going into town and coming home with a balloon. That was a real treat for me because we didn't have many things like toys.

We did have what was there on the farm. There probably was some sort of religious reason why they didn't want to shower us with a lot of gifts, but there was another reason: there wasn't a lot of money in the pot in the 1930s because of the Depression.

Our Christmas didn't involve the gift exchange tradition. We didn't have a Christmas tree, except at church where they would have a very big tree. On Christmas Eve, Santa Clause would come and in the little Sunday School we had an exchange, so we had one gift coming from somebody. Then there was a sack of candy and a fruit for each of us. That was sort of it.

There was a kind of philosophy of children should be seen and not heard and of not spoiling children by giving things. But then we would eat as a family together – goose, duck, roast beef. I am struck by the quantity of meats at Christmastime. Not until my oldest sister, Dorothy finished high school and went to Commercial College, came back and was employed at the bank, that first year, for the first time, we had lovely gifts. Maybe the second year, we got a Christmas tree. From then on, we began to establish a stronger tradition.

That holiday wasn't so much, nor was there much recognition of birthdays. They were recognised and we had them. We didn't have birthday cakes. The 4th of July somehow strikes me as a big holiday because it meant going to a special place, where there was a ball game, a speech, music, the Welsh people would give recitations, always including Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. There would be at least 200 people there and a picnic atmosphere. We could have firecrackers. It was the one holiday my Dad ever took, other than Sundays. We always milked

the cows, but when I say 'holiday' I mean we left home at 9:30 in the morning and didn't get back til 4 in the afternoon. That was pretty special. We all went in one car.

The one place where children were recognised and given praise, prizes and money was in the competition named Eisteddfod where we would recite chapters from the Bible or sing. We got prizes for whoever performed the best. That is the exact tradition of the Eisteddfod. I started singing in public at the Eisteddfods. We got 50c for first place and 10c for second and nothing for third. Usually I got 50c. One time I remember, I had a little coin purse and I lost it. All the people were so sorry for me. There was a lot of sympathy because my Dad had died and people were caring for me. Nobody ever did find that purse, but they didn't take the money out of their kitty to pay me to replace it either. That's alright. I knew I had won.

The one book in the house was a Bible and our little consolidated school had very few books in the library. Somehow I did a lot of reading. I really spent a lot of time fantasising. If I had a task like getting the cows from the pasture, I would fantasize about all sorts of things. Some of it surely was related to my becoming some kind of success. I never understood what a success was but I knew I wasn't going to be a farmer.

One of the special sources for me to imagine the outer world was the movies. I do remember the first movie I ever saw was *The Tale of Two Cities*. It amazes me that I was permitted to go see that when I was about 6 or 7 years old. It was a school function and my Father was on the School Board. Somehow, we had a high school teacher who was a very well educated lady, I think now looking back. She organised a school bus trip for the students who went up to 10th grade and whoever wanted to go and pay the 10 cents could go to the cinema in Mankato to see that Charles Dickens story.

It is as clear to me today as that first event. I remember the peasants drinking wine out in the streets. I didn't know much about wine but I sensed it was something terribly important to them! They must have been very thirsty! I remember the very, very old man in a prison cell. I remember Madame Defarge. It deeply impressed me.

As I got older, I went to a lot of cowboy movies with Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, movie star cowboys. Lake Crystal had a double feature of cowboy movies on Saturday nights. After I got my driving license when I was 15, then I could drive to the larger town of Mankato and expand what I could see. I only saw *Snow White* decades after it had been around the first time after I could drive.

It was at my Aunt and Uncle's house that I heard radio for the first time and just totally fell in love with what the radio was about. Remember, we are talking about 1934 maybe. I'd heard it before but always at that house. To be able to listen to a radio program and know that it was coming from New York, was like magic. It was a really big thrill for me. We used to sit around and sort of listen. I remember being there at 10 o'clock at night and all of us listening to the news, but we used to sit and LOOK at the radio. Cedric Adams was the name of a newscaster at WCCO in Minneapolis who read the news at 10 o'clock and we watched it like we now look at a TV set.



Our close neighbors, Mr and Mrs Lew J and Nell Lewis, had a radio and seemed to welcome us in the evening, no matter when we wanted to come. I remember being at their home when we couldn't possibly drive from our home for weeks at a time because of the snow, but we walked over the snow drifts, sat down and listened to radio, chatted and had food although were less likely to have food there than at my mother's family home. When we were there late in the evening, Aunt Esther would have coffee for the adults and cake for all of us. That sort of Minnesota refreshment probably involved sandwiches as well wherever you went in the evening in the 1930s on the farm.

Someone told me I should be a radio announcer because of my voice. No one from our hometown was a radio announcer and I thought that would be magnificent; to speak over the airwaves. So I became very well acquainted with all the announcers on programs and would imitate the announcers. I knew the commercials by heart. I spent a lot of time listening to the radio after we got one when I was 10 years old. It helped me be in new places in my imagination and think about what the future held for me.

## Chapter 2 – My Father - Dave Roberts

I'm pretty sure my Dad's name was David, but I don't have any proof of that. He was always called, in my memory, Dave. And when I saw 'in my memory', it is a bit sketchy because he died when I was 8 years old, so I really didn't know him very long and my memories are clouded. This is a formal picture of my Dad, David Roberts on the left and his brother Evan as children.



Early death was much more common in my parent's lifetime. There was an epidemic of flu in the 1890's and children in my mother's family died then. In 1918, there was another flu epidemic and there were children who died then, so in a sense we got by lucky in terms of our family growing up mostly intact. My father died in 1933 and that is the first death I remember and the first funeral.



My Dad and Mother were married in 1913. Dorothy was born in 1917 at my grandmother's house, Ruth Roberts. They were living with his parents before in the house built on the 160 acre farm adjacent to where their new 120 acre farm was to be. Part of this arrangement was the idea that they could share farm equipment without even having to cross a road.

He enjoyed having a stable family and being a proper parent. As I remember him, he was 6' tall, strong and my vision of him is of a physically and emotionally robust person. There was softness yet firmness about his face. It was a very strong face I think. His face would have been a beautiful model for a statue of a proud, strong man. I think he had brown eyes. His features were regular and when I see the pictures now, I think he was very handsome.

My father cared a lot about his family. He was a member of the School Board which was an elected office, so to go through an election for a position like that seems to indicate some assertiveness and interest in what happened to us. Dad was something of a leader in having a male vocal quartet and I remember seeing him reading scripture or giving prayer at Jerusalem Church. It was an important part of his and my Mother's life.

He was basically a happy person and I remember him having a good sense of humor. When I was in the car with him taking cream to the Creamery in Judson, I remember his voice. He made a joke and made me laugh with his lovely voice. He sounded as if he cared.

I remember one time when he felt fiercely angry at my brothers because he had told them not to dig a hole in the ground. It turns out that my older brothers, Newt and Earl, were trying to dig a well. He was fearful that if they dug down to their level, maybe 4'6", it could have caved in on them. That's one memory I have of him yelling and beating my older brother.

Seeing that, I'm sure I learned that I had better be careful about what I did. So, I did everything I could to avoid that kind of anger, which thinking about it now, was not misplaced but more severe than anything I would want to be involved in. It was essential for him to teach the boys. They had defied him and were disobedient. Their punishment was excessive.

Saturday night was bath night and the time for his weekly shaving session. I picture him shaving with shaving soap lathered from a mug on a bristle brush, looking into a little round mirror close to a kerosene lamp attached to the wall. I remember him pulling on his skin to tighten it as he used his straight edged razor to get rid of his whiskers. His face was then soft after that but since he only shaved once a week, it would get prickly as the week wore on.

He lived the life of a Minnesota farmer, wearing bib overalls mostly. On Sunday he wore a suit, white shirt and tie. The bib overalls were blue, not striped. He knew that hard work was essential. He wasn't afraid of it and helped his children learn a sense of responsibility about work. Outside and inside chores were shared responsibilities between all of us. My mother and sisters didn't do some of the harder things like putting up hay, but they milked the cows and did many other chores.

I remember the election of 1932 when Herbert Hoover was running against Franklin D. Roosevelt. We were at our neighbor's home, half a mile away to listen to the election returns on the radio. I remember both my parents remarking with some sadness that Roosevelt seemed to be winning because he was in favor of removing the prohibition on the sale of alcohol. They were together on that policy. There was never any alcohol in our home, save one bottle of whiskey, bought for a horse with equine encephalitis. It lasted twenty years.

It's hard to speculate on whether my father had past-times. On the farm, there was always something to do. But for pleasure, he loved singing, especially with the three men in his male quartet – John Price, John B. Jones and Ivan Roberts. Daddy was the baritone. He also sang in a male chorus formed periodically in the area for Welsh men. The tradition of Welsh male choirs was very strong in our local area.

Daddy had an eighth grade education, although I've never seen proof of that one way or the other. For some reason, I think he attended the same school as my Mother; District 99 which was located within a mile of Jerusalem Church on what is still a Township road, as opposed to a County or State road. I could locate this if we were to drive there – half mile due west of the Judson Cemetery which I call the Jerusalem Cemetery.

His lack of theoretical knowledge about child-raising makes me think he was sterner than he needed to be but other than that, I know of no weakness in him. People who have talked to me about my Dad always stress his strengths. He was well known in the community and well respected by others. He was not an introvert in any way. 'Confident' is a word that describes him.

His wife, my Mother, was more closely related to the church than he was. That may have been a little problem between them, but it is hard to say from my child's memory of this man. I never remember an argument or debate on any topic. There was no question that he was

'Lord of the manor'. I know that together, they talked through things; but ultimately, it would be my Dad's decision that would prevail.

Trying to describe the values my Dad believed in, I would say, honesty, obedience and trust. Honesty is a strong value because he was basically a very honest man. I mentioned obedience in the earlier example about my brothers and their punishment.

I suspect he believed about people caring about each other. Living on a farm in Minnesota at that time, there is no way you can survive if you are not willing to work as a team member in a neighborhood group of about eight families. That is the way much of the harvest work got done. Co-operation was an important word.

I remember him as a member of the Church and that predominantly Welsh community which was really a social group in a way. I can also picture him singing and taking part in the Judson Community Club, somehow related to the school. It was an organization with a President and Secretary. I don't remember him being an office bearer in that group, but I wouldn't be surprised if he had been.

He supported the Church as best he could, both with his presence and money. There wasn't a lot of money around but he always gave to Jerusalem. He also would have supported the Farm Bureau, a grassroots organization of farmers and farming communities, as an active member.

He wanted us to grow up to be happy and good people. He enjoyed life and was not a fearful man. His joy was in music. We had a piano as I was growing up. Mostly my older sister Dorothy played the piano. Helen Ruth played the piano too. I just know that he saw music as an important asset to life.

From my Mother's family with several men and women, there was a strong support network that was just understood. She was close to her siblings. They cared a lot about each other, helped each other. At any time, my Dad could have asked them to help. I suspect the wood we used in our furnace came from my Mother's home farm. They had a pretty big network, as well as emotionally and geographically close support through the church network.

Our family saw ourselves as a strong family prior to and after my Dad's death. We were proud to be his sons and daughters and my Mother was proud to be his wife. We were all proud to have her as our Mother. I suspect he got along well with his parents, especially his mother, who was easy to get along with. He was the stronger of the two in relationship to his brother Evan.

I think my parents were very close and they shared intimacies more than other people might. I guess he was thrilled to marry my Mother. They were a happy couple and well-suited for each other. I know nothing of his birth or his wedding, except I learned recently that they went to a little town called Ottawa in LeSueur County for their honeymoon.

I had a crib in their room and must have been there until I was four or five years old because I can still picture that crib and being in their room. I remember them talking at night and just know they had ways of being close. He communicated more with us children at mealtimes

than otherwise. His style was direct and firm and there wasn't much question about what he meant.

He was kind to the animals. I never remember him being mean to any of them. There was nothing cruel about him. He was well-loved by the community. In our community, the number of people attending a funeral was supposed to be some kind of gauge of a person's stature. Apparently there were more cars and people at my Father's funeral than there had been at any funeral at Jerusalem Church up to that time and after. That's a testament to how he fit in the community.

He was very fond of Dorothy, as his surviving first-born child. The fact that she got a piano and had piano lessons indicated that he wanted the best for her, whatever that would be. In 1915, he had lost a first-born son, Lyle. It is easy to imagine how precious Dorothy would have been after such a loss.

When my sister Helen was three years old, she got pneumonia in both lungs. They thought she would die, but the doctor did a procedure, opening the top of her lungs where she had scars. I remember not just one but several people talking about it and saying she was 'like an angel'. She was sweet. She never really changed. There was more love expressed to her than others in the family. She thrived on that.

Helen married Bud Meredith and moved to Washington with him to be close to his sister. She and Bud had visited us in Phoenix, at a family reunion in Hawaii and in Australia. She cared for us so. She surprised the Lake Crystal family by moving to Washington with her husband, where Bud's brother lived. It was a big thing to leave for Issaquah, Washington but that is where her husband had a good union job in construction. Helen worked for Graybar Electric for over 30 years. Unfortunately, she died aged 62 of cancer.

One of father's legacies is the pleasure that comes from music which was part of our home life with the piano and singing we experienced. It cuts across from one generation to another in our family. The idea of co-operation and working together as we had with Saturday clean-ups of all the boys and girls together also stems from how my Dad and Mother organized our family to accomplish things.

He would have had every right to feel satisfied with what he had accomplished in his life until then. But at the time of his illness, he would have had the terrible feeling that he didn't get to finish what he started. I remember him calling my brother Newton, Earl and me into the living room where he was lying on the sofa. When he told us that he wanted us to take care of our Mother and sisters and to be good, I remember he cried as he told us. I had never seen him cry but that was about two weeks before he died.

At age eight, I had no idea he was going to die. I remember feeling the shock of being told he 'passed away' by my Uncle Edwin. I had been sleeping for an hour or two when he came to our bed and told us that. My Dad was buried at Judson Cemetery which is about 2 miles southwest of the community of Judson and probably 8 miles straight north of Lake Crystal on the blacktop road that goes straight north. His mother and father are buried there along with

his brother, Dorothy and several other relatives. There is a gravestone for my brother Newton, even though his body was never recovered from the Pacific, following his drowning in WWII.

I remember being in my Dad's bedroom downstairs in the time he was sick because he couldn't get up the stairs. His body was kept at home between his death and burial in the living room which was customary in that time and place for people to pay their respects. I remember standing in that room with my Mother and my Nain, his mother, standing 8' away from his body with both of them crying. I was so close to both these women, touching their legs and being there. They were dealing with their own grief and I felt they were touching me but not giving me anything. So I would go outside and be with the cats, who I could talk to. I don't remember any singing at home at the time of the funerals. People brought lace curtains to hang because we couldn't afford to buy any. The house was spruced up a bit. A lot of people came in and out from the time Daddy died on a Saturday night until his funeral, three days later.

People came a long distance for the funeral. We had relatives in LeSueur County in a little Welsh community called Ottawa and the area was referred to as Big Woods. My Uncle Tom Griffith, Mother's uncle and other relatives from there that we knew came to my Dad's funeral.

It was only a couple of years later that my maternal grandfather Evan T. Evans and some of my aunts died; Aunt Nellie in Montana, Aunt Lizzie in Bemidji, Minnesota. My mother was involved in heavy grief starting in 1933 for her husband and her sisters. I went to funerals a lot when I was a child and I now feel there was a kind of lack of grieving in me for my father as I was only 8 years old.

After my father died, my oldest brother Newt quit school, aged 14 to do all the work at the farm, including helping cut trees, pick up wood, bring it home with a team of horses pulling a sled in the winter. There were always animals to take care of – milk cows, horses, pigs, chickens and sheep. Planting and harvesting grain and harvesting hay in the summertime were jobs which had to be done. It was a big job for a young man to walk in his father's shoes and he did it well to help us all.

## Chapter 3 – My Mother - Sarah Evans Roberts

The way we grew up in a relatively small rural community rather limited our sights. My mother's family got scattered through North Dakota, Montana and northern Minnesota from this little area in southern Minnesota. They went where land was available through homesteading. They were all very poor. They had not travelled far and their life was like the life we lived.

'Free land' in Minnesota became available in 1868 with the passage of the Homestead Act and it attracted new immigrants. Local treaties with the Sioux Indians were largely ignored by the traders and politicians but the new settlers felt this was new land for them to settle and make fertile by their labor. Large farm families provided the workforce to do this.

My mother was one of twelve children and of those, ten lived to adulthood and raised families. She was the youngest girl. Two were never married. Funnily enough, both Ann and I had mothers who were the youngest of twelve in their families. Isn't that interesting? Below is a picture of my mother (second from the right) with her surviving siblings.



I know the house where my Mother was born quite well. I have been in it hundreds of times because her brother and sister, Edwin and Esther, the 'never-marrieds' continued to live in that home and we visited it often for Sunday dinner, both while my Dad was living and regularly after he died.

That home was a bustling place with very small bedrooms upstairs. It wasn't nearly as convenient as the home where I was born. It was a pleasant place, full of good smells and good cheer.

Mother had a very soft face. It was typical of the women in her family with a genuine softness, especially her skin. When I was growing up, she had dark hair, almost black. Once I called it 'black' to her and she corrected me, saying it was 'brunette'. Her hair, as mine, used to be auburn. It changed colour and eventually, like most of us, became gray. She had pretty eyes and a warm softness about her. I enjoyed touching her hands and her soft face especially.

I tend to see her wearing a lot of cotton house dresses that would allow her to do what she needed to do around the house but would be serviceable and pleasant. She did wear aprons quite a lot too. Even her voice was soft. I can't remember her screaming ever so there was an

overall pattern of softness. She never wore perfumes or scents. The word 'clean' comes to mind when I think of how she smelled. I liked her engagement ring set with a row of seeded opals that sparked my interest from an early age.

Mother would have been very happy to marry my Father when she was 23. He was a 'good catch', good looking and a good character. She cared about her children and about her church. She was part of the rural Protestant tradition in a Calvinistic type of church. Her little country church, Jerusalem, was the center of her existence and was always throughout her entire life. It was the heart of the social group in the community there. She felt it should survive and almost by sheer will, saw to it that it did survive until after she died.

My family has had a tradition of honouring our grandparents incorporating their names in our middle names. My sister, Dorothy Jane was named after my mother's mother, Jane. Helen Ruth is named after my father's mother, Ruth Roberts. My oldest brother David Newton is the first name of my father David but we always called him Newt. My brother Earl Theophilus was named after Evan Theophilus Evans, my maternal grandfather. He was often called Ted. And I was named William Lee for my paternal grandfather, William Roberts. This seems to be a pattern in how they chose names.

My parents were married in 1913. Lyle, their first child who didn't survive, was born in 1915. So Dorothy became the first child in 1917; David Newton, 1919; Earl, 1921; Helen Ruth 1923 and I was born in 1925.

I don't know if other people in the family know much about the fact that I had an older brother who was born but died the same day. He only lived a day but we didn't talk about him. I remember asking my mother about him once and she said, "He was born too soon." And I asked, "What does that mean?" and she said, "You'll find out when you grow up." She probably didn't want to get started on the whole process of how children get born and she didn't want to go into that.

There is a headstone for Lyle in the Jerusalem cemetery. The fact that they named him, and treated him as a person who was grieved as a person is important. He was acknowledged and valued.

Mother's family of course was something she cared deeply about. She kept close tab on her family of origin, her sisters and brothers. She recognised the birthdays of their children with birthday cards. She continued to do that until she died. Some of my cousins remark to me about how they could always look forward to hearing from Aunt Sarah, my Mother.

She had very little interest in material things. She surely would not have been a woman who wanted to go shopping unless she needed to go buy clothes for the kids but she would not have any interest in seeing what was around and something to be stylish. She was thrifty and cared about being thrifty. Ann remembers her being neatly dressed. She always wore a corset, which was a common undergarment until the late 1960s.

She was very productive in the kitchen to preserve food for the long Minnesota winter, canning tomatoes, beans and other vegetables and even canning meat, all making pleasant smells. We butchered a pig or two at our farm every year and most of the meat, in order to be

preserved, had to be canned in glass jars. I think about it as highly practical and looking back, just delicious.

I didn't like the smell of her making soap after we had butchered. There was a process to go through to render the lard with lye to make soap. Apparently it was good soap but it really smelled when she was making it.

I don't think she had many favourite objects, but I remember when I broke one before we got electricity. It was an Aladdin lamp, a very special type of kerosene lamp with a removable glass chimney for cleaning. I put it up near a mirror with a nice bevelled edge of a china closet she had. The heat of the lamp cracked the mirror. My mother cried. She didn't scream at me or punish me, but she cried. That was more punishment, almost, than I could stand. But there it was.

I don't associate any objects with her. She lived in that house because she and her husband had planned and designed the home. Obviously they made love. They made a happy family. We had a big garden with apple trees. There were wild elderberries which made delicious pie, jam and jellies.

Mother sewed for us. There were a few years when my underwear shorts were ones that she had made from a sewing pattern. She was involved in what was called the Home Extension program in which a government employee came and offered tips on cooking, nutrition and sewing to groups of neighbourhood women. Mother liked to cook, but cooking and eating were not the centre of her life. I'll never forget how she baked seven loaves of bread every other day to keep her family fed.

She really enjoyed good music, not necessarily classical music, but good church music. She enjoyed having her children participate in activities, encouraging us to be part of 4H Farming Clubs or compete in the Eisteddfod for music and recitation. I think all of us were involved in that. I know she liked Dorothy playing the piano. She was typical of a parent in having values relating to her children.

Mother had her father's soft manner. When she was a widow and trying to control Dorothy and Newt who sometimes scrapped with each other, she never raised her voice. I don't remember her saying 'no' to me. So, I tested the limits. I would say, "I'm going to..." and unless she said, "You will not..." which she wouldn't do very often, I got to do whatever I wanted to do. It was a strange bit of manipulation but that's the way it worked. I remember my father, in contrast, being strict about some things and punishing us. He usually was gentle and I grew up in that tradition.

She didn't get hung up on organizations, except for her church organizations. One, the 'Missionary Society' which met once a month I remember well because they had lunch with sandwiches and cake at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. So, supper which we might normally have at 6 o'clock, if she had gone to Missionary Society that day for us was sparse. She wasn't hungry! And she didn't handle that as wisely as she should I thought. Just because she was out eating didn't mean the rest of us should eat less. That's the only thing I can think of criticizing her about.

She feared the times and evil. She feared the children might get off to a wrong start. She was opposed to the removal of the ban on selling alcohol, called Prohibition, which was one of the amendments to the Constitution that eventually got repealed. She was a member of the WCTU, the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She gave money to temperance groups. She feared alcohol would be the death of people. There was misinformation about 'everybody who drinks will become an alcoholic'. I disagree with that. However, she believed that and I couldn't do much about that. She also was critical of us boys smoking. On that she was fighting a losing battle as smoking was popular in our peers. And she was right on that!

The lessons she learned in life were serious partly because she had lost siblings to childhood diseases. Her lessons had to do with loyalty, trust, obedience and having what they referred to as 'a fear of God.' I think she had a gigantic trust in a super being. I remember seeing her praying on her knees at her bedside as well as at church.

Mother finished eighth grade at school. I don't think she ever worked outside her home other than taking care of people later in her life. Mother enjoyed reading, but often, I remember her reading the *Bible* and the magazine, the *Christian Herald*, putting herself to sleep sitting in a chair in the kitchen. She enjoyed singing. She had a nice soprano voice. She enjoyed being part of the church choirs. As the years came along, she led more activities in the church too.

In her very quiet way, she was somewhat judgmental of people but mostly I don't remember her complaining. She laughed a lot. She loved hearing jokes and used to put her hand over her mouth when something was funny and may have been a bit risqué too. I remember a time when my Aunt Florence and my Mother nearly lost it when I told the story about the candle and blowing it out of the sides of my mouth but being unable to blow it out completely. They hadn't seen or heard it before and they did just really laugh.

She was both strong and tender. In a storm in 1929, my mother brought us all together on our sofa and we all waited out that storm. She didn't take us down to the basement which people were advised to do. She would have considered that neurotic to be that fearful that you had to go hide in the basement to avoid a storm.

It was one of the things that marked how unfearful she was. I don't think I learned a fear of anything except, unfortunately, water. Not water to take a bath, because she liked to have us clean. Not water to keep clothes clean, but water for going swimming. One of our distant relatives had lost a son who drowned while swimming. His death was a reminder of water's danger.

I also had a fear of dogs, which I attribute to being bit three times by dogs before I was 6 years old, every time for no reason I knew. I wasn't taunting the dogs. I was being, if you'll excuse the expression, 'a good boy' and I still was bitten. Another time I was bit by our own dog, a farm dog that went to get the cattle up from the pasture to the barn for milking time. He was useful to the family. I remember hearing the shot that my Dad fired after I had been bitten. My mother was taking care of my bleeding leg and my Dad went out behind the trees and shot the dog.

Mother tended to like being outward and involved with other people, although I'm sure she had a very strong inner self. I remember the night my Dad died and trying to go sleep at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning after most of the initial activity had happened. I called to her in another room and said, "I can't go to sleep." And she said, "I don't think any of us will sleep tonight." O me, that was an expression of an inner strength and inner life.

She was warm and caring. She loved having the grandchildren and probably didn't see them as much as she wanted. She tended to moralise a bit to reflect Christian teaching from her standpoint. It was a conservative way of doing things I see now, looking back.

She got up in the morning and went downstairs, going to the east window to look at the sun and had a sneeze! Every day, that is how she started the day. She had a habit of praying and of going to church three times on Sunday. She had a habit of relating to people in the community, switching into Welsh for the old-timers who were more comfortable speaking in Welsh than English. She spoke only Welsh before she went to school, which always surprised me. None of her children learned the language from her.

There was a fair amount of pity for my Mother because she lost her husband when she was 42. There were five children and my oldest brother Newton was only 14, so the whole matter of being responsible for the farm was a tremendous load for my mother to take on. She was too proud to accept financial help, a program for widows. That program later would be called Aid to Dependent Children. Being Evan T's daughter gave her that sense of 'superiority'. I don't know if it was the position they held in the community. It may be true or totally fiction, but that is my sense of it.

We did have a hired man, David Evans, who helped. But the older boys had to do most of the work, with the team of horses and help of neighbours. Normally, all of us in the family helped with all the chores with the pigs, the chickens, cows and horses. In lots of families, the girls wouldn't have milked the cows, for instance. But it was necessity that we all help together and we did. If there was work, it had to be done.

She had the support of her brothers, especially Uncle Edwin, not that he gave money or even advice, but was simply there and listened to her about anything. He was much more valuable to her than my paternal Uncle Evan who somehow didn't easily connect with my Mother. She was always decent to him, but there was a distance between them. The predominant action she had throughout her life was to be a very caring person. When she left the farm home, she went to other people's homes and cared for people who were ill.

In her last years of life, she became the housekeeper for a man named Price Campbell, a widower who lived less than a block away from Dorothy's. She had known Price almost all her life. He was interested in watching bowling on TV. One time when we were there, she expressed interest in going bowling and I took her. I was so proud of her. She liked new experiences as well as reliving those related to her church and community.

She believed there was a God who was punishing as well as loving. In her last weeks, she was unable to speak because of a metastasis to the brain. I visited her nearly every day because we were living in Mankato where she was hospitalized. I will never forget the peace reflected

in her eyes. While her speech was gone, her ability to communicate her trust, her absolute belief that she was going to be home with God was unshakeable. It is possible that she knew this would be a reuniting time with my Dad, with my brother and with all of her family – all of whom died before she did. It is possible that she looked forward to death because of her beliefs.

My Mother's mother had died when she was 18 years old. I suspect that was a very tragic event. She never talked about it, although she made reference to her Mother sometimes. I have seen a copy of an obituary about my maternal grandmother, Jane Evans, and I have to smile because it sounds like my Mother. The kind of things described in her mother I associate with mine.

She had more than her share of adversity, losing her first child on his first day of life, losing my Dad, losing her son Newt in the Pacific war and within one month, losing two sisters and her father in 1935. She was well acquainted with death and had had to rely on financial credit to get through the Depression. Luckily there was a store owner in Judson who allowed that credit and would take corn or pigs or any produce in payment for the cash owed. It all did work out right in the long run. Mother made a final payment on the farm sometime to Nain and Uncle Evan in 1940.

She had such a support network. Everyone in the community could be counted on because they had counted on her support over time. She was there if someone was sick or needed food. She never wanted to make her problems or her reactions to other people's doings a big public event, so she was quiet in her reactions. She would not hold forth, or make big bold statements about something that needed to be criticised. She did it quietly, one person at a time.

I don't know if she yearned for companionship of the opposite sex. After she started caring for Price Campbell as his housekeeper she became happier and more contented. She had missed out from 1933 until her death in 1967 on having a husband and the companionship and financial security that could have provided. With Price, she found companionship in her final years.

Mother's family of origin was large. In the early years when Dad was living, we went to visit at night at Uncle Davie's home, Uncle Gomer's home, at Uncle Edwin and Aunt Esther's home. They were her siblings who lived within one mile of the home farm. Lizzie and Nellie lived away and both of them died in 1935. She was close to Aunt Esther who lived at the home place. At church, Aunt Esther used to look in my ears, take out her handkerchief and catch up on the dirt my Mother had not been able to get out of my ears.

We saw them often, not just on Sundays. On Monday or Tuesday, I loved going to their home and listen to Cedric Adams, a newscaster from WCCO at 10 o'clock at night. The 10 o'clock news. Just think. Then we had to go home after that! Usually we were there with our car, but before that I remember being there with our team of horses and a sled.

That was the family she grew up in and they were close. Then there was our own family with Dad and the five children. We were proud of ourselves. She loved her Mother dearly and lost her early.

She may have had some exasperation with her father, who married three times after her Mother's death but she would never have said any word of criticism. She called him 'Father' in almost reverential terms. It was like he was the priest. I think she loved him deeply.

She was seen as a strong supporter of the church in the community. She had been the wife of Dave Roberts and now she was the head of the household. She would like not to have it that way, but that's how it was.

I never heard her disagree with my Dad and I can picture them often be close to each other, talking and being warm with each other. I don't remember any conflict. Looking back, the family dynamics are positive. She understood a great deal about how to get along. She knew less about dealing with conflict than a lot of people do. She would not permit herself an expression of rage at almost anything. It wasn't the way she did things. I have no idea if she had favourite brothers or sisters or children. If there were one, it would probably be me because as the last one, I spent a lot of time with her alone, more than did anybody else, but I have no way of gauging that today.



In 1964 or 1965, Mother was diagnosed with colon cancer and had a colostomy. She lived with that until her death in 1967. I remember a lot about her last months. On Labour Day weekend in September, we had an extended family picnic. I was close to Mother when I felt that she was momentarily 'out of it'. Within a day or two, she had fallen and ended up in the hospital.

She had a seizure and lost her speech abilities and from September to October she lived without speaking a word but with a beautiful look in her eye that I took as peace. On the eve of the night she died, Ann and I and all the children gathered at her bedside. We sang Welsh hymns a cappella. She appeared peaceful. I think she knew we were singing for her. At 4 in the morning on November 7<sup>th</sup> 1967 she died. She was 77.

There were a lot of people at her funeral at Jerusalem Church. That was a sign in that community of acceptance. I'm sure Mother was happy at the end of her life because of what she was looking forward to with the deep, deep faith she had. She is buried at the cemetery located 8 miles north of Lake Crystal and 2 or 3 miles southwest of Judson, Minnesota near her husband and many family members. At her gravesite those people who still could sing the Welsh funeral song in the original language sang in four-part harmony along with me and my siblings. It was indeed (her favourite word) a beautiful, moving experience.

Starting in about 1955, when there was talk of closing the doors of Jerusalem Church, my mother would simply say, "No. It cannot close." And if she paid the salary of the minister herself, she was determined that it would not shut. It did close its doors after she died. We were getting ready to go to Australia in 1969. The church was still standing when we left but soon after, the building was dismantled. People bought the pews and individual things as mementos. The charter papers were given to another church and members went other places. She almost single-handedly had kept it going as long as she lived. It was the core of her identity and of that place.

## Chapter 4 – My Nain Cambria - Ruth Roberts

My paternal grandfather, William Roberts, died in 1922 before I was born. I never heard people talk about him except to say what a kind man he was. He had few relatives except those who lived in the Cambria area of Blue Earth County. I wish I could have known my paternal grandfather, William Roberts, so I could have known something about the relationship between Nain and him, but I don't know and haven't speculated much about it.



I spent a lot of time together with my grandmother, my Nain, William's wife, Ruth Lewis. I called her Nain Cambria because I had two Nains, and she was from the nearby township of Cambria originally. She was short. Her hair was grey, never white. She combed her hair in a bun. Her fingers were not soft and they were arthritic. She wasn't shy about touching. She liked making

double crust pies. She also churned butter for her own use. Here is a picture of her on the right with her mother, Anna.

My mother was always busy so after I was a four year-old I could walk across the half-mile pasture to Nain's house. I have so many happy memories of my time with her. I can see her holding a loaf of her homemade bread in her arms, cutting with a knife towards her to make me a slice for onion sandwiches. I was lucky because both my mother and my grandmother had time for me as the youngest and I felt I was my Nain's favourite. Nain liked boys too so it was a good match!

One of my favourite stories was that she put popcorn in a round pan on top of the heating stove, only a little higher than she was. She covered it until it started popping but when it started popping, she'd take the cover off and, you know what would happen. The popcorn started coming out like a fountain. I would scramble around the floor, picking it up and eating the popcorn. My grandma, I called in the Welsh word 'Nain', would laugh and clap. She loved me and she was the one who really got me going early on loving onion sandwiches. It was sort of a silly joke within the family that I used to say, "I want bread with onions to-tween it!"

She was the one who made ½ inch slices of onion with fresh homemade bread that she had baked herself. She was some lady! She lived about half a mile away, across the pasture, and that is where I would go before I started school. In good weather, I spent a little time with her every day. She didn't have any of the responsibility with raising children and all the things that had to be done, so she always had time for me. When we went to Cambria on Sundays, Dorothy would play the pump organ and we would all sing hymns together.

I always felt her as a very youthful person who loved playing. Perhaps she missed out on the fun of childhood and became determined to have that pleasure as an adult. When I think

about it, she would have been a great wife. She was a loner when I knew her but there was not a sense that she was lonely. She lived many decades as a widow, from the age of 57.

Nain had arthritis badly and her knees were locked. But she was limber and could touch her hands onto the floor, bending from her hips. She walked with straight knees, but she got around. Luckily, she had her bedroom downstairs.

When I was with her, she liked to let me help her so we did things together. She was a good listener, a caring person. I don't remember her ever talking critically about other people, which was a bit unusual in our district. What I remember the most about her, I remember her laughing. She always wore a full apron, even when we came to visit. She enjoyed her rocking chair.

In my childhood, she lived on the farm adjacent to ours. The part of the farm that my mother and dad bought had been subdivided from William and Ruth's farm. My Dad's brother, Uncle Evan, lived with her. Evan was the best man for Eldon Jones' parents when they married, but I never heard of him dating or having any strong friendships with anybody. He liked to sing. He was a bass. My dad was a baritone in the quartet. Uncle Evan didn't sing in the quartet but he liked to sing when they came to church. My memory of closeness about the age of five or six came from being with my Nain, not my Uncle.

Evan was seen by the people in my mother's family as being sort of weak, or dependent. I spent time with him. He put me on his lap when I was about 8 and let me drive his car. He never drove his car faster than 25 miles an hour so in a way, he taught me to drive. Later, my brothers taught me to drive in a green field. There was a hand throttle as well as an accelerator, and they would be sitting in the back and pull on the accelerator while I was driving in a grain field and I was in the front. They got a kick out of that trick.

Nain had three brothers and at least three sisters. I don't know her position in the birth order but one of the families, her sister Lydia, moved to Canada. She did a bit of genealogy study about the family. One brother was Grant, the other, Edward (Ned) and a brother William. One of her sisters married a man named Little and they had a daughter named Florence. Florence was my dad's first cousin and she married David Charles Evans, my mother's youngest brother. That is Ron Evans parents so we were related to that family on both sides. We were close as families. Sarah's brother (Florence's husband) was the only person I know in our family who had some form of mental illness. He had severe depression and died quite young, perhaps as a result of suicide at the St Peter mental health facility.

As we look now, my Nain seems to have been quite separated from her brothers who continued to live within 10 miles. She obviously felt close to at least two sisters, including the one who moved to Canada after Nebraska. They kept track of each other through letters. I remember her saying she had a letter from her Canadian niece named Phoebe.

I never heard her complain. She wrapped her legs in bandages every day. She made aprons but wasn't into handicrafts like my mother who was encouraged by Dorothy. She pickled and canned but again, it wasn't that necessary for the two of them in that house. We didn't eat at

her house so she didn't need to have provisions for our big family. I don't know what she did at night, as obviously there was no TV then.

Nain didn't have a Welsh accent because she grew up speaking English. She was born in Illinois and had been brought up speaking English but she learned Welsh at aged 17 so she could be a housekeeper at somebody's home in Courtland near Cambria. These people were so nationalistic that they wanted their kids to only speak Welsh at home.

But for my Nain, even the Welsh culture was not something she was steeped in or wanted to perpetrate. In that way, I think she was a bit of a loner. There were pressures to conform, but she didn't. She didn't consider herself superior or puffed up, she just lacked the will to be like the rest; "Why should I?" I remember seeing her in church but mostly I remember her not being in church.

She and William would have been married in the mid 1880's. Their first home was the farm where my cousin Jane Ann Roberts grew up. I think my parents lived with them there when they were newlyweds. Later, they moved from there to the place near our family farm which was about 220 acres.

She was really well known in the area and lots of people called her Aunt Ruth. People who were not even related to her called her that. She had a clock, our grandmother clock, called a kitchen clock made around the 1900's. There was some carving on this clock that looked like 'AR' and when I was in about second grade I thought how nice, she has Aunt Ruth in her clock! She kept a few candies hidden behind the clock shelf for me to find.

She used to have a single light bulb hanging up in the middle of the room when electric power came to her property. She'd never had electricity before and she thought it was fantastic. She was friendly with the neighbour ladies on each side of her in Cambria. One was a school teacher and a good support for her. Uncle Evan was also a support but he tended to need more support than she did. Her brother Will lived across the street from her in Cambria.

The Jerusalem church that started in 1858 was the centre of everything in our community, not only services, baptism, marriages and funerals, but ice cream socials, an annual supper for a fund-raiser where women sold quilts. If she feared anything, it was being forced to do things in the community she didn't want to do. Ruth resisted that kind of peer pressure. She would have fought against being swallowed up by the people in the church.

Nain wasn't part of all that, in contrast to my mother. It wasn't that she felt above the church. She felt some of it was kind of ridiculous and she had a wild sense of humour that perhaps did not fit the more conforming Calvinistic church life. I don't remember my mother fussing about her for that, but truly she was more a free thinker than most of the Calvinistic Methodists who became Welsh Presbyterians.

The history of Calvin is of a pious man with a critical attitude. My interpretation of Calvin was: *Don't play on Sunday and don't call your brother a 'darn fool' on Sunday.* One of the few times I got a spanking from my Dad was when I did that. In 1915, Jerusalem changed from Calvinistic Methodist to become part of the Presbyterian Church, USA. They were called Welsh Presbyterian. There was a Welsh church in Mankato and another Presbyterian Church in Lake

Crystal. Salem, Bethel and Carmel were other nearby Welsh churches. Often times, the four Welsh churches shared one minister on a circuit.

My mother always spoke Welsh when she was a child, so she loved this linguistic heritage very much. Evan T. Evans, my maternal grandfather, was born in New York and his wife was born in Ohio. They spoke Welsh in their family and their many children grew up in that culture. My mother didn't speak English when she started school. It seems amazing to have this happening in America at that time. But they had their Welsh community all around them, with this Welsh church as its hub. They could enjoy the fruits of community in the language of their parents.

The two-storey house on Nain and Uncle Evan's farm I remember had wallpaper. There was an outhouse not so far from the house. One of her nieces went out there to sneak a cigarette. It was Zoey Williams, Aunt Helen Ruth's cousin in Seattle. Nain always knew that she was smoking and hiding it, but they never talked about it.

Her house smelled like wood. The woodstove in the living room was essential to survive the Minnesota winter. Off to the side in the kitchen, near the pantry, there was a wood cooking stove. They had about six cows, which was probably enough for Uncle Evan to manage, without children to help. I can picture her metal teapot and coffeepot. In her china closet, she had some precious things from her visit to Canada to see her sister Lydia. We have a few of these in our red chest that were hers. I've never seen anything like that anywhere else. She had a reputation for her fried potatoes.

Nain had a nice cottage garden around the house, always with flowers in the summer. She raised horseradish, like a huge turnip shape. The horseradish made your hair uncurl! She also raised spearmint and another kind of herb. There was a grove of trees on her farm that she planted. They were great windbreaks.

When my dad died in October 1933, Nain and Uncle Evan made a decision within a month or two to move off the farm. It was too much for Evan to run the farm without his brother's support. Also, it may have been if he didn't have a farm, he could be helpful to our family on our farm. He was a little bit helpful, but not much. I think it would have been hard for her but my special relationship with Nain stopped when they moved further away. When I was 18 and had my appendix out, I had some special time with Nain Cambria again. I stayed with her for a week or two to recover because I couldn't do any farm work before I went into the Navy.

I don't remember how Nain coped with losing her son, but it was huge. And Evan too would have been destabilized by losing his brother. They had a farm sale, an auction in early March, 1934 and they moved to the little village of Cambria, rented a house for a short while and then bought a house. Evan worked as a farm helper until he died in 1954.

After my Dad died, our family became more of Nain's support. We saw her once a week and took food to her. We'd sometimes spend the evening with her and buy her ice cream for a treat. What she wanted, more than anything else, was not to be a burden. She couldn't be of much help on the farm, so it was easier to move further away.

Nain got Social Security when it first started in 1945 after the Act was passed. She got some Old Age Pension, perhaps \$12 a month, some little amount. She thought it was great that she was getting money. She'd been a widow for more than 10 years, so it was more related to age than her marital status.

Dorothy and my mother Sarah nursed her during her last months in the downstairs bedroom at Dorothy's house. Sarah's mother had died in 1908 and she cared for her mother-in-law with a mixture of obligation and love.

Nain died in 1952 at Dorothy's house, about aged 90. I remember taking our baby Becky to meet her great-grandmother. She asked, "What are you doing, Lee?" "I'm going to school, Nain." "School! You are going to school! What are you doing?" For me, I was thrilled to be in graduate school, learning how to be a social worker, but it was beyond her comprehension. She probably got through eighth grade but maybe not. It was just not part of her life. But I knew she loved me even if she couldn't understand my choices later.

## Chapter 5 – My Taid and Nain: Evan T and Jane Griffith Evans

I don't know much about my maternal grandmother, because she died before I was born. My mother called her 'mother', instead of the usual 'ma'. She seemed to be very fond of her but I don't remember the words she said about her. She was a bit 'saintly' and I suspect that maybe she was more saintly than my grandfather.

She was the last of eight children. That family had come from Wales to Ohio in 1837. She was born in Ohio. Yes her family's name was 'Davies', but they changed it as they came across the country somehow and made it simpler. I'm laughing because Griffith, written in Welsh is just awful and totally unpronounceable. Fancy changing from Davies to Griffith!

This is an excerpt from a story of the Welsh emigration: "There were many people on the ship with the name Davies. Evan Davies changed his name to Griffith."

Evan and Jane Jenkins Griffith were charter members of a Calvinistic Methodist Church in LeSueur County, Minnesota, up the Minnesota River from Mankato towards Minneapolis. I remember listening to some of her relatives. I think she had a brother named Thomas Griffith. He is a man I remember who lived in LeSueur County and tells of hiding in a basement when they were fighting the Indians. When he was visiting us, he stayed home from a church meeting because I was sick as a boy about 8. My Uncle Tom who was 6'5", a great giant of a man, stayed there and told me stories! My mother's brothers were mostly much shorter than Uncle Tom.

We used to go visit this family once or twice a year when I was a child. My mother was very fond of Uncle Tom, her uncle. I only know one of my relatives that spent any time in jail. I'm sure there might be others but apparently we have a pattern of not talking about it. William Griffith, Tom's brother, died in Jefferson City, Missouri of malaria in a prison during the Civil War where he had been fighting for the Union. I wish I knew more stories of this.



My mother's father Evan T. Evans was born in Utica New York, July 28<sup>th</sup> 1848, so he would have been one of the first of our family born in America. He had been in the Civil War. Somewhere there is a picture of him with his Union uniform on. He joined at age 16 with an Infantry group from Wisconsin.

Young men have an urge to protect their mother, their country and everything will be fine. They go off to war with these ideals and are changed by their experience. He was short, 5'7" or shorter. He had a pleasant smile and was very cordial. He liked people but was content inside himself.

He had strong feelings about the importance of family and of raising a family. My mother spoke of him with reverence, even though she later disagreed with some of his behaviours. He took being a father very seriously, otherwise he would not have developed his reputation as a caring father.

When I think of the community that Taid Evans and family were in, it was pretty circumscribed. It was within 5 miles of Jerusalem Church and the other communities were within 5 miles of their church. You couldn't go 10 miles and not encounter a church, so the church was the hub of activity.

My grandfather 'Taid' (pronounced 'tide') was a good organizer and saw to it that the crops were planted, the cows milked and he made a good income from the farm activities. As a farmer, he had more of a management style than being a hands-on farmer. When you have a big family of several children, that style would be fairly easy. He was known as a successful farmer. I can't think of anything else that would have that kind of status in our community. They were very much like the other families in their 5 mile area, doing the same things. I think they may have had more land than others which might have provided more opportunity to do well.

I have no idea if he was a member of the Farm Bureau or the Grange or any of the farm organizations. I know he would have been a member of the Judson Creamery Co-op. There was a Judson Shipping Club which was a co-op that sold their pigs to South St Paul but I don't know when it would have started. If I remember right, I tend to remember that he had a ring with a Masonic emblem so he may have been a member of the Masons.

The presence of so many farm co-ops was a feature of the settlement of Minnesota by so many Scandinavians. Everyone benefitted from these unique ventures that started in Denmark or Norway. Those people who came started co-ops for marketing, storing grain in co-op elevators and silos for later distribution. For everything that was produced there was some opportunity for a co-op to deal with it. That was an important thing in Minnesota. I don't think there was anything like that in Arizona, with its sense of independence.

The church groups were also highly organized and distinct. Just two miles from Taid Evan's home was a Swedish Lutheran Church. Going 8 miles another direction there was a German Lutheran Church. And there were German Catholic churches around Nicollet, north of Judson. The church was one thing where nationality groups held together but when it came to business everybody did what they needed to do across ethnic and religious boundaries.

Evan T. was something of a dandy. I remember him when he was at the end of his life lying in a bed with cancer for a couple of months at my Uncle Edwin and Aunt Esther's where his father had originally bought the land. My picture of him is in a light coloured suit, a natty dresser. He had a little grey moustache. His voice was soft and gentle. His whole manner was soft, not abrasive and I have those tendencies. I have a picture of him in 1915 at an organization called The Borrowed Time Club. The people there were all aiming to be 100 in the year 1915. There is a picture of him wearing a mourning coat with 20 other men, honouring someone who lived to be 100 years old.

He lived in California when I was young. His wife had died, Jane in 1908 and I think my mother said, "He's been married four times." His last wife that I heard about, Cecil May Moss, was a Californian who never came to Minnesota. He used to come in the summertime, celebrate his birthday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, same as my brother Earl, and then went back to California. I wish I could tell you more scandal about my grandfather but that's about all I know. I'm not sure why he

went – perhaps he thought he could find some nice women out there. Maybe the rural community was too confining.

I sensed that he was about as interested in farming as flying to the moon. He found the church community a bit stifling. I speculate that his wife Jane was too pious for him. I remember him giving a prayer at a church service where it would have been appropriate that he give a prayer, but only once. Others prayed much more often.

I have no idea what he did in California for a living. My mother was fond of him but I'm sure she thought he was a bit of a womanizer. Once in a while he sent us a postcard. But mostly he wasn't there; he was in California with one of his wives.

I remember sitting on Taid's lap when I was 5 or 6 and feeling comfortable and loved. Probably he was more of a thinker and perhaps a reader in his life. He stayed up with current affairs. It's hard for me to picture him milking cows or doing the farm chores; it just wasn't his thing. There were always others around to help. I wish I knew what he might have done after he left the farm. In Minnesota he went to the Jerusalem Church and I think he did attend some services in California because he would have liked to make contacts and get to know people.

He didn't seem affected by the Depression, because he continued his annual summer pilgrimage back to Minnesota to see his family through the 1930s until his death. The family didn't have the money to go see him in California. One of his daughters lived in Montana, one in Bemidji, Minnesota and some in North Dakota. He saw them when those children came down to live with Uncle Edwin and Aunt Esther. The home farm was paid for a long time before so there were no mortgage payments on it. Perhaps his source of support was his wife's income. I just don't know.

I never remember him speaking in Welsh. I know my mother was brought up as a Welsh speaker at home and began English when she started school. In the family, he would have spoken it but he got out of it and dropped some of the tradition. He had been born an American and was Welsh like I am. It was important in my mother's family to be Welsh and have that identity. My Dad's Roberts side of the family had lost their sense of their Welsh origin. My Nain on that side only learned Welsh when she was 17.

When Evan T. was sick with cancer at the end of his life, my mother was very dedicated and loving. I think his last wife may have died by then. People were fearful of cancer but my mother was so sad he got that. He had brought a pink sweater from California for my mother to wear but it wasn't her cup of tea at all.

I could easily picture my grandfather, Taid Evans, enjoying the farm for short times but missing the excitement of the city. He needed stimulation and activity. This made him unusual in our community where people were three or four generations on the same farm, in the same little place. When he came back, he felt close to his daughters in this place but he needed to have a bigger horizon for the whole of his life. He didn't really relate to Lake Crystal, but more to Judson, the little town where I went to school.

He had a favourite grandchild and that was Earl – he had the same middle name, Theophilus, and they were born on the same day. He was named after the Apostle in the book of Timothy, in the *New Testament*.

I remember his funeral in 1935. The family had a tradition of laying the body out at home in the front room before the service at the church at the funeral. There would have been an open casket, so during the service, his body would have been lying high enough so everyone could see his corpse. I remember seeing him. He had been at his children's home for two months in his dying. One of his daughters, Lizzie, had also died of cancer three weeks before he did.

Evan T. might have been upset that he didn't make the 100 years of his Borrowed Time Club but he got closer to it than most of us do (87 years old).

## Chapter 6 – Ann: How it All Started

I loved Ann from the time I was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and she was in 9<sup>th</sup> and we were in the Latin class at Lake Crystal High School. Latin was the only language offered at the school and if you were going to go to college, you had to take a language first. At the time I was a bit dismissive about 'Latin' because no one speaks this language anymore, but later on, I realised its value.



We had a very romantic beginning. I heard Ann play *Claire de Lune* beautifully; wearing a white formal with red dots. This was a Parent Teacher Association meeting and they had asked her to play a solo.

I knew she was bright and good looking, but when she came off the stage, I met her at the stage door and said, "You are beautiful!" I have no idea why I was at a Parent Teacher Association meeting, but there you go. I wouldn't have missed that moment for anything! I had been going with another gal before, but that all slipped away that night.

I remember meeting Ann's mother Pearl when I was a sophomore in high school. I was very impressed with her because she was friendly. I went to her house to pick up some furniture for a class play. They allowed us to use their new living room set and I thought how nice it was they did that. Ann must have volunteered that. The play wasn't even for her class.

Ann remembers the first time I came to her house I was dressed in a white sheet! It was the Roman banquet for our Latin class. She thought it was very funny to have her beau come dressed in a sheet toga to call for her. That was unusual for southern Minnesota – we didn't know much about the Ku Klux Klan! We didn't even know much about the Romans.

That night, we reclined on the floor, tearing out hunks of baked bread from a loaf and ate raw vegetables, like celery and carrots. I wonder if we put on our shoes that time?

There was no point in me trying to compete with Ann for top grades. The fact that she did so well in all areas made me take stock of my own performance. I was more in the B's range. I had one D. That was in algebra. I didn't like the teacher, who was probably a good teacher, but I just never caught on to algebra. I took geometry from her and got a B the next year.

Other than a very minor episode of shop-lifting at the five and dime store when I was younger, I had been 'a good boy' until high school. But starting smoking was the ultimate delinquency for me because it was forbidden in terms of my mother and my grandmother who were very important people to me. I remember going behind the barn to smoke with one of my



brothers once when I was younger, but I believe I started smoking when I was a freshman. I had a friend who smoked so I used to smoke with him a bit, then I kind of stopped until I was a senior. I think it was a way of saying, "I'm not just a goody-goody little boy." I believe I had

established that kind of reputation. My image of me at that time, at least one of many images is that I was seen as a good kid. We lived in an area where there were cultural expectations to conform and we did. What other people thought were seen as important. Both Ann and I were beginning to resist that as we came to know each other in our high school days.

We usually were with another couple when we went out on Saturday nights, so maybe it was their two-door 1931 Chevrolet, but we always wanted to sit in the back seat. I remember driving through the Main Street of our small town, population 1200, and I had my arm around Ann. I remember Ann saying, "Oh, no, we shouldn't be doing this if people can see us." It was alright to do it, as long as people couldn't see it! I told her, "It's not important what people think."



That was a new thought for her and given all my early church and community programming, it was also difficult for me although I'd been trying it out for two or three years by then. If I had been beating her with a whip, it would have mattered what people thought. Since I was doing something as inoffensive as putting my arm around her shoulders, that certainly is not doing something people should condemn.

On one of my first vacations, I caught Ann with a fish hook. We were standing in a boat, trying to cast for fish like our friends in the next boat. It was silly really because I couldn't swim. It was a hook for catching bass with three prongs that got caught in the seat of Ann's slacks! Really embarrassing. We wanted to laugh and we didn't know how to get the hook out. The boat was rocking with our laughter. That was one of our experiences at that cottage. Ann's folks had let her go because the Lutheran minister and his wife were chaperoning.

Another experience at the lake was playing an old-fashioned pump organ and we sat playing and singing – Home Sweet Home, church hymns. That was the first time I was conscious of the

kind of sentimental nature that I had. It struck me then that my family was important to me, and I hadn't been aware of that. But since it was my first time away from home, I became very sentimental. I had been at a 4H camp for three days or overnight to State Fairs, but not a really a vacation at a lake.

We sang *"When the apples grow on the lilac tree..."* together, with Ann playing a beautiful accompaniment, when she was 16 and I was 17. The theme was something about 'lilacs'.

On June 18<sup>th</sup> 1948, we married at Ann's parents church, the Lake Crystal Methodist Church, two weeks after Ann finished college. Her mother made her lovely dress. We had been dating for almost 7 years before our wedding so we were very ready to launch into the next stage. We had been treated to a lovely shower ahead of time and still treasure many gifts that people gave us to start our life together. We had a reception in the church basement, as was the custom at that time, and then drove off into the night for our honeymoon near the Twin Cities. It was a wonderful start to what has been an amazing lifetime together, now in our 64<sup>th</sup> year of marriage.



I'll tell you more about my love of this extraordinary woman, my life companion, as the story unfolds. Here are some pictures of us at the Wishart Gardens in Victoria BC, when we went to Seattle to visit my sister Helen Ruth and Bud the year after we married.



## Chapter 7 – War Service and My Education 1944 - 1951

I knew I was going to go to college from the time I was in 9th grade. My oldest sister Dorothy had gone to Business College in Omaha, Nebraska. She came home and worked in the Lake Crystal Bank. She was very bright and capable. All the rest of us graduated from high school, except Newt who was running the farm.

I don't remember my Mother ever saying, "Read this book," or "Study harder." She didn't relate to academics. She had gone to the little Welsh school up to 8th grade.

I was out of school for a year and got drafted into the war. I was deferred because I was helping on the farm. Farmers were exempted because the country needed grain.

Newt died in the Pacific on January 26<sup>th</sup> 1944 after he had come back to Lake Crystal on leave from the Army for Earl and Mary's wedding. We were told that he was on a plane that was forced to land on the ocean. All the passengers had to climb out onto the wings. Newt got washed off by a wave and couldn't swim. He drowned.

Nine days after we got news about him, I got appendicitis and I was deferred for six months after that. On the day I got my side-ache, I went to the doctor and the doctor said I had to have surgery, I told him I could not possibly be available for surgery a few days later. Dr Hugh said, "Do you want your mother to have two dead sons?" so given that choice, I went to Mankato to the hospital and my appendix was removed

I was deferred for six months after that. I got drafted in February 1944. We were asked if we wanted to be in the Navy or Army. I was on a bus with all the recruits who had been drafted on the way to Fort Snelling in the Cities. Everyone wanted to be in the Navy except me. So I thought if that was what they all wanted I would say the same. As it turned out there were 2 of us out of 100 who got in. I think now that I got in because I could type. I had hoped I could be the bass drum player in the Navy band that played for radio and community events. But my wishes had no bearing.

In September 1944, I went to Farragut Idaho for boot training for about three months. The Native Americans called it Fever Valley. It was by a lake and there was a lot of dampness that fall. It was a company of 100 guys who started there and we were together for three months except some of us. 60 got sick and were sent away. I met my friend George Grenville there who became a Hollywood movie editor later. One of my least favourite experiences there was being forced to jump off a high platform into water, as if leaving a ship. The food at camp was excellent and I worked at the canteen. We followed the progress of the War in newspapers. It only took 10 seconds to shave all the hair off our head.



One of the early nights in the hospital, a girl in the hospital from Lake Crystal who had dated Earl saw me and said, "Lee!" and came in kissed me. At another point at boot camp, two male friends from High School, came to the camp to see me, leaving their own camp for out-going units, and sneaked in to see me. They got leggings which identified them as 'boots'. They got

caught and put in the brig for three days. I got through with boot camp and came back to Lake Crystal on a week's leave when Ann was a freshman at Hamline University. I was sent to an out-going unit back at Farragut. While there I got scarlet fever. I remember the exact date I went to the hospital, Dec 19<sup>th</sup> 1944 after coming back from Minnesota, just before Christmas. We were in isolation in a special ward for scarlet fever about three weeks.

After I got out of the hospital, I was put back in an out-going unit. Some of the guys were sent to sea, but I was sent to San Diego for yeoman training, like being a secretary with typing and shorthand. I still wasn't well but was so glad to get away from Idaho. I was there a month before the scarlet fever turned to rheumatic fever because they didn't have antibiotics to treat it.

I was sent to Corona California to a large hospital that had been a golf course. During the war, they had to make facilities on what was available. I lay flat on my back most of the time. I took up to 48 pills a day and could hardly lift a cup to my mouth. I did a lot of reading, including the LA Times. My roommate was a white man from Louisiana, Jack, who was bitterly racist and we used to argue all the time. I was treated very kindly and professionally by a black corpsman with a bacteriology degree. It opened the world to me, meeting such different people.

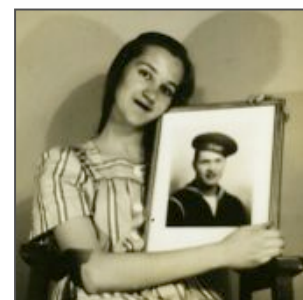


After boot camp, I got sick with rheumatic fever and spent nine months in the hospital and I had a lot of time to think what course to take in the future. I also had a lot of time to miss Ann and we wrote to each other frequently during that time. I had some friends, like Paul Johnson, my best friend from Lake Crystal who is shown with me in our uniforms after my hair grew back!

I knew my college education would be paid for, having been in service. Coming home from service, and because my future wife, Ann was going to college, there was no question that I would not go to college. There was never a day in my life I thought I would be a farmer. I don't remember conscious thoughts to say, "I will not be a farmer," but I never had any fantasy, looking back, about my hands in the soil. I also never thought I would take over Ray Leffler's insurance agency if I married Ann although he invited me to come into the agency if I wanted to do so.

In late November of 1945, after the war was over I was discharged. I was put on 100% compensation because of my weakened heart but that got changed fairly quickly. I kept on having some income because of my military service.

I arrived home from the service in Lake Crystal in the last week of Nov. 1945. I came by train from Corona, California where I had been a patient in the Navy hospital starting in March. I stayed at Dorothy's home where Mother also lived. Kathleen was a young child. Ann was away in college. So other than Christmas vacation



we didn't get to spend much time together. I worked as a clerk at the Red and White grocery store. I stocked shelves and all the odd jobs that needed to be done. The other job I had in Lake Crystal was setting pins in the bowling alley. Thank goodness that didn't last very long.

I chose Macalester College in St Paul, Minnesota because they were affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. I had been approved as a candidate for the ministry. I thought for a time I would be a Presbyterian minister. When I was in the service, I began to re-evaluate that and think that it was inappropriate for someone to say, "That is the wrong thing to do," "This is what you're going to do". I assumed that all the guys I was in the service with had the same background that I did which was a big blunder. Some of the married guys were picking up single girls for a good time. I assumed they had been taught what I had been taught and did this anyway, so it would be ridiculous for me to be a minister and try to change behaviour.

By the time I entered college I had given up that idea. From the beginning I had some vocational, interest tests. They all indicated the ministry was a logical course to follow. By this time I was interested in being a social worker which was also Ann's plan.

I went to the school that would have been my college if I had gone into seminary training, Macalester College. Luckily, Ann was at Hamline University, another liberal arts college 22 blocks down the streetcar tracks from Macalester. My major was sociology which I really enjoyed, with minors in psychology, economics and political science.

In January 1946 I moved to St Paul and started my academic career. The first year I lived off campus with a family close to Mac. The dormitories were full when I was ready to start college. The next year I had a room in Kirk Hall, a Men's dorm and shared a common room with three other men. We had a great time.



My college tuition, books and housing during the one year at the dorm were financed not through the GI Bill as most other veterans at the school were, but through another scheme which gave us some financial benefit. This was due to my having a medical disability discharge from the Navy. It was \$135 a month.

I joined choir and sang all those years there. Another of the choir members was Fritz (Walter) Mondale, later to be a Minnesota Senator and Vice President under President Jimmy Carter. I also started singing with a barbershop quartet. One of the things I remember was not being able to get the right pitch to start our song. We proved our status as amateurs.

I also went to summer school and studied Human Physiology and German. I got all A's for final grades in those subjects so obviously I was a better student than I thought. Ann was away at the Univ. of Chicago so I had fewer distractions than during the regular school year when we used to have a date at least once a week. The one telephone at Ann's wing in her dorm carried us through the rest of the week. I think we talked at least three times a week.

At Macalester, I studied German for two years from Herr Lichtenstein, a Jewish refugee who had been a judge in Germany. I didn't become fluent. When Ann and I were in Germany later, I found I could converse and understand a bit.

At Hamline, Ann studied, among other things, Spanish. Her teacher seemed much more able to make sense of it and give a reason why you are learning something. (Much later, when we were in Australia we took a night course in Malaysian. We had such fun with the people who were taking the course with us. We learned a little bit, enough to be useful on a later trip.)

The fact that we both moved toward a career in social work eliminated the possibility of a farm future for me. I was proud to have a friend in San Diego who was a classmate of mine from high school, who earned a PhD in mathematics. He was involved with missiles and satellites and in the landing the man on the moon working for McDonnell Douglas.

Then was Eldon Jones, from the same class of 1943, who stayed in Lake Crystal on the farm after his Army service but did wonderful things. Later he started a one of the world's leading hoist, platform and dump body producers, Crysteel Manufacturing Company. Ann's sister, his wife Helen, became its CEO. It is noted for its innovation and entrepreneurship, Eldon's forte, and it really improved employment options in Lake Crystal.

My barbershop quartet actually sang on the radio for an amateur show my junior year, 1947. One of the other guys told the MC that a couple of us were going to get married. I didn't know that the MC knew anything about that. When I was being interviewed live on air, before singing he asked me when Ann and I were getting married. I said June 18. The only bad part of that was we hadn't told any of the family that was the date we had picked. That was a funny way for them to find out because naturally we had encouraged the family to listen that night. That was quite a surprise to them.



I enjoyed being part of the theatre group in college. I liked being on stage because I needed the attention, looking back. Modelling also fulfilled needs for me, including making money. From the time I was a junior in High School, I had been in theatre productions, so I was thrilled and surprised after I auditioned to play Sir John Falstaff in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* play, that I was awarded the part for a Shakespeare festival at St. Thomas College. Hamline also participated. Ann played a lady-in-waiting in another play. She had no speaking part but that was one way of getting publicity for the festival.

I wore a white beard and powdered my auburn hair. Funny to look at this photo now when I actually do have grey hair to see my young self.

It was a great opportunity and over my future years I did continue in little theatre both with singing and acting. In Cherokee, I played Tom in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Curly in *Green Grow the Lilacs*, the book for the musical Oklahoma.

Sometime in my third year at Macalester I signed up for temporary married couple housing at the far end of the campus on the corner of Snelling and St. Clair Avenues. It turned out that we were able to move in after we had been married a week and we had had our honeymoon on a rainy week at Hay Lake in northern Minnesota. We lived there for one year. It was a cozy place for \$37.00 a month, including utilities. We used our wedding money to buy a Kenmore

desk-style sewing machine. Ann made curtains, slipcover for a bed and bolster to be used for our sofa.



We were on a lot where the streetcar ran on the side and front. I walked to my classes. We walked to a nearby grocery store and to a United Methodist church where we both sang in the choir. We didn't have a car until later.

In these years, I also had a modelling 'career' which is something I liked doing sporadically in my life. When I worked for the department store, Field-Schlick, I was in the Minneapolis paper in 1947, looking rather thin but sporting the latest 'fashion-right fall clothes':

*William Roberts, left 1581 St Clair Ave., wears a suit in gray and brown shadow stripe sharkskin, cut with wider collar and roll lapels ending in low closing double-breasted front. A brown fall-weight felt hat blends with the suit colors.*

Being at Macalester imprinted me with an interest in politics and being an active citizen. I have always been interested in what our leaders can do. Franklin Roosevelt was, I don't know how to describe him, other than being truly charismatic and committed down to the bare bones of helping people who needed it most. He was truly an amazing man and he'd carried the country through from 1932 until 1945, when he died. Oh, I remember the day he died very well. I was in the Navy at the time and a patient at the Hospital in Corona, California. In the late afternoon, the news came on the radio that the President had died. I remember the sort of shock because he had been our President for so long. Nobody said much of anything. It was just quiet, or a mumble, "Oh, my God." There was that kind of feeling.

That meant that Truman, the man who had been a Senator from Missouri, was now going to be our President. We knew nothing about this man but as it turned out, he also did a fantastic job. We voted against him at our first chance to vote when we became of age – 21 in 1948. I was certain that he was something of a slob, who called people names. On the other hand, he was a man of his word and as it turned out one of the great leaders of our country.

Ann and I had voted for Norman Thomas, a Socialist candidate, which was about as far out as anybody in Minnesota could ever be, but we did that. A good experience and I'm glad we did. From then on, we've always voted for the Democratic candidate for President. We've always done what we could to support that party using tax dollars to support public policy to benefit the poor, elderly, people with disabilities and other who needed help.

In 1948, many of the men were coming back to college after the Second World War and wives were helping put them through school. Housing was really short after the war. I found a small apartment owned by a Jewish couple at 93 North Milton Street.

I started a two year course in social work at the University of Minnesota in Sept. 1949. I had a placement in the State Dept. of Public Welfare where I had a chance to put into practice what we were learning. The second year I was at Wilder Child Guidance, a small privately owned

not-for-profit agency. It was a choice placement and I learned a lot working with a supervisor who helped me understand a great deal about human behavior.

I learned from Ann that one needed to go to graduate school to be a professional and valued social worker. My field was psychiatric social work and I put that to use several jobs later.

During these two years during my Masters of Social Work, we had our first child, Becky in Miller Hospital in St Paul on a cold snowy night when we didn't have a car and had to rely on friends for the trip to the hospital. People have always been helpful when needed. We moved from the apartment to a trailer at University Village on Como Avenue, where many of the veterans and their families lived. We moved again to a double wide trailer and again for the remaining time, in a rounded Quonset hut.



From the beginning of our married life, I also liked to help out at home. Some have remarked that I was a 'new age dad' before the term was coined, because I was actively involved with our children. It was such a joy to come home from a day of work and enter into the exuberance that young children brought us as well as give Ann a very necessary hand. We didn't live close to parents at any stage when the children were young so we worked as a team.

We also bought our first car, a 1938 Oldsmobile. It had a long hood so it felt really big. We needed the car so we could take our baby to show off to the family in Lake Crystal. I would need a car to look for a job at a county seat. This was part of the stipulation for financial help I got during graduate school. It required me to work three years in a child welfare office.

My time at Macalester for my Bachelor Degree, then the University of Minnesota for my Masters of Social Work, were very happy times for me and set me on the direction of very interesting and fulfilling working years ahead.



## Chapter 8 – Austin and St Cloud, Minnesota

1951 – 1957

I got my first professional job with the Mower County (Austin, Minnesota) Welfare Department. I was delayed in getting started because we were waiting for David to be born. Mower County was very generous having us wait to come there. I had graduated on June 18. David was born on July 16, 1951. There was a big lightning and thunderstorm the night he was born. We were both at the Maternity Hospital in Minneapolis. The front end of the Quonset blew in but nothing was badly damaged. After the birth, Ann went directly from the hospital to her parents' home in Lake Crystal. By this time we had a different used car, a small Chevrolet.

### AUSTIN, MINNESOTA

Our material goods and furnishings got moved, including a big piano which we bought our first Christmas when we lived at Macalester. We didn't have much other furniture actually. We rented a house from a Mrs. Skinner for a few months. Then we moved to a house owned by my boss and stayed there for the next two years. We were on the first floor and someone else lived above us. There was a basement where Ann washed clothes and hung clothes to dry in the winter.

As a child welfare worker, I had responsibility for supervising boarding homes where we placed children who had been in neglected situations and were now in a safer environment. I also did adoptive home studies. That's a job I took very seriously and felt well prepared to do. My training had been especially good and far better than most social workers in the rural counties would have had.

I sang in the church choir (of course). The director was Richard Lockwood. He and his wife Anna became very good friends. Dick grew up in China and Anna in Chicago. The first time we had dinner at their home, I commented that there was no bread on the table. And there was none. Our diets had always included bread when we were growing up. We continued to learn about differences in life.

The Lockwood's invited us to be part of a discussion group that met in each other's homes once a month. The Nordin's became good friends. They had a cabin in northern Minnesota where we spent a week with them. We kept in close contact for years. Jay Gildner and wife were also in the group. He later became Assistant Press Secretary for John Kennedy and accompanied Jackie Kennedy when she toured India. It was at this time that the Senator from Wisconsin, McCarthy was exerting his voice in the national scene. Politically it was not a pleasant time. My Hollywood friend who was a film editor (George Grenville) and had been in the navy with me was among the large number of Jewish men who felt attacked.



Ann and I played in the Austin City Band, Ann with her clarinet and me with the bass drum. We had uniforms too, even caps. When Ann was pregnant with Ned she had to close her waist band with safety pins to make room for her pregnancy. The jacket covered it all OK. We had fun and earned two dollars each for a practice and two dollars for a concert or parade. It may

seem silly to think of now but that little bit of money was much appreciated. I remember an outdoor concert in the park where I sang a Negro Spiritual, "Mighty 'Lak a Rose". It went over pretty well.

Austin was 85 miles from Lake Crystal, so we saw our family some. My mother, sister Dorothy and her husband Don came for Thanksgiving one year. We usually went to Lake Crystal for holidays. It was in Austin that I was able to be in the delivery room in the hospital with Ann when Ned Austin Roberts was born. That happened because our family doctor, Ray Van Cleve was in our discussion group and a good friend. I was thrilled to have this experience which was quite unusual at that time. Ann's parents were great at supporting us by babysitting when new babies came along. Usually the children stayed in their home in Lake Crystal. I think that is why that place has been so special for Becky who had the most time alone with her grandparents.

### **ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA**

After two years in a rural county, we decided it was a good time to look for a supervisor job for me. There was an opening in St. Cloud, Stearns County Welfare. We did not like leaving our friends in Austin but in order to get ahead in those times, you had to be willing to move. Stearns County was an amazing place, St. Cloud itself was 40% Roman Catholic and the surrounding countryside was over 90%.

We found an interesting house to buy at 503 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South on a big corner lot. We learned later it was the first brick house built in St. Cloud. The house was located near the Teacher's College (now the University).



Becky and David were able to walk to a laboratory school there where, no they didn't experiment on the kids so much as provide live subjects for student teachers at the University under supervision of master teachers. The close distance provided rental possibility for college students to fill our big house. We also had an immigrant family living in the apartment addition built before by the doctor who lived there before. We had this part torn down after a

big storm by a man who wanted free bricks for his use. It was simpler when they and the place was gone and made more playing space for the kids.

Eventually we had that rental, which previously housed an immigrant family, torn down after a storm demolished part of it. We made it into a really nice lawn area. There were two rooms on the second floor and a side apartment on the ground floor. Three girl college students lived there and were a source of live-in help. There were thirteen rooms and four baths, all for the price of \$7,000. We fixed it up over the years, plastering over the bricks to insulate against the cold and painted it white. I sent Ann and four children to Lake Crystal for a week and I painted the outside of the house. The gingerbread style front was dark brown. Our front door was an outrageous, welcoming red. We loved this house even with the “rolling floors” indoors.

James William was born on April 1, 1954 and Suzanne Elizabeth came along on June 8, 1955. I was able to be in the delivery room for their births, even in a Catholic Hospital. It wasn't really a plan to have a big family. We enjoyed each other so much and the bounty of love turned out to be five kids.



I spent time with Ann and the children on most nights and weekends. Ann's parents, Ray and Pearl visited quite often and lent a hand as the family grew. Ann and I talked on the phone each day at noon.

Our family had grown so fast to a big size, so I explored the possibility of getting a vasectomy. There was no way of getting sterilized in St. Cloud or even Minneapolis because of the strong Catholic bans in the state.

At work, there was an older gentleman head of the welfare agency with eight or nine social workers including two child welfare workers for me to supervise. The board was theoretically my boss. In contrast with many of the rural Minnesota counties, they exerted a strong negative influence on amounts of grants to welfare recipients; that was a real “no-no,” so I was walking a fine line much of the time as I tried to help people. When an opportunity came for me to be employed as a social worker at the nearby Veterans Hospital in St. Cloud, I took it and found it to be much more to my liking, plus I received a higher salary. This was a long-term psychiatric hospital with close to 2000 patients. My responsibility there focused largely on making placements of hospitalized veterans in local homes. Surprisingly much of that work was similar to what I did later in Cherokee, Iowa.

It was patterned after a system in Luxemburg. My immediate boss and the chief social worker were very trusting and helped make my stay there very pleasant. I car-pooled with a group of guys. People didn't usually have second cars then.

One of my pleasures there was forming a male quartet. They met at our house so I could have Ann as accompanist for rehearsals. Our children grew up hearing this male singing. I was also in church choir and helped with a Boy Scout troop there. It's hard to believe but I also went bowling once a week.

1956 in St Cloud was really a bad winter for us health wise. The kids had a lot of childhood illnesses, chicken pox, mumps, measles and sore throats too. It started out with most of our children having German measles. At that time, they didn't have any vaccinations like they do now. They can be very serious.

In fact it was for David, because he got bronchial pneumonia after the red measles. He was so pale. We were very worried.

We couldn't go to Lake Crystal for our usual Christmas there. Instead Grandpa and Grandma came to us in St. Cloud and what a wonderful Christmas that was. They brought a little card table set, grey with red trim, and matching folding chairs. It was also the year of the costumes – the Robyn Hood costume and the police costume.



We were all worn down by the illnesses. We struggled to keep up and keep going. That was the main thing. It was winter time and that meant we were indoors all the time, except for when Becky and David went to school at the Laboratory School connected with the State College there to train teachers. Miss Neal was Becky and David's kindergarten teacher in St Cloud. She was the person that our friends, the Anderson's, used to say, "She loves every child but she really doesn't like any parents."

About that time I saw an ad in a national social work publication that they were looking for a social worker at the Cherokee Mental Health Institute with a starting salary of \$10,200 annually. That sounded too good to be true. Ann and I drove to Cherokee and were really taken with the hospital, the town of 8,000 and the reputation of good schools. I had an interview for a job in the social services department of the State Mental Health Institute, a beautiful complex of buildings opened in 1902 as an asylum. We talked with Dr Fanny and Dr Brinegar in the administration. We were invited to a little party at the Fleniken's house in the employee quarters where we met other staff.

We were quite impressed with Cherokee with its Sanford Museum and Planetarium. Someone there told me, "We just love Cherokee. It's like a little oasis in the desert." I was offered the job. The tough part was that after we had the interview and we were driving home, I started getting sick: chills, fever and really feeling miserable. That turned out to be the beginning of a recurrence of rheumatic fever, an allergic reaction to a strep infection. My friends at the VA hospital arranged for me to be transferred to the Veterans Hospital in Minneapolis where I stayed for six weeks.

We had to turn down the job offer in Cherokee because of my illness. The rest of that winter seemed pretty long for Ann, 70 miles away. We didn't have telephone access. She made one very brave trip to visit me with all the kids packed up in the dark green DeSoto station wagon in the days when there were no seat belts. She hadn't driven that much, particularly in the wintertime. I was really lonely and eager to get home so I was thrilled that she made the effort to see me and it boosted my morale to catch up with all the family. I was able to go to the

canteen in a wheelchair. I felt so terrible, emotionally, that I was dumping this big job of raising the kids all in Ann's lap and I couldn't do a thing.

She had a little financial help with the renters upstairs, an old man named Fred and two male college students. We had three college girls on the side of the old brick house. We hired one of the girls to help Ann with cooking and childcare after their classes were over. They liked playing and reading to the kids. When asked, one of our college boys shovelled the snow on the sidewalks around our large corner block.

Ann had a housecleaner once a week and milk and groceries were delivered. Fortunately Ann could call in the grocery order. In that winter, the family was basically living indoors all the time and there was lots of sickness spreading from one to the other.

When Ann went to the doctor one day, he said, "If I were you, I'd get out of this climate and get some sun." She said, "OK. It sounds like a good idea to me." I was back at home, recuperating after the time in the hospital in the Twin Cities. I was lying in bed in the front of the house and resting which I had to do then as I still hadn't gone back to work. Ann came in and said, "We're going to move to Phoenix." We kid each other that was one of few unilateral decisions in our married life.

I think the doctor mentioned the warm dry climate and Phoenix was such a place. I then started exploring through correspondence about going to Phoenix and working in the VA (Veteran's Administration). We did some negotiating between my St. Cloud VA boss and my Phoenix-to-be boss at the VA there. Amazingly, they made a transfer possible. We did it without them interviewing me and they paid almost all our moving expenses.

So in August 1957 we packed up, sold the house and left for Phoenix, with five kids, aged 7 to 2. This move made for a long separation from our family roots, about 1800 miles.

We didn't move our piano or our big beautiful antique bedroom set that we had acquired from my Nain. We sold the bed and dresser for \$25. We used that money to invite Dorothy and Earl and their spouses, Kathleen and my mother and took them to a nice restaurant. We thought that was quite a nice thing to do. It was very unusual for us to go out to restaurants with the whole family.



We did take quite a lot of furniture and when we got to Phoenix, we bought a new redwood picnic table for our kitchen table. I had loved working at the St Cloud Hospital where I was with such a nice bunch of men. I had no desire to leave that situation and actually I got exactly the same salary in Phoenix as I got in St Cloud. We moved because of health needs for me and the family, no other reason. As usual we made friends in a new place and we were happy there. Our main interest was to get healthy again. We wanted sunshine and we got plenty of that in the first time we lived in Arizona.

## Chapter 9 – Phoenix, Arizona 1957 - 1959

We left in the summer time. We sold the first house we ever owned in St Cloud and made a couple thousand dollars on it. We were so ignorant of what the climate would be like that we took lots of pictures of the Minnesota River valley so we would have our last exposure to green. Little did we know that Arizona was home to several national parks and forests. The high desert was full of growth.

We arrived in Phoenix in early August having driven down through Colorado and thrown snowballs on the Continental Divide. When we went through the Salt River Canyon, we thought we were going to die. The radiator went out and we had to replace that in Globe, Arizona which is just after you get through the peaks and troughs of the Salt River Canyon. We had a few hours waiting in Globe for the garage to fix the car. It was really hot outside and our station wagon didn't have air-conditioning. We had a water bag that hung on the front bumper for emergency use.

The summer drive from Globe to East Van Buren in Phoenix taught us an appreciation of how different the climate was from Minnesota. We found a motel on Van Buren Street where we lived for one week with a swimming pool. Dave jumped in, Ned watched, then followed, then Jim who was three years old jumped in and those boys were like fish.

I had a chance to meet my boss, Miss Fisher and other social workers at this VA Medical Hospital. I was assigned to the surgical ward. My boss pointed out the area where the best public schools were located, Madison No. 1 School District, because it was supposedly the best. The school had a great reputation.

We found a three bedroom ranch-style home at 1828 E. Marshall Street, in a neighbourhood just a few blocks from Madison One. It only took a week to find this pleasant relatively new house, buy it and move in. Our things were stored at the home of a man from St Cloud who was now a realtor living in Phoenix. He allowed us to keep our stuff under his covered carport, so it was protected just for those few days. It was a block north of Missouri, a through street and one block out of the City limits at the time. It is unbelievable when you see how Phoenix has grown. I think the population was about 250,000 and of course now it's over three or four million. Madison School was later demolished for a freeway.

A population of 250,000 is exactly what Tucson was when we came here in 1972. It is 800,000 now. These Western cities really do grow. In those days we were within a 7 mile circumference for my work at the VA, the church, stores and schools, so it was pretty easy with one car. We were only two blocks from the Madison School. The school had little "ramadas", shaded areas next to the school all around the campus. We always felt safe in that neighbourhood.

The most unique part of living here was being surrounded by a grove of orange trees. The builders in our development had taken out some of the trees to build houses, but saved the orange trees they could. We had twelve orange trees. They were great for juice and so delicious!

Everybody painted the lower trunk of the citrus trees white, so it was quite nice, uniform looking throughout our neighbourhood. Some people had grapefruit trees and we would occasionally exchange our fruit.

The orchard irrigation system occurred every 14 days in the summer and once a month in the winter. We were surprised because water was cheaper in Phoenix than it had been in Minnesota. We used so much more. It seemed silly that that would be true in the desert. Actually it came from the Salt River project which had been a federally-financed system of water control and we were using federally subsidized water for our irrigation. The time the water would come to our lot was posted on a community board. Sometimes it would be 1 am and sometimes it was 7 or 9 o'clock. You had to be there to turn the water on and off. It would usually run for twenty to thirty minutes.



Another popular tree was the mulberry. In the winter time people would chop off the ends of the branches so they looked really strange. They don't do that so much anymore. They had a big leaf and looked nice and shady. We had a hedge in front of our front windows made of pyracantha vines, which is a vine with red berries. We also had a laurel hedge and a couple of rose bushes.

The boys had two bunk beds that were from the Navy painted sky blue, so they were really four beds in the boy's room. Ned broke his collarbone jumping from the top bunk bed. The girls' bedroom had Degas ballerina wallpaper.



In the house itself, there was an area between the living room and the kitchen that we kept empty for a play space. We had a picnic table and benches for our kitchen table. We had lots of tricycles which the younger kids rode around on the double-wide cement driveway. The kids did a lot of playing on the floor, like building forts, playing jacks and marbles. The bookcase had little dividers with plants on the top which was a great little play space. That is where David hid the hairbrush that I used to spank him once.

We bought a new Kimball piano there. We previously had an old upright piano since we were married, an 800 pound piano that we moved from place to place in the Cities, then to Austin and we left it in St Cloud. We had the new one by our first Christmas – a Kimball console – that was the nicest thing we acquired. We had a long table that we made out of a former library table. The curtains and draperies were nice in the house. There was carpeting. We bought a hide-a-bed couch. When we had company, we gave them our bedroom which had a private bathroom while Ann and I slept in the grey hide-a-bed.

Our older three kids had a really good educational start at Madison School. Ned started kindergarten (Beginning First) in Phoenix. Becky finished third grade. David joined the

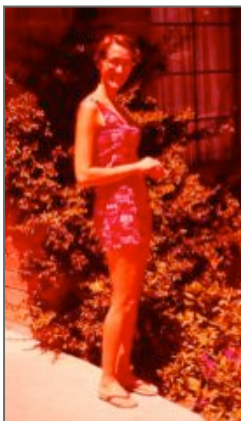
neighbourhood group who walked to school together. There were lots of young families around us. They accelerated their reading and worked hard on phonics as a background. They taught Spanish as a second language. Becky had a Hopi Indian friend, Helen Sekaquaptewa. We thought it was great that you could meet someone with a cultural experience so different than what we brought from Minnesota.<sup>1</sup>

The house itself had a little patio outside the kitchen door. There was a little building that housed the washing machine and also was a little storage area as part of the carport. We had a double wide carport which would have been great if we had two cars, but it was wonderful for the kids riding trikes around there.

The work experience in Phoenix was very unhappy for me. One time I stopped a surgeon and asked for a meeting with him to discuss my functions. He said, "Damn you social workers, you always want to sit down." For a surgeon who stands up at work this was no good. I did some reading on the subject of death when I was in Phoenix. My frustration was a result of trying to use my skills in dealing with patients about their illness. The surgeons wouldn't allow that. The concept of teamwork was missing and was especially noticeable coming from St. Cloud, where the team approach was in effect.

In spite of the negative feeling I had at work in Phoenix there was much to be happy with. We made friends with other staff people. In St Cloud, I carpoled with five men but in Phoenix, it was just Dr Marv Weinstein and me. Dr Weinstein was a psychologist and they lived not far from us. They had a Madrigal group we sang in. We still see them occasionally in San Rafael, California. They had four children and since then, they have not felt nearly as happy about their adult children as we have. They have had lots of problems, but they were wonderful friends.

There were some other social workers with families. We went roller skating and picnicking up in the mountains with them. On a weekend morning, we used to pack a grocery bag with oranges, peanut butter and bread. Often it was not more than that. It was very simple. We didn't need a lot of equipment. We would go up to the South Mountain Park. They had huge concrete areas where the kids could play, roller skate especially and just roam around in the mountains. It was very, very nice.



For Ann, it was just like heaven on earth, spending most of her life out of doors. When it was too hot, we were OK because we had air-conditioning. So our house was always comfortable. We were encouraged by the Weinstains to join the Jewish Community Centre for the summer months. They had a beautiful swimming pool. We made good use of it. For \$95.00 summer membership we got through the hot days.

Ann made herself one-piece outfits, pedal pusher lengths. A lot of the time she wore skirts and blouses and was not into jeans. She looked beautiful then and still is.

---

<sup>1</sup> Becky has met up with Helen several times since the mid-1970's. She married a Mormon and had 7 kids. Has a PhD in Education but is not interested in living the Hopi life back on the reservation.

The girls were still wearing braids. I clipped the boys' hair easily with the clippers. It really was a way of saving money. My mother had cut my hair until I was through high school so it was a logical thing to do.

My quartet from St Cloud provided some local contacts. Bill Thayer was the bass. Bill was the brother of Fran Applebee whom we contacted when we got to Phoenix. That's how we established our friendship that resulted in our going camping with the Applebees. Mr Applebee's mother was born in Arizona, an early pioneer with Apache blood on both sides. He was a true Arizonan who had worked as a cowboy with sheep and cattle and knew all about the West.

The Thayers gave us one more contact. She worked for Dan Marsh, a big drugstore in St Cloud next to a store called Herbergers. One of the exciting things we did in Phoenix came from an invitation to a banquet for art lovers. We didn't know who it was from. We think it was from Herbergers as they knew we were a young couple in Phoenix. We were invited to the Biltmore Hotel with its gold leaf ceilings to a big gala featuring the actor Vincent Price, dinner and the whole shebang. I'll never forget sitting down with an older couple. They looked at us and their first words were, "Do you paint?" We told them that we had just finished painting the kitchen! We really enjoyed ourselves with Vincent Price, the movie star, was sitting 15 feet away from us at a table. As a result of that night, I wound up soliciting funds for the art museum, one of my attempts at civic contributions.

Ann made little swim suits for all the kids, with a blue background and little fish to keep track of them by looking for that colour in the water. They all became good swimmers and we had a great time there. It was a perfect place with a beautiful big pool. There were lots of Eastern Jews who were used to sitting at the ocean. There was no swimming involved, they just wanted to stand in the water, cool off and talk. We didn't socialize much there as the swimming was the main thing.



I do remember it got to 116° on July 16<sup>th</sup> - David's birthday the next year. Pretty hot! But our house was comfortable with an air-conditioning system that was much better than most people had. They tended to use evaporative coolers which lost their effectiveness when the humidity rose, as it did with the irrigation. The air-conditioner helped the family have many hours of reading and playing games indoors which complemented all the outdoor activities.

Nobody went out as much as people do now. I remember we took the family to a Disney Shaggy Dog movie starring a Hungarian sheep dog at a drive-in theatre. We still have two drive-ins in Tucson but they are the only ones in the State of Arizona, I think. We went out for special ice-cream after that.

There was a covered playhouse in the backyard where the kids played when it wasn't too hot. The yard was fenced with grape stake boards, long, narrow and pointed. That enclosed the side and backyard next to where Mickey and Ray Nettles lived. They were favourite

neighbours of ours. They didn't have any children. They must have minded the noise sometimes – the shouting – but they were always really kind, lovely people.

There was another family across the street from us who had a girl who might have been about 5 or 7 years older than Becky. We can't remember their names. But we had only been in the house a day in the hot, humid August that year and she said to Ann, "We live here in the summer because we love the heat! We are desert rats." And that was a positive note that stuck with us to find this was a climate that a lot of people liked.

We had an electric stove and that was really a mistake. We brought our stove from Minnesota and we had to put a special electric wire in to make it useable. We nearly died when we got an electrician who came from across town and it cost us \$96! It was unusual to cost so much. We were paying \$2 for doctor bills. I made \$4700 a year so you can see dollar values were pretty low.

Ann had a refrigerator and froze orange juice in the freezer top of the refrigerator. We had an electric mixer that had a juicer attachment as well as useful for making cakes and cookies. The picnic table was great for filling in that little corner with wallpaper all around it. It was a very pleasant, attractive little home. We paid \$12,000 for it and sold it for \$14,500 a few years later.

So each house we sold we made a few thousand dollars on. We didn't have to spend much on repairs on this house, compared with St Cloud. It was only 6-7 years old which was very different for us from a Minnesota house. For one thing, it was one storey. Another, it had no basement. Just a cement slab with the brick house built on that. Even though we had carpeting, right under it was a cement floor. And it had some tiles on it – just so different. Our laundry room was outside attached to the carport.

We brought our television from St Cloud that we got in 1955. That was one of the things we enjoyed. Ann loved the Perry Mason lawyer shows. The children watched Romper Room and during our time there in 1957, saw the first Russian spaceship, Sputnik launched to orbit the Earth, which started a space race between Russia and the US.

One of the strange things about Phoenix compared with Minnesota was that we had two newspapers, a morning and an afternoon newspaper. Minneapolis had that but in St Cloud, we only had the one paper. Both of these newspapers were very, very conservative. We got the newspapers sometimes. I didn't read it before going to work but I remember coming home from work and reading the paper and being furious with the politics of the time that were very Republican. Governor Morrison was running and they published a photograph of a 50 cent overdraft that he had done in the bank and details of his divorce. None of this kind of stuff was reported in Minnesota! It felt very, very different.

It seemed like sleazy politics and we didn't like that. For some reason, Barry Goldwater, Arizona Senator, was not a popular man in our house. We would see his mansion high up on the hillside and we would all boo. In his later years, we observed that he stood in contrast to the politician we thought we knew. He married several times and his last wife really helped

mellow him. He accepted abortion. He had a grandson who was gay that helped him be very tolerant towards that group. In his later years, he became an interesting character to us.

We were also on the sidelines when President Dwight Eisenhower's motorcade came by. It's much like when you go to see the Queen go by: You wave! And he was going 45 miles an hour back there in 1956!

We had to buy a new station wagon when we were in Phoenix. The old DeSoto had it, so we traded that in and got a blue Plymouth with white trim. That was a wonderful station wagon.

In 1958, when Suzanne was about three, we decided to take a trip to San Diego. It was summertime so we left Phoenix about 10pm and lined the kids up to sleep on their sides, like sardines in a can. It was 102° when we got to Yuma but we thought it best to travel at night when the weather was more reasonable. We had water bags on the fenders so if we got stuck in the desert we'd have water. Honest to Pete, we were pretty brave when you think of it.



It was our first camping experience at Oceanside in California with our newly purchased canvas tent with side room attached. We were so proud of that beautiful new tent that we had. Being on the beach was probably not the best place because that sand got into everything. Oceanside was not as developed as it is now. We tended to swim in the backwater lagoon not in the ocean proper. Ann got the sand stuck in the zipper of the swimsuit she made for herself!

When we were in San Diego, we went to the wonderful zoo there and we have movies of the children's zoo where the kids got to ride the Galapagos tortoises, something that surely would not happen today.

Leaving Oceanside, we went across to Tijuana, Mexico. Ann's shoes were tied up on top of the car with the tent, so we were walking on a side street in Tijuana to buy her some sandals, and she was barefooted wearing shorts with five little kids behind us. All those Mexican men were following her long legs. I remember very distinctly they had never seen legs like that in their life! They were used to women who were a bit more squat, a little shorter. We learned later that was not proper dress attire in a resort town.

A week after the beach (and sand in the tent) we camped in the White Mountains with the Appleby family. Bill Appleby was a native Arizonan and was a great resource for us. We stayed at Tonto Creek in the Tonto National Forest. Bill taught us a lot about camping. We went trout fishing. There were twelve people in our two families and he caught a whole trout for each of us! Absolutely wonderful! In addition he cooked biscuits in an iron pan.

One night he baited some skunks to come into our camp, which was very rustic with no one else anywhere near. We had to be careful. We put mothballs all around the outside of the

tent. We told the kids to be quiet but they could watch from the tent. Fran Appleby and Ann stood quietly by the fire. I trusted Ann not to scream but I was less sure about Mrs. Appleby. Three or maybe four skunks came and walked right through the camp side. We all stayed very quiet. The skunks were just beautiful. Their tails were so fluffy, black and white and held upright. It was some sight.

The Applebees were really generous with their time and they loved to help us get oriented to Arizona. He made a special grate for us so we could put our cooking utensils on it. Fran helped Becky make doll clothes.

We had a nice big store close to the school, a fairly big supermarket. The shopping area was Madison East. I can remember talking with the butcher and telling him the beef didn't taste like it did in Minnesota and he said, "That's because our beef doesn't have as much fat in it."

Ann didn't take the kids shopping very much. She went by herself mostly. We went to a big store where we got our tent, like an early K-Mart, called Fed Mart. You had to be a federal employee to shop there and VA employment made that possible. We bought our tent there which was our family camping trip from the beginning til we left it in Seattle when we went to Australia!

I sang in the church choir and I became President of the choir. They had to have somebody who would call a meeting to order every once in a while. That made me a member of the music committee which was an official church committee. That church was called First Methodist Church. It had been located downtown and now had re-located on Missouri Street and Central Avenue. It was a wonderful location. That church had the most beautiful blue stained glass windows.

The church wasn't built when we got there. We were meeting in a fellowship hall and there were Sunday school rooms. The worship sanctuary of the church came last and it was beautiful. When the church was dedicated we sang excerpts from the Messiah and the Hallelujah Chorus. We were there every Sunday. I remember some people remarking that we got all those kids up and dressed and to church by 8 o' clock in the morning.

They had four services on a Sunday morning during the church season of Easter and Advent. As happened to many of the places we moved to, here come the Roberts' with five kids, so we'd better build a sanctuary or more rooms. We ended up contributing to building drives everywhere we went. It was part of the 'we must populate' feeling we had in the 50s, right after the War.

We remember hearing at college, "You're the ones who should have children, you educated people." So we certainly had children! Most of our friends and our peer group did too. We stopped having children because we didn't think we should have any more after five. I tried to get an operation to take care of that while we were still living in Minnesota, but not in St Cloud and not even in



Minneapolis could I get that because of the heavy Catholic presence in the medical profession, which was anti-birth control. Only when we got to Phoenix, one of the surgeons gave me my vasectomy and our family was complete.

Grandma made each of the boys some wonderful cowboy shirts. Mr Kelley who lived on the other side of the fence, hand-tooled leather holsters for them. All we had to do was buy jeans and hats. How they loved them.

The girls didn't get into the cowboy stuff very much and we didn't take part in square dances that I remember. We did go to the entertainment places, like the zoo and the desert. We knew when to stay away from the desert because of rattle snakes. We liked McDowell Park, sort of on the eastside, close to Scottsdale/Mesa. It was a fun place.

I had a very minimal private social work practice, done in our doctor's office, located close to the Veteran's Hospital. If I remember right, I only had one patient. The doctor had referred him to me. He was quite willing for us to do that. It was a way of making a little extra money.

I also tried to get into the Army Reserve as a Medical Service Officer, because many of the doctors in the hospital were part of that. It too was a chance to make a little money but there wasn't a position open, but I still was given an appointment as a Captain in the US Army Medical Service Corps. It was only after we went to Cherokee that I resigned my commission.

Our standard of living was very much like everyone else's. I was always looking for chances to make a bit more money and wanted to improve our lives. That's why if you look at our moving history, it was not only a career opportunity for me but it was for more income for the family to live on.

Very soon after we got to Phoenix I was ordered to take two pills a day of penicillin so that prevented me from getting a strep throat. Rheumatic fever is really an allergic reaction to a strep infection. The medication cleared me of having any need to be in a warm climate, which let us consider employment back in the Midwest. That's how it happened that we went back to Cherokee.

As far as the rest of our health, we were so much healthier in Phoenix than we were in Minnesota. We were outside in the sunshine. We didn't have all that contact with colds in crowded schoolrooms. Actually, we all did much better. Ann loved being out in the sun and feeling the rays go through her body. It was really therapy for her.



Grandma and Grandpa came to visit us each winter as soon as tax season was over. My mother and sister Dorothy, husband Don Kelly and their daughter Kathleen, came for our second Christmas there. They all came by car – nobody flew. A few other Minnesota people stopped by for a short visits, maybe time for a cup of coffee.

Ann wrote regularly to all the parents every week and we took a lot of pictures so we could send our slides to Grandpa and Grandma. That was

one way to ease our conscience about leaving Minnesota. We could still let them know what the kids looked like and what they were doing. (No Skype in those days!)

My sister Helen Ruth and Bud from Seattle came in May of the last year, 1959, and it turned out to be one of the hottest Mays. It was too hot for Helen Ruth. She had that fair Welsh complexion with beautiful soft skin and was used to Northwest humidity.

Ann started teaching our children how to play the piano. She played for them to sing and dance and fall down when she stopped, usually in the middle of a phrase. They loved that exercise. We had music song books for kids and adults. We didn't listen to music on the radio very much. In our growing up years, we did listen to radio a lot. One of the reasons we didn't have radio on was that Ann needed to know what was happening in the house. Our house was generally a quiet place, considering there were five children. If I knew there were tensions brewing, Ann usually stepped in and diverted attention or in some way, eased the situation.

We all played well together. The boys of course, played rough and tumble games at times. We all played a lot of board games where reading was important. We had a swing set in St. Cloud which was much enjoyed but we left that in place when we moved to Phoenix.

Wherever we were in those years of the 1950s, we didn't have a lot of time to think about exploring the meaning of our lives. We were enjoying life, the family and were really busy but we didn't make a lot of time for reflection. I had to be at work at 8am in the morning and could leave at 4:30pm because we were both so occupied with our children. And there was church choir for me in addition. Then a few social contacts, the Weinsteins and Applebees and a few other people we met. I don't remember having any big dinner parties like we had when we got to Adelaide in Australia.

I remember we had one very nice chicken dinner at the Weinsteins which had a special orange herb sauce. Everything was more casual and informal in Phoenix than in the midwest. We were happy people. We liked Phoenix and were healthier there. I don't think we looked back at St Cloud with many regrets though we did leave good college friends, the Leafs and our neighbours, the Andersons who later flew a plane to see us in Cherokee.

Although we only lived in Phoenix briefly, we were able to come back to Arizona later, in 1972, to live in Tucson. It had the best of everything – a nicer climate than Phoenix and a city that is much more liveable, and more liberal (at least in Pima County), in keeping with our way of thinking. It has been a pleasure to be back in Arizona all this time, even though it has put us far away from family.

## CHAPTER 10 — Cherokee, Iowa 1959 - 1967

After two years working in Phoenix, I saw an ad for a social worker at the same Iowa Mental Health Institute where I had interviewed for a job two years earlier. My health had improved in the Arizona climate, which made it possible to consider moving back to the Midwest to be closer to home. Our family took a vacation back to Minnesota to see the relatives, most of whom had visited us at least once during our pleasant winter time. We diverted our travel plans so we could stop in Cherokee, Iowa. The same staff that I talked with on our earlier visit to Cherokee was still in place and Dr. Brinegar, the Superintendent wanted me to start working right away. We got there on a Friday and he wanted me to start on Monday! He was just crazy! I had to come back to Phoenix to finish my work, resign and do all the things you had to do.

Ann never got back to Phoenix to say good-bye to friends or say good-bye to the house. She and the children stayed with the grandparents in Minnesota while my brother Earl and I rented a U-haul trailer and returned to Phoenix. Earl did most of the packing while I was at the hospital readying for my departure from there. My social work supervisor didn't like it that I was leaving. However a salary that was almost \$4,000 more a year was appealing to me as was returning to the closeness of our family in Lake Crystal.

When we went to Minnesota, we knew it was a possibility we would go to Cherokee sometime, but if we had known for sure, we would have tried to make a camping trip to the Grand Canyon, something we didn't do. It was like it was ordained – it was supposed to happen that we finally got to Cherokee. When the family left Phoenix, we camped along the way in Colorado and Nebraska



The family stayed in Lake Crystal for a couple weeks when I went ahead to start work and find a house. I got an apartment on the grounds of the hospital for the family to live in. Our meals were in the hospital dining room. We lived there for a short time as I found a nice family home for us to live in at 506 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street where we were very happy. The elementary school was only two blocks from home. Jim started kindergarten that

fall. So Suzanne was home for the first year with Mom and the cats we brought back from Phoenix. It was late summer, 1959.

The Mental Health Institute was an amazing looking place. It followed an architectural plan of a French architect. The main building had some circular staircases. All in all it was a beautiful red brick imposing place, almost like a castle on a hill. It also had a conservatory that stayed hot enough to grow a banana tree, a source of much amazement to the children. The local kids called the hospital the Nut Hut.

The state legislature had a committee called the Board of Control. That board managed four state hospitals for the mentally ill, one in each corner of Iowa. Cherokee was in the northwest corner and 150 miles from Lake Crystal. I was proud of their treatment philosophy, which was created after the noted Meninger brothers, famous for their mental health expertise, spoke to the legislature and promoted the idea of Brains, not Bricks.. So Cherokee had the most interesting and varied group of people I ever worked with. The hospital was a training hospital for residents training to be psychiatrists, with staff from all over the United States.

When I started working in Cherokee there were about 2,000 patients. I was one of six social workers who were hired to work with the counties to find homes for long time patients who had been treated and were only staying in the hospital as a place to live. Some had been there for as much as forty years. The former "poor farms" in each county made ideal settings for those patients who suffered from institutionalization. Some of the patients were transferred to private homes. We followed up on those patients and they were doing fine. It was quite an adjustment for them. The changes were really made possible by new medications, such as tranquilizers.

I was in Cherokee six years, the last four I was Director of Social Work. All the social workers worked five days a week, eight to five. We took turns being on call for the holidays and weekends. In the last year or two I had responsibility as the social worker on 'the children's unit'. That was fascinating to me. Dr. Fanny Ginsburg was Assistant Superintendent and one of my strong supporters. Everybody at the hospital called her Dr. Fanny. She loved our family, came for dinner a few times and gave the children the biggest box of Swiss chocolates we had ever seen. It may interest you to know that Sue, Mom and I saw the retired Dr. Fanny in New York when we were returning from our stay in Australia. She took us to lunch at the famous Russian tearoom.

Cherokee was an interesting cultural experience. Mom was active in a musical club, Tone Circle, and got to accompany many accomplished musicians. All of the family sang in church choir. Music was valued in the community. So was theater. A new Little Theater was built while we lived there. I had major roles in musical theatre; I was Uncle Tom in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Curly was *Green Grow the Lilacs* (a forerunner of *Oklahoma*).

Becky studied violin with Merle Robinson and soon played in Cherokee's symphony orchestra. Ned started on guitar and bassoon. Later, Jim played trombone, and Sue the flute but we all had a lot of music together. Most of the children learned some piano from their Mom. We joined the community chorus and orchestra for the annual Messiah concerts. Being sixty miles from the largest city, Sioux City was too far for those days so Cherokee really became a center for the arts. They also had a local museum that attracted our family for special events. The library was also special, especially for Dave who used it extensively. He read out the children's collection then went on to voraciously consume the adult books, especially the science fiction.

I was in a bowling league with other hospital employees. We kept busy and loved it. We also took part in a Hi-Fi Club, listening to newly-released records on great sound equipment some of the staff had. The family enjoyed many social gatherings, parties, musicals and hootenannies in Cherokee in a small town where people made their own fun. We also used to

go to the nearby Washington High School and the Museum to see travelogues and science movies sponsored by National Geographic.

The boys were active in the Scouts and in Little League baseball. The girls also were in Girl Scouts or Brownies. They excelled in academics. When they all brought their report cards home the first thing they wanted to do was go to the local A & W root beer stand where the owner gave free root beers to them for every A. All summer the kids lived in the community swimming pool, a few blocks away. Dave became a very good diver off the low board.

In spite of all these activities, Ann and I always found time to be together. We didn't find having five kids hard, but we did need to work as a team. We went out to parties, concerts and plays quite often as a couple and we took a driving trip with another couple to Phoenix one time for a holiday.

Thinking back, so many happy memories revolve around the seven of us being together. I used to read the kids a chapter of a book after we finished supper and we would laugh and talk together at that time. My role was to be strong and the ultimate arbiter of disputes. Ann had the role of building fairness into all of life it seems to me. She was often the referee but most definitely the planner, a role she excels in to this day.

We tried to work with Roberts Rules of Order and have a family democracy, where each member was valued as much as possible. The rules seem to me, looking back, were more imposed on Sue than anyone else. I think she felt different than the other children. Maybe it was her red hair but she felt imposed upon.

We had a ravine and creek behind our house with an old garage perched at the back of the yard. The boys and their friends had a great time playing there. The ravine was a source of wonders and imagination for all the children. They were disappointed in later years to see the ravine had been cleared and developed.

Our experience with gardening took place at the Mental Health Institute's gardens, part of a large acreage surrounding the building. It was rich farm land originally. Patients and staff were given the amount of land desired for their personal gardening. Our children learned about growing vegetables, weeding and watering in a hands-on way and also enjoyed climbing the large established trees nearby. It saved our open backyard for games of softball and badminton, or just idly looking up at the cumulous clouds and guessing what the shape looked like.

We liked to take camping trips each year as a family. For one thing, it was an economical way to travel with our big family but Ann and I wanted to expose the kids to as much stimulation as possible. We went to the Seattle World's Fair in 1962, going through the South Dakota badlands and seeing Mount Rushmore, visiting friends along the way.

Long car trips with children offer chances for the parents to plan entertainment. Ann always had ideas for games or activities. I think she loaded them up with long plastic tubes and cheap Navy beans and told them they could use these pea shooters to be Johnny Appleseed bean planters. We did lots of singing in the car and word games, but occasionally, we would need to pull over for my famous 'silent treatment' until the boisterousness settled down. We stayed

with Helen and Bud and explored Washington after having some great days at the World's Fair itself. Other camping included trips to Chicago, Missouri , Montreal, New York, Washington and Minnesota as well as time with the family in Lake Crystal.



## Chapter 11 – Mankato, Minnesota 1967 - 1969

In early 1967, I learned that Blue Earth County was going to have a Mental Health Center. I immediately contacted my cousin, county supervisor Ron Evans, for information about who was interested that I was keen. I had had experience with mental health centers when I was at St. Cloud and Cherokee. We arranged for an evening meeting with the board. It seemed that was an ideal place for us to move because our families of origin were nearby (12 miles to Lake Crystal). The plan was for Le Sueur County to join with Blue Earth County for running the clinic which would be located in Mankato. There were several members of the board who were County Commissioners so the funding was well-taken care of.

Throughout the mental health movement nationally there was thinking that the clinics should be consultants to the county welfare office, schools and private agencies. That was much to my liking. Throughout Minnesota there were some clinics that had a psychiatrist as Director, some had Psychologists and several had social workers like me. Over the next four years with me as Director I had a school psychologist, psychiatrist part-time, another social worker and clerical help.



One of my tasks at the Mental Health Center was to give mental health lectures to school groups and other civic organizations. I was in contact with Charles Schultz, the cartoonist who gave me permission to use slides of his cartoons from the book "The Gospel according to Peanuts." It seemed to me that the cartoons told a story that people could relate to. This proved to be a popular way to present mental health.

One of the reasons we left Cherokee was simply to be closer to our family of origin. We got a lovely family home at 126 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street near the High School. Our children were at such interesting stages and were lots of fun to be around. We wanted to share that.

Unfortunately, Ann's Dad, Ray Leffler, died suddenly in November just three months after we arrived in Mankato. He had helped us a lot to get settled.

My Mother had metastasis to the brain a year later which came from her bowel cancer, was hospitalized three months, unable to speak. I was able to visit her often. The night before she died our family sang to her at her bedside. We like to think she heard us. On the Sunday before she went to the hospital, I had felt she would not have long to live. I remember going to the funeral at Jerusalem Church and the Welsh people singing a funeral hymn in Welsh for her but I don't remember talking with anybody about that or initiating conversation with our children or siblings. Looking back, it appears to me that I followed the routines that our families had provided. They were not well done. Huh! Interesting to know that now.

We were left with one parent, Ann's Mother and dear Grandmother Pearl to all the children.

We had a full schedule in those four years. I worked out at the YMCA every day as it was near work. The boys became Eagle Scouts. The girls had private music lessons (Sue on flute and Becky on violin) plus orchestra, church and school choirs. There were lots of sports activities for the boys. The children all walked to their school, the furthest being a mile away. We had regular meals together and everyone had chores to do besides their studies. Ann had a part-time teaching position in a small rural school of 200 students in Rapidan. She taught music for three years and had nearly all the students singing with her at the piano. We celebrated holidays with both families.



You may be surprised to know that we didn't use our telephones for calling long distance, (12 miles) unless it was urgent.

In 1967, our family had a very big trip through the Great Lakes to New York and onto Montreal for the World's Fair Expo 67. We came back through Washington D.C. and Jim and I were lucky enough to bump into Fritz Mondale with Bobby Kennedy and Ed Muskie in the White House. Jim claimed he knew there was a reason I had insisted he change his odd-colored socks, and he wouldn't wash the hand that shook Bobby Kennedy's hand for ages.



In 1968 we hosted an AFS (American Field Service) student from Sweden named Martin Carlson. He was between Becky and David's age. His presence got us thinking about the possibility of living in a different country, just as he was having such an experience in the United States.

The other AFS student in Mankato that year was a girl from Brisbane in Australia named Trish Maddigan. The rest of this story can be found in our family's

recollections about how, why, and when in a book we compiled, called "Aussie Odyssey".

We had friends who had been teaching in Africa and they pushed hard on the idea that we not go to Africa, because of illness. We chose Australia because they spoke English, had a good climate and a good education system we thought.



It took nearly a year planning, corresponding with the Australian Consulate in New York, selling our material possessions at porch sales, packing some to take with us and informing my Board of Directors about this move. Some called it crazy and others called it courageous.

In September 1969, we left our families of origin and Minnesota and headed off for a big family adventure – migrating to Australia.

One of the people I worked with, Mrs. Winter, Jim's friend's mother, sent us off with this song to be sung to a famous Australian ditty:

- (1) Once a Billy Welshman, camped by a Crystal Lake,  
Under the shade of a cottonwood tree.  
And he sang as he grew and waited for his voice to change,  
"You'll come a-travelling, oh Annie, with me!"

#### CHORUS

"Traveling, oh Annie, traveling, oh Annie,  
You'll come a-traveling, oh Annie, with me!"  
And he sang as he grew and waited for his voice to change,  
"You'll come a-travelling, oh Annie, with me!"

- (2) Up then he took her to a hapless Minni place –  
Hamline, Macalester – they grabbed them with glee!  
And he sang to exhaustion as them moved to Austin town,  
"You'll come a-travelling, oh Annie, with me!" CHORUS

- (3) Up jumped our Welshman northward to the Saintly Clouds –  
Along came the little ones – one, two, three!  
Then the air in Arizona made him sing his gypsy song  
"You'll come a-travelling, oh Annie, with me!" CHORUS

- (4) "Oh, Bill" said Ann. "Let's settle down a little while."  
"We shouldn't take root in Phoenix," said he,  
And he sang as he packed for the northern trip to loway -  
"You'll come a-travelling, oh Annie, with me!" CHORUS

- (5) Five little Welshmen came along with Ann and Bill  
Northward they came from Cher-o-kee.  
And they all sang the tune that Daddy Bill had often sung –  
"You'll come a-travelling, oh Annie, with me!" CHORUS

(6) Up then they marched to settle down in Kato town.  
“Is this the place where we stay?” asked she.  
“No,” said our Welshman. Let us leave this billabong,  
You’ll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!”

CHORUS – II

Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda  
You’ll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.  
“No,” said our Welshman. Let us leave this billabong,  
You’ll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!”

(7) Seven jolly Welshmen packed up their tuckerbags.  
Sailed far away o’er the deep blue sea –  
And they laughed as they left us list-ning to the fading song  
You’ll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!”

Sydney Opera House under construction – September 19<sup>th</sup> 1969 as the *P & O Oriana* docked at Circular Quay, Sydney



## Chapter 12 – Adelaide and the Trip Home 1969 - 1970

I had a couple months of employment at the Parramatta mental hospital in Sydney while we stayed and we lived in a migrant hostel for mainly English migrants in the suburb of Burwood. I spent time checking out job leads. We had registered with the Australian Employment Service before leaving Mankato. With my Master's degree in Social Work, I was well-qualified.

A few months after our arrival, we tended to doubt our assessment of Australia before we left as a good English speaking country as the strine in New South Wales and Aussie were at times very baffling. We had arrived in the coldest spring for decades and left our coats at home, lured by picture of Bondi Beach. Ned and Jim were in boys school with very authoritarian ways and often seemed to provoke caning. Like all migrants, we had time to compare and contrast what was better at home and in the early days, Minnesota looked pretty good.

In mid-December, 1969 Ned saw an ad for a teaching position at the South Australian Institute of Technology. I made a few telephone in the extremely difficult public telephones which hardly ever worked and was encouraged to be interviewed, so Ann and I flew to Adelaide. We stayed with a generous couple, Ann and Tim Marshall, we had met on the *P & O Oriana*, the ship we had sailed to Australia on. Both were faculty members at the University of Adelaide.

I felt very fortunate that I was who they were looking for. Actually my future boss, Marie Mune, wanted someone who had some sociology background as well as mental health experience. We moved our family to Adelaide with our two cars, a Holden and a Simca, across the Hay Plains. I started work in early January 1970.

The staff found temporary housing for us and one entertained us for Christmas dinner which was unseasonably cold and we gagged on her fatty plum pudding with coins in it. Generally people were very helpful. We bought a beautiful big old house in the suburb of Urrbrae. We had high recommendations for Unley High School in that area which is the school of Australia's current and first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard. So Ned, Jim and Sue walked a mile or more in their school uniforms and learned how to cope with the Aussie system. They were advanced by a half year due to the school season. Becky and Dave started at Flinders University.

There are of course, so many things to remember and tell of as long a life as mine has turned out to be. We wrote a book as a family of the seven of us, called *Aussie Odyssey* where we all responded to a 13 question survey that Ann put together to make our chapters. This book is precious to us but lost in the mists of times for digital remastering, so ask your folks or grandparents if you are interested in this chapter of the family history.

I really loved living in Adelaide. From the start, I enjoyed living in the well-planned city. We had never had so many detailed maps available for getting around in a new place. The availability of music and dramatic performances were exciting to us, especially the famous Adelaide Festival of Arts, which brought major companies such as the Royal Shakespeare Company to South Australia that first March. I remember getting in on Hinge and Bracket, a wonderful British camp comedy team. We laughed til our sides split at the Old Kings Music Hall vaudeville tradition.

My work colleagues were determined that we should see more of the countryside while we were in South Australia. We went to the beautiful Flinders Ranges staying in a hotel in Parachilna. We went to the opal mining town of Andamooka on a remote dirt road as I got interested in opal jewellery and polishing. I had newly quit smoking and wanted something to do with my hands. Our Andamooka hosts were people who had come from Minnesota and were growing a thriving garden harvesting rain on their tin roof. We also went south to a sheep property owned by Marie Mune's sister, so we got a real sample of Outback Australia.

We were leftists in a non-leftist society. The War in Vietnam polarised a lot of people and we found ourselves for the first time, marching in a Moratorium with thousands of others to Adelaide's Parliament House. It was strange for us to be anti-government.

We certainly did enjoy many other things in Adelaide, including the wonderful Central Market, where cabbages were as big as bushels and local Italian and Greek growers kept us in beautiful fruit and vegetables at bargain prices. Sides of lamb hung at butcher shops, costing \$2. The now-famous Barossa winery area supplied flagons (about a gallon) of wine, again for \$2 for wonderful clarets.

It was a time of big change in our family life. Becky and David didn't stay at our family home for long. Dave worked his way up to Asia, then came back for a brief visit before embarking to Guatemala, then southern California. Becky became involved with other students at Flinders University. Ned and Jim worked in a local brick factory and did a lot of hitch-hiking around the country. Jim returned home from a hitch-hiking trip which he had attempted to get to Queensland but came back early. He came in the house, saying, "I had to pee." Sue was tutored in French, since a foreign language was a requirement and she had not had any previous training. I feel that the transition to Australia for Sue as she had to accept decisions that disrupted the flow of her schooling and friendships. She proved very adaptable and resourceful given such challenges.

Ann and I left Australia for financial security reasons. No matter what, the US paid social workers better than Australia at that time. Ann longed for the routine American way and the time there was less fulfilling for her than for me. The children left the nest, women were still oppressed in the sexist Australian culture before women's lib. I had enjoyed my working life, colleagues and students and much on offer in Adelaide, but in late 1971, we packed our suitcases and left the rest to a moving company to ship back to an unknown address. We embarked on a 7 month overland trip home. It was such a great opportunity to see more of the world.

We began this adventure in 1971, going to Indonesia, including Bali as the first leg of our long trip home from Australia, where we spent three weeks. We had sold our house and left Becky in charge of anything that had to be signed. She was living with Ned and Jim in a house in the city. Jim had taken a leaf out of my book and got a summer job as an occupational therapist assistant at Glenside Psychiatric Hospital. Becky had a summer job at the East End vegetable markets after her year at Flinders University. Suzanne had gone ahead to Sweden to stay with our AFS student, Martin Carlson's family. I think Dave was in Guatemala so our family were on four continents that first Christmas apart.

While in Australia we met an Indonesian man who had studied Geology in the US, then come back to his family in Indonesia, but because of the political situation he had to get out and went to Australia where we met him. He was eager that we meet his parents and brothers in Indonesia when we began our trip home. In a sense we were taken care of for the first three weeks we were out of Australia. It was great fun being with that beautiful family. The father was a beautiful older Buddhist man and his wife was Muslim. They were Bapa and Ipin.



We were invited to a circumcision of a 14 year-old boy and they kept saying, "Take pictures Bill." I had a heck of a time wanting to take pictures of this boy, who was much too old for this procedure. We had seen the young man earlier in the day with a look of terror on his face and weren't that keen to document the ceremony!

We were invited to a wedding because we had talked to some Indonesian boys as we were leaving to take a ferry to go to Indonesia. This 21 year-old gave us his card with a telephone number. We called him and his fiancée got on the phone and invited us to their wedding 30 miles from Denpasar in a village. They came and picked us up in a three-wheeled vehicle. Her father had studied Public Health in Michigan. He sat next to us and explained everything to us during the wedding ceremony. At the reception, they talked about birth control and giggled. It was really touching.

It was wonderful. Ann and I were the last people served on dinner plates, number 19 and 20. They ran out of plates at 20 and from then on everyone was served on a banana leaf.

We then went onto Malaysia and stayed with the physician parents of a social work student of mine, Morinda Kour. Again we were well taken care of. Then we went on to Thailand, then Hong Kong, New Delhi and Agra, where we saw the Taj Mahal. We tried everywhere to mix with the people. I had met a sociology teacher who invited us to her place in India. She served us an exotic meal ending with silver-covered desserts.

Our itinerary was to go to Tehran, Iran but there was the worst snow storm in 30 years. We almost landed, then the plane took off again. Finally we landed in Turkey but found a country under martial law. The airport was full of people who looked pretty scrungy. They took our passports away. We were scared. Then we had to fly back to Tehran because that is what our tickets said. We felt safe everywhere except Ann had an experience in Tehran where she felt a man was following her. She was quick-witted and found a way to get to safety but it was one time when we realised that not everyone had the same values we had.

We felt safe once we got to Vienna where we saw fat people for the first time in a long time! We felt like we were back home because we saw people eating chocolate. The Third World countries were much more about survival and healthy food if people had means. We went to an opera and a mass where parts of the Vienna Boys Choir were singing and the orchestra

playing. It was so nice! We then spent a little time in England before going on to Sweden to meet up with Sue, Martin and his parents. Suzanne had been there three months already.

Becky had written a letter to us and Sue read it to us in Swedish. Think how much she picked up in three months! Plus she learned how to weave. I thought she was fantastic. We were based in Sweden for 10 days and went on an overnight ferry to Finland.

All along this journey I had been doing a study of psychiatric hospitals to see if anybody had social workers and if they used anything like it, especially in working with families. I started in Adelaide at the Glenside Hospital and from then on I met wonderful people. The people I could talk with in Indonesia so wanted me to stay and work there because it had never occurred to them that the family may be part of a person's illness and potential help. This is what I had been doing in Mankato before we went to Australia. The existing situation in many countries was that a family would keep someone with schizophrenia at home until they couldn't stand it, then would totally reject the person as they didn't know what else to do.

I had devised a questionnaire based on five patients admitted before a certain date and had a series of questions about them. I was able to do this study in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, where the hospital I worked with was a University hospital and Hong Kong. I tried in Vienna but could not get the people who spoke English to work with me. They were so German. One of them asked me, "Do you believe in Freud?" and I said, "I thought he had interesting ideas but that was not my main interest in my thinking. I believe in behavioural therapy approach." I went to a psychiatric hospital in Wales and picked up some in Sweden. The Welsh ones tended to be like ours twenty years before.

I published an article on this experience in a national mental health journal but more importantly, the cross-cultural perspectives I gained greatly informed my teaching and life understanding.

## Chapter 13 – Tucson, Arizona 1972- 2011

I didn't have a job waiting for me when we came back from our three month trip crossing Asia and Europe from Australia. We landed in New York in February, 1972. We first connected with our friend Dr. Fanny from Cherokee and the Mental Health Institute who retired to New York City. She took us and Sue to the famed Russian Tea Room and told me I could always find work back in Cherokee. That was not on my agenda as we were thinking of our later years when we did not want to be shovelling snow and living in that cold environment. We stopped in Minnesota to visit family. Then I flew to Denver and Phoenix, later to San Diego and to see Dave at the University of Santa Cruz. Dave and I slept in his tepee a couple nights at the University Farm where he lived.

I was offered a job in Tucson at the Medical School at the University of Arizona and a day later a job with the Veterans Administration in San Diego. Since we had been so happy in Phoenix and remembered our friends in Tucson who thought Tucson was the best place they had lived in their frequent military moves it didn't take long to make the decision. I took the Arizona job and seldom regretted the decision (maybe only once in awhile when I had too much sun).

So the job came easily. The next task was finding a place to live. We were helped by a realtor who kept showing us houses in the northwest. He didn't listen. When we got rid of him we started driving around the area close to the Medical School. We found a sign on an attractive house covered with vines. It was one day before an Open House. Even though it was late afternoon we called the realtor to see if he could arrange for us to look inside. We loved what we saw, a three bedroom house, two baths, newly polished wood floors, a fireplace and room for our grand piano being shipped from Australia. We brought along a paper cut out of our concert grand piano, still in Adelaide, and spread it out to see if it would fit in the living room. Interesting but we did the same thing for the next and last house we bought.

We bought the house at 2335 East Seneca, just about four blocks north of the Arizona Inn with a beautiful view of the Catalina Mountains and lived in it for 13 years. It was an ideal location for us and was so convenient I walked to work some day and come to think of it, that happened with the kids having to walk to school from all our previous homes.



Sue was finishing her last year of high school and the boys were in and out as they worked on their future plans. It took two or three months for two large containers with our furniture from Adelaide to arrive. They had been in storage for four months while we were en route back to America.

We thought the family would be coming home more often than it turned out. We built a swimming pool that got good use. The Catlin neighbours enjoyed it too.

We turned our garage into an Amway storehouse and office for Ann after she finished her Master's Degree. There was lots of coming and goings. We had lots of patio space for outdoor parties.

I was hired in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Arizona. I had learned about the new team-approach to family medicine while in Australia. This was exciting to me. My title was Assistant Professor. I taught medical students and worked every day with Family Practice Residents. I helped them become more aware of their impact on patients. I also did some work in Community Medicine. I used my social work skills in working with patients, students and residents. One of the things I brought to the department was an early recognition of the challenges of aging. As a result I was appointed to all the aging committees at the University and some private agencies too. Some of the residents later became specialists in geriatric medicine. Two of the graduates of our program are currently our family doctors.

In 1979, I planned and was given a six month sabbatical which focused on geriatric curriculum to learn how British schools were teaching about aging. It was an ideal choice for me to help the Medical School by bringing this information back in a written report. Ann joined me in England after she assisted in the birth of Morgan Llewellyn, our first Australian grandchild, and stayed in Melbourne to help with Nellie who was born to Jill and James 11 days after Morgan.

Before this I had joined Ann in her master's research on long-married couples married 50 years or more by interviewing fifty men while she interviewed the women. We wrote papers and gave conference reports on Healthy Aging in the mid-1970's and later in many states and regions across the United States. Because the topic was new for social scientists and the boom in long marriages was not highly recognized, we were never turned down in our application for presentations. Sometimes it was in the family relations field. Otherwise it was related to gerontology or geriatrics. You can see more of our work at the end of this book.



We got to travel quite a bit at this time. I think there were over ten national, state or regional conferences where we participated, including in New York, Kentucky, Louisiana, Florida, Washington and California. I also worked as a consultant at Green Valley with social agencies in the field of aging.

Soon after moving to Tucson we heard from our son Ned who was still in Australia that Transcendental Meditation was growing in popularity and suggested we might find it useful. He had become a teacher. We have been faithful practitioners of that practice all these years and are sure it has helped us in many ways.

While we were living in this home, I began to think seriously about an early retirement at age 60. There was a lot of pressure to publish research which was not my preferred mode of working. I knew we were resourceful and could bring in some extra income. I worked half-time at a psychiatric hospital and Ann and I conducted workshops on Communication for Couples in many places. We had had special training in Salt Lake City and in North Carolina on enriching marriages with better understandings of communication with David and Vera Mace, creators of a large marriage enrichment program, ACME. Our marriage was enriched by these courses and by the people we met and taught, including in Sydney and Adelaide.

We had these dual interests of marriage and family and aging. Our descriptive research on "Couples Married 50 years or Longer in Tucson, Arizona" was the impetus that led us to people and agencies who were seeing more divorces in the 1970's.



We reported on this study at ten national, regional or state conferences on either Marriage and Family or Aging. Our emphasis was on positive aging in a time when other professionals were just beginning to recognize this whole field of gerontology and geriatric medicine.

Once when we were visiting in Australia, Ann and I did several programs on aging. At one seminar, there were fifteen older nuns who came, dressed in brown habits. We didn't know what to expect. We encouraged them to each draw a floor plan of the first home they remembered living in. To continue that exercise they shared their story with another nun. That was the beginning of a wonderful day of discovery for them. The reviews were so full of happiness and excitement at what they had learned. It was most rewarding for us. That kind of thank-you was often a joyous occasion for us.



Other part-time jobs I had were a stint at modelling, helping Ann with our Amway business, working as a Court Visitor for the Probate Court and helping a dear friend, Margaret Frances in her last fifteen years of life. She needed us to help her in her moves and to take her to appointments, keep in daily touch, write correspondence with and for her and generally watch over her, although not in our own home.

It was a time of change for us. We had originally joined a traditional Methodist church with a male dominated power structure and very old ideology. A good example was the choir's idea of celebrating two hundred years of the heroes (all male) of the Revolution in 1976 in song. Well, Ann had other ideas. She proposed that Betsy Ross be included and when they laughed at her that was the last straw.

We moved to St Francis Church to see whether we would be happy there. It was a smaller version of the current church. So-called "hippies" made up most of the congregation. Some came without shoes; informal dress was expected. People played guitars and danced and wrote poetry. Many had had a traditional church upbringing, either Protestant or Catholic but rebelled from the past and wanted to create new traditions.

We felt right at home with this group. Ann was going to the U of A, doing her Master's degree and was exposed to a lot of new thinking. What was attractive about the church was that it was very family oriented. We liked the informal atmosphere. Our kids were all out of the home so they lost out on this more liberal Protestant church except for their trips home and then they seemed to like coming to St. Francis with us. We took an active role in family activities and promoting family camps. In addition we both served in volunteer administrative roles.

At our St Francis in the Foothills United Methodist Church, I have a few solos that I sang each year. I am known for singing *Sweet Little Jesus Boy* on Christmas Eve and *He was Alone* or *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?* during Easter week. It is wonderful having Ann accompany me on the piano. It has been such a great partnership through all these years and I'm glad we have been able to sing our way through life.

After our first grandchildren were born in Australia we started making more trips to catch up with the family there. It was much easier to plan these trips after I finished up work. Once we had arranged to have six weeks of teaching social work in Adelaide. We even did baby sitting, once when Jill wanted to work at a school and needed someone to take Nellie and David to school and once for Becky and Richard when they wanted to attend and speak at a disability conference in Vancouver.

In 1983, we moved into our first newly-built home at 4478 E. Haven Lane. We have lived in this townhouse, which faces Mt. Lemmon, until this day (2011). We've lived in Tucson, Arizona longer than any other place. These have been happy years and it has worked out that we have lived here together. We are now in our sixty-fourth year of marriage.

Our last part-time jobs were as Court Visitors for the District Probate Court in Tucson. We worked separately and made recommendations to the court about establishing guardianship (or not). The Court appointed us to one or two cases each in most months and we did the interviewing and reporting.

We both have had special health challenges in the last decade or two. I had surgery for colon cancer and open-heart surgery. Ann has had three bouts of Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma with either chemotherapy or radiation therapy. New nuclear medicine treatment in 2010 has been a real boost and in 2011, scans show she is cancer free. There are real benefits to living long enough to get the benefits of medical research in your own lifetime.



## Chapter 14 — Recent Years

As I just reported, Ann and I used to be ‘ageing specialists’, travelling the country to give seminars on this topic. Well, it’s good to know that I like to practice what I preach, in spite of not becoming a minister. I really have achieved a somewhat august set of numbers – now 86 as I write this, and it does give an amazing perspective on the journey of life.

Looking back it has been a long ways from the days when I was a country boy. I had never expected my future life to be the same as my father’s life, but I didn’t know what it would be. There were times, such as when I was driving our car down a California freeway in heavy traffic when I reminded myself and others in the car that I was a country boy with big dreams for my life and this was just one expression of what happened. I have been around the world, visiting places I never dreamed I would see. I have crossed the Pacific Ocean many times in airplanes, once in a steamship. I have visited the Taj Mahal. I have driven through and camped with a tent in thirty five states in the United States with my family. I have attended a circumcision in Java, a wedding in Bali, and heard a boy’s choir in cathedral settings in Vienna and in England. Along the way we met warm, caring people everywhere.

So many riches! I feel very blessed! I am a country boy all grown up. I have lived much longer than I ever imagined, and was able to celebrate my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in Lake Crystal with all our relatives there on the weekend of the Welsh hymn singing festival, the Gymanfu Ganu. It was wonderful to be back in bright green Minnesota with our relatives, partying and singing with so many of our family.

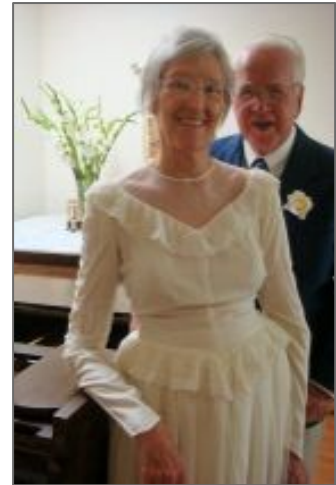


I have been thoroughly blessed with our five children and their spouses and our beautiful grandchildren. We feel very lucky to have our youngest daughter Suzanne living here in Tucson with her husband Tony. With family scattered over such a wide range, it is dear to have her so close.

Jim and Jill and Becky and Marty live in Adelaide, Dave and Janie in Santa Rosa, Ned and Judi in Truckee, and here in Tucson, Suzanne and Tony. Our dear grandchildren, Nellie and David,

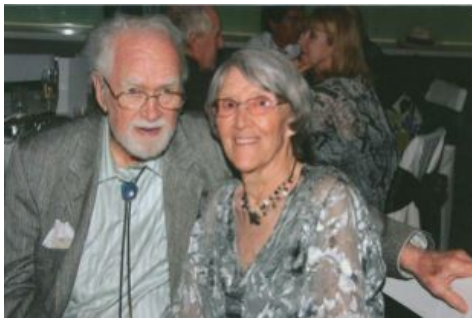
Ethan and Kelsey, Marshada and Keif, Morgan and Anna have been a joy to us over more than thirty years. It is hard to express how proud I am of each of them and how much I love them.

My wife of 64 years is still alive and kicking and these days has taken on the role of caring for me with my Parkinson's disease progressing. She is still the total delight of my life. We laughed at being able to fit into our old wedding clothes in preparation for celebrating our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with our family reunion hosted by Ned and Judi at their home in Truckee, California in June 2008.



It was wonderful to be together and to realise that even though we studied long marriages, we actually have lived one! Sixty years sounds like a long time, but in fact, it felt short. It flew by. I think the idea that we gave each other ultimate respect made our relationship sound and joyful. I wish that everyone, especially our descendants, could enjoy the closeness and intimacy that Ann and I have experienced. It is a great way to live. Living with a minimum of conflict seems to me to make each hour seem better.

In 2010, Becky re-married after losing Richard in 2004 and brought not only her fiancé Marty to Tucson but many other of their Australian family. We had a wonderful family celebration at our church and home, sharing the happiness of new love with them all.



This year, Ann and I were lucky enough to take to the skies again for two special events in Australia – Morgan's wedding to Sonya in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and visiting little Jack in Sydney. It was a big trip and how lucky we were healthy enough to make it. We had a wonderful time re-connecting with our memories of Adelaide and all our family there.

Now we are in the amazing state of being great-grandparents with Keif and Corin's Hailey Ann, our first great-granddaughter and Nellie and Karl's Jack, our first great grandson who we were able to see on our recent 19<sup>th</sup> trip to Australia. And as I write this, Sonya and Morgan are expecting their first child and David and Polly just got back from Borneo where they married.

There's an old saying, "You can take the man out of the country but you can't take the country out of the man." The longer I live, the more I am in touch with my memories of my childhood farm days and although I did not want to be a farmer as an adult, it certainly was a wonderful place to spend a childhood. We played, we worked, we did things together as a family and I had a lot of freedom of my imagination to roam around free.

I wish all of these ingredients to the future generations – and send love to you dear ones I can only imagine today. You come from good stock – real people with real values and in me, you get an ancestor with more than a little sense of adventure and fun. May this stand you in good stead for the adventures of your lives!

With all love Bill, Lee, Dad, Taid & Grandpa