



*Fabian's
Story*



Fabian's Story

By Fabian S. Mack



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Irene and I in a Denver Park in 1946.

Dedication

To Irene, my wife and the mother of our children.

With the contribution and participation of the children in Irene's life, I wish to dedicate these writings to her for all her devotion to our family and the rearing of thirteen successful citizens of this great country of ours.

Foreword

We really do have a remarkable family. But then, we have remarkable parents. We hated that we lost mom so early - when she was really, truly just coming into her own. But as I think back on her announcement of her illness, and the ensuing months of her life, I really believe *she* believed that she had fulfilled her purpose and completed her journey on this earth as it was meant to be. There was so much more that she probably could have done, - I would liked to have done - but she was satisfied with her accomplishments as they were. She was an incredible seamstress with fashion savvy. She restored antiques beautifully. She decorated with a flair. She was a superb cook. A true artist in many ways. An assertive and successful businesswoman. But mostly, she was a mom - a drill sergeant kind of mom. To our friends, she was "the colonel." Daily activities were not so much "scheduled" as "choreographed". We were not so much "raised" as we were "directed". Her legacy on this earth was her thirteen children. She was proud of having us - of our birthing, our rearing and our ultimate successes. I think she truly saw us as her life's work. I am proud to be one of those thirteen and proud to know that her blood flows strong in me and that some of her talents rubbed off on me - as they did with my siblings. Until the end, she remained beautiful and strong. We miss her. We wish we knew as much about her life as we have the privilege of knowing about our dad's life through this book.

We've been fortunate to have our dad for many more years. We're lucky he has maintained his health well into years beyond his retirement. His retirement is a gift to us - the gift that gave him the time to reflect and record the remarkable journey his life represents, including our mom and all us kids. Our family was not an affectionate one. Although I remember climbing on my dad's knee and his cuddling with us, I don't remember many "I love you"s as we grew up. We had a regimented and disciplined household. We worked more than we played. It was natural that we grew up with a strong work ethic and fiercely independent personalities. Although Dad left most of the kid-rearing to Mom, his influence rests on us all. Dad worked hard for us. His legacy is how well he provided for us. I have thought many times in retrospect, how fortunate we were as children. It's a wonder dad was able to spend any time with any of us individually, and still provide the things he did. We had two homes, went to private school, had wonderful Christmases and birthdays, regular family picnics and tons of great memories. All those things - magnified by the sheer volume of the family we were - made us blessed indeed.

As adults, we have been the beneficiaries of Dad's constant support. Despite his frugality, he has never denied any of us financial support when we've truly needed it. Every single one of us has a ledger with dad; some of the kids have paid off and borrowed again and others just keep growing interest. One of his greatest gifts to us is the financial gift he made that enabled us to finish the Black Butte home. And on top of that gift, his willingness to buy in as a partner when we needed one. His financial assistance has been more than money - it has been the glue that has provided a means of keeping our family together. Our Black Butte home is the central headquarters of this family - the magnet that exists to bring us together and keep us together; the haven in which the gran children have the opportunity to bond and sustain the family ties. Without Dad's financial and physical support of our objective with the Black Butte House, we wouldn't see and share and enjoy each other and each other's families nearly as much as we do now.

As much as he has done for us, Dad isn't easy. He's opinionated, critical, blunt, sometimes arrogant, usually too practical, very self-disciplined and highly expectant of the same thing in others. Sometimes you just can't help but feel a little inadequate in his presence. It's really hard to buy greeting cards for him that say just the right thing because he's not all those warm and fuzzy things that most greeting cards address. His own success is the result of strong genes, good family, hard work, high intelligence, true grit and determination. He believes that we each have those same ingredients - enviable blending of his own genes with those of an unquestionably fine and talented woman. He has every right to expect each of us to be all that we can be and certainly is justified in being proud of his life. I am proud of him and proud to be his daughter. It is with pleasure that I assist him in recording his life for his children and the children of generations to come.

Lovingly,
Janice



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Preface

As one grows old, the tendency to reflect back on life becomes almost a daily habit. What were occasional glimpses at the past twenty years ago, have become long musings as the days of retirement give me the luxury of more time to think. I have been able to reflect for long hours on the many incidents that progressed into what became my life. At the same time, I have become acutely aware that I am blessed to even remember them all at this stage. Yes, I am one of the fortunate ones – to still have my full faculties after more than 80 years on this earth. As I do, it has become an intense desire to put my memories in writing while I am still able to do so.



Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge my daughter, Janice, whose untiring effort and encouragement enabled me to put my memories in writing. With her writing skills, she edited my handwritten script into interesting reading with her vision, she brought my words to life through the family photographs she chose and placed. I could not have accomplished this and brought this book to form without her devoted effort and assistance. For this, I am grateful.

I also wish to thank my father, Anton, who was so supportive in my desire to finish high school, which in turn, made me eligible for service in the Air Force as a flight crew member. Through my association with the elite members of the Air Force and the diversity of my comrades, I experienced dimensions in life I would never have experienced in the isolated upbringing and rural setting of our farm in North Dakota. These experiences, in turn, played a large part of shaping my later life and my determination to succeed as a professional and as a parent.

I also wish to thank all my children who contributed their own memories and perspective to this book. Their contributions punctuate my story.





The Macks

I struggled with where to begin. My earliest memories date back to when I was about six. But to start then would be ignoring what was the true foundation of my life - my family heritage and history as German-Russian immigrants to North Dakota. My German-Russian grandparents emigrated from southern Russia to America in the year 1901. It is there I will begin.

To understand the designation of "German-Russians", it is helpful to know some Eastern European history of the 18th century. In the mid 1700's, Russia and Turkey were at war. The result was a Russian victory through which Russia acquired vast lands to the south of Russia that were formerly controlled by the Turkish Empire. This vast area of agricultural land was mostly uninhabited.

Around this time, the ruler of Russia married a German princess named Catherine. Eventually, the Russian ruler died leaving Catherine as the reigning authority. Catherine later became known as "Catherine The Great". During Catherine's reign, the Napoleonic wars in central Europe occurred. These conflicts greatly affected Germans and their lands. Because of great destruction, mandatory military service and relocation, many German families were displaced and homeless. Coincidentally, Russia desperately needed people to settle the vast, newly-acquired lands in south Russia.



The vast agricultured areas of Southern Russia were offered to German immigrants if they would come and work the land.



It was Catherine The Great who issued a manifesto to her people in Germany which included an invitation to come to Russia. She promised them free land, exemption from military service, religious freedom and free transportation to their destination in Russia. Thousands of German families took advantage of this offer and up until World War II, the German population in Russia numbered in the millions.

Many German families were traditionally large, and as their population increased over several generations, land became scarce. Many landless families began to look at other areas to settle. Some families went east to Asian Russia, but most looked to the opportunities in America where the first Homestead Act (free land) went into effect in 1862. A tremendous immigration to America from Russia began in 1875 and lasted until 1915. Thousands of German-Russians came to America and settled on land in the central and northern plains.

My grandparents, George and Margaret Mack, both in their mid 30's, arrived in America in 1901 with four children – John, Anton, Laura and Katie. My father was the second oldest at age 6. Four more children – Lena, George, Frank and Ambrose – were born in North Dakota. They were assigned 160 acres of land near what is now Karlsruhe, North Dakota. Karlsruhe is located in the center of the state of North Dakota in McHenry County. (see map). They were one of the first three families in a wide area. (The farm was designated as a "Century Farm" in the year 2001; there are but a few of that age left in the area.) The original homestead is now about to pass on to the 4th generation, sons of Tony and Maggie Mack. Tony was the 6th of the seven children in my family.

Catherine The Great

Catherine the Great (1729-1796) was an important person in Russian history. She was born in the old German Kingdom called Prussia, where her father was a prince. At the age of 16, she married Russia's Grand Duke Peter. He became Emperor (or Czar) of Russia in 1762, but



was overthrown and killed within a few months. Catherine was then declared empress, and ruled the country until her death.

During her 34-year reign, Catherine expanded Russia's territory, economy and culture. Through diplomacy and war she added about 300,000 square miles to her empire. She encouraged the development of art, business, education and science. She also tried to modernize Russia's political and legal systems.

In 1773 there was a mass rebellion in Russia. Although it lasted only a short time, afterwards Catherine became stricter, passing laws that made life hard for many poor people. As a result, today Catherine is remembered as someone who did great good for her country, but also added to some of its most serious problems.



My grandfather was a very ambitious man. Within about 10 years, he was one of the largest landholders in the area. As more immigrants settled in the area the population developed steadily and by 1907, the first one-room school houses were built around the state. My dad entered the 1st grade at age 12; three of his younger siblings entered the same grade at the same time. The first priority - before a child advanced to the 3 "R's" - was to learn the English language. I believe my father was both intimidated by this task and embarrassed at learning at the same level as younger kids. After several months he quit and never did learn to read. Although he was quite adept with numbers, he remained essentially illiterate the remainder of his life.

North Dakota in the Early 1900's

Around 1850, a group of pioneers started the first permanent farming community in what is now North Dakota. In 1861, the Dakota Territory was officially established. It included all of present-day North and South Dakota, plus parts of Montana and Wyoming. However, by 1870, only a few thousand whites lived there. Then, over the next 20 years, native tribes were subdued, railroads were built and new people began pouring in. In the early 1900s, North Dakota was a young, fast-growing state.

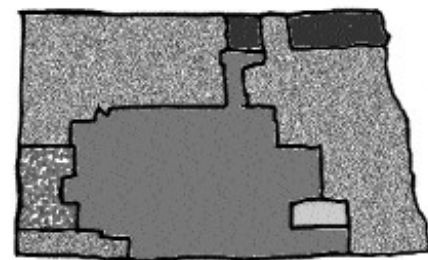
The territory had rich land for farming and ranching. Much was available for homesteading, and railroad companies also sold property at low prices. At first, settlers came mostly from big cities in the eastern U.S., but in the 1880s, large numbers started arriving from Europe.

In 1889, North Dakota became a state and began developing rapidly. At the time it had a population of about 190,000 - less than three people per square mile. By 1900, that climbed to 320,000. Another 250,000 came during the next decade, and North Dakota emerged as one of the nation's leading agriculture and livestock producers.



Karlsruhe is in McHenry County, North Dakota.

My grandfather died in September of 1922. He was only 58. A few months later - in February of 1923 - my grandmother died, also at 58. I had just been born in March of 1922, so, consequently, I don't remember either. My parents, Anton and Katherine Mack, had married in 1917 and had rented a farm nearby. After my grandfather's death, my dad - being one of the oldest boys took over the family farm and that is where I lived until I enlisted in the Air Force in 1942. Our family eventually grew to include Wendell, Barbara, myself, Lawrence, Margaret (Peggy), Anton (Tony) and Daniel.

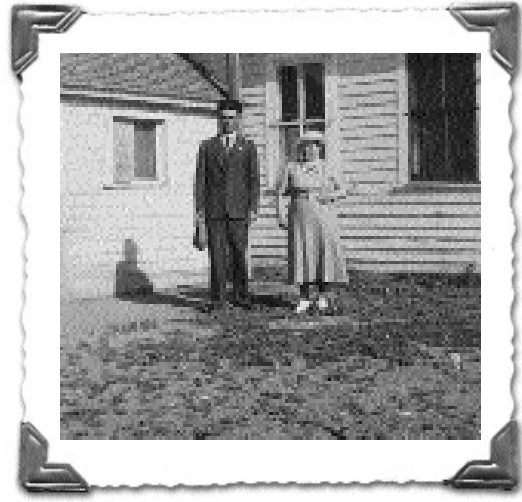


Austrian Canadian German Germans from Russia Norweigen

Demographics of settlers in early North Dakota.



As a youngster, I attended parochial school about five miles away in Karlsruhe through grade 6. For 7th and 8th grade I went to a one-room country school. This was during the height of the depression and several years of drought. The school district had no money for buses, so schools serving the rural county were opened in the areas where an appropriate number of families were within walking distance. For several years, we had to walk 1-3/4 miles to get to country school. Other kids walked equally as far. Naturally, no P.E. classes were needed!



My parents, Anton and Katherine Mack in 1940 in front of original home built in 1903.

Other Notable Events of 1922

- * *Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, died. Charles M. Schulz, who created the "Peanuts" comic strip, was born. The 3,000-year-old tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamen was unearthed in Egypt.*
- * *The Soviet Union was officially founded. Mussolini and the Fascists seized power in Italy. Britain took control of the land that later became Israel, to govern it on behalf of its Arab and Jewish inhabitants.*
- * *The first radio stations in many states began broadcasting, and James Doolittle became the first person to fly across the United States in less than a day.*
- * *Karate was publicly introduced to Japan. In the U.S., water skiing was invented and the National Football League was organized.*
- * *Insulin was discovered. The Nobel Prize for Physics went to the scientist who developed the modern model of the atom. The mathematical equations that provided a basis for the Big Bang Theory were solved.*

After completing the 8th grade, I insisted on attending high school (although it was not considered necessary back in those days). Attending High School meant I had to find a way to get back and forth from Karlsruhe, so my dad allocated a team of horses for me to use. I had to transport myself to high school and also drop off and pick up four younger siblings at the parochial school. The care of the horses - and the rubber-tired trailer and open sled for snowy times - was my responsibility.

Although proud to have it, I didn't think my 8th Grade Diploma should be the only education diploma I ever received.



After my sophomore year, my parents told me I had to quit school. We could not afford the \$32.00 for high school tuition and, besides, I was needed on the farm. This did not sit well with me. I was embarrassed to be confined to the farm so I joined the Civilian Conservation Corps. (C.C.C.). Our pay was \$30.00 a month, of which we got to keep \$8.00 and the balance was sent home to our families.



The Civilian Conservation Corps. camp at which I was stationed.



I finally graduated from my gateway to a much bigger world.

A year after I joined the C.C.C. (1937), the 7-year drought ended and we had a fairly good crop of wheat. The family needed my help, so - on condition I could return back to high school - I went home and helped with harvest. Four years later, I graduated with the class of 1941. In my graduating class there were eleven seniors, the largest class up until then at Karlsruhe High. The following year my brother, Wendell, was drafted into the army, leaving me to do most of the farming.



We had a new rubber-tired tractor with lights. I worked in the fields from early morning until near midnight, weather permitting. After all the crops were in (late October), I went to Bismarck and worked at Montgomery Wards. I had enlisted in the aviation cadet program the previous May and was waiting "on reserve" to be called for active duty. I really didn't want to stay at home then so a retail job in the hardware department at Montgomery Wards served me well until my orders came through. In late November, 1941, I received my orders to report to San Antonio, TX by December 8th. The time I eventually spent in the service is a highlight of my life - with both highs and lows in emotions - along with fear, frustration, relief and pride.



Gunner's Wings



Early Days

I am fortunate to possess a reasonably good memory and to remember many important incidents since the age of 6. One of my first clear memories was in the year 1928. Dad had had an outstanding crop of wheat and decided to purchase a threshing rig and tractor. Equipment like this was scarce in the area and beyond the means of most farmers. Many families had to depend on someone else who owned the equipment to do their threshing. This dependence made things very uncertain as it was often late fall by the time equipment owners finished with their own land and by that time inclement weather - like early snow - would often set in.

I remember so clearly when the newly-purchased equipment was delivered to the farm in mid September. The machine was bright aluminum with red trim. The tractor was black with red wheels. Coming into our sandy yard, it had to make a short turn-around. The heavy tractor dug deep into the soft sand and left deep ruts in the middle of the yard. To this day it is vivid in my memory.

Later that fall after a bountiful crop was threshed, my folks were feeling pretty "flush". We had been driving a Model T Ford for many years. One day, Mom and Dad took a trip to Minot, which was about 45 miles away, and left us kids at home. Toward dusk that evening, we were awaiting their return when, down the road, we saw a big blue sedan car approaching. Into the yard they drove with a brand new 4-door Pontiac! I can still visualize it today. Dad told us later it cost almost \$500.00.



*Threshing with the unit bought in 1928.
Wendell & I are on the bundle wagon
feeding the thresher*



Life on the farm was extremely hard most of the time. In 1929, North Dakota was hit hard by both The Depression and drought. My dad lost several hundred dollars when the banks closed. Our crops were poor or non-existent for eight consecutive years, until 1937.

During this time, many families were hard-pressed for food. Two nearby families had sixteen and seventeen children respectively, and had a terrible time trying to find enough food for them. Although there was welfare called "relief", only the most destitute would apply. Most people - like my parents - were too proud and refused "handouts". One fall my dad bought potatoes, flour, and chicken feed on "credit". Then he traveled five miles daily during the winter months with a wagon and a team of horses hauling gravel for a road project until the commodities were paid for.

We were fortunate that a small creek ran through some of our property. The water enabled us to produce some hay, which, in turn, enabled us to keep some livestock - mostly milk cows. The cream we produced was the key to sustaining a small amount of cash flow year around. Our average herd of milk cows was 30 to 35. They all had to be milked twice a day, including Sundays. During the school year, we kids had to be up early and - with a little help from Mom and Dad - had to milk all the cows before we got ready for school. We were expected to help from the first grade on. Mom would select the easy milkers for the younger kids who started with two or three cows per day. As you gained muscle in hands and arms, you graduated up the ladder until you could milk six or more.

Producing cream and generating cash flow was the number one priority during those years. My dad rented some lower ground nearby for summer pasture. It was important to keep the cows well-nourished with fresh grass. The property was unfenced and bordered neighbors' grain fields on two sides. It was my responsibility to keep the cows off

The Depression and Drought Years

In the 1930s the U.S. faced economic and environmental crisis. The Great Depression had begun in 1929, and it was both the worst and longest economic collapse in modern history. The stock market crashed. Many banks and businesses went broke. Millions of people across the country lost jobs, homes and hope.

Around the same time, severe drought hit the nation's midsection. Combined with old farming and ranching practices that left the soil vulnerable to wind erosion, the drought damaged or ruined land from Canada to Mexico. This put even more people out of work, and on some days sand blown from Kansas darkened the sky over New York City.

The dual crisis eventually passed as a result of nature's cycles and human enterprise. By the late 1930s rainfall returned to normal. Economic recovery also began through government-backed efforts like the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration. The depression and drought years had lasting effects, however. Out of them came important programs like Social Security and nationwide soil conservation. Their hardships also influenced the attitudes of everyone who



the adjacent fields from early morning until 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon when I could bring them home for milking. My job as a herder lasted for five years and for this, there was definite consolation: I didn't have to go to Mass or work in the fields.

As a kid, I was a great shot with a sling shot and could hunt all types of birds and varmints if I packed enough pebbles. Small pebbles suitable for the sling shot were not available where I herded the cattle but we had access to a small patch of gravel near our home. Consequently, I had to fill all my pockets with a day's supply before I left home. Along the creek were squirrels, birds and all types of wild life for game. It was a great way to spend the lonely hours by myself.



Tony, Larry & Fabian feeding heifer calves.

Some years previous to the Depression, my dad had bought two colts for additional workhorses. One of the colts grew to be a tall, lanky horse. To this day, I have not figured out why my dad named him "Shorty". Shorty was not great for fieldwork, but he was the fastest horse around. He reminded me of today's quarter horses. I never lost a race in the neighborhood as long as we had Shorty. On the other hand, Shorty had a major drawback: he was so tall that if I accidentally slipped off him, I could not get back on unless I walked him like a fence or dirt bank and used the height to get back on. Consequently, once I got on, I would stay on him for 6 to 7 hours at a time.

I was very envious of a neighbor who had a saddle. Although I had begged my parents for many years for one, they didn't think it was important that I have one. My consolation in not having one came only from the thought that, although my neighbor had a great saddle, he had a lousy horse. Shorty was the better by far.



Shorty wasn't great for field work but he was the fastest horses around.

Throughout my high school years, Shorty was the only means of transportation to attend any after-school activities such as games etc. My parents – of the opinion that extra curricular activities were not part of getting an education – allowed me to attend as long as I provided my own transportation. My mother would say, "Shorty is in the barn and since we have to feed him anyway, you might as well make use of him." Shorty would make the five miles to town in 20 minutes. Many times – on moonless nights – I would have no idea of the route back home. I would just give Shorty loose reign and about a half hour later, he would stop in front of the barn at home. It was amazing.



In town, we rented a barn in which we kept the "go-to-school" horses during schooltime. One night when I had ridden Shorty in for a high school basketball game, I discovered that the landlord had locked the door, so I tied up Shorty to the fence near the barn. When I went to pick him up to go back home, he was gone. The trains running nearby – or some other racket – may have spooked him. It was a long five-mile walk home in the snow! When I finally reached home that night, he was standing in front of the barn waiting to be let in. I have so many good memories of Shorty and still feel a tremendous affection towards him!

My father loved horses and we had the best around – up to a total of 22 at one point. Every year in the Spring, most would foal. As the horse herd increased, Dad would scour the local auction sales, looking for used harnesses. For our most-used horses – what he called our "best" ones – he would order fancy new harnesses from Sears. Every year after spring work, we kids would have to oil all the harnesses. We loved the aroma of the oil, but the job was messy and lasted for days.

In the winter months, Dad would haul grain to town in a double sled and bring back coal and other supplies on the return trip. The people of Karlsruhe always enjoyed Mr. Mack going down Main Street with his high-spirited teams and sled.

Commodity prices were extremely low in 1934. I remember one time when my brother and I helped Dad load a grain wagon with bushels of rye one Saturday morning in late fall. He took the grain to town to trade for the year's supply of flour. He returned with only eight 100-lb. sacks of flour and a 50 pound sack of salt. The 90 bushels of rye only sold for twenty-five cents per bushel and only just paid for the flour and salt.

Earlier that fall, we wanted to sell a few steers – as did other farmers. We had 12 head to offer which my brother and I - with two horses - drove to the local stockyard. The government offered \$25.00 a head for yearlings and up. They also offered any family in the area one head to slaughter for their use at no charge. There was no market and no buyers. The best-fed were chosen at no charge, but many head were left over. There was nothing to do but destroy the remaining animals.



Typical horse-drawn sled, similar to that used by my father to haul grain and supplies.



Word went out for volunteers to furnish scrapers and teams of horses to dig slip trenches. We furnished one four-horse scraper. I handled the team and Wendell the scraper. Along with other farmers, in one day we dug a huge trench. Several men came with shotguns and killed all the remaining cattle, dragged them into the pit and we covered them up. It was a shame, but the cost to keep the cattle was more than anyone could afford.

Fortunately, there was always a demand for good work horses – even during the drought years. My dad would sell any horses that had faults – in singles or in pairs. He made several barter trades which involved me. We were in need of another good hay mower and we had a nice gelding that hadn't been properly castrated. We had to keep him tied up because he would pester the mares to no end. When an equipment dealer came to the farm one day, Dad traded the horse and \$50.00 for a new hay mower on the condition that we deliver the horse to Balfor which was 13 miles away. The dealer agreed to bring the rider back to the farm in a truck along with the mower.

Since I was the best horseman, I had to ride the gelding to its destination. There were many farms along the route and they all had horses. The gelding was almost uncontrollable; he had to stop by all horses and sniff them. Fortunately, none were in heat and after some harrowing incidents (I remember crying several times and being scared to death that he would throw me and run away), I finally reached the destination with tremendous relief.

After harvest in 1940, we had several thousand bushels of wheat stored and my dad was itching for a new rubber-tired tractor. He ended up making a trade with a dealer up in Verendry – 9 miles away. Dad traded the old tractor, 4 horses and 1000 bushels of wheat. First, Wendell and I hauled all the wheat to Verendry. Then we took the tractor and horses. Wendell got to drive the old tractor and I had to ride one horse and trail the other three. The dealer drove the new tractor back to our farm. What a joy that new, bright, yellow machine was, with an electric starter and lights in front and back and 25 mph road gear so we would

The Tractor Revolution

Around 1900, the tractor started a revolution in agriculture. For centuries, farmland had been worked with plows pulled by animals or people. But in the 1890s, automated pulling - or traction - machines began to appear on U.S. farms.

The first tractors were powered by steam engines and looked like miniature versions of old-fashioned train locomotives with big metal wheels. These were slow, heavy, hard to drive and expensive, so only a few large farms used them. In the 1920s, gasoline-powered models became available, and they operated more like automobiles. Mass production made tractors more affordable and soon after 1930, the development of rubber tires made them even more versatile - as well as more comfortable to ride for many hours at a time.

Over the years, tractors became multi-purpose implements with engines modified to drive power shafts and operate a variety of farm equipment. However, plow-pulling remained one of their primary jobs. Ultimately, tractors did this so well that they enabled fewer people to work more land more effectively, helping to make America the world's top agricultural producer.



drive home from the field for lunch. With the advent of this type of machine, we moved away from our dependence on "horse" power and farming became more pleasure than drudgery with far fewer hours spent in the field.

Back in the fall of 1939, Dad had bought the buildings on an abandoned farm five miles away. For \$500.00, we got a 2-bedroom house, a large barn and a granary. We kids completely disassembled all the buildings and set out to haul the lumber home. We loaded a two bedroom house onto four wagons. On the way to our farm, someone from town stopped us on the road and offered Dad \$600.00 if he would deliver it into Karlsruhe which was 2 miles away. We took the deal and set out for Karlsruhe. The remaining lumber from the other buildings was taken home. With the salvaged lumber we were able to build a large granary and a double car garage. We painted them all white and they had red shingles and trim.



Our new rubber-tired tractor in 1940.



Our new house and granary in 1941.

By the fall of 1941, Dad had enough cash to build a new two-story house on the farm, complete with running water and our own electricity. The electricity was generated from a 32-volt system and charged by wind power. Ours was only the second home in the Karlsruhe area equipped with wind power. Our cousins, the Blacks – 3 miles away – had built the first system one year earlier. What a joy when we moved in to our new home just before Christmas in 1941! How fortunate we were to have finished it just before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor which occurred December 7th because, at that point, all building materials were restricted or not available.



Dad had somewhat put me in charge of the complete project of building the house. Once he had made arrangements for all the materials we needed, it was up to me to get them all to the building site, including the rocks and gravel for the basement. To get power to the cement mixer, I took the motor out of a discarded Model T pickup, overhauled it and mounted it on a trailer. It did a great job. Later, the motor was ideal to power the fanning mill, grain blower or whatever other equipment needed light pulley power. Dad was very proud of me and what I could accomplish with all my innovations.



Our 1941 Studebaker pickup. To the left of the pickup is my Model-T Fort engine and cement mixer. Here, we were dismantling the old house.

The Attack on Pearl Harbor

At the beginning of December 1941, war was all around, but it had not yet come to America. For a decade, China had been fighting military aggression by Japan. World War II officially began in 1939 with the German invasion of Poland. The next year, Japan joined Italy and Germany in an alliance, forming the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.

To obtain oil and other natural resources, Japan invaded Southeast Asia in 1940. The U.S. responded by stopping key exports and freezing Japanese assets. After that, Japan expected the U.S. to declare war - but not to fight hard enough to win. However, there was still fear of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, based at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japanese airplanes struck Pearl Harbor and nearby military bases. In less than two hours they sank or crippled 8 battleships and 13 other naval vessels. They also destroyed almost 200 American aircraft, and killed or wounded about 3,000 American naval and military personnel.

The U.S. declared war on Japan the following day and Japan's allies declared war on the U.S. soon after. But while the Axis powers considered Pearl Harbor a victory, it assured their defeat by bringing America into World War II determined to fight to the end.

For the harvest of 1940, my dad had bought a new, 1941, 1/2 ton Studebaker pickup. I used this rig to haul all the materials for the new home, including the furniture. In my accounting, the total cost of the house – including all materials and labor – was \$5,200.00. At that time, wages for carpenters, plasterers, bricklayers, electricians etc. were \$1.25 hour. Sheetrock was not available, nor were insulated windows. The walls and ceilings, however, were completely insulated and we added storm windows all around. We electric lights in all the buildings – which were a godsend – but electricity



had to be used frugally. Although we really enjoyed having the electric lights because daylight "up north" in the winter was short – it was necessary to have a windmill to generate enough power to use them. We also had lots of laundry, but Mom could only iron on windy days when the wind charger would produce maximum current without drawing the batteries. There were no 32-volt refrigerators available then, so that wasn't among our "luxuries". It was almost five years after WW II – sometime around 1948 – that electric power finally came to rural areas of North Dakota.

Windmills, Water and Light

Some historians credit the windmill with making it possible to settle the American Great Plains. What's certain is that, during the late 1800s and early 1900s, farmers and ranchers throughout the region used windmills to pump life-sustaining water from underground sources. In the 1930s, desire for the modern conveniences of electric lights and appliances also led to development of windmill-powered battery-charging systems. At one time, these wind turbines - or "wind chargers" as they were popularly known - supplied electricity to many rural communities.

After power lines spanned the country, interest in wind energy faded for a few decades. But in the 1970s, concern about long-term oil supplies spurred new efforts to harness wind as an alternative power source. The first utility-scale wind turbine generators were installed in the early 1980s. Wind now produces about 6 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity in this country each year, and it's likely to provide a growing portion of our energy supply in the future. Scientists also say that out of all 50 states, North Dakota has the greatest wind power potential.



The windmill was necessary for pumping and generating our power prior to the arrival of powerlines.

In 1929, a rural telephone system had been in place for local calls, but a severe windstorm sometime in the mid '30's had blown down many of the lines and it had been too expensive to repair. One consolation of the lack of phones was that it minimized all the neighbor's gossip. Eventually, Dad had taken the phone box off the wall. I found the old phone box and used it to make a telegraph system. I strung a wire out to the barn and my brother and I would send coded messages back and forth using a telegraph key. The only expense was that we had to buy new dry cells occasionally for power. I also learned to make electric motors using mom's old thread spools. I would coil copper wire around them and connect them to a 6-volt battery. To this day, I don't know where I got all my ideas, but they worked!

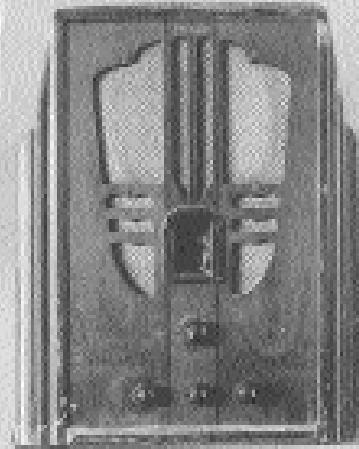


A very exciting acquisition to our household was our first table – model Philco radio with battery charger, which we got in the winter of 1935. What a great source of entertainment during the long winter months! Besides all the wonderful programs, it put us in touch with life outside our little farm area. That same winter we got the radio, the Dionne quintuplets were born near Winnipeg, Canada. Since Winnipeg was one of our favorite stations, and since the quints were local celebrities of sorts, we were able to follow their developments for several years. It was on this very radio that we heard the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor Sunday afternoon, December 7th, 1941.

The Golden Age of Radio

In 1896, successful transmission of a radio signal for about one mile marked the beginning of a new era. By 1910, ships were regularly using radio communication and amateur radio operators across America were entertaining each other. During World War I, nonmilitary broadcasting was banned. But afterwards, radio boomed. The first commercial-owned radio station opened in 1920. Within two years, there were almost 400, and 60,000 U.S. households had radio receivers.

Radio's Golden Age came in the 1930s and 40s. By 1934, radios were important sources of entertainment for 20 million homes, and families gathered every night to listen to favorite programs. One comedy show had up to 40 million listeners five times a week. (About 43 million people watched the Super Bowl in 2002 - and the population was more than twice as large as in the 1930s.)



Radios also brought news. This included ominous accounts of bombs falling on London in 1940, and then the shocking announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Later came more hopeful reports of Allied successes, and finally, glad tidings of victory. Through it all, Americans listened - and prayed - together, united by the power of communication.

As long as I could not go to high school, enlisting in the C.C.C. at age 17 was a great way to get away from the farm. After working so hard for so many years on the farm, life in the C.C.C. was a snap – 8 – hour days, good food, recreation rooms, pool and ping-pong, weekends off, a bed to myself (I had never slept alone) and showers. The C.C.C. work crews were managed by a civilian superintendent and a foreman. There were also two army officers assigned whose role was control and discipline. There was a chaplain and, of course, kitchen crews for the mess halls. The food – which was served family style to tables of ten by waiters – was excellent. Education classes were available during evening hours. I studied bookkeeping and typing.



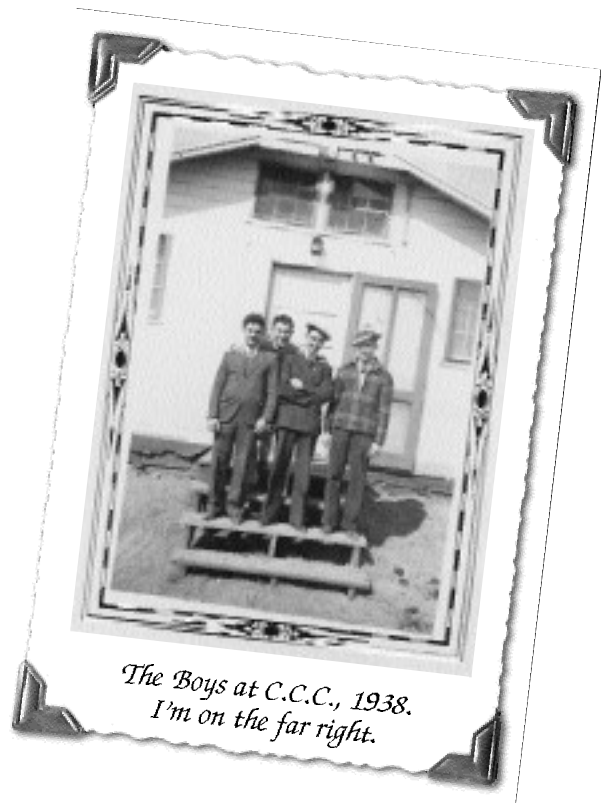
Our camp consisted of about 300 men from ages 16 to 30. About half were from regional farms and communities and the remainder were from eastern cities. In our camp, the Easterners were mostly from Chicago. We were at a camp north of Minot on a wildlife refuge on the Souris River, which extended all the way up to the Canadian border. My job – similar to many other farm kids – was as a truck driver and heavy equipment operator. Half the camp was involved in construction - building roads and bridges - while the other half was concerned with providing for the wild life - mostly ducks and geese.



Reo Dump Truck

The camp had many dump trucks – mostly Chevy's and Dodge's. We also had a few Reo's which had twice the capacity of the others. My driving skills must have been pretty good because I quickly got moved up to a Reo truck which was about as much as a 140-pound kid could handle. Aside from homesickness, life in camp was good. My morning shift from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. left time for pool and other recreation. The fellows from the East were a different lot and difficult at times. We country boys heard language and stories quite foreign to us!

Fistfights in the C.C.C. Camp were common. Some of the mouthy city kids would badger and annoy local kids about our different values and behavior. Up to that time in my life, I had never been angered to the point I felt I needed to defend myself or to strike another person in earnest with clenched fists. I had always been too timid or reserved to get belligerent. It was the second month in camp when a guy from Chicago named Smith – called "Snuffy" by the crew – annoyed me to the point that I asked him to lay off or I would "clean his clock". "Come on outside, Curly," he said to me. We went outside and he came right at me. With one right from me, he was down. He got up again and came at me again. Another right and he never got up. He had never even touched me. After the cheers, a bunch of the guys carried him into the latrine and revived him.



*The Boys at C.C.C., 1938.
I'm on the far right.*



After this encounter in the C's, I later would think about our soldiers during World War II and how they reacted to a combat situation that could be a matter of life or death - especially ground troops who were confronted by the enemy face to face. I think every man reacts differently. When I was in the military, I had several confrontations - two when I caught up with thieves who had been stealing from me. They gave up the goods when I threatened them physically. My experience with bullies in the C.C.C., gave me enough confidence in my ability to take on anyone near my size. Fortunately, I was not too belligerent.

The Civilian Conservation Corps

The Civilian Conservation Corps was established in 1933 to create jobs and protect America's natural resources. Enrollment was originally open to unmarried men age 17 to 23. They lived in work camps, most of which were run by the U.S. Army.

At the C.C.C.'s peak there were about 500,000 corps members in 2,700 camps across the country. They worked hard, ate well and had opportunities for education or other training. They also sent most of their pay home to help their families.

The C.C.C. program ended in 1942. By then more than 3 million men had been involved. Among other accomplishments, they planted about 3 billion trees, built 97,000 miles of road, controlled soil erosion on 20 million acres of land and spent 4 million man-days fighting forest fires. More than 40,000 of them learned to read and write, and their families received over \$1 billion in added income (an astronomical sum in those days).

During my time in the C.C.C., I had become accustomed to a shower once a day. When I left the C.C.C.'s and returned to the farm for harvest, we did not have the facilities on the farm to accommodate such a luxury. So I proceeded to do something about it. I mounted a 30-gallon gasoline barrel on a high form on the sunny side of the barn. From the barrel, I ran a beer hose that connected to a showerhead made from an oil can. Then I added a spigot to turn off flow of water. Instantly, I had an outside shower. The shower curtains were constructed from an oilcloth from the kitchen table. Water had to be carried up a ladder and put in the barrel in the morning, but by evening, it was warm enough for a shower. My two younger brothers thought it was such a neat idea, they would gladly carry the water up in buckets from the well if I let them use the shower.



The showers really worked great until cold weather set in, but by that time, most of the dusty fieldwork was done. Then it was back to a once-a-week bath in the round tub every Saturday evening in front of the kitchen stove. We could only put about 4 inches of water in the tub because that was all the stove reservoir held. The water was reused until everyone had bathed. We boys were always on the tail end of the bath line and the water got pretty dark by the time it was our turn. At least we had the shower in good weather. One way or the other, it was very gratifying to get cleaned up - even with only about 2 gallons of warm water per shower or five gallons in a small tub. How times have changed!



Life on the farm after the C's was much improved. By then, there were good crops and better prices and our economic situation improved rapidly. In 1936, my dad mortgaged everything he owned, cashed in a life insurance policy and bought the farm from my parent's estate for \$6,000.00. By 1940, he had paid the mortgage and we started building – first from the old lumber mentioned previously, then progressed to a new house in 1941 with running water, bath tub and electric lights.



*Mom's new hen house
built by Fabian 1942*

My mom always liked her chickens, but never had a decent chicken coop. Before I left for the service, I decided to do something about that. I took all the salvaged material - including windows - and built Mother a real hen house all by myself. She was very proud of it and really enjoyed having it. Tony and Maggie have kept it up well and even today, it is still very functional.

Not to be critical of my mother, but sometimes she had limited vision when it came to long-range plans. She really made it difficult for my father to progress more rapidly when finances permitted because she was so cautious and conservative. Sometimes her position did not make good sense to me or to my father. In the early spring of 1941, I wanted to increase the shelterbelt around the farmstead. A shelterbelt is a barrier zone of trees planted to protect crops and soil. To extend it in two directions meant moving fences and covering a dump ground. Mom objected to the shelterbelt, wanting to keep our farm small and conservative. Eventually, I did extend it, but not to the extent I wanted and which would have served our long-range plans for expansion. We regretted it in the years to follow as the large increase in our livestock justified more shelter. Years later, my brother, Tony, had the foresight to expand the shelterbelt significantly.

My dad was a kind and gentle person and when one of us children were in need of a special favor or pocket money, Dad was always more sympathetic to our needs than Mother was. Dad understood my desire to attend high school, to join the C.C.C.'s, and to volunteer for the service - which needed his consent - rather than wait for the draft. I owe a great deal of gratitude to my father for what I accomplished in life. I was able to express it to him often in his later years as he lived to be 97. Mother had passed away at age 58 from complications of a gallstone operation.





A Snapshot of the Years

As my thoughts wander back through the years of my life, I remember aspects of rural life, including how remote we were particularly in the non-school months. During the summer, we were very isolated; we only saw or associated with other people after Sunday Mass or occasionally at a local gathering with neighbors. Sunday afternoons were our opportunity for homemade ice cream and visiting, although everyone had to be home by six to do the milking and chores. The beginning of the school year was always a welcome time as it provided the excuse to avoid farm work and the opportunity to associate with others after the summer remoteness.

Monday was always wash day at home. Washing was done with a hand washer - a tub with a u-shaped bottom with a tall wooden handle which enabled the washer to slosh the clothes about in the water until they were clean. In 1934, we bought a Maytag washer with a ringer and a one-cylinder gas motor. This was a great improvement over the hand - operated washer, but it still took the greatest part of a day to do all the washing and hang it out to dry.

There was never a time when there wasn't more work to be done than there was time to do it. Twice when I was a teenager, my dad bought timbered land from a Norwegian friend. Each time he bought about an acre that was forested with trees up to 10 to 12 inches in diameter. The land was about 12 miles away. We felled all the timber by hand saw and axes, then sawed it into 12-foot lengths and finally hauled



An old hand washer



it home to process into fence posts and kindling wood for the wood stoves. I remember how strong my dad was - lifting timber into wagons. We kids could not do that sort of heavy lifting. We had a circular saw powered by the tractor with which we spent many Saturdays helping Dad saw and stack several years' supply of wood.

After years of isolation on the farm and in the small community of Karlsruhe, it was sort of an eye-opener when I joined the C.C.C. All of a sudden, I associated with many different ethnic groups, especially from locales in the eastern U.S. such as Chicago, Detroit, Boston, etc. We of German descent had definite mannerisms of speech - different from that of the numerous Scandinavian and Eastern European cultures. Personally, I tried hard to lose my German accent and assimilate into the American culture.

When I joined the military, I was again very aware of the numerous ethnic backgrounds such as Jewish, Italian, Dutch, and all types of eastern European cultures. There were also many American "Easterners" and "Southerners" - two cultures that were so different than my North Dakota backgrounds that they might as well have been foreign. This diversity was much more obvious then than it is today.



...at camp in the C.C.C. was an eye opener for me.



I was very successful in business with the Elgin Watch line.

I believe it was these diverse associations and the acceptance of the differences that laid the foundation of the good relationships I always had with sales representatives of all culture and especially with the large Jewish element so prominent in the jewelry business. As a jewelry buyer, I learned their selling techniques quickly. I had one experience in which an order was obviously "padded" and from that point on, I was forever cautious and vigilant of business practices, yet always polite about it regardless of personalities. Interestingly, the order that had been padded was an order of Elgin watches, which I sold through quickly. Ultimately, I placed an additional order before I realized the original order had been padded. Because of the advertising I had done to promote the watches I had received, the watches sold so quickly that Elgin asked another jeweler in Walla Walla to send me some of his inventory! I became a trusted friend of



many Jewish salesmen who, in turn, I trusted implicitly, like Paul Speyer, Irving Gelb, the Kaufmans, Mark Mayer and many others on the road who treated me right and respectfully. Unlike many small retailers in the jewelry industry, I always maintained a good credit rating with my suppliers. This was definitely a boon to my success.

As a retail jeweler in Eastern Oregon, I had some outstanding success in several categories. In the years 1957-58-59, the Baker store was the highest volume account for the Wyler Watch Co. in seven western states. One reason for my success was that all the watches for my Pendleton store were purchased through my Baker store, so my volume appeared to be nearly twice what it actually was in Baker. Aside from that, however, I was successful with Wyler mostly because of some of the unusual promotions I did. In one promotion, we dropped a watch from an airplane into the rodeo grounds during a rodeo. Another time, we tied watches onto the horns of the meanest bulls. The cowboy who could take a ride from the bull won the watch. We sold a lot of Wyler watches! Another great product in my early years of business was low-priced costume jewelry. We would lay out the jewelry on tables in the center of the store for self service. Shoplifting was not much of a concern then. The customers enjoyed a great selection that was well displayed and we did a great volume over all other competition.

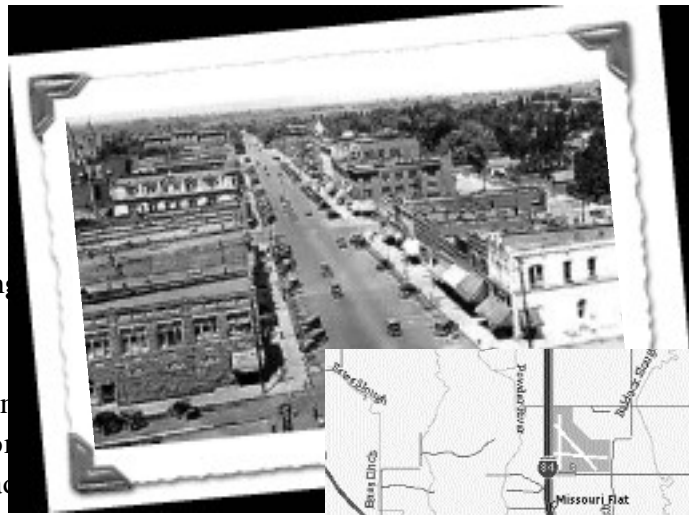


*Christmas 1958 - 1959
We had plenty of costume jewelry for inventory*

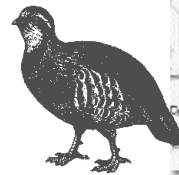
Although it may not be a record for a retailer, in my 27 years in the Baker store, I had 27 years of gain in volume and never had a year less than the previous year. Sometimes, net profits varied because of increased advertising costs as the Baker economy changed, but I never fell in volume. I had identical success in the Ontario store for nine years. I believe this success was possible only through good planning, effective promotion, very careful buying in conservative quantities, conservative mark-up, proper display, mature and effective sales personnel, maintaining a good credit rating and treating sales reps with respect. When you adhere to solid standards, you create opportunities to obtain the best merchandise for your area at the best prices. I have continuously encouraged my relatives and children to practice wise inventory control and turnover. It took some of them some time, but they eventually realized that by operating on borrowed capital and carrying excessive inventory, they generally diminished their return profit. It was great to see the turnaround in business practice once they understood that concept.



Acquiring property on Missouri flat, about six miles out of Baker, brought some new adventures to the family. The Dalgliesh family, who lived a mile down the highway, were excellent neighbors and exposed us to some excellent hunting and fishing experiences. Along with first and second sons, Jim and Jerry, I experienced my first deer hunting venture with the Dalglieshes. We also did a lot of bird hunting together. Chukar hunts (partridge-like birds) on the Powder River were always successful. We had excellent pheasant habitat on our ranch and the surrounding properties. On one opening day in two hunts we came home with 42 birds. We filled the deep freeze with our bounty for much enjoyable eating during the following months. Hunting rabbits – which were also abundant in the area – was always a great outing. We'd trudge through the sagebrush in the dead of winter and they would scurry everywhere.



Baker City



Missouri flat was about six miles north of Baker City.

The Dalglieshes were also avid card players and we spent frequent evenings year 'round in the company of Roy and Hope. Irene loved to play Poker! Even after we sold the Missouri Flat property and moved back to town, we would host poker parties whenever we had the chance. Dalglieshes were always glad to drive into town for the poker parties and Irene's desserts.

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Irene's Pineapple Angel Food Cake

1 store-bought angel food cake
2 cans pineapple tidbits
Cool Whip topping

Drain pineapple tidbits thoroughly.
Mix pineapple tidbits with Cool Whip.
Cut cake horizontally through the middle and spread with pineapple mixture. Place top layer on cake and spread remaining mixture over top and sides of cake.
Refrigerate 2-3 hours.



Pheasant were plentiful around Missouri Flat and one "opening day" hunt netted 42 birds.



A long, graveled driveway led into the ranch yard of our Missouri Flat home. When we bought the property I had noted that the driveway was riddled with old discarded nails. Conveniently, there were also many small pails with handles that had been left on the property. I offered the kids 25 cents per pound for all the metal they could pick up. They did a good job and benefited financially, but eventually the pickings became scarce. It took me a while to catch on that, in time, they eventually started to raid the old tool shed - which was full of debris - to fill their individual pails. They also borrowed my shop tools and looted the old, discarded farm machinery that was sitting in the field across the road. The extra parts significantly enhanced their collection. How innovative and industrious those kids were!



*Our wagon wheel fence
Missouri Flat.*

The wind on Missouri Flat could be miserable! To protect the fields, house and barnyard I had arranged to have a shelterbelt of trees planted on two sides of the property. I managed to elicit the kids' sympathy on how these little trees would suffer if there was a lack of water. They spent days with their little pails watering those trees during that first year which proved crucial to their survival. And survive they did, to make an ideal windbreak for the ranch which is still there today.







Winter On The Farm



One of the great privileges in my youth on the farm was having a .22 caliber rifle for hunting. My dad had bought my older brother a .22 rifle because he did not have the opportunity to continue his education beyond eighth grade. In gratitude for staying and helping out on the ranch, Wendell was rewarded with the rifle. To earn spending money in the winter months, he hunted rabbits and trapped minks and weasels. I would often accompany him on his trap route on Saturdays. One day he caught a nice, large, dark mink which was likely to fetch a premium price. After visiting several fur buyers in Minot, he was offered \$36.00 for the fur - this was real money for a kid during the depression. Weasels normally fetched about \$5.00 per pelt and rabbits from 25 cents to \$1.00 per pelt. Trapping skunks was popular in the area, but we refrained from that because Mother objected violently to the odor. Hunting rabbits was best at night. My brother, Wendell, innovatively affixed a large flashlight to his rifle and was pretty successful in killing rabbits at night in our barnyard where they came to feed after dark.

When I was 16, I had to buy my own rifle. It was a .22 caliber, bolt-action repeater, which I still have today and use as a spare when I squirrel hunt. I remember that it cost \$15.95 and ammo - in shorts (short shells) - cost 20 cents for a box of 50. Because the area around Karlsruhe was overrun with gophers, the county paid a bounty of 1 cent per gopher tail. On one particularly fruitful hunting mission I claimed 46 tails using only one box of 50 shells. (As a point of record, I did not miss with the other four shots; it just took second hits on a few of the gophers to stop them from going back down the hole.) Gopher bounty was not really a profitable venture for accumulating spending money - its rewards came primarily from the fun of shooting.





The two years before I entered the air force (around 1940-41) we had bought a new pickup truck which we used when we hunted rabbits at night. We improvised a spotlight by taking a headlight out of our Model T Ford and connecting it to an extra 6-volt battery we carried in the back of the pickup. A whole rabbit would fetch a price of 50 to 75 cents for skins - the meat was used to feed the animals in the Minot Zoo. One good night we came in with over 50 rabbits. Our average take was usually smaller than that, but it was always great entertainment for lack of other adventures during the long winter months in the Dakotas.

During several winters in the 1930's when the snowfall was unusually heavy and no snow clearing was done, we did not use our automobile from November until late March. We relied primarily on horses and sleds for transportation to school and town. Everyone carried horse blankets to cover the warm horses after several miles of travel so they wouldn't cool too fast after they reached their destination. Horses were so important that the utmost care was taken to insure their health. I remember my dad leaving church during Sunday Mass (which would often last nearly two hours) to check the horses tied up nearby and make sure they had their blankets on and were doing all right.

I still haven't figured out why Mass would last nearly two hours. I do recall, however, that the priest would first give the homily in German, then repeat it in English to make sure everyone got the message. At the time, the homily, now called the sermon, was the most important part of the Mass and most priests were well versed in "preaching".

The ritual of courtship during this time - given the limited transportation to neighboring communities in the wide open areas of the upper central country - has always intrigued me. My father told me that in 1915 his dad had acquired the first Overland automobile in the area. The Overland was an upscale to the Model T Ford which prevailed at the time. Having the car availed more interaction between nearby communities for my father. He was able to visit other communities for social activities like dances.

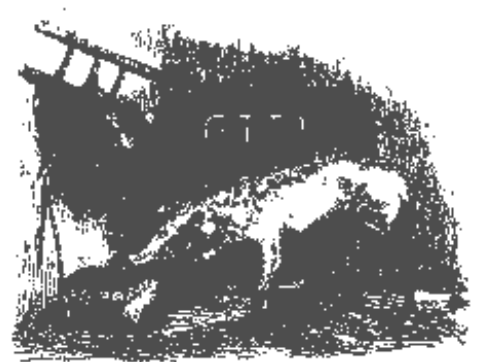


My mother had an uncle who owned a tavern in Balta (a nearby town) and who was also a so-called "matchmaker". The matchmaker traveled around a large area seeking out men and women of marriageable age and would form conclusions as to whom should meet. If his intuition should bear fruit and consummate in a marriage, he would collect \$25.00 or more depending on the financial means of both families.



I am convinced to this day that the marriage of my parents was the result of his match making. It was also timely in that it allowed my father to avoid the draft in WW I because of his marriage status. The rumor was that his matchmaking business was quite brisk when the WW I draft was instituted in 1917. The matchmaker was a real entrepreneur in many ways; he became successful in bootlegging during prohibition through acquisition of supplies out of Canada only 45 miles away. In later years - up to WW II - his matchmaking endeavor was primarily with widows and widowers and, as economic conditions improved, his fees became substantial depending on the financial circumstances of the seeker. For the grandfather of our neighbors, the Blacks, he secured two wives over time for \$500.00 per wife.

A very important item for farm families was the supply of meat. The physical labor required to maintain a farm demanded a high protein diet and it was important to have an abundant supply of meat on hand. In the cold winter months we consumed a great deal of pork. The pork then contained a higher percentage of fat than today's hogs, but the fat seemed vital to the diet to maintain body heat and withstand the cold. One quickly found this necessary if you spent much time out in the open going to and from school, doing chores, or – like my dad – caring for livestock and the land in the bitter cold of North Dakota. We always maintained a large number of hogs and although we slaughtered an individual one from time to time, it was in the late fall when we would slaughter up to four at once. Hog slaughtering was a social event - a time when neighbors gathered together, usually for a long day. As a result of that day, hundreds of pounds of sausage would be made and hams and bacon were in the curing process for weeks following. After all the meat was cut or prepared, it was all smoked, which took many days of close supervision in the smoke house.



From my history with the hog slaughter, I adopted a related ritual as a parent and a provider. When my children were little, I would get together with a couple of my brothers in the basement of the "convent" and make HUGE batches of sausage as we remembered it from our farm. The recipe is a family tradition. We enjoyed it many mornings with pancakes, French toast or Cream of Wheat. Although we had it frequently, it always remained a treat!

Mack's German Sausage

50 lbs of finely ground meat (75% pork and 25% lean beef)
1 head of garlic, pressed and mixed with water
1 1/2 cups salt
1/2 cup pepper
1/2 cup TenderQuick

Mix well; stuff in casings; smoke lightly.

To serve: Fry until cooked throughout. Enjoy!



In the fall before harvest, a wiener calf - known as veal - was slaughtered. The veal meat was mostly canned in jars as a meat supply for harvest and threshing time. As the chickens came of slaughter size, our diet was supplemented with them as well, along with some bologna from local grocers. Towards late fall there would usually be a barren heifer in the herd which needed to be slaughtered. The heifer was isolated and grained for about 90 days, then slaughtered when freezing temperatures had set in. The beef was usually just quartered and hung in the granary where it froze and was cut up with a meat saw when the meat was needed.



One benefit of fattening and slaughtering a female beef instead of a steer was that female beef bones made the very best soup. Our normal Sunday dinner – after Mass and around noon – was beef or chicken noodle soup as a main course. The whole family enjoyed the hearty soup. I recall being the only one who insisted on jelly bread with my soup. How weird that sounds today, but I loved it and I remember making a spectacle of myself in front of other family members.

I can recall times when my mother would tell my Dad we needed meat for the next day and my dad would take me along to the shed to get it. My job was to hold a flashlight so he could see in the dark shed. Dad would saw off a hunk of several pounds from the bottom of the carcass. When it thawed out, my mother would separate the meat from the bones. The bones went into one kettle for soup and the meat into another kettle to be simmered for hours until it was tender. We never heard of steaks or roasts - we just had “meat”. It was always well seasoned and always good.

As Catholics, we religiously observed the season of Lent before Easter and refrained from eating meat during this time. As an alternative, large quantities of frozen pike and walleye were always available at local markets as were herring and other types of fish. We always looked forward to this season of meatless days as a time to enjoy seafood, pasta, and bean dishes - which seemed like delicacies. I remember having a lot of caviar, which was inexpensive and not considered the rarity then that it is now. A rare breakfast treat at our home was caviar or hogs brains with scrambled eggs. What a great nourishing breakfast!





Service History

We are all formed by the sum of our experiences and my time in our country's service remains one of my most significant memories. This chapter contains a brief summary of the highlights, important achievements or interesting happenings during my career with the Army Air Corps.

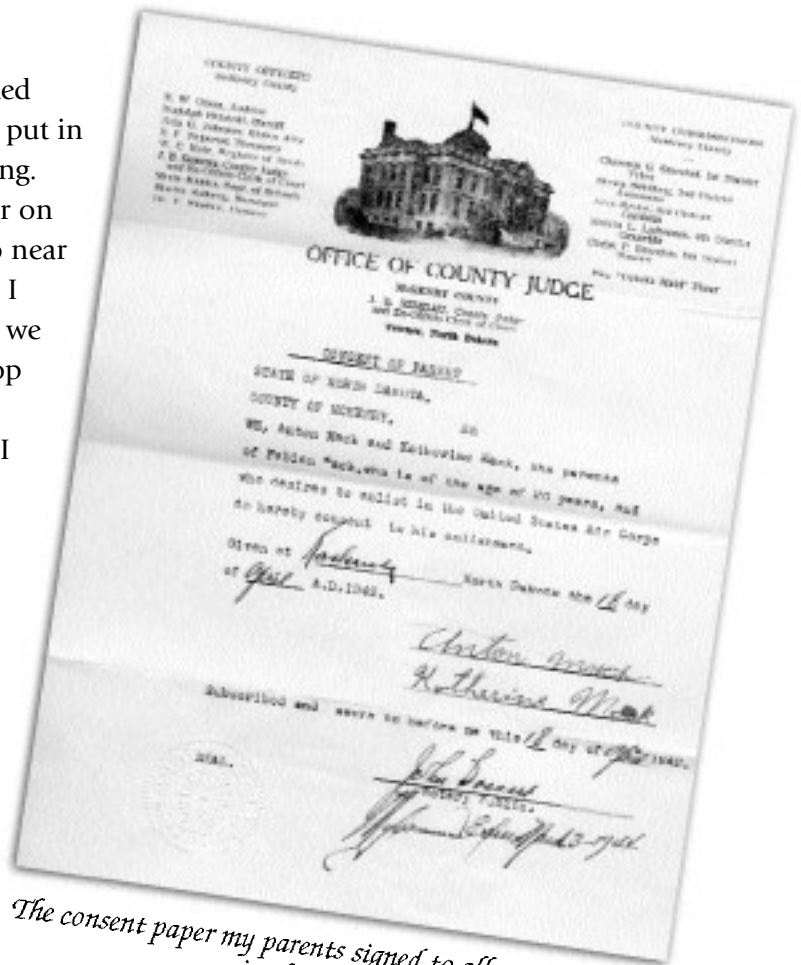
Early in the year 1942, I sensed the slow progress and limited victories of our Armed Forces and estimated that the war would continue for at least another two to three years which, in turn, without doubt, would have made me eligible for the draft. Feeling a slight dissatisfaction at home, the urge to go out and see some of the rest of the world, and maybe a touch of patriotism, I decided to enlist in the military. The Air Corp was my preference for branch of service. I had graduated from high school the previous May and the Air Corp had dropped the prerequisite of 2 years of college, so I was eligible to enlist in the Aviation Cadet Program.

I gathered the necessary legal documents, but it took a great deal of effort to persuade Mom and Dad to sign the required consent papers that approved my voluntary enlistment. Conrad Zeigler (a friend and distant relative) and I were the only applicants from the Karlsruhe area. We both passed all the mental and physical requirements which – believe it or not – was an achievement by less than half of the applicants. The Minot Elks Lodge sponsored the enlistment program for the Army Air Corps. After we took our oaths and were sworn in during a ceremony at the Lodge, we were fed a good dinner and sent home to wait on reserve until called up for active duty.



My brother, Wendell, had already been drafted into the Army so that left Dad, Mom and me to put in the crops, as Larry and Tony were still quite young. Thank heaven, we had a new rubber-tired tractor on which I spent long hours from early morning to near midnight. We had a bumper crop that year and I cut all of it with one outfit. In addition to that, we threshed for several neighbors and had a big crop of oats from my Mom's land out in Berwick. I hauled the oats home during the night because I was helping Dad with the threshing machine during the daytime.

I finally received my orders to report for active duty on the 23rd of November. The orders were to report to the Armory in Minneapolis by December 4th and, from there, to the Aviation Cadet Center in San Antonio, Texas. Conrad had received his orders two weeks earlier and had to report to Santa Anna, California. One exciting thing about the first leg of this journey was the special stop accorded me by the Railroad. Normally, the Empire Builder - a fast passenger train between Chicago and Seattle - sped right through Karlsruhe, barely even slowing down. On this event, it stopped in Karlsruhe - just for me to get on.



The consent paper my parents signed to allow me to enlist in the Air Corps.

About 400 cadets gathered in Minneapolis and boarded a first class train for the 4-day trip to San Antonio. One morning - as the porters were getting ready to serve us breakfast - the train hit a big black Pontiac at a railroad crossing in Texarkana, Arkansas, killing the driver. It was an unfortunate experience, punctuated by the dining hall visual: the porters had just served tomato juice to the tables when the engineer hit the brakes. The juice spilled all over the white tablecloths.

After about a week of processing - which included all types of tests, shots, issuance of clothing, etc. - we all received our classifications. I qualified and was classified to start pilot training and was scheduled for pre-flight school at Kelly Field located at the southwestern edge of San Antonio, the first of January, 1943. Now called Lackland Air Force Base, it is the oldest continuously operating flying base in the United States Air Force.



Fabian at Gunnery School.

Having worked so hard all summer, I was a skinny 134 pounds when I went on active duty. We had great food in the Air Corp, always served family style by black waiters and always offered "all we could eat." With regular hours (shorter than farm hours!) and plenty of exercise, I was up to over 150 pounds in a short time.

Pre-flight school was modeled after West Point with very strict discipline. They operated with an upper- and lower-classmen system and plenty of hazing went on. Academics were mostly related to math and moved quickly. Fortunately, I had taken every math class available during high school and had no problems. Physical fitness was stressed and training was hard and tough - calisthenics, football and running - and by the end of 8 weeks I could do 2 1/4 miles in 11 minutes and came in 5th in a group track meet.

Our pre-flight training class of about 150 cadets - which was noted as class 43-I - finished at the end of February, 1943. Afterwards, part of the class - including me - was sent up to a brand new airfield near El Reno, Oklahoma. It consisted of one hanger, two barracks and only dirt runways. When the wind blew - which was often - the sand drifted so high that on several mornings we cadets would have to shovel it away from the hanger doors so we could get the planes out.

We trained in PT-17's (made by Fairchild for flight training). Our flight instructors included several civilian pilots and two Air Corps officers. From the beginning, I had problems with landings. When the flight surgeon checked my eyes, he determined I had a problem with my depth perception (eyes out of focus). I was washed out of flight training after only about 12 hours.

Two outstanding memories of my time at Mustang Field in El Reno include ordering meals from a menu in a café in the hanger - then just signing the check - and taking P.E. in a cow pasture and trying to dodge all the soft cow dung.



PT-17 made by Fairchild for flight training.



About six of us were eliminated in one day and shipped to Sheppard Field, Texas. Our status was changed from Aviation Cadet to P.F.C. and we were then assigned to radio school in Scott Field, Illinois, about 30 miles from St. Louis. We had "Class A" passes which meant we could leave the base any time we were not in school. Lloyd Peterson (Pete) from Kansas was my best friend and we often went out together. Girls were plentiful and I enjoyed both the city and the radio school very much. I finished radio school in October and was sent to Tyndall Field near Panama City, Florida for gunnery training.

Gunnery school was very interesting and exciting. We started with regular shotguns, shooting skeet and trap. In the group of ten to which I was assigned, I was the only one who had ever used a shotgun or who had some experience shooting at a moving target. Practicing from a moving pick-up going through brush and shooting at trap from all sides and angles was very exciting. We ended up shooting low targets flying out over the Gulf of Mexico. At Tyndall, we also received plenty of practice with side arms using the standard 45-caliber automatic.

I completed gunnery school on December 11, 1943 and was promoted to Buck Sgt. (3 stripes) and given an 18-day stopover enroute to the Salt Lake City Air Base for assignment. I was very excited to be going home on furlough with my uniform and wings. I had been away from home just about one year, but it seemed much longer. I arrived home three days before Christmas, after stopping for a day in St. Louis to visit a friend. The weather at home was great through the time I left on the 30th. Our train arrived in Kansas City, Missouri on New Years Eve and stopped there for about two hours. I arrived in Salt Lake on New Years Day, 1944 and took a refresher course in radio to stay sharp on taking code.

In March of 1944, we were assembled in crews and sent to Tucson, Arizona for overseas training in B-24's. We flew practice missions all over the southwest desert while every crewmember was checked out in his position. I had been promoted to Staff Sergeant and was barracks chief, so I had a private room. This was the first time I had any privacy at all since I had joined the service. Here again, we had Class A passes so we were free any time we were not scheduled to fly.

Tucson was a most interesting city - very few service men and plenty of girls. It was my first experience with two aspects of Mexican-American culture - food and women.

We finished our training about mid-May and took a train to Lincoln, Nebraska to pick up a new B-24 that had come off the Willow Run assembly plant in Detroit, Michigan. After test-flying it for a couple of days, we got orders to fly to Dow



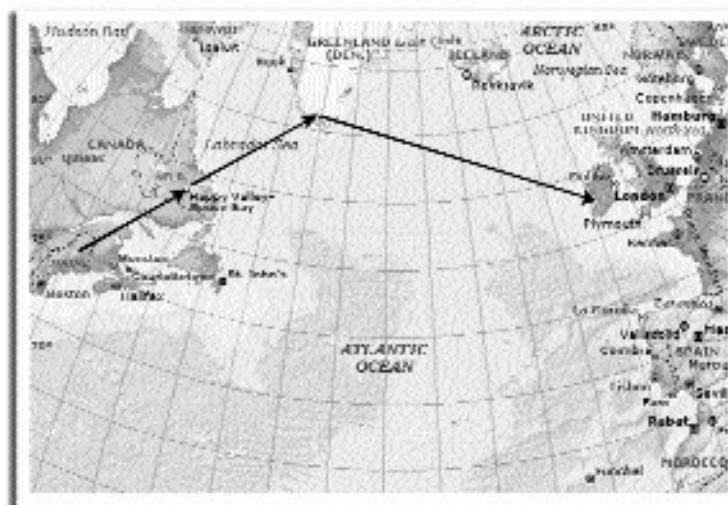


Field in Bangor, Maine. From there we received secret orders. We were instructed to fly out over the Atlantic before we opened them.

The orders directed us to Ireland by way of Goose Bay, Labrador and Greenland. Crossing the Atlantic, we ran into severe storms with terrible icing. Of the 12 B-24's in our group, only 10 made it to Ireland. In Ireland, the whole crew took refresher courses in their specialty area for two weeks. Then we moved on to Howard Hall near Stone, England for about two weeks. We had to leave our brand new bomber in Ireland for modification and ended up in June with the 445th Bomb Group in Tibenham - about 20 miles from Norwich on the east coast of England.



The B-24 Bomber



We flew from Bangor, Maine, to Goose Bay, Labrador, on to Greenland and finally into Ireland.



Over Kassel, Germany we lost 25 of 35 aircraft in just a few minutes.

We flew our first mission on July 2nd in a B-24 named "Bugs Bunny" - the plane we flew most often unless it was down for repairs. We flew some rough missions and some milk runs. For the most part we suffered only light losses to the Group until our 23rd mission when the 445th was chosen as lead group to Kassel, Germany. On the Kassel mission - right after we had dropped our bombs - we were hit by approximately 100 Luftwaffe fighters. We lost 25 of our 35 bombers in just a few minutes. "Bugs Bunny" was badly shot up, receiving most of the damage to the wings and waist. All three gunners in the waist were wounded. We lost two engines along with part of one rudder and about two feet of our left wing tip.



The sky was full of chutes and burning bombers. Many of our planes just exploded into balls of fire with no one surviving. A few had crew who were able to bail out. I remember looking out and seeing two chutes above and to the right of us and as I watched, the bomber behind us caught the cords with his wing and cut them, causing the men to fall freely to their deaths without their chutes. As American fighters came to our rescue, "Bugs Bunny" headed for the airfield near Brussels unloading whatever we could to maintain altitude on our two remaining engines.

As we limped toward Brussels, I administered first aid to the wounded with the help of our bombardier. My gunner crewmember, Louie, was wounded badly. His left arm remained attached only with a thin thread of skin. His left foot was also nearly blown off.

About 15 miles from Brussels we could no longer hold altitude. The engineer and I managed to lower the landing gear. I tied one chute to each waist gun mount because we no longer had any hydraulic system for braking. I tossed the chutes as we touched ground and we made a surprisingly nice landing in a plowed field. I commandeered a farmer's pick-up and took the three wounded to a small hospital nearby. I then hitched a ride to Brussels where the British had a field hospital and was given an ambulance and driver to go back and pick up the wounded. Louie had died in the meantime but I was able to take Palm and Watson to the general hospital in Brussels where they were well cared for by the British.



After spending a night in the Brussels hospital, I made my way back to England and to my base. Since we no longer had a complete crew, I had to fill in wherever and whenever a radio operator was needed. I flew my last mission on December 11, 1944.

I was able to get a room at Gilbert's (Gilbert was a fellow service man) neighbor's house in London and I enjoyed a seven-day leave. I had met a nice woman named Alice and spent most of my time at her house. After my R&R, I volunteered to stay an extra two months and was sent up to Nelson Hall where I waited for air transportation back to the states. While stationed in England I was promoted to Tech. Sgt. (5 stripes) and received the Air Medal presented to me by Jimmy Stewart. I was later awarded five clusters - one for every six missions flown - and the "Distinguished Flying Cross" for completing 30 missions.

I left from Prestwick, Scotland in mid-March on a C-54 transport and arrived in Washington D.C. the next day. After sightseeing in D.C., I was given a first class train ticket to Santa Anna, California where I was to report three weeks later. I stopped in Chicago and Minneapolis before going on to Minot, arriving home just a few days before Easter, 1945. It was great to be home safe. It was Spring, the weather was nice and I really enjoyed life again.

I reported to Santa Anna and spent two enjoyable weeks with two guys named Woody and Larry whom I met on the way back from England. We went out almost every night. I especially liked Long Beach for having a great time.





In late May, the three of us were shipped to the air base at Sioux Falls, South Dakota. We had requested to be instructors at the radio school there. By the time we arrived, however, the school was closed. We were re-assigned to the job of processing crews from the European theater to the Pacific theater. The war in Europe had ended.



After several months of "the good life" in Sioux Falls came the Japanese surrender in August, 1945. The military had implemented a point system in which discharges were granted in the order of the points achieved. Others had more points than we did, so we remained in service. We had very little to do on the base and spent most of our time in town - a town with the wildest women I have ever encountered. A special Sergeant's Club had opened; it offered great food, dancing, slot machines and other vices for the idle.

The Air Corps was interested in keeping some of its trained personnel and offered to send me back through the Cadet program or give me a promotion to Warrant Officer if I would re-enlist for 3 years. After considering it for awhile, I decided to take a discharge. I convinced myself I was too ambitious for service life.



I was shipped to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin and discharged on September 14, 1945. On the way home I stopped off in Grand Forks, North Dakota where I had several relatives and visited for a few days. While there, I decided to enroll in the University for the Fall term. I went on home and spent some time on the farm helping Tony. 35 days after my discharge, I ended up in the hospital with an emergency appendectomy. Because I was no longer in the service of the United States, I had to pay my own hospital bill.

Having attained the rank of T/Sgt., I had enjoyed a reasonable income in the service. Along with flight pay (which was an additional 50% of base pay), playing good poker and loaning money at 100% interest rate, I had a nice nest egg of about \$2,700.00 when I left the service. Not bad.

So ended my Air Corps career. It was exciting at times and miserable at times. Several times, I almost got killed. On the whole, it was adventuresome, educational, and a great experience which I would never repeat again. Looking back now that it's over, however, it was great.

I was awarded five Air Medals and the "Distinguished Flying Cross" for completing 30 missions.

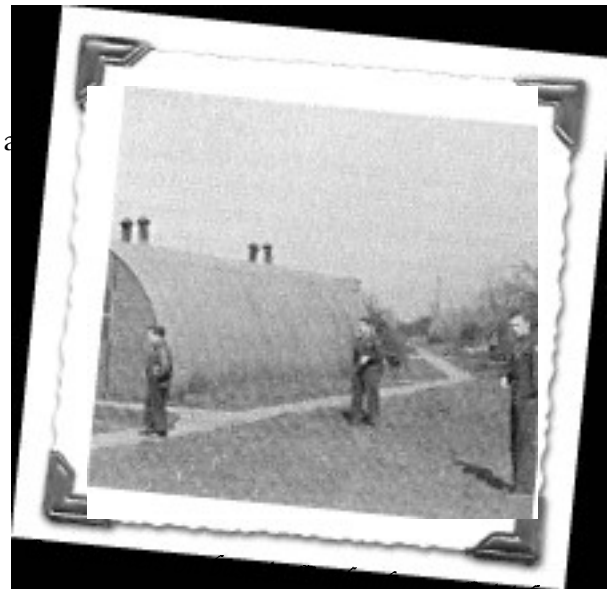


Life Overseas

Our quarters on the air base in England – British Quonset huts heated with two wood stoves - were comfortable as the climate in Britain is not severe. Most of the discomfort we felt stemmed from the dampness generated by the ever-present fog in winter months. Coal had been rationed by the British so it was in short supply. The soldiers often supplemented what we had by thieving from the main coal supply. Our mess hall was adequate, however, and meals were generally well-prepared so I could not complain.

It was normal routine that we would know the evening before if we were scheduled to fly the next day. If we were on the schedule, we were awakened between 3:00 and 4:00 a.m. and expected at the briefing at 6:00 a.m. My routine included stopping at the chapel where a priest was always present to give communion and a blessing.

It was mostly Catholics present, but, occasionally, non-Catholics would ask for a blessing, too. The mess hall opened at 5:00 a.m., so we would stop there on the way to the briefing. The cooks would actually cook our eggs to order. It was only the flying crews that had the privilege of a good breakfast, but you could only take advantage of it if you didn't have butterflies in your stomach. The mission of the day could last up to 9 hours so it might be 4:00 in afternoon before you returned.



Quonset Huts. *Some were British*



Our briefings lasted about 30 minutes and included details of the target and the area, expected weather conditions, enemy opposition, gun emplacements, bomb loads and fuel supply, navigation maps, radio man's code sheets, etc. My responsibility on the missions was to monitor radio transmission in code from headquarters and base, decode them and inform the pilot. At this time, radio equipment was still relatively rudimentary. Wearing a headset for many hours - trying to pick up code through all the static and noise - had a significant effect on my hearing later on in life. Never, however, did I feel self-pity for this loss because I always realized my loss could have been much more significant - perhaps my life - which many of my comrades sacrificed.

Casualties from the 8th Air Force amounted to 30% of aircrews - the highest rate of any American combat unit in WW II. Some of our casualties were mental cases, termed "flak happy". Soldiers suffering such mental strain were sent to re-hab centers to recuperate. Many just simply became dysfunctional as a result of fear and grounded themselves - this was always an option for flying personnel. If you chose to ground yourself, it meant loss of rank, flight pay, and assignment to menial duties. Sadly, these airmen were looked down upon by others and certainly had few friends. They were labeled other than brave.

Throughout the duration of a mission, the time was very stressful. From wake-up time to base return was generally twelve hours. Airmen with butterflies (nervous stomachs) often did not eat breakfast or ate very lightly. We always carried vitamin candy to reduce hunger pangs and provide instant energy. We had to go light on liquids as the bombers didn't have restrooms - crew members used a P-tube to relieve themselves. At an average altitude of 20,000 feet, the temperature could reach 30 degrees below zero. The intense cold always created a problem of the oxygen masks freezing up. Instead of wearing our sheepskin lined leather suits, we usually changed to heated suits and boots. These were great except wires could break and cause burns or - worse yet - malfunction completely. Then we were miserable from the cold.

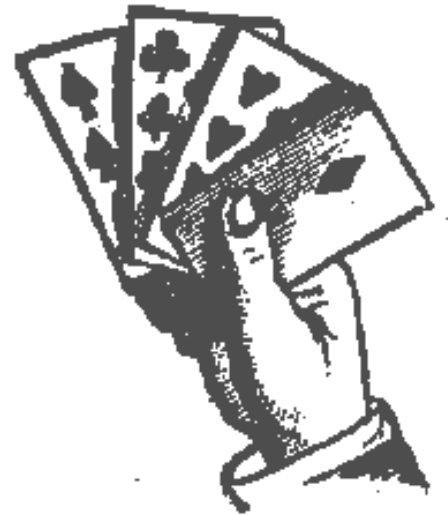




On base we had unheated latrines and showers outside our barracks. Sometimes, there was warm water, but generally it was just cold. Shaving and washing was a miserable chore with cold water. Most of the English families living near the base did laundry for the airmen. They always provided good service and I think the financial rewards must have been positive considering the generosity of Americans. We cleaned our own dress clothes – which were mostly woolens - with aviation gas and did our own pressing. Extreme care was required in this process - especially a good airing out - or you smelled like a gas can. No such service as "dry cleaning" was available.

Playing cards was the number one form of entertainment when we were off-duty. I always did well in poker and sent home several hundred dollars to my bank. Since I was very thrifty, I always had cash available to loan out to the idiots who would go broke. My interest rate was always 100% to the next payday. I never lost any money to bad debt as my creditors always came back from their missions, which was the greatest risk.

One day, in the middle of August, during a card game, I excused myself and said I'd be back in about an hour, and headed for the door. I wanted to attend a special devotions evening at the chapel. My gunner crewmember, Louie, had been playing next to me. Louie considered himself an atheist. However, this day, he asked to join me to the chapel. I remember him saying he noticed I was not as scared on missions as he was and he wondered why. I explained that because of my faith, I felt ready for any eventuality that may befall me and had no fear of death. From that time on, he joined me when I went to the chapel before missions for a blessing. I mentioned this to the nun in the hospital in Belgium when Louie was badly wounded a month later. Unbeknownst to me, she called a priest who asked me if I felt it was appropriate to give him the last rights of the church, which I approved. He was still conscious at the time and also approved. Who knows - perhaps I got credit for saving a soul. On the Kassel mission, all four officers and myself in the front part of the plane were unhurt; we all happened to be Catholic. In a conversation on a later date, one of the wounded gunners asked why we were so lucky. I replied, "Maybe you consider it luck, but I attribute it to a lot of Hail Mary's up front and none in the rear."



*Playing cards was
the leading form of
entertainment.*



The tension that stemmed from having flown so many missions stayed with me for many years. Eventually, one learns to live with it and it eased off, but the horrors of a plane that suddenly turned into a huge orange flash and the realization that the nine crew members you knew so well were gone in seconds - or the memory of the disabled bomber that went spinning out of control and had no chutes coming out of it and ultimately crashed into the ground in a big flash that could not possibly have survivors, are memories that stay with you a lifetime. I believe the average man who served in World War II and survived acted much in the same way as I have – put the whole thing behind you, forget about it, be glad you're still alive and go on with your life.



The Air Medal was awarded for completing 6 missions.

The Air Medal - a minor decoration - was awarded to all aircrew members who completed six missions. My first was pinned on me by the actor Jimmy Stewart, who flew twelve missions with our group before he was transferred to headquarters. Eventually, I was awarded five Air Medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross for completing 30 missions. Watson and Palm, the wounded waist gunners, each received The Silver Star for shooting down four German fighters, in addition to the Purple Heart and Distinguished Fighter's Cross.



The Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded for completing 30 missions.

I had moved up the ranks quite rapidly and was promoted to tech/sergeant upon arrival in England. This was the highest rank for an enlisted man. The pay scale was \$96.00 per month plus an additional 50% for flight pay. The only deduction was \$10.00 per month for life insurance. When I returned to the states, I had \$2,700.00 in an account (equivalent to about \$10,000.00 today) and felt financially comfortable. I worked part time through watchmaking school for pocket money as my complete allowance from the V.A. under the G.I. bill of \$65.00 a month went for room and board. Not until I bought a used car in February of 1948 for \$600.00 did I use part of this savings.

The only former crewmembers I have met since the war were Herbert from Kansas City and Homer from Georgia. We met at a Chicago reunion in 1996. By phone, I have visited with the co-pilot, Vadera, in Sacramento. I have no idea as to the whereabouts of the other crewmembers. During the war, we considered it unwise to develop too close a relationship with someone as many men were often moved from base to base. Overseas, we rarely knew anyone more than a couple of months as crews finished and moved on or failed to return from a mission and were replaced with new crews.

Our crew had came together in March, 1944 in Salt Lake City. We quickly moved to Tucson where we were assigned a new engineer. We stayed together until October of '44 when the officers finished and returned stateside. When the two wounded gunners recovered after the Kassel mission, they finished their tour in December and went home. I stayed until April. Seven months was the duration of our life as comrades and then we all lost track of each other.



Flying The Missions

On arrival in England in late May of 1944, I was assigned to the 445th Bomb Group. After flying several practice missions, we were declared combat ready and on July 2nd, flew our first mission. Our target was a supply depot at Pal in France (#1), inland from Normandy Beach where American forces were moving inland. Cloud cover was heavy and we bombed by P.F.F. (radar).



Two B-24's escorted

On July 5th, we flew our second mission - to a rocket-launching site near the coast of France (#2) and hit the target well. Our third mission on July 19th was a long haul to Munich in south Germany (#3), targeting an industrial area just west of the city. Anti-aircraft fire was very heavy and we received seven shrapnel holes, but the hits were not serious. As an aside, when my daughters and I visited Munich in 1978 and stayed at a Holiday Inn, it was in an area that had been completely rebuilt after being completely destroyed by our air force.



Missions 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16 and 19.



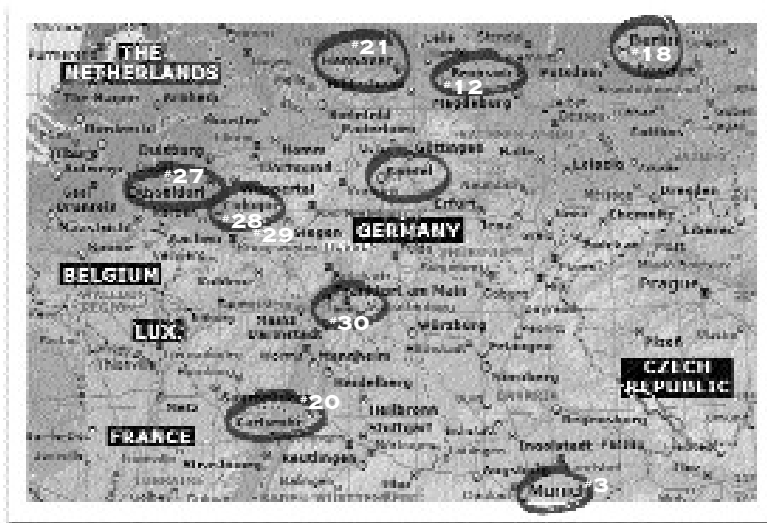
The target of our 4th mission on July 18th was a concentration of German troops near Caen, France (#4). Our mission was timed to be just ahead of American and British troops moving inland from beaches in France. We bombed at 16,000 feet and lost one B-24. Seven men were able to exit with parachutes.

The 5th mission on July 19th was an airfield near Leiphem, Germany (#5). German fighters were in the area but did not attack us. Mission six on July 20th was another airfield near Reims, in Germany (#6), also close to Munich. Two B-24's with the squadron ahead of us collided; there were no parachutists from either plane.

The Invasion of Europe

D-Day June 6, 1944, marked the beginning of World War II's final phase in Europe. On that day, supported by more than 5,000 ships and 13,000 planes, about 130,000 American, British and Canadian troops landed on five beaches along the coast of Normandy in northern France. Although they encountered strong German resistance, three weeks later the Allies had 850,000 men and 150,000 combat vehicles ashore.

For almost another month, the Allied forces were confined to their Normandy beachhead. Then the battlefront in western Europe began to expand rapidly. Paris was liberated on August 25, and the first American patrols crossed Germany's border in early September. Great danger, struggle and sacrifice still lay ahead, but the goal – bringing Hitler's reign of terror to an end – was finally in sight. combat



Missions 3, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30.

Our 7th mission on July 24th targeted a concentration of German troops at St. Lo in France (#7). The German concentration was holding up American troops which had not been able to make much progress inland from the beach.

On our 8th mission – July 28th – we got our first glimpse of Paris, as our target was a fuel depot on the outskirts (#8). The weather was "10/10's" (solid overcast) over the target area so we did not drop our bombs but brought them back to base. On our turn away from the target area, we could just see the city of Paris through a hole in the cloud cover.



The 1st of August, 1944, was our 9th mission. This took us to the Paris area again to target a railroad bridge just north of Paris (#9). We had a spectacular view of Paris in clear weather from our new B-24 named "Patty Girl". Our regular plane, "Bugs Bunny", was held up for service.

Our 10th mission on August 2nd took us to Seine, France (#10) and a fuel depot, which we hit hard, bombing visually. Mission #11 on August 4th brought us in over the North Sea to Schwern in northern Germany (#11) where we struck a fighter aircraft assembly plant. Besides receiving heavy flak on this mission, we had an equipment hang-up and I had to physically throw out the bombs. I almost fell out of the plane without my chute. When we finished, the bomb bay door would not close and on top of that, the engineer miscalculated fuel transfer, almost losing one engine.



Missions 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29.

Our 12th mission on August 5th involved a motor works factory near Brunswick, Germany (#12). On this mission, we had bomb bay door problems again, but were able to get them solved.

On August 6th, our 13th Mission was directed at a fuel dump near Hamburg in northern Germany (#13). The flak was extremely heavy and burst very close a few times. When it was over, we had numerous holes in the plane and a hydraulic line was cut so we had to lower the landing gear manually and had no brakes. Despite that, we made a good landing and fooled the ambulance and fire truck that were standing by.



On our 14th mission on August 8th, we again hit a rocket site on the French coast. Under heavy flak, we took a few hits but had no major damage.

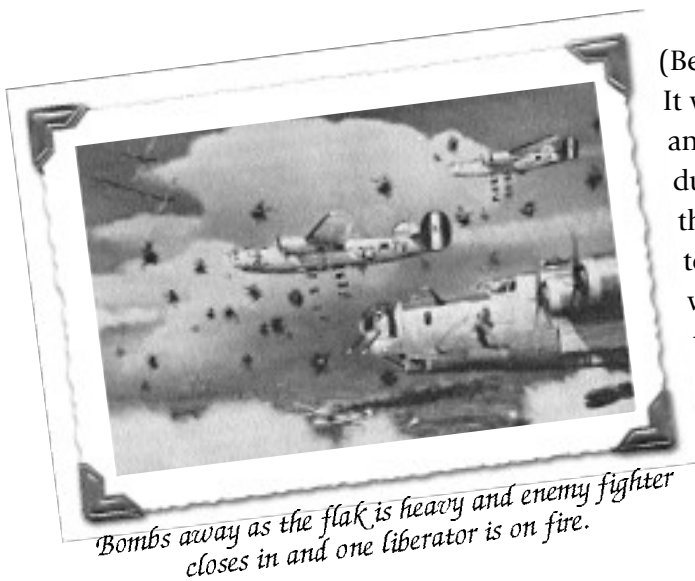
The 15th mission was our halfway point to the completion of our required 30 missions. We hit the island, St. Malo, off the French coast (#15). The island held some heavy gun emplacements and we did some excellent bombing. Around this time, it was revealed to us that of all the groups in our division of B-24's, the 445th Bomb Group was #1 in accuracy.



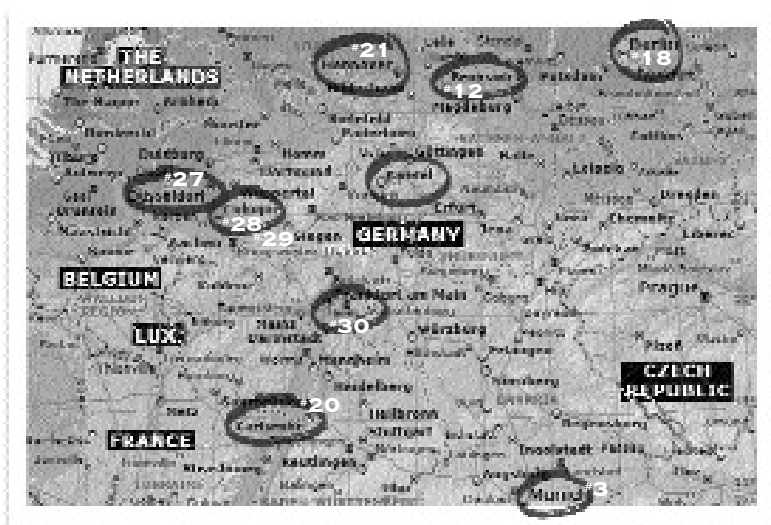
Missions 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16 and 19.

On our 16th mission on August 14th, we again hit a railroad bridge on the Seine River east of Paris (#16). On the same mission was a new crew from our barracks. It was their second mission. They were hit and their co-pilot lost a leg from shrapnel, but survived. On a later mission - September 27th - the whole crew was lost.

Mission #17 on August 16th took us to an airfield in Dessau in central Germany (#17). Our group suffered very heavy flak and two B-24's went down without any parachutes visible.



Our 18th mission on August 27th took us to the "Big B" (Berlin) - to an airfield on the outskirts of the huge city (#18). It was a long trip. On August 30th, our 19th was directed at another rocket-launching site near the French coast. It was during this middle part of 1944 that the Germans launched the largest concentration of rockets from the French coast toward London. In early September, these launching sites were overrun by American and British troops which ended the rocket attacks on England.



Missions 3, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30.

In our 20th mission on September 5th, we hit the huge railroad yards in Karlsruhe, Germany (#20). Karlsruhe - just about 30 miles from the French border - seemed like a very beautiful city. It is likely some of our ancestors originated from this area.

On September 12th, our 21st mission took us to an oil refinery near Hanover in northern Germany (#21). We approached from the North Sea. Flak was very heavy and on return we flew directly over Brussels, Belgium where British troops were approaching.



Missions 3, 5, 20, 22 and 24.

Hitler's V Weapons

In the summer of 1944, Hitler unleashed his Vergeltungswaffen – "vengeance weapons." First came the V-1, which was essentially a pilotless jet plane that carried a ton of explosives. V-1s began hitting London in June, and over the next few months, about 2,500 landed. These came to be known as buzz bombs because their engines were so loud people could hear them coming 30 miles away.

The next vengeance weapons – the V-2s – were true rocket-powered missiles. Since these traveled at supersonic speeds, they were silent until they struck, and there was no way to stop them once they were in flight. From September 1944 to February 1945, thousands of V-2s were launched, first at England and then at targets in Allied-controlled areas of Europe.

Hitler's V weapons were ineffective from a military standpoint. But their psychological impact on civilian populations was tremendous, and with their use warfare entered a new age. At the same time, though, V-2s were the technological "grandfathers" of rockets that later played key roles in America's national defense and exploration of space.

Our 22nd on September 13th took us in over southern France and along the Swiss border near Lake Constance. We bombed a motor factory in Ulm in southern Germany (#22). We ran into heavy flak and had many hits in the group, but no losses.

As we were approaching the end of our 30-mission tour, the confidence that we would persevere through to the last mission gave us a great lift in morale. Our Air Force fighters had prevailed over the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) which gave us good



protection and led to light losses, but anti-aircraft fire still prevailed. From time to time, small groups of German fighters appeared, but were usually held out of dangerous range by our 50 caliber guns.

On September 27th, we embarked on our 23rd mission – to bomb a tank factory at Kassel, Germany (#23). On the way to the target, our #3 engine gave us problems but soon chimed in. We dropped our bombs but were off course as we turned away from the target. The heading took us away from our escort and we were immediately hit by over 100 German fighters. My plane was directly behind the lead plane which was shot down first followed by the wing plane to the left of the lead plane. Next, we lost both of our wingmen, so we teamed up with the plane that was left ahead of us. In a frighteningly short time, only eight of the 35 B-24's in our group were still flying. We took a lot of fire in the rear part of our plane, which wounded the three gunners. We lost two engines and sustained structural damage to the right wing and our tail section. (see pullout story)

Kassel, Germany

Located about 100 miles northeast of Frankfurt, the city of Kassel is near the geographic center of modern Germany. It started out many centuries ago as a Roman colony, and well known former citizens include Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, the brothers who collected and published Grimm's Fairy Tales. They worked in Kassel as librarians from 1805 to 1830.

Allied bombing in World War II reduced much of the city to rubble. But after the war, Kassel was rebuilt along with the rest of Germany and Europe. Today, with a population around 190,000, Kassel is once more an important production center for automobiles, machinery, railroad equipment, textiles and scientific instruments. Since the 1950s, it has also been home to the Documenta, one of the world's leading showcases for contemporary art.



Just 5-minutes into the devastating encounter, our escort came to our rescue and shepherded the eight crippled planes out of Germany. Of the eight, three crash-landed in France and we finally had to crash-land in Belgium, about 15 miles east of Brussels. We were able to make a good wheels-down landing in an open field with the aid of two chutes I had rigged up to stop the plane when it hit.

The ill-fated 23rd Mission to Kassel, with a repeat visit for Mission 26.



Once we were down, I commandeered a farmer working nearby – along with his little pick-up truck – to take the three wounded to a small nearby hospital. The hospital was staffed by three nuns. They had limited supplies and no blood plasma, but secured a local doctor who did what he could for the wounded. He informed me that the British had a medical unit at the Brussels airport and offered to drive me over, which he did.



Missions 3, 5, 20 and 22.

When I told the British officer in charge of the medical unit of our situation, he immediately ordered an ambulance and driver for me to return to the small hospital, pick up the wounded and transport them to the Brussels General Hospital which the British had commandeered for treatment. By the time we arrived back at the small hospital, Louie, the most badly wounded gunner, had already died from shock. The British driver and I took the two other wounded gunners to the Brussels hospital. The driver then promised to go back and pick up Louie's body for proper burial.

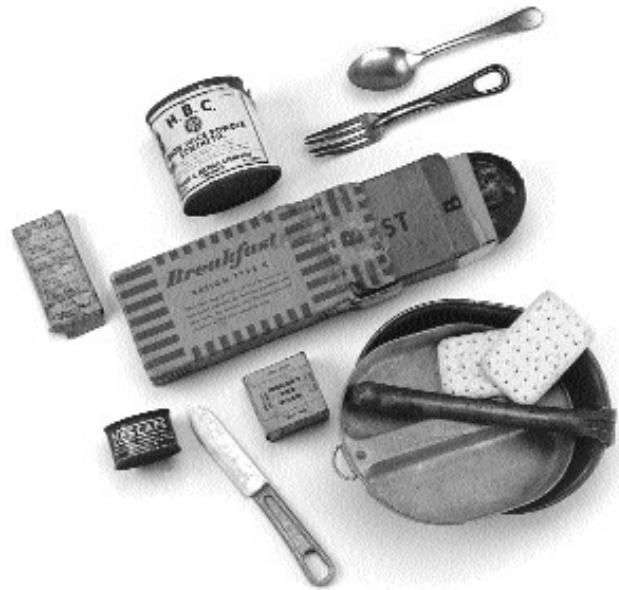
I had a minor leg wound which was taken care of with a large bandage. The doctors operated on Palm and Watson (the gunners) that evening, mostly removing shrapnel from their wounds. I was kept in the hospital overnight for observation (they may have thought I'd go into shock), but the hospital was so overcrowded with wounded paratroopers from another disastrous mission in northern Belgium (movie: A Bridge Too Far), I left the next morning. I walked miles in my flying boots back to the airport and caught a ride back to England in a hospital plane full of wounded paratroopers. After an overnight stay at a British air base, the commander





ordered a British pilot to fly me back to my base. It was my first encounter with the British military, but I was very much impressed by their prompt and much needed assistance.

Much has been written about the ill-fated Kassel mission and the realities of war. Of the eight bombers that escaped Germany, four crash-landed before reaching the English Channel and two more crashed-landed in England. Only two of 35 reached the home base. Of the 27 crews and about 250 men who went down, about half bailed out. Four of those were murdered after successful jumps. Many perished without being able to escape the planes. The graves of those who died were found – mostly after the war ended – in small cemeteries spread over a wide area. This was the situation in most of Germany and other parts of Europe where airmen had bailed out or did not survive on planes that crashed in remote areas.



Mess tools that were part of an infantryman's necessities.

The practice existed amongst aircrews that when a crew did not return from a mission, the missing member's wardrobe and personal belongings would be distributed among the remaining members. Sometimes, dice were rolled over an item in dispute. I guess that old saying is true: "There is no honor among thieves."

Upon my return to the base in England and to my barracks, I discovered that my entire wardrobe had been emptied, and that several new crews had moved in to replace the three crews we lost. Suspecting that my personal items had not been "officially" removed, I announced to the new crewmembers that after I checked in at headquarters, I would return in one hour, at which time I expected all of my belongings to have been returned. Fortunately, everything was returned with the exception of one favorite shirt that I had had tailored when I first came to England, and which fit me splendidly. It never showed up throughout the remaining time I spent there.



Of the five crews quartered in our barracks - or hut, as the British referred to them - three did not return. One crew was on leave and only two survivors remained in our crew. Officers were quartered in separate huts. So, upon returning to the base from the Kassel mission, I had to get acquainted with the men of three new crews. In the two days I was absent from the base, all the lost crews and bombers had been replaced and it was "business as usual". The new crewmembers were not anxious to hear recitations of my experience from the Kassel mission. Many were rookies and our heavy losses on that mission unnerved them.

Amongst the aircrews, there were no people of color. Although I heard later that there were groups of black soldiers, in fact, the only colored people I ever encountered in the service were generally in kitchen and food service in mess halls at some bases.

Before I was assigned to more missions, I received the pay that was due me and a three-day pass from the base. I spent this leave time in East London with Herb Swartz, a former crew member who had also survived the Kassel mission with another crew. He had an uncle with whom we had spent time on prior leaves. I also had a girl friend nearby whom I had been seeing for several months. I had a wonderful relaxing time on that leave.



The Tuskegee Airmen Flew mostly B-25's.

Blacks in the Military

During World War II the U.S. Armed Forces – like much of American society – were racially segregated. When the U.S. entered the war, there were less than 18,000 African Americans in the Army and Navy, and none in the Marine Corps. A combination of military need and political pressure soon brought change and, by the end of the war, more than 1 million black men and women, had served in uniform.

Most African Americans were assigned to support duties. For men, these included preparing and serving food, driving supply trucks, and building roads or airfields. But there were all-black combat units as well. One was the 761st "Black Panther" Tank Battalion, which formed part of General George Patton's 3rd Army and saw action in six European countries. Another was the Army Air Corps' 332nd Fighter Group. Often called the "Tuskegee Airmen," the Group flew almost 1,600 missions and destroyed hundreds of enemy aircraft.

In 1948, all branches of the Armed Forces became integrated by order of President Harry S. Truman. This was a milestone for the civil rights movement, which gained momentum in the following decades.



When I returned to the base after the leave, I was scheduled to fly our 24th mission on October 5th. Since we were short three crew members, we had to use substitutes which made us uneasy because we had not established a working relationship. That day, we bombed railroad yards at Rhein, Germany (#24) and experienced a near collision caused by inexperienced pilots flying in close formation. Other than that, however, it was an uneventful mission in which we encountered light flak and no enemy fighters. Admittedly, we survivors from the Kassel mission were very tense and apprehensive about flying.



Missions 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29.

On October 6th, we took off on our 25th mission to an ordinance depot near Hamburg in north Germany, approaching from the North Sea (#25). The route was mostly over water at lower altitude and we encountered no anti-air craft guns until we entered German airspace. A sister ship in our squadron named "Patches" suffered a flak burst near the plane on the return flight which wounded several aboard but the plane was able to stay with us back to base.

Our briefing for the 26th mission on October 7th brought mixed emotions when the day's mission map was revealed. Our mission was to return to Kassel and strike the same target as September 23rd when we had sustained such heavy losses. On this mission, the flak was very heavy again since this target was in central Germany where there was a heavy concentration of guns. Fortunately, we had our P-47 fighter escort all the way through the bomb run and our safe return.

After a week off, our 27th mission on October 15th took us to an oil refinery at Dusseldorf (#27), also in central Germany. Again we encountered very heavy flak but we had a good escort of P-51's, which had replaced the slower and heavier P-47's, and were our newest and best long-range fighters. Up to this time, the German fighters FW-109's and ME-109's were equal to our fighters but as more P-51's kept arriving, the German Air Force was mostly annihilated in a few months in late 1944. Their lack of trained pilots and fuel limited their ability to resist the bombing raids and our losses were mostly to anti-aircraft fire.



Our P-51 Mustang escort.



On October 17th, we headed for Cologne (#28). Our target was a bridge across the Rhine River behind the famous Cologne cathedral. Years later, my daughters and I went to Mass in this magnificent cathedral on our first trip to Europe, so now I have several first-hand photos. "Ack-ack" fire was heavy but a new radar-jamming device that had just come into use made it very inaccurate. This mission was #30 for the officers on our crew, but I had missed two missions while on leave, so it was only #28 for me.

The others were very jubilant to finish their tour and be returned stateside. In anticipation of celebrating the completion of their tour, I had secured a bottle of whiskey from a street vendor in London for the celebration. When we got together that evening and opened the bottle, it turned out to be vinegar! I had been had, but fortunately someone else came up with a bottle of scotch.



Cologne Cathedral



The Messerschmitt ME-109

The Fight for the Sky

In World War II, the success of Allied strategic bombing largely depended on effective cover by fighter planes. Otherwise, long-range bombers like the B-24 were vulnerable to attack by fast and heavily armed German interceptors. This turned the sky into a crucial field of combat.

On one side were enemy aircraft like the Messerschmitt ME-109 and the Focke-Wulf FW-190. Messerschmitts were the backbone of the Luftwaffe's fighter force, and early in the war they helped Germany seize control of Europe. The FW-190 appeared in late 1941, and quickly proved to be a superior weapon.

Against these came American P-47 Thunderbolts and P-51 Mustangs. Thunderbolts flew their first missions in the spring of 1943. But while they were versatile and remarkably rugged, they didn't have enough range to reach targets deep inside Germany. In December 1943, Mustangs entered the fight and made a decisive difference. By carrying extra fuel tanks that could be dropped when empty, P-51s were able to make round-trips of 1,500 miles or more. They were also deadly in action. In less than 18 months, Mustangs shot almost 5,000 enemy planes out of the skies over Europe.



The very next day, October 18th, I was called up to fill in on another crew that was short a radioman. Since I didn't belong to a crew anymore, I was on standby if any crew needed a radioman. We went back to Cologne, targeting a chemical factory north of the city (#29). On the return trip, we ran into some severe weather which broke up our formation, but our wingman - a new crew on their first mission - stayed with us back to the base.



The Rhine River Bridges in Cologne.



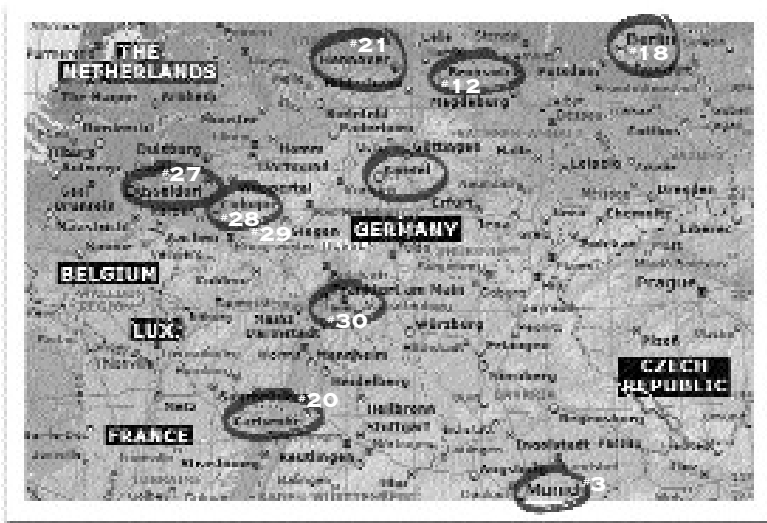
A famous red Cross Club in London during WWII.

During this time, I kept abreast of all new crews as replacements came into the squadron if, for no other reason, to ensure my flight pay. I was not very anxious to go on my last and 30th mission as there were rumors the war could be over by the end of the year. I went to London often and spent time with Alice when she wasn't in medical school studying to be a foot specialist. Alice was a very gracious and attractive woman – the only child of an affluent family who operated several shoe stores.

The day of reckoning – my 30th mission - finally came on December 11th. I was called to fill in on a crew needing a radioman. The target was Hanau near Frankfurt in southern Germany (#30). It was wintertime in Europe and after a heavy snowfall the day before, the continent was largely snow covered.



We were carrying 100-pound fragmentation bombs which did not all release on the signal, "Bombs away!", so we had to carry some in the waist and drop them out the camera hatch door. Again, we ran into very bad weather on the return trip and had to leave formation and fly singly back to base. Our ground troops had already reached Aachen and were positioned well into Germany proper, so lower altitude flying from there on was not too dangerous. It was only the 5th mission for the crew I flew with and they were not too confident about themselves, which made me feel very uneasy. However, we landed safely back at base and I was quite relieved about completing my 30 missions over that stressful six-month period.



Missions 3, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30.



My photo near the end of my military career.

Upon completion of a tour, you could request transportation back to the States by ship, many of which were regularly crossing the Atlantic. However, as I was not too excited to arrive back in North Dakota for a 21-day leave in the middle of winter, I volunteered to stay another three months. This also qualified me to request air transportation back to the States. I fulfilled the additional time and arrived by air in Washington D.C. on April 1st, 1945. I spent a few days sightseeing in D.C., then took a train to Minot. The train stopped overnight in Chicago, then again in Minneapolis and Grand Forks, North Dakota, before I arrived to pleasant weather in Minot during Easter week.



Sadly, the day before my arrival, my uncle, John Mack, received a telegram from the war department informing him that his son, Tony, had been killed in Germany. This saddened the whole community. I also learned that a neighbor - a very good friend who had joined the Merchant Marines - was missing in the North Atlantic with a convoy to Russia and was presumed lost. A classmate from high school had been killed in the South Pacific. The small community of Karlsruhe had three casualties and war was still on.

After my furlough, I reported to Santa Anna Air Base in California where, for a month, the three of us who had returned from Europe had some great times in Long Beach and L.A. For reassignment, we were given an option to choose a base near home so I chose the base at Sioux Falls, South Dakota and went there as a radio instructor at the base radio school.



Cousin Tony Mack

The End of World War II

In the spring of 1945, the Allies closed in on Germany. American and British armies crossed the Rhine in late March, and then pushed east. By mid April, other forces from those same countries were advancing north from Italy, while Russian Soviets moved southwestward from Poland. On April 30th Adolf Hitler committed suicide. Seven days later the Germans surrendered, and jubilant crowds celebrated May 8 as V-E – Victory in Europe – Day.

Despite facing certain defeat, the Japanese fought on, and U.S. military leaders estimated that the war in the Pacific might cost 1 million more American lives. So President Truman decided to use atomic bombs. The first one was detonated over Hiroshima on August 6, and the second over Nagasaki on August 9. Less than a week afterwards, Japan announced its surrender.

The world had been saved from Hitler and his accomplices. But the war was truly global, and its cost horrific. A total of 61 countries, representing 3/4 of the world's population, took part. About 110 million people were mobilized for military service, and at least 60 million – more than half of them civilians – died as a result of the conflict.

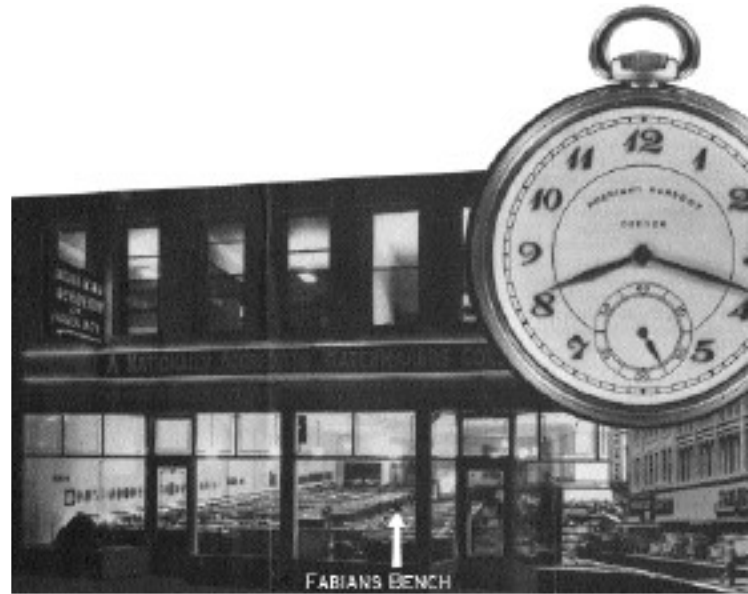
On May 8th 1945, Germany surrendered. We were given a choice to upgrade from a tech sergeant to a warrant officer and re-enlist for 3 years or take a discharge. I was not unhappy in the Air Force, but felt I was too ambitious for service life. I took my discharge on September 15th, 1945. In the meantime, Japan had also surrendered on August 14th.

I wish I could express my gratitude to my father for his confidence in me and for allowing me to graduate from high school, which made me eligible for the Air Force when we became involved in WW II. The elite men with whom I became associated in the Air Force gave me great insight for the future, despite the horrendous losses we suffered over Germany. By the grace of God, I survived.



After The War...

On my way home after my discharge in Camp McCoy, Michigan, I stopped in Grand Forks, North Dakota for a few days to visit relatives. While there, I enrolled in the University for the fall term. While I was waiting for school to start, I helped Tony on the farm and ended up having an emergency appendectomy. The operation caused me to miss the start of the University. As I was contemplating a vocation, I learned that the American Academy of Horology (watchmaking) was opening in Denver on January 13th. I was very interested and enrolled right away and soon was on my way to a career.



Denver Academy of Horology. My bench is visible through the window.

I took to watchmaking readily and was always in the upper part of my class of 150. I finished within the top 25 at graduation a year later. Some students took up to 2 years to complete the program. For several months before completing watchmaking school, I had worked after hours in a downtown trade shop assembling cleaned watches for \$1.00 each. I gained valuable hands-on experience and it sure beat working in a service station for \$1.00 an hour.!

In the meantime, I had bought a used 1942 Chevy from my friend, Issy Gefroh, who could not afford a repair bill he had incurred by letting it freeze up. After graduating, I headed back home to Minot, stopping at my uncle's jewelry store in Bismarck. My uncle wanted me to go to work for him, but after giving it some thought, I decided to go on home to Minot and was offered a job there right away. The summer before, I had met Irene in a Minot jewelry store where she was working. When I came back, however, she had left the store and had gone to work for a dentist. We began courting.



Irene & I in Denver in 1946.

The jeweler for whom Irene had worked was the railroad watch inspector. He had contracted leukemia and the store offered me \$10.00 more per week (\$65.00 per week) than the other store that offered me a job, plus one half of all other watch repair I did on my own time. I took that job and did great - practically doubling my regular wages - but put in long late hours. Meanwhile, on November 17, 1947, Irene and I were married. After several months of living in a basement apartment at Irene's folk's house, we finally found our own apartment. Life was good. We made many friends partying but we were especially close to one family - very nice German religious people - who had a furniture store.



I gradually assumed the responsibility of the whole jewelry store with the exception of bookkeeping. As my employer's health deteriorated in the latter part of 1948, I offered to buy the business. They said they would consider it and prepare a proposal after the year-end inventory. Their ultimate proposal to me was for me to pay the cost of the remaining inventory and a reasonable price for the fixtures which were poor quality and home made. The proposal amounted to approximately \$35,000, onto which they added \$10,000 for good will (blue sky). They had only been in business five years and the location was not the best, so I felt the amount for good will was not justified. I started looking for a store of my own and found several in nearby small towns. However, none of them were really suitable to me. Then I learned from the "National Jeweler" magazine about a store for sale in Baker, Oregon.



Irene and I at our wedding.



Original Baker Store on the corner of this Antler's Hotel.



Interior of original Baker store

After a few phone calls and a train trip to Baker in late February of 1949, we decided to buy the store in Baker. With borrowed money from both families and a nice nest egg of our own, we arrived in Baker and took over the store - on a side street one block from Main Street - on April 1, 1949. The store had been there only about four years. It was well done with nice blond wood fixtures, but it had black linoleum flooring which proved to be very difficult to maintain. There was as much repair work as I could do. With very limited inventory, however, sales were very slow the first few months. I was very confident that things would get better, though, and they did as we went into the late fall season.



Putting Down Roots In Baker

When Irene and I first moved to Baker, we lived frugally in an upstairs apartment. A year later, we moved into a rental house. Two years later, we bought our first home on 1st Street. It was a 2-bedroom bungalow, with a remodeled bathroom and a nice large basement. The location was wonderfully convenient – four blocks from work and just one block from St. Francis Academy, handy because our oldest child, Jim, was getting near school age. By this time, we also had Jerry and Joyce. Janice came along in August of 1952.

The same month Janice was born, a drugstore at 1913 Main Street went out of business. It was a terrific location and I took a five year lease at \$150.00 per month. I completely remodeled the front half and moved into the building on September 1, 1952. I had an extensive inventory of low-priced costume jewelry to fill the store. Traffic and business boomed.



Our 1st Street house had a beautiful interior spacious for a small family and wonderful for entertaining.



Dining room in our 1st Street house.



Bob Lambeth came to work for me to do the watch work; I also had two other sales clerks. Business increased dramatically and so did profits. Bob eventually left retail to go "on the road" for a Portland materials house. While in Baker, he had married a lady from Boise (Dorothy). They lived together "on the road" until Bob bought a pawnshop in Mountain Home, Idaho and they settled down there to have family. Bob and Dorothy became life-long good friends. They always stopped by to visit when traveling through the area. They loved the family and the family loved them. The older kids always looked forward to going to Mountain Home for a week or so in the summer to stay with them. It was sad for all of us when they both passed away.



Baker City, Oregon

Around 1860, the discovery of gold in northeastern Oregon triggered a classic Wild West boom. Prospectors flocked to the region, followed by a host of other hopefuls. Amid this activity, the town of Baker City sprang up. Officially incorporated in 1870, it soon became a thriving center of commerce. By 1900, it was the biggest town between Salt Lake City and Portland, with elegant hotels and a fancy opera house – plus electricity and telephones. The community came of age in 1903, when the Diocese of Baker City was established to serve the Catholic population in the eastern two-thirds of Oregon.

Mining peaked during the 1920s, but forestry, ranching and farming provided a solid basis for continued prosperity. Though the town missed out on the rapid development that occurred elsewhere in Oregon after World War II, it also avoided many of the problems such development caused. This made Baker a great place to do business and raise a family in the 1950s. ("City" was dropped from the municipal name in 1911, but reinstated in 1989.)



The original black tile storefront of Mack's jewelers on Main Street in 1952.



Pete Keating, from Pendleton, came to Baker to be my watchmaker in 1956. A year later, in 1957, I decided to buy a store in Pendleton and transferred Pete over there as manager. Over a period of years, I sold Pete an interest in the store and our partnership worked well. The store was very small, but Pete ran it efficiently and had a remarkable inventory turn. I visited him there regularly. The kids enjoyed stopping on the way to or from Walla Walla where I took them for their orthodontic appointments. When I retired in 1986, I sold my remaining interest to Pete.



*St. Francis Cathedral in the forefront;
St. Francis Academy in the distance.*



The city of Baker was the seat of the Catholic Diocese of Baker. There was a Catholic school in town – St. Francis Academy – run by the diocese and staffed by Franciscan nuns. The nuns actually owned and lived in a beautiful, large home at 2337 2nd Street, just two blocks from the school and church. In 1955, they decided to sell the home and move into the upper floor of the school building. By that time, Irene and I had six children (Julia and John had been born) and a seventh on the way. We purchased the nun's house for \$20,000.00.

The house had two dormitory-like suites at either end, plus a normal bedroom. Jim and Jerry were assigned to the bedroom; the girls (Joyce, Janice, Julie and, eventually Jacque and Judy) got the large suite at one end and the younger boys (John, Jeff, Joe and, eventually, Jason) got the smaller suite at the other end. Irene and I converted what had been the chapel into our bedroom. There was only one full bath and one half bath.



Our family generated quite an expense in bicycle transport. As one child graduated to the next size up, the oldest got a new bike.

We completely remodeled the kitchen and full bathroom. With Irene's expertise in decorating, it became a comfortable and ideal family home, close to work, school and church. It had a great backyard in which we built a dual clubhouse for the boys and the girls. The basement was a large with an open area to which adjoined a separate large shop and a separate storage room. There were lots of cupboards and shelves for storage and for canned goods. The large open area was an ideal place to make sausage, beer and root beer. The shop had a great workbench used to repair bike's and once to make a go-cart



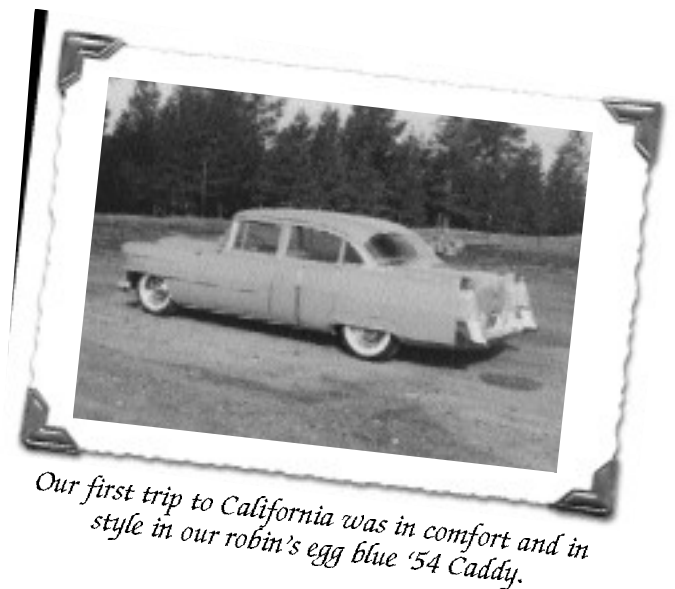
from a lawn mower. Oh, how that go-cart would run down Madison Street with Jim or Jerry driving! It was very noisy, but a lot of fun. We enjoyed the home for 20 years. Most of the family has vivid memories of growing up there.

The home was just a block from the Parish House and was a favorite place for the clergy to visit and relax. We regularly had priests over to dinner or to play cards for an evening, starting with Father Moore and continuing through Father Gaire, Father Weckerle and Father Hayes. Father Fern, a priest from India, would bring his guitar and play for the family. Occasionally Bishop Leipzig would stop and visit. Even some of the nuns who used to reside there would occasionally stop in to see what Irene had done with the place.



Very shortly after starting our business in Baker, I realized my educational shortcomings in diamonds and gemstones. I felt that to be truly successful, I would have to learn much more about them. Since I had eligibility remaining on my G.I. bill, I enrolled in correspondence courses in gemology offered by the Gemological Institute of America (G.I.A.). For two years, I studied faithfully at home in the evenings after work and kept up my lessons. With a growing family and needing to pay careful attention to a growing business, it was often extremely difficult to read and complete the dry, scientific lessons. After two years of correspondence study, three one-week resident classes were required. These were only available at the Institute in Los Angeles. With the oldest five children, we set out for Santa Monica in our Cadillac. The words I had been studying finally - with the help of good instructors and the use of instruments in the lab - started to make sense and I started to enjoy gemology.

We went back to Baker after the classes and I studied through two more years of correspondence, this time with the aid of some instruments and a gem scope I had purchased. Finally, I was ready for the final three weeks of resident classes at the Institute which culminated in earning my Graduate Gemologist diploma. As only the sixth Graduate Gemologist in Oregon and the 54th in the U.S.A., I felt this was a tremendous accomplishment, especially considering the circumstances under which I completed the courses. It had been almost five years from start to finish and I felt ready to move forward and begin to enjoy the jewelry business even more.



In the mid 60's, the jewelry industry was as much a source of alternative "luxury goods" – such as appliances – as it was a source of jewelry. There was a trend for consumers to buy these luxury goods on easy credit terms. To take advantage of the trend, we had changed our logo to Mack's

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an italic word.



*Credit*Jewelers. For several years we gained additional volume but ultimately did not increase the bottom line of profit to any meritorious extent. For the most part, I had established the terms for credit and contract purchases and was also deeply involved in the collection process. This became so overwhelming at times that I would spend many evenings collecting past due accounts and repossessing merchandise from unpaid accounts. In the end, I decided that the extra volume the "credit" business created did not justify the effort required for collection and I eventually returned to a cash basis. I only maintained a few charge accounts who had established themselves as good risks. I continued this policy up to my retirement. In retrospect, I see that I had – by many years - preceded the advent of credit card purchases which is now prevalent in many retail environments.



*I studied the GIA courses after work
when the kids were asleep*

My youngest brother, Dan, eventually came out to Baker from North Dakota and began an apprenticeship as a watchmaker. He lived with us for a year and worked with me for many years. In 1969, I bought a jewelry store in Payette, Idaho from a couple who wished to retire. The store in Payette, which was right across the river from Ontario, Oregon, was an avenue for me to break into the Ontario market. I ran a very successful "going out of business" sale in Payette in the two months before Christmas, netting us \$16,000.00.

A new mall was scheduled to open in Ontario the following year. I secured the best corner location with the intention that Dan would manage this store. Dan, however, - and his wife, Donna - did not want to relocate to Ontario. I was terribly disappointed and turned my reservation over to my friend, Jake Molenaar, from Boise. Jake opened a store that turned out to be highly profitable and did well in the Ontario market for many years. It was this episode that made me realize that Dan and I did not make decisions similarly and that it was probably a good time to part company. I deeply regretted missing out on the opportunity the Ontario store offered because I was convinced it would do well and I was ready for the growth. It was not until seven years later that another opportunity arose and took me to Ontario where I did extremely well in business for the ten years leading up to my retirement.

In 1962, my friend, Bill Schaan, suggested I buy a farm that was for sale. The farm was adjacent to property he owned on Missouri Flat, about 6 miles outside of Baker. It was a very difficult decision for me because at the same time, a jeweler friend of mine from La Grande - Mr. Peare – had just passed away and his wife was very interested in selling me the building. The price was right and was about the same amount as the farm property. It was an agonizing decision – weighing my ambitions to add another store and more income versus buying the farm. I was convinced the farm would never produce any revenue, but I needed and wanted it as an outlet for stress and an opportunity for the family to experience life in the country.





Missouri Flat Ranch and the great "wagon wheel" fence. The yard made a great baseball diamond!

From the first day, that "ranch" cost us a lot of money. The buildings were run down and we had to paint everything – house, barn, outbuildings, etc. There was a great fence made alternately of panels and wagon wheels but it was a pain to paint and maintain (the girls had to paint it). We had no livestock so we started by buying eight registered Angus heifers. There was land leveling to be done and ditches to be dug. We had to drill an irrigation well and assemble a portable sprinkler system. The yard was so huge, we needed a riding lawn mower. We had to invest in a tractor and a hay baler. We had to plant trees to break the wind from blowing all our good soil away. We all worked hard and - in the end - it was a great experience for us.

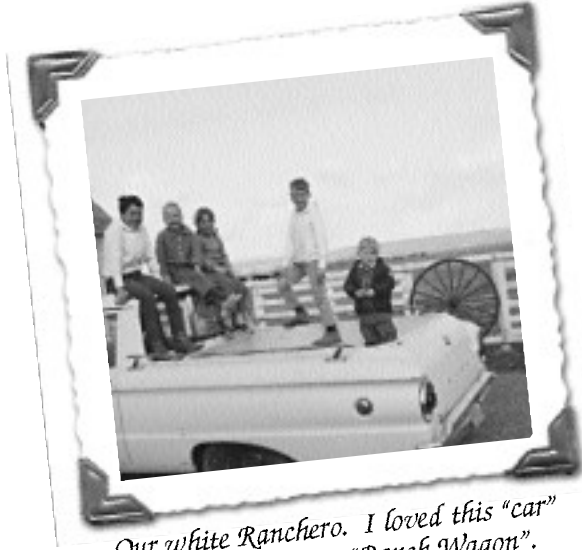
Unbeknownst to the family, we were the victims of several considerably unscrupulous deeds by Mr. Schaan. First he sold us an old, arthritic white horse, which we finally had to dispose of as worthless. Next, he took more than a year to pay us after agreeing to buy our excess hay for his feedlot. What really convinced me, however, that he was not fair and upright, was how he handled the irrigation water that had been appropriated to our properties. The primary irrigation ditch ran through his ranch before it entered ours. Two years in a row, we were cursed with very dry Spring weather. Water was short to begin with but he used most of both our allotments before the water could get to our property. We were at his mercy and our crops really suffered those two years. His positioning and ethics really angered me and ultimately affected my decision to sell the property and move on.



I would occasionally "rent" a bull to breed our heifers.

During the last two years we had our property on Missouri Flat, I had been elected as president of the ditch company that serviced our area. I was working with the Highway Department planning the new freeway that would run through that area. The ditch company was awarded funds from the Highway Department to combine water channels on both sides of the freeway. It was through this process that I was finally able to engineer a different ditch route to Missouri Flat and to our property that was much more dependable and easier to maintain.

The proposed route of the freeway through Baker Valley was very confidential. Only four ditch company presidents were invited to a meeting of the Highway Department in which the proposed freeway plans were revealed. We were shown the finalized maps that depicted the key interchanges, including



Our white Ranchero. I loved this "car" and used it as our "Ranch Wagon". Unfortunately Janice "totalled" it just before her 16th birthday.

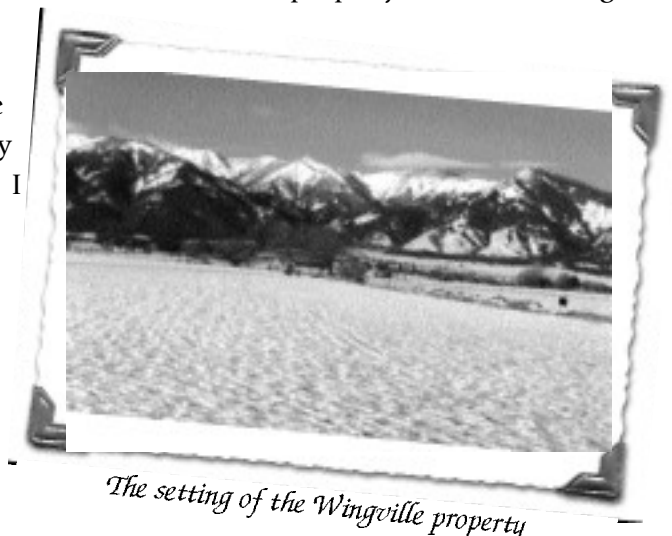
Campbell Street. This was knowledge to which very few people in Baker had access. I suggested to Irene that we buy some of the empty lots along Campbell Street. As an example – a friend of mine – a gunsmith, offered me a whole block for \$9,000.00, which interested me very much. Irene did not agree and preferred that we keep our money in the bank. Two years later Safeway bought the lot for \$75,000.00 and built the new super store on the lot. I always looked back on this as a lost opportunity.

It was two years later that Francis Clarke approached me about selling some of his 40 acres in Wingville. He wanted cash to relieve him of some burdensome debt. Again Irene did not agree, but I was able to put the deal together for 32 of

the acres (minus the home). I had all the land leveled. A year later, Francis came to me again and said he had to sell the home site also. I was able to buy it for cash and my total investment - with improvements - equaled \$110,000.00.

For eight years, we had kept two homes: the 2nd Street house in Baker where we lived from October to May, and the Missouri Flat home where we lived from May to October. It was around 1971 when we sold the 2nd Street house and Irene and I moved the family to the Wingville property. The four older kids were already out of the nest. The Wingville home was not as large as the house in town, but we had four bedrooms and built an extra family room over the garage. It was a beautiful setting in the valley but did not obligate us to the extensive farmwork we always had to do on the Missouri Flat property. It was nice to get back to maintaining only one household.

As I look back on this time in my life, I feel fortunate that from the first day in my own jewelry store, to the day of retirement, I thoroughly enjoyed the jewelry business. I was always so grateful to whomever or whatever guided me on this course which has also been financially rewarding. I am extremely proud that so many of my children entered this interesting industry. My hope is that they have never regretted their choice and that they will enjoy their work and prosper as I have.



The setting of the Wingville property





Rearing A Large Family

Irene and I certainly did not do any so-called "family planning". We loved each other very much and let nature take its course. Irene was an excellent homemaker and a great and devoted mother. I was 25 and she was 19 when we were married. We were indeed mature enough to assume the responsibilities of caring for a family. My life experience up to the point of our marriage certainly provided insight and ability in the tasks of providing for and managing a family socially and financially. Irene also came from a disciplined background and was an intelligent, responsible, capable and gifted individual.

Thankfully, our business progressed as our family grew and it yielded us the financial resources to provide for our family in a large and comfortable home, two blocks from school and close to the store. Irene kept things organized and efficient at home, while I tended to the business. Baker was small and most activities for the kids were close by home. Music teachers were available at the Academy two blocks away or came to our house. Sporting activities at the Gymnasium were only one block away and most of the kids' friends as well as the public swimming pool were within an easy bike ride. The kids even rode their bikes to the dentist, so Irene wasn't busy chauffeuring all the time. She maintained pretty strict routines so all the kids knew what their chores and responsibilities were and when they had free time.





Stocking and maintaining the groceries required strategy and planning, but Irene made it seem pretty simple. She planned meals ahead – in an informal way – but always had a running list of what we needed from the grocery store. There was a small independent grocer called "Cut Rate Market" just a few blocks from home. Irene was their best customer. She would shop weekly and we had a charge account that we paid monthly. The proprietor always enjoyed waiting on her personally and gave her any advantage he could on volume purchases. In turn, Irene took advantage of every bargain. If frozen tom turkeys were 15 cents a pound, she would buy six. Ketchup and peanut butter were always purchased in gallon cans, tomato soup in the family size, and canned vegetables and cream of mushroom soup by the case. She would buy a flat of bread (ten long loaves) at a time. We would use at least two loaves per day, sometimes three. Irene was a smart shopper and the family was well fed economically. In addition to the standard groceries, we had a daily delivery of two gallons of milk and a weekly delivery of six dozen farm eggs.



We always purchased awards at the local 4-H show - and provided all the trophies.

As the children grew, however, and took a liking to steaks more than ground meat, we had to buy an additional half beef and half hog for the meat supply to last a full year. When it came time to get extra meat, I would stop by the slaughterhouse owned by our friends, the Rhodes family, and leave the order for the additional beef and pork we needed. They would deliver it to the house, packaged as we requested. Several times a year, we would set aside a few evenings during which we made homemade sausage. When we finished a batch

At the store, we did a big business in trophies. Because the local 4-H show bought so many awards and trophies from me, I always felt obligated to purchase an animal or two – or three – at the show auction. Usually, I would buy a beef, a hog and a lamb. We would have them slaughtered and processed into a wide variety of meat cuts – chops, steaks, ground, etc. Our large freezer in the kitchen would hold about three animals and initially provided about a years' supply of meat.

Piggies in the Blanket

Ingredients:

2 cups uncooked white rice	Dash of Paprika
6 lbs. ground beef	2 eggs
2 medium onions, diced finely	2 heads cabbage
Salt to taste	Ketchup or tomato sauce
Pepper to taste	

Preparation:

Cook rice according to directions; cool and set aside. Immerse cabbages in boiling water 15-20 minutes; set aside to cool. Combine ground beef, diced onions, salt, pepper, paprika and cooked rice. Separate cabbage leaves from head. Create a small roll of the mixture and wrap a cabbage leaf around the roll. Place rolls in baking dish, seam side down. Pour a line of ketchup or tomato sauce over the cabbage rolls. Sprinkle lightly with paprika. Bake for 1 1/4 - 1 1/2 hours at 375°. Serve with ketchup or additional tomato sauce.



- which included both links and patties - we would have it lightly smoked. The family much preferred our home-made sausage over ham or bacon for breakfast. We consumed huge quantities of meat for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Always, the last packages of meat in the freezer were the heart and liver. Some of the kids liked liver, but most didn't. Most of the livers I eventually had to feed to the neighbor's cats. The kids couldn't imagine eating heart. Once Irene baked a stuffed heart and made the mistake of telling the kids what it was. They all refused to eat it. After several days in the refrigerator, we came up with the idea of thinly slicing it and making Beef Stroganoff which they usually loved. Sure enough, they all enjoyed it immensely and they never knew what they ate. Irene and I enjoyed some of the German delicacies we had known from our childhood in North Dakota - among them pickled pigs feet. Generally, our kids were pretty good eaters and not too picky, but they would really tease us when Irene would serve those. When the urge hit, she would make them for just she and I and we'd serve the kids something leftover!

Irene's Oatmeal Cake

1 cup oatmeal	2 eggs, beaten
1 1/2 cups boiling water	1 tspn cinnamon
or 2 cups of leftover cooked oatmeal	1 tspn salt
1/2 cup margarine or shortening	1/2 tspn soda
1 cup sugar	1 tspn baking powder
1 cup brown sugar	1 1/2 cups flour
	Preheat oven to 350°.

Make oatmeal mixture and set aside. Cream margarine (or shortening) and both sugars. Add in beaten eggs. Mix well. Add in oatmeal mixture. Mix well. Blend in dry ingredients, including flour. Bake in a greased and floured 9 x 13" pan for 45 minutes at 350°.

TOPPING:

2/3 cup brown sugar
2 tbsp. shortening or butter
1/2 cup cream

Melt first three ingredients together.

Add: 1/2 cup chopped nuts
1/2 cup coconut
Pour over cake while warm

We went through loaves of bread at a head-spinning rate. Although we kept large quantities of dry cereal, we all had a preference for cooked cereal such as oatmeal and cream of wheat. The kids would dip up the cereal with toast - I think some of them may have been in high school before they realized most people ate cooked cereal with a spoon! Any leftover oatmeal Irene would use to make her famous oatmeal cake. Sometimes we'd have French toast - the kids would eat 2 or 3 slices each. Often we'd have eggs and sausage with toast. I prepared breakfast most mornings and would usually start with at least a dozen eggs, two loaves of bread and about two pounds of meat.



St. Francis Academy didn't have a hot lunch program, so all the children came home for lunch every day. Irene usually prepared a homemade chili, stew or soup for a quick, hot lunch. Her beef and beet Borscht was a favorite. As a regular treat, she would often also make "doughnuts" – raised dough, deep fried and sprinkled with sugar. She would make mounds of them and the kids would devour them all with amazing speed. Sometimes lunch would consist mainly of just sandwiches – tuna or peanut butter or grilled cheese – which would be piled high on platters when they'd blast into the house for their lunch break. There was almost always canned soup to accompany those – either tomato or chicken noodle.

Irene's Bignets (Doughnuts)

(Along with a big pot of soup, we'd find platters piled with these on the kitchen table for lunch some days. Mom left some plain, but mostly we liked them rolled in powdered sugar.)

1 pkg. Active dry yeast	1 cup undiluted evaporated milk
1 1/2 cups warm water	7 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup sugar	Oil for frying
1 tspn. Salt	Powdered sugar
2 eggs	

In a large bowl, sprinkle yeast over water and stir to dissolve. Blend in (with beater) sugar, salt, eggs and milk. Add 4 cups of the flour and beat until smooth. Add shortening. Knead in remaining flour. Cover with plastic wrap and chill.

Roll out on floured board to 1/8" thickness. Cut into squares. Deep fry at 375o for 2-3 minutes until lightly browned on each side. Drain on paper towels; roll in powdered sugar; serve warm.

Dough can be kept for several days. If it rises, punch it down and roll it out.

Yield: 4-6 dozen

Irene's Borscht

32 ounces Beef Stock (mom would use beef bones and boil the hock out of them)
32 ounces canned, sliced beets
1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped
3 stalks celery, cut into small chunks
3 carrots, cut into small chunks

3 potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
2 bay leaves
2 cloves of garlic peeled & crushed
1 tspn. Salt
1 tspn pepper
2 tspns sugar
1/2 head cabbage, shredded
2 8-oz cans peeled tomatoes

Bring the stock, onion, celery, carrots, potatoes, bay leaves, garlic, salt, pepper and sugar to a boil. Simmer, covered for about 40 minutes, until the vegetables are just softening. Add the cabbage and tomatoes. Continue cooking about 10-15 minutes. Serve as is or with sour cream.

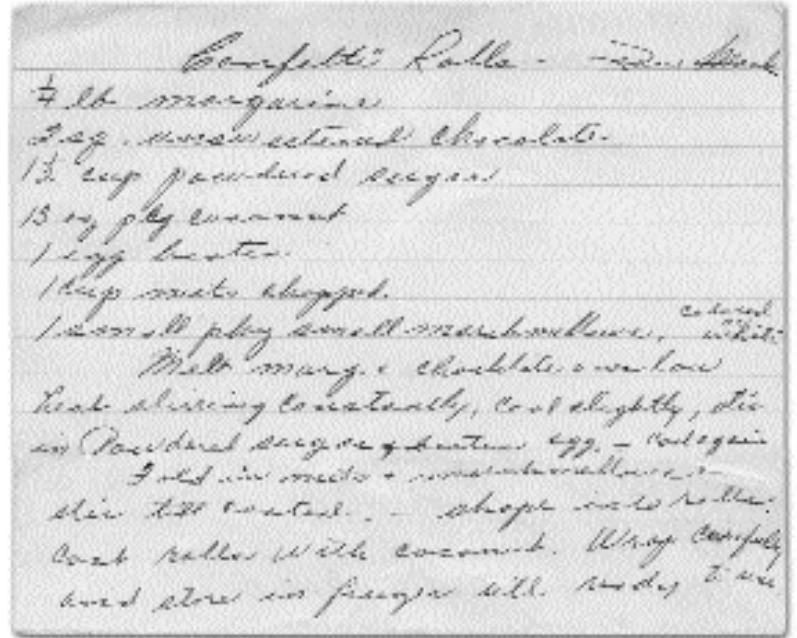
The kids would come home from school for lunch and find a huge pot of this on the stove. Of course, Irene would quadruple the recipe!

The evening meals were well choreographed by Irene. Although I was not there, I know she always had the meal planned and organized. She would start the main dish sometime in the afternoon, particularly if it was a cut of meat that needed baking for several hours. When the girls came home from school, it was their responsibility to prepare the starch – usually potatoes which we bought by the 100-pound sack and kept in the furnace room off the workshop in the basement. We loved potatoes any way – mashed, baked, French-fried, hash-browned or scalloped – and ate lots of them. We always had a vegetable – green beans, peas or corn were the regulars. Since Irene canned a lot during the summer, there was



always a pile of dill pickles slices on the table. The girls were also always responsible for making a dessert of some kind – we ALWAYS had dessert. It was usually cake or pudding, but sometimes Irene would make incredible pies. We certainly ate well and by gauging the general health of the family over the years, it must have been a satisfactory diet, as we had a minimum of health problems. Good thing, because we never carried any health insurance.

Our dinner table was regulation ping-pong size. When our family was the fullest, we'd have to sit a couple of kids at a side table. We always had one or two in high chairs that were pulled up to the table by either Irene or me. We'd put the two left-handed kids (Jacque and Jeff) on the ends so they wouldn't poke the others. Everything was always served family style and the kids learned to take what they wanted the first time around because there usually wasn't much left after a dish had made it around the table the first time.



We always had a dessert, although Irene usually made this for guests.

When dinner was over, it was always the girls' responsibility to clean up the kitchen. They would continuously argue over who would "carry over", who would "load the dishwasher", who would "wash" or "dry" or "sweep up." But it was always done fastidiously, thanks to Irene's training and expectations. Irene usually used this time to escape to her sewing room or she and I would go to one of the quiet rooms to catch up on the day.



Joyce, Janice and Julie learned the bathing ritual when they were young (here with a baby and her friend) and continued it with the younger kids in later years.

After the dishes were done, it was time to bathe the younger kids and get them ready for bed before all the school-age kids settled into their homework. Bathing was another routine – one big tub of water and the kids would go through from the youngest on up unless it got too dirty to reuse. We allowed the older kids to shower at night but never in the morning because it was too busy and hectic and, since we only had one bathroom, we couldn't allow it to be tied up for long periods in the mornings.



The amount of laundry our family generated was nearly a full time job in itself. Our washer and dryer ran overtime. Every day after school, the girls would have to fold at least seven or eight big loads of laundry. Irene always used cloth diapers, so there were always a lot of them, too. Once folded, the piles of laundry would completely cover our huge kitchen table. The girls couldn't start dinner until after the laundry was all done. These were the days before perma press fabrics, too. Piles and piles of ironing always awaited the girls on Saturday. We would trade in our washer and dryer every three years for a new one. This was one good way of avoiding a breakdown and a huge complication in the daily schedule.



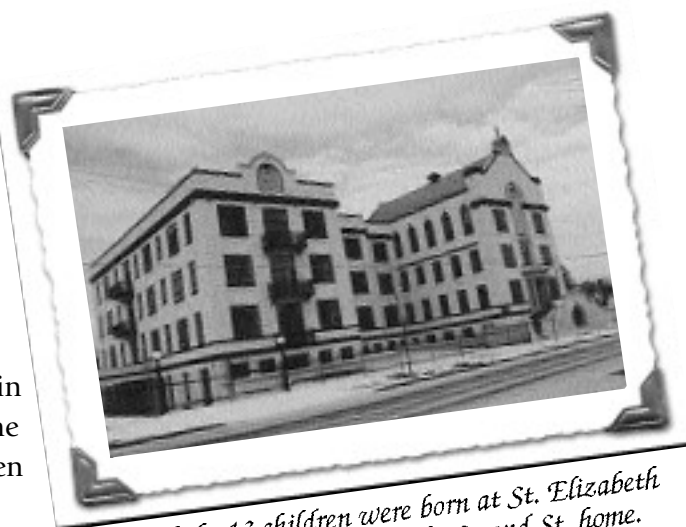
We had to replace our washer and dryer about every three years to avoid breakdowns.

Saturday was also the day for housekeeping. Irene had a schedule she rotated – everyone's sheets were washed at least every other week. The girls were always stripping and re-making one bed or another. Then there was endless vacuuming, dusting and scrubbing. It was rare that there were more than a few hours in the week there weren't chores waiting to be done.

Something I always appreciated about Irene was how she always took things in stride and I look back on how strong and independent she was. She always enjoyed being pregnant and never showed signs of illness or weakness during her pregnancies. After having so many kids, it was pretty routine to her. There was one incident I'll never forget, though. She was pregnant with our 10th child and was getting near delivery time. One morning as I was leaving for work, she asked me to be home that promptly evening as she felt like she should check into the hospital after dinner. She already had her suitcase packed. When I came home that evening and asked the kids where Mom was, Joyce told me that when she came home from school, Mom had taken her suitcase and walked over to the hospital which was just two blocks away. I hurriedly fed the children and rushed over to the hospital, where the nuns presented me with a new baby girl – Jacque. They told me Irene had delivered as soon as she got there; she had barely given them time to get everything ready! I do not recall if Dr. John Higgins arrived on time to make this delivery, but he delivered all the other kids from Jerry to Jillona over the years. Birthing seemed easy for Irene and there were never any complications to my knowledge with her full-term pregnancies. Despite three early-term miscarriages, we were indeed blessed to have thirteen healthy children with no major problems.



I wish we could have protected all our children from the health problems some of them experienced later in life, particularly trouble with drugs and dependence on alcohol. Both Irene and I grew up in well-disciplined families and it has been hard to disassociate alcoholism from weakness. Discipline always had a distinct presence in German ancestry, and Irene and I felt like we carried that on in our family. Irene used a firm hand in controlling the children when I was not at home. No school children left the house until their beds were made and their rooms picked up. Each of the children had specific chores – the girls busy in the house and the boys busy outside. We believed in corporal punishment and did not hesitate to use it if we felt the kids were out of line or had exercised poor judgment in an action. Every one of the kids had a strong and well-directed beginning; it seems that when they were left without supervision as teenagers, they got involved in abuse that has been detrimental to their well-being as adults.



12 of the 13 children were born at St. Elizabeth Hospital, 2 blocks from the Second St. home.

When the boys had no after school activities at home – like mowing the lawn, cleaning the garage or doing other exterior work - they came to the store and did whatever I could find for them to do in menial jobs. It often took me longer to explain to them what to do than it took for me to do it myself. Engraving and tinkering with watches turned out to be the most interesting work to most of them. Since I did a big business in trophies and awards, there was always a great deal of engraving to be done - especially in the fall months or around the 4-H show. Before Christmas, the kids would help assemble hundreds of boxes and make hundreds of bows for the jewelry we sold.

Evidently the exposure to the jewelry store and surroundings appealed to many of the kids as seven of them took a significant enough interest in it to choose it as their own life's vocation. If they enjoy the jewelry industry nearly as much as I have, they certainly made a wise decision. I was actively involved for exactly forty years and enjoyed every day of it. I often wonder if the family members who embraced the jewelry business ever had thoughts about how they would have fared in life if they had chosen a different career. Some of the kids went into different professions and became successful as well. I've always felt, however, that very few entrepreneurs offer individuals as much an opportunity to be secure and prosper in a private





business as an independently owned jewelry store. Unlike other retail business, customers who desire to purchase a precious symbol for a loved one will usually seek the advice of a knowledgeable person. To buy an unknown item based solely on a merchant's reputation of offering honest value for the dollar seems to be almost inconceivable in the present day of questionable values offered by many retailers. Yet I am convinced that the small independent jeweler will survive the onslaught of mass merchandisers - including the internet - for a long time to come if he is honest in presenting gifts of precious metals and gems.

Some of my business success is, admittedly, due to a few people who played key roles in my life. To them, I am forever grateful for their parts in a great working relationship and maintaining a most pleasant business atmosphere. Dorothy Conklin was my first long and faithful employee who stayed with me for ten years. She only left because her family wanted to move to Yakima, Washington. Selma Radabaugh followed Dorothy and stayed for eleven years – until she moved to Boise to be near her daughter after her husband passed away. Thelma Hyton was already in the Ontario store when I bought it and she stayed for nine years. After she lost her husband, she remarried and retired to California. Josephine Bailey was a great office manager for fifteen years; four stores required a lot of accounting. Up until Josephine came, I did and oversaw all the office work personally and always had a handle on the entire operation. My close supervision contributed to attaining and sustaining an excellent credit rating in the industry.



1958 Christmas Card.



The kids grew up in and around the jewelry store. Irene wrote verses for our annual Christmas card which usually depicted another child each year.



Over the years, many Baker residents requested my help when they were in need of cash and I often bought their jewelry from them to provide it. On one instance, I failed to keep provable records of how I came upon the used jewelry and ended up in court with a fine. I learned a valuable lesson from that incident - that being sympathetic to people in distress and accepting their valuables as a means to an end, was not always a win-win situation.



1959 Christmas Card.



1957 Christmas Card.



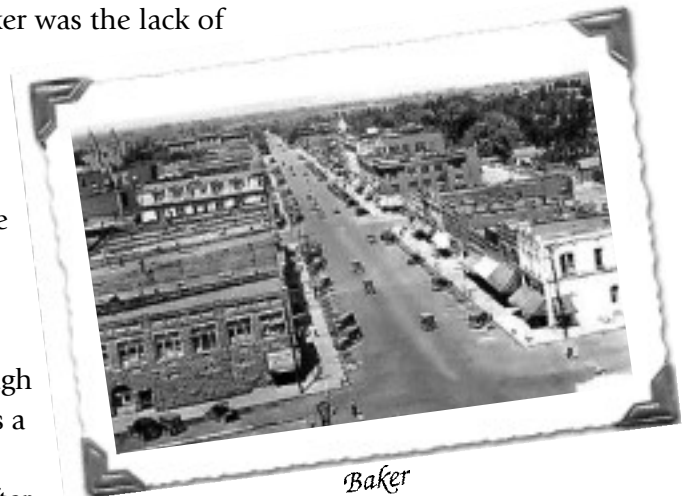




Baker And The Economy 1949

When I opened the store in Baker, I had quite a few competitors. There were three full-line jewelry stores on Main Street and a watch repair shop on Broadway. The repair shop and one of the jewelry stores went out of business within about three years. During my third year in Baker, I was able to move the store over to Main Street into larger quarters.

The two remaining stores were no match for my aggressive merchandising and service. I became very promotional in all phases. I enjoyed tremendous success every November with "total weight" diamond and colored stone promotions. I also did exceptionally well with watch promotions. Low-priced costume jewelry generated the traffic that enabled me to move all types of merchandise. In hindsight, the only negative part of being a retailer in Baker was the lack of growth in the area. On only three short-lived occasions did the community prosper: 1) the construction of three dams on the Snake River; 2) the construction of the gas pipeline through Baker; and 3) Paramount Picture's filming of the musical "Paint Your Wagon." The construction of the I-84 freeway through the area did little for the economy. As a matter of fact, the freeway was Baker's doom in some ways. It was shortly after the completion of the freeway that I began



Baker



to notice an outflow of business to the Boise area. Of the 28 years in Baker, I was aware of only a small number of businesses that truly prospered. Fortunately Mack's Jewelers was one of them.

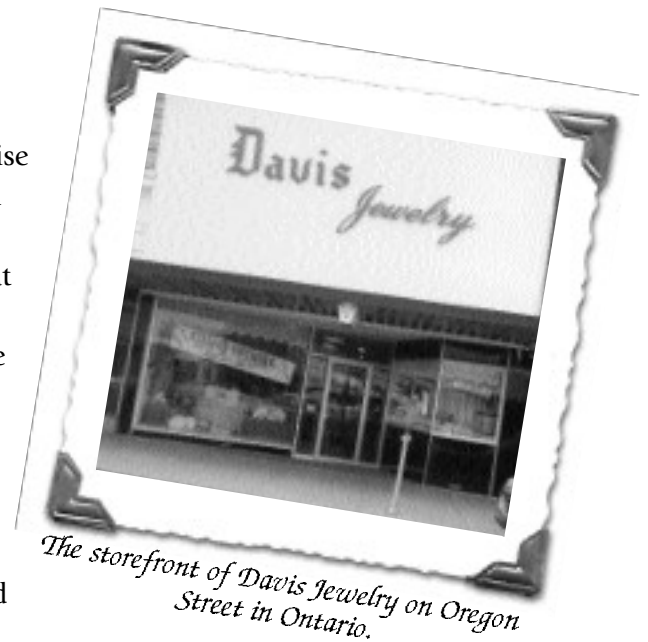
The gradual decline in retailing that began in the early 70's has continued to this day and I see no signs of a change in the near future. In 1996, Jerrold decided to close both the Baker and Ontario stores and partner with Joseph in La Grande. Perhaps ending the family's presence in Baker City retail after 50 years may prove to have been a wise decision. Two economical prospects that have been on the books for some time – the development of the Anthony Lakes ski resort and the development of Radium Hot Springs - seem remote as both would be of a seasonal nature.

A Move To Ontario

In late November of 1976, I had received a call from Louise Davis of Davis Jewelry in Ontario asking if I was interested in their store. They had decided to quit at year's end. The very next evening I met her at their store, took a good look at what they had, and told her I would need a few days to make a decision. Once I had extracted a promise from Jerry to move from L.A. and manage the Baker store, I decided to buy a small amount of the Davis inventory, the fixtures, and lease their building,

The day after Christmas in 1976, I gathered some merchandise from the Baker and Pendleton stores and moved to Ontario. I opened there on January 1st of 1977. Thelma Hyton - a former employee of the Davis' - agreed to stay and work with me for six months. Thelma turned out to be an excellent employee, particularly in how she managed the gift and bridal department. We worked well together and she ended up staying for nine years until she lost her husband, then remarried and eventually retired. Although Josephine Bailey then helped me in the office for several years, it was hard for anyone to take Thelma's place.

When I reached retirement age in 1987, Jerry and Jeff bought the corporation and carried on. They changed the name on the Ontario store from *Davis Jewelry* to *Mack & Sons*. During my tenure in Ontario, I had acquired several



The storefront of Davis Jewelry on Oregon Street in Ontario.



My grand opening in Ontario in 1977.

I think this is the pdf doing funnys stuff with the space after an italic word.



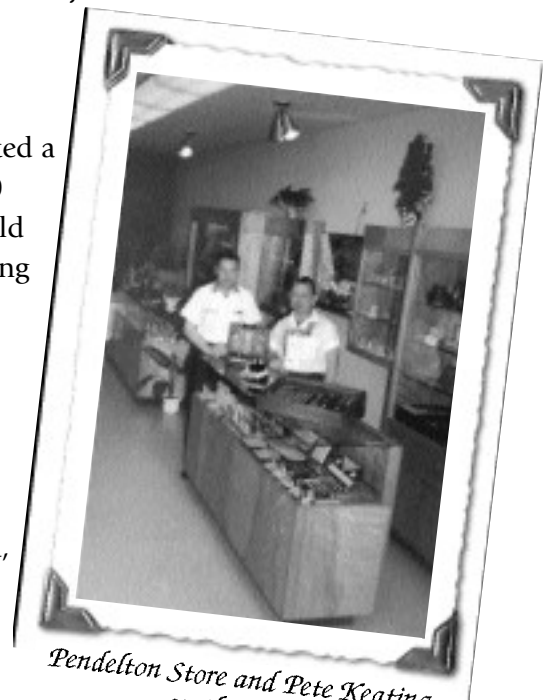
My four-plex in Ontario where I currently reside

buildings on each side of my business as they had come up for sale. Eventually, I had purchased seven units - all adjacent to each other in the 200 block of Oregon Street. I owned approximately two-thirds of one block.

In 1979, I had also purchased a nice duplex in Ontario and in 1984, an excellent 4-plex. The 4-plex had a deluxe unit on one end which I moved into and in which I still reside today. With my commercial property and my rental units - which I upgraded - and by investing wisely in stocks, I was fortunate enough to double my net worth in less than ten years.

The Pendleton Store

Although small in size and volume, the Pendleton store generated a reasonable profit annually in relation to my investment over the 30 years in which I was involved. When I first bought the store, I would spend about one day a month in Pendleton. Soon, with Pete Keating doing such a good job, I pared that down to about 4 or 5 trips per year. Eventually I got to where I would just go over there once annually to assist with the inventory reconciliation. My total investment in the Pendleton store was never over \$50,000.00 and I considered the return quite adequate. Over the years we had three minor break-ins and theft - roof entry, glass breakage, and a side-wall entry - but none were substantial in loss. By the time I retired, Pete had gained a 45% interest in the company so, at that point, I sold him the balance of my interest in an amicable deal.



Pendleton Store and Pete Keating on the right.

Weiser, Idaho

In the early eighties, one of two jewelry stores in Weiser, Idaho - about 20 miles from Ontario - came up for sale. Jeff - who had been working with Irene's store in La Grande - preferred not to stay there so was available to manage the Weiser store for me. We had a very successful "Going Out of Business" sale, followed by a good re-opening sale under our own name - Mack and Sons. Because Weiser is in Idaho, there was sales tax. The tax seemed significant enough to drive the local residents across the Oregon border to nearby Ontario where there was no sales tax. We believe this was the primary reason we could not generate enough volume to be profitable. After five years, we conducted another great "Going Out of Business" sale, closed the store, and moved the fixtures and inventory to Ontario.





Family Home at Black-Butte

After Irene's untimely death in May of 1984, her estate was divided among the children. Her real estate holdings included several commercial buildings in La Grande and Enterprise, a residence in which the boys lived in La Grande, and the Wingville Ranch that was on a long-term contract. Managing of the properties proved difficult because of their geographic spread and the varied interests of the children who were now busy young adults. After several years, the kids gradually liquidated some of the commercial buildings and the residence but maintained the long term contract on Wingville and the La Grande building that housed Irene's store, which Joe was running.

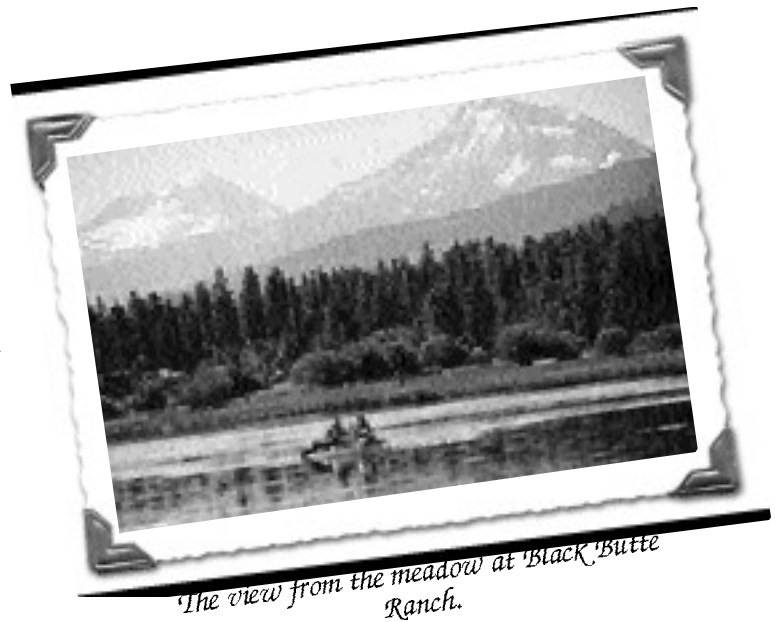


I.J. Gems building in LaGrande in which Irene's main store was located.

Although Irene had distributed her business interests proportionately among the children, her real estate and cash had been distributed to all of them equally. This presented many of the typical dilemmas that unwieldy partnerships face, particularly decision-making about the assets. So the kids wisely formed a partnership. They called it CePart, an acronym for "Commercial Partnership". The financial aspects of CePart were largely accounted for and managed by Joyce and Judy. Each of the kids had a 1/13th share. With the exception of the income from the Wingville contract and the LaGrande building and the related expenses, CePart was a relatively dormant enterprise in which a significant amount of cash was building. There was varied opinion as to how to invest and perpetuate the partnership – some kids wanted to sell off everything and



distribute the proceeds, others wanted to invest in more commercial property and grow the entity. But always there were the questions about where the investments would be made and who would manage them as the kids had spread out geographically from Alaska to Colorado. It was also obvious that, as the years went by, there was really no longer any place for the siblings to gather together. Irene's home had been the family "seat" after our divorce and after her death that ceased to be.



The view from the meadow at Black Butte Ranch.



The golf courses at Black Butte are superb.

The idea of investing in a leisure home for all to share began to gain support. Since the kids had spread out mostly between western Washington and eastern Oregon, central Oregon looked logical as a convenient location for a shared property. The Sun River Resort in Bend was well-known as a great leisure destination. Judy was also familiar with Black Butte Ranch Resort near Sisters as her in-laws had had a home there for many years. Many of the siblings had visited there with Judy. The kids looked at both places – and several other developing properties in the vicinity. They had \$130,000 in cash and were hoping to find a large home with the amenities to host large crowds in a cabin – or lodge-like environment. They became discouraged as what was available in the price range was either dilapidated, far too small or inadequate for the objective. After making several trips to the area, the scouting team was about to leave yet again when – on a Sunday morning – a local real estate agent called and said a vacant lot on Black Butte Ranch had just become available.



Black Butte Ranch is a developed property, 11 miles east of the Santiam Pass and 10 miles west of Sisters. The ranch sprawls at the south base of the Black Butte. To the west and south, it has incredible panoramic views of the Cascade Peaks, Mount Washington, The Three Sisters and Mount Bachelor. The old ranch had been subdivided into building lots back in the 70's. Most of the lots had been developed and it was rare that really good lots became available, particularly golf-course frontage lots. The lots at Black Butte Ranch are much larger than the lots on most of the other leisure developments in the area. Black Butte Ranch has two championship golf courses, 4 swimming pools, 18 tennis courts and miles of bicycle paths.

The real estate agent led the kids to Lot #13. It was on the northernmost edge of the ranch, about one mile from the main lodge and beautifully situated right on the seventh fairway! It was a large lot with some BIG trees (which later proved to be a problem when it came to situating the house!), but better yet, it bordered on Forest Service land that was unlikely to ever be developed and, as it was at the edge of the ranch property, the drive-by traffic was minimal. There were nice homes on either side. The kids fell in love with it. The asking price was exactly the amount the kids had in hand - \$130,000. They decided immediately to make an offer for somewhat less, which was promptly refused. After a little debate and soul-searching, however, they decided to pay the asking price, convinced it was a message from Irene that they should definitely have Lot #13 for the family home.

Black Butte Ranch

In the early 1900s, most of the land that became Black Butte Ranch belonged to a struggling livestock company. When the company's assets were liquidated, a lumberman bought the property, cut much of its timber and then resold it. Later owners offered the ranch to the State for use as a park, but rejected lucrative bids from California developers because they feared that its natural beauty would be destroyed.

An Oregon firm acquired the ranch in 1970, after promising to preserve the spectacular setting. A team of young professionals then launched an innovative marketing campaign, while engineers and planners shaped a multifaceted living and recreation environment. This unique approach succeeded, and in the 1980s, the ranch's homeowners purchased the property in full, removing the last vestiges of control by outside developers.

Today, Black Butte Ranch offers its owners and guests a wide range of outdoor activities along with opportunities to "get away" or just "be together" – all against the breathtaking backdrop of the snow-capped Cascades. With its evolution from simple exploitation to sophisticated appreciation, the ranch also reflects some of the most progressive trends in modern Oregon.



Most of the kids find Black Butte's tranquility a major attraction.

Although the investment in the lot stripped CePart of most of its available cash, it also turned out to be a wise investment as the lot has steadily appreciated over the years. As some cash resources began to accumulate again, the kids pursued their dream of building a home for family gatherings and to share in small groups. To help them realize their dream, I distributed



\$10,000.00 to each of them, designating it to CePart as funds for the development of the home. There was a general consensus on the design of the house and Janice knew an architect who developed the plans. John, a builder, agreed to take time away from his new business in Colorado to get the project off the ground. He had some very frustrating times with the Deschutes Planning Commission, but finally - by spending a lot of time in Bend - he was able to walk the plans through all the steps it took to get a building permit. However, we were delayed for a good part of the building season and didn't get started until August 1st.



John built the house at Black Butte with assistance from Jim and I.

There was a lot of brush to be cleared off the site before laying out the house footprint on the lot. We worked for several days in extreme heat. John had built a nice shop trailer and brought it to the site. We rented a home near Sisters and settled in while waiting for Jim to come and join us. Not being acquainted with the area, we had some frustrating times trying to line up the services we needed. The phone company - U.S. West - could not locate the telephone line to provide us with phone service. After 2 weeks of frustration, John and I finally decided to locate and dig up the buried wires ourselves. We also had to independently locate and hire quality sub-contractors, which is difficult when you don't know anyone in the area. The first subcontractor we needed was a backhoe operator.



The front entry to the Mack house at Black Butte Ranch.

Fortunately, we located one near Sisters and he turned out to be excellent. He was accommodating, did an excellent job and met with John's approval all the way to the end of the project. Once off the ground, work progressed steadily in the heat and the dust. It was an extremely dry summer but with water hoses running from neighbors' houses on both sides, we were able to keep the dust down to a tolerable level. We had an unfortunate incident one night in early December when our site was burglarized. The culprits took John's compressor, two skylight windows, the motor and fan assembly for the fireplace unit and numerous other items. It was demoralizing to realize this could happen on a protected property like Black Butte Ranch. The police never did locate any of the items and no arrests were ever made.



During the fall, as the house neared completion, the siblings in Oregon and Washington all made many trips to the house to finish the interior. The girls sanded and painted all the woodwork; the guys spray – painted the entire interior, then moved on to installing closet shelves, shower doors, light fixtures, etc. It was a very “hands-on” job!

It was incredibly generous of John to provide his time and expertise at minimum cost to get this project done. Eventually, however, he needed to get back to his own business in Colorado. The following spring, CePart decided to subcontract the remaining finish work which included the outside decking, the siding, the painting and landscaping. The girls undertook the decorating, with a little help from an interiors store in Sisters. Joyce, Janice and Judy met and decided on appliances and the furnishings we needed to acquire. Irene had collected and refinished beautiful furniture throughout her life which had been distributed among the kids upon her death. When the Black Butte house was finished, many of Irene’s furnishings came back there to stay. You can’t wander the house and not feel her presence and remember her among some of the pieces she loved.



The Great Room with tables and chairs from Irene’s collection.



Winter can be as beautiful as summer at Black Butte Ranch.

The house came to completion in late summer, 1996. Since then, we have had annual family reunions every August and memorable gatherings for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Everyone agrees it has been a great place for the family to get together. It’s not uncommon that two or three of the children – with their spouses and children – will meet there for a weekend. Many of the kids use the house to entertain close friends or business associates. In the busy months of late spring, summer and early fall, the house is rented out to provide revenue for the existing mortgage and ongoing expenses.

I wholeheartedly agree the Black Butte house has been a great concept, not only as a place for the family to gather, but from an investment idea that should appreciate over time. I feel good about the support I was able to provide and hope that the kids appreciate my effort and contribution. After all, I could have bought a motor home! Some of the kids have decided to divest of their holding in the partnership for one



reason or another and I was able to pick up one of the shares to become a partner myself. All in all, I believe the current partnership of the eight children who REALLY want to have this family place is a good balance of interest, care and responsibility.

CePart owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to John for his willingness to build the home and for doing such a great job. I believe there is not a better built structure in all of Black Butte – particularly one achieved at such an economical price. Thanks also go to Judy and Joyce for the extraordinary effort they have always put into managing the details required to maintain a fine home. I hope the Black Butte home serves the family well for many years into the future.



*The view of the back of the house from
the 7th fairway.*



The Klein Family

Irene's family – the Kleins – were also of German-Russian origins. I don't know a lot about them, but both Irene and her father, Andrew S. Klein, related some things to me. The Kleins homesteaded about ten miles east of Karlsruhe in 1902. The site of the homestead had poor soil conditions so, after securing it, they bought land about 3 miles northwest of my grandfather's homestead. This land proved to be good farm ground and they prospered. Mr. Klein was one of the first farmers to own a threshing machine with steam power. He was also the first to farm with two tractors and to use combines.



Mr. and Mrs. Andrew S. Klein



Irene's beloved brother John.



Irene's mother was raised in Strasberg, North Dakota (southeast of Karlsruhe). Her family was neighbors with the Welk family (as in Lawrence Welk). When, in the fall of 1934, no arrangements had been made for buses to take us to school in Karlsruhe, we attended a country school near the Klein's home for several weeks. I was in the sixth grade and Irene was a first grader. Her mother was the best seamstress in the area and the Klein girls were always the best dressed at Karlsruhe church. Later in life, Irene was herself an exceptional seamstress. Before I left for the service, I remember seeing Irene at about 13 years of age. I was dating her older sister, Bertha.



Irene and a friend. Irene was always fashionable.

During the depression years, Irene's father took to hauling coal from nearby mines for families and public buildings in the area. He used a large semi truck and did well financially. During WWII, her dad either bought or rented additional farm ground and raised flax – a highly-prized commodity. At the end of the war, Mr. Klein had accumulated enough wealth to sell out his farm and retire to Minot. He was only about 55 when he retired.

Lawrence Welk

Lawrence Welk (1903-1992) was born into a German family that had immigrated to the U.S. from Russia. While growing up, he learned to play the accordion and decided he wanted to be a professional a musician. After



organizing his first band in 1924, he played dancehalls throughout the Midwest for the next 25 years.

Welk's big break came in 1951, when a Los Angeles TV station broadcast one of his performances. For four years, he and his band appeared regularly on LA televisions. Then, in 1955, ABC hired them for a Saturday night series that aired nationwide. This became the "Lawrence Welk Show," which ran until 1971 and continued another 10 years in syndication. During that time, Welk played and conducted his lively "Champagne Music," as well as hosting a regular cast of popular entertainers. The show became the longest-running musical variety program in TV history, and Welk delighted audiences over a career that ultimately lasted almost seven decades.



A field of flax.

Profile

Irene Mack

Homemaker raises 13 children, makes 11 professional jewelers

By STEVE POWELL
Observer Staff Writer

In today's society, women are often criticized for leaving their children at home while they go to work.

Well, Irene Mack of La Grande takes her children to work — all 13 of them.

But not all at once.

Irene has been a part-owner of her business since she started in jewelry in Missoula, N.M., in 1946. She has operated the I.J. Gems Fine Jewelers store in La Grande for just five years.

All 13 of her children, ages 15 to 34, have worked in her stores at various times in their lives. And, 11 of the 13 have followed in her footsteps and gone into the jewelry profession.

Jerrold, 33, is a jeweler in Baker. Jordan, 30, is an official lecturer for the Gemological Institute of America in Los Angeles. Julia, 28, is a jeweler at I.J. Gems. John, 27, currently is in Alaska on a leave of absence from the gemological institute. Jeff, 26, is a jeweler in Idaho. John, 25, is a jeweler in Coeur d'Alene.

Joe, 24, is a jeweler in Coeur d'Alene. Jason, 23, is a manufacturer of jewelry at I.J. Gems. Jacques, 21, is a jeweler for Samuel's Jewelers in Salem. Judith, 20, is a jeweler for Wendell's Jewelers in Salem. Jordan, 18, is a student at a jeweler's manufacturing and designing school in Texas. And, Jillian, 15, is a student at La Grande High School, but also is a member of the gemological institute.

James, 24, a building contractor in Idaho Valley, and Joyce, 22, a hospital administrator and accountant in Hot Springs, Ark., are the only two who are not in the jewelry business.

"We get together once a year for a family reunion and it is just like a Northwest jewelry convention," Irene said.

All 13 of her children's names start with the letter "J." That is where she came up with the name I. (Irene) J. Gems.

"We did not really plan it (the letter J)," said Irene, who is now divorced. "We did it for the first two and it became a game after that."

Most of the Mack children got their start at the family store in Baker that was started in 1949. That now is one of four stores in the Mack and Mack chain. Irene also owns the I.J. Gems store in Enterprise.

Irene said having her children work with her was very comforting — for her and her children.

"They never had a problem with what they were going to do when they got out of school. They knew for years what they were going to do," she said.

"They just came to work and helped. And they asked questions. I think the greatest education for a child is in answer every question they ask. It makes them more curious and they ask more."

Having a large clan that worked together and had many of the same interests made the Mack family very close.

"We had to learn to get along because we had five girls in one room," Julia recalls. "Mom always said it was easier having 13 than one because we all helped one another and babysat each other. It was easier on more that way."

Julia said her mom was at home most of the time when the children were younger, but started to work more when they got older.

"We felt like mom was a mother. We were not deprived in any way. We got to see her at work and at home," Julia said.

The reason most of her children went into the business is because they found it so rewarding, just like their parents.

"They were always fascinated by our work," Irene said. "We never asked them to (pursue the business)."

Everything there is something new. Working with stones never gets old. There are always new gem stones. The trends and the styles change. I take a refresher course about every 30 months to see what's new on the market."

Irene said the key to success in the jewelry business is education.

"You have to know your product before you can sell it," she said.

All of her children have taken correspondence courses from the gemological institute. For their business backgrounds, they have gone to school at Oregon State University and Eastern Oregon State College, along with more trade-type schools in Switzerland and Texas.

Irene said they have to know all phases of the operation — from craftsmanship in manufacturing. The children even helped remodel the store.

"We do it all (at I.J. Gems)," she said. "We take turns all around (the store). That's in case one takes off."

The Mack children are talented and in the jewelry business that means creatively.

"It takes creativity from arranging the showcase and windows to manufacturing a new design. The salesmen have to be creative in making suggestions to customers about what looks best on their hand," she said.

Her son Jason probably gets the most credit for being creative at the La Grande store.

He is the manufacturer and designer. He does custom designing, stone mounting, and he casts rings by making wax forms. He does everything but lapidary work (cutting stones).

Jason said he is looking forward to the day his younger brother, Jordan, graduates from Texas Junior College in Texas and can help with the manufacturing in La Grande.

"You just do much repair and custom designing in it," he said. "We use their (our customers') diamonds and gold and we re-mount it. It is the same ring, but in a different form. Most other stores don't do custom designing — they just sell what's out there."

Jason said when Jordan comes to La Grande, they can start making new jewelry.

"When we run out of repairs, we can start making some stuff. We could make 60 percent of what we sell. That will cut down the middle man and the customers will see lower prices. And, it will be better quality because it is not mass-produced."

The business does have its hectic moments, Irene said. There are always rush orders, adjustments, and spur-of-the-moment buying. She said that is why it is important to have a manufacturer like Jason on the premises.

Irene said getting into the jewelry business is very expensive compared to most retail businesses.

"The overhead is so high," she said. "We are probably the only alarmed stores in town, along with the banks."

Irene said she will never expand in a major area.

"I do not like a fast pace," she said. "I think the children were much happier growing up here (in Eastern Oregon)."

Article on Irene that appeared in the LaGrande newspaper after she opened her business there.



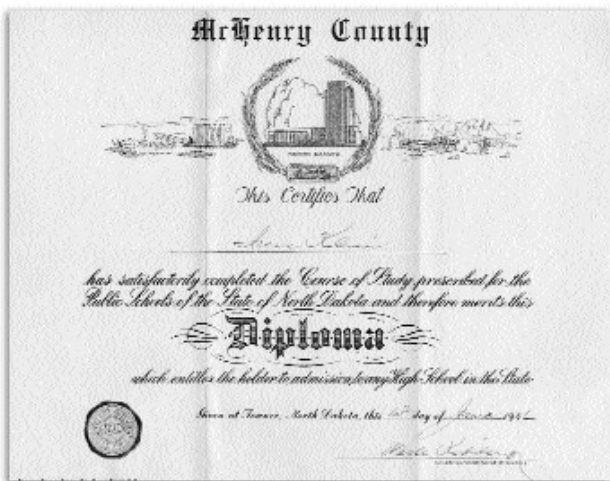
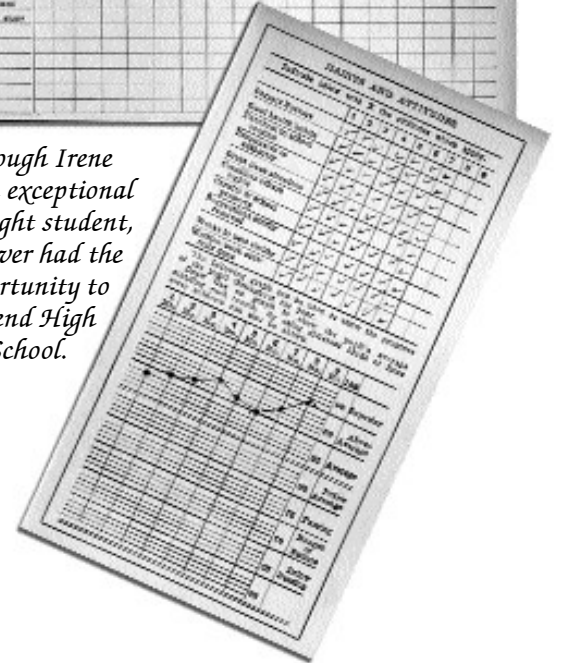
The war was still raging when Irene finished eighth grade in the country school. She never had the opportunity to attend high school because – like in so many families - she was more important to the family farm than the family thought education was to her. Several years later, Irene had the opportunity to start high school in Minot. However, after being away from school for so long, she chose to go to work instead. She loved fashion and took a job at a ladies apparel store and then later at a jewelry store where I met her again. Despite her limited education, Irene was bright, creative, ambitious and determined. To see her accomplishments later in life, one would never guess she had only an 8th grade education.



Irene was a bright, talented and extremely accomplished woman.

SCHOOL FOR THE YEAR ENDING														1914		1915		1916	
GRADE	STUDENT	STANDINGS BY MONTH												EXAMINATIONS					
		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Final	Term	Year			
8th	1	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20		
7th	1	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20		
6th	1	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20		
5th	1	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20		
4th	1	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20		
3rd	1	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20		
2nd	1	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20		
1st	1	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20		
STUDENT AND ATTENDANCE Name _____ Date _____ School _____ Teacher _____																			

Although Irene was an exceptional and bright student, she never had the opportunity to attend High School.



Irene's diploma from 8th Grade.

Irene was the sixth in a family of eight – three boys and five girls. Her older sister, Alice, had multiple sclerosis to the degree of being literally helpless. Mrs. Klein was very devoted to her and cared for her until she was 34, when she passed away. Mr. Klein died at age 85 and Irene's mother at age 87. Most of Irene's family still resides in the Minot area. Mr. Klein was a well-respected community leader. He was especially active in church affairs as well as civil affairs, serving on school boards and in local government. He was bi-lingual and could both read and write in English and German.

My parents and the Kleins were acquaintances, but not close friends. They considered each other better-than-average farmers and neighbors and respected each other's standing in the community.



We Thirteen

"I've only learned in recent years about some of the incidents that stood out in our kids' memories. I think I'm glad...."



All thirteen children at the wedding of Jerrold and Shirley Keith in 1974.

Squirrel hunting

Some of the best times I had growing up were when Dad asked me to go squirrel hunting with him. We would go out to Keating, North Powder or Haines. Dad always knew where the squirrels were. He would bring lunch and shells and we would shoot the afternoon away. At the end of the day, we would talk about the distance of shots, amazing shots and everything else that was going on in the field. And, oh, how many squirrels we got!

Jordan #12



Sumpter Valley Days

I had just gotten my driver's license a month prior to this day. We had this unique, custom order, long black station wagon with room for all of us and even extra room to carry lots of groceries or food for a picnic. It had a lot of shiny chrome, and came to be called the "Mack Mobile".



The Black Mercury station wagon.

One Sunday, our family was going on our usual Sunday outing, but I didn't want to go. As overworked as we sometimes felt, I had better things to do with my day than spending it with the family. My best friend and I wanted to go the *Sumpter Valley Day* in Sumpter, Oregon - about an hour from Baker.

Eventually, mom gave in and let me stay home. Her last words before leaving with the family were, "Do NOT drive the car!" However, she left the keys hanging in their usual place! Well, here we two were thinking, "Now this is a Sunday afternoon and we could be back before they do and will really enjoy our outing at the Sumpter Valley Days!" We decided to go.

Well, we spent more time worrying if we would make it back before they did, which we did. However, what we didn't know was that dad and mom wrote down the mileage before they left. Easy to say who was smarter. I was beyond trusting for quite some time!

Walk it Over!

Julia #5

As was the tradition – and the expectation – of Irene, I was standing at the counter slicing pickles for the dinner table. I was a distracted teenager and Jill, who was a toddler with an impeccable vocabulary, was pounding on her metal high chair shelf with her spoon and chanting, "Nanny (the name all the little kids called me because they couldn't say 'Janice'), I want a pickle! Nanny, I want a pickle! Nanny...." I got so sick of hearing her, I tossed a sliced pickle across the room and it landed on the high chair shelf right in front of her. "There!" I said to her shocked little face. Hardly missing a beat, she picked up the pickle, tossed it back across the room at me and yelled, "Nanny, WALK it over!"

Janice #4

Irene's pickles

For a quart jar:
Several twigs of fresh dill
1 teaspoon of pickling spices
2-3 cloves of garlic
5-10 cucumbers, depending on size - short stems attached.

Carrot sticks
Pickling mixture:
1 part vinegar to 16
parts water
1 tsp. Salt

Procedure: Wash cucumbers and leave 1/4-inch of stem attached. Sterilize the quart jars. Place dill, pickling spices and garlic in quart jars. Pack each jar with pickles and add a carrot stick or two. Combine vinegar, water and salt; bring to a boil. Cover pickles with boiling pickling solution, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Tighten lids onto jars and process 15 minutes in boiling water canner.

The kids didn't know what a store-bought pickle tasted like until they babysat at other homes! Irene would make huge batches of these.



Front yard at Missouri Flat: home base was to the upper right.

Baseball in the front yard

At the Missouri Flat ranch, we had a huge front yard. It made a great baseball field. The best base placement, however, was to put "home base" out in the furthest corner which left the "outfield" nearest the house. Although we had strict rules about how hard the older kids could hit the ball, we occasionally got out of hand and blasted out a few windows in the house! We'd all have to do extra work to replace them, but pretty soon, we'd be out there all over playing again!

Janice #4

My favorite mom moment

Hearing that she cried when I was crowned Homecoming Queen my Senior year.

Judy #11



Bessie was our first milk cow - very prolific!

Cream and butter!

We had two milk cows that were very prolific! We'd milk twice a day, strain the milk and then pour it into gallon jars and refrigerate it. When the milk had settled, we'd scoop the cream off the top. At times, we would accumulate GALLONS of cream. Mom used cream in everything - mashed potatoes, cream of wheat and oatmeal, soups, casseroles, etc. She made the most awesome cinnamon rolls - over which she'd pour a ton of cream before baking. We had cakes and pies with whipped cream for dessert. Still, we couldn't use up all the cream. So we'd make butter. In the blender. And of course, we'd use buttermilk in most recipes and have butter in and on everything. It's a wonder we didn't all grow up weighing 300 pounds with high cholesterol! Interestingly, none of us are overweight and none of us has a cholesterol problem.

Janice #4



Sledding

In the wintertime, Dad would take us sledding on the roads of the Colton Ranch. He would pull us behind the Ranchero – sometimes three at a time! It was a blast! We would often veer off the road into snow drifts that were 4-5 feet high and bury ourselves!

Jordan #12

The Sweetie Pie

One day after school in 1977, at the Wingville house, I was in the kitchen preparing one of mom's required five-course dinners. Mom was in La Grande working; Jay was doing some work outside; Jordan and Jillona were inside doing something else. All of a sudden - as I'm standing over the stove cooking - I hear the utility room pantry doors opening. I think to myself, "No one should be in there unless they would be looking for something to eat - and they shouldn't be looking for something to eat when it's so close to dinner." So I went in to see what was going on, only to find Jay quietly reaching into the box of "sweetie pies" - a chocolate marshmallow treat which we were forbidden to eat as a snack. THEY WERE ONLY FOR OUR LUNCH BAGS! As he was crinkling the wrapper he turned around and saw me standing there.

I said, "Jason, put that sweetie pie back. Those are only for our lunch bags!" He said, "Not today!", and turned around and ran out the door and down the stairs into the TV room. I took off after him and caught him down in the TV room and tackled him on the big blue pillow. We wrestled around a few minutes during which I finally got the now totally mutilated sweetie pie back. I had taken off running back up stairs toward the kitchen when Jordan thought he would get involved. As I came running through the second door into the dining room toward the STONE STEPS, Jordan was hiding behind the door and stuck his foot out. I tripped and went flying face-first into the steps which brought me to an immediate halt. My fall caused a huge rug burn up the side of my face and my eye – which had taken the brunt of the fall – immediately started to turn black and blue and swell shut.

The next thing I knew, mom was coming in the door. She had to take me into town to the hospital. I ended up with a big white patch over my eye for about two weeks, but the worst part was I had a game that Friday at which I had to cheerlead at with the patch over my eye. Needless to say, mom was furious with us all.

Jacque #10



Meat!

Dad would always buy several animals at the 4-H fairs so we always had plenty of meat in our freezer – pork, lamb and beef. Mom made awesome pork chops. I remember them being so tender and so tasty. I've never been able to succeed with mine to make them taste like they did when we were kids. We especially loved beef, though. Roast beef with mashed potatoes and gravy was a staple. Steak was served – it seemed – at least once a week. It was the boys' chore to make sure the barbeque was lit and ready when dad came home on the nights we were having steak. Dad would grill all the steaks just like we liked them. None of us knew how spoiled we were having steak so often – at least until we went away to college and couldn't afford it on our own!

Janice #4

Pet Eagle

One day, when Jay and I were hunting in the Keating-Catherine Creek area, we stopped to check out an eagle's nest Jay had seen. Near the tree where the nest was, we found a baby bald eagle that had fallen out of the nest. We decided to take it home and raise it as our pet; we thought it could live in the forest behind the ranch. Every day after school we would hunt to feed it – pheasant, ducks, moles, birds, etc. It grew and grew. Sometimes we had nothing to feed it, so we started taking hamburger out of the freezer to give it. When we had used up almost all of the hamburger in the freezer, we decided we'd better call the Fish and Game Commission to come and pick up the bird. We told them we had found it outside its nest and it had been wounded. To our delight, they didn't arrest us! And mom never missed the hamburger!

Jordan #12

Career Launch

As more and more of the younger kids became able to make boxes and bows, Dad looked to we older ones to help in other areas of the store. I would love to dust and straighten all the costume jewelry. I think that's when I began to enjoy the merchandising aspects of the business. He would also expect us to do the engraving. We had a nice "New Hermes" engraving machine and quite a few different sets of type. Dad did a healthy business in trophies and there was particularly a lot of engraving to be done around the 4-H show time. There were lots of end-of-the-schoolyear awards, too, and in addition to those we'd have baby cups, silver bowls and goblets, ID bracelets and St. Christopher medals. Engraving was the skill that got me my first job in a jewelry store outside the family business. I was a freshman in college and needed money, so I went to a local jeweler in La Grande and told him I could engrave and I had a job within 5 minutes! That job eventually launched me into more aspects of the business and ultimately into gemology which has turned out to be an unbelievably rewarding profession for me.

Janice #4





It was just a box of crayons!

Once when mom and dad were out of town together (which was rare), I had an art assignment that required crayons. Why I didn't want to use any of the hundreds of them we already had at home, I don't remember. I just remember that I really wanted a new box of them. Since mom and dad were gone, I thought I'd just go to the stationery store and buy myself a box. We never got allowance but I had a little money from my report card. When I got to the stationery store I just couldn't resist getting the big box of 64 that had the sharpener in the back – it was so cool and we'd never had anything like that with our school supplies! Somehow I justified in my mind that mom and dad would agree with my choice. The only problem was that I didn't have enough money of my own, but I remembered this thing called a "charge account" that my parents had at some stores. The clerk told me they had one at this store, too. So I just said, "Charge it, then!" When mom and dad came home and found out I had charged something without their approval, they were really, really mad! I got the dreaded "hose" and never, ever considered charging anything again!

Janice #4

Weeding by fire

When I was about 12 or 13, mom had directed me and Jill to weed the hill behind the pond at the Wingville Ranch. It had become overgrown with grass and thistles around five of the beautiful evergreen bushes. It was summertime and the ground was very dry, making it difficult to pull the weeds. Jill and I worked for about two hours and only got about 25 feet across the hill. Eventually, I had a better idea: instead of weeding it, we would burn it. I went back to the house and got some matches. I convinced Jill it

would be alright and I started a small fire in the center of the hill. It quickly exploded because the ground was so dry, but it was working okay until the bushes started to catch fire. We tried to drench them with water but we ended up losing two of them and in less than an hour had a very black hillside! At least we were done – until Mom came home. That was the beginning of a very harsh punishment – and even MORE work!

Jordan #12



The backyard at the Wingville Ranch.



Lucky shot

One weekend when John was home from college, John, Joe, Jordan and I went up into Burnt River Canyon over by John Day to go deer hunting. Joe had been up the weekend before and got a big buck, so we thought we would try our luck. All of us – except Jordan had high powered rifles with scopes. Jordan borrowed a 30-gauge shotgun that was really a crappy gun. We drove up to a good spot and decided to leave the truck parked and spread out from there. We told Jordan to stay with the truck while we spread out along the mountainside with our eyes and ears peeled. After some time, back in the vicinity of the truck, we heard the sounds. We each had our guns trained on the trees on the hill right above where the truck was parked and saw a big cow jump out. Shortly after her a buck jumped onto the road, then bounced across it and started down the hill on the other side. Before any of us could get off a shot we heard a shot. Jordan reared up from where he was sitting as the buck ran across the road and he managed to get off one shot – right into it's back end. It was a clean shot - didn't ruin any meat and dropped the big guy immediately!

Jason #9

Summer School

I've shared this memory with my children. I always had something better to do than schoolwork. I hated school and homework and my grades showed it. Although I didn't understand it at the time, Mom often used reverse psychology on me and it always worked!

Mom sewed a lot and it was always exciting to see what she would make us – particularly the outfits for our annual Christmas pictures. She was so creative. Usually, she would make something for Joyce, then the same thing for Janice in a different color, then something for me (often in the same color as Joyce's).

One day, mom started sewing me a dress. She made ME - ONLY ME - four dresses. They were so cute, I was sure my friends would just die to look like at them! We're talking brown corduroy jumper with wide belt loops to hang on your hips. Another dress was in pink, my favorite color, and made me look so much like a teenager I couldn't believe it, and I was only in the seventh grade.



Eventually, I understood my good fortune. For four days a week, I left my brothers and sisters at home to do the daily chores and I GOT TO GO TO SUMMER SCHOOL!!!

Irene would often make pretty dresses for the girls. Here, Joyce and Janice model their Easter outfits.

Julia #5



That damn clock

Dad gave each of us an opportunity to work at the store and earn a little spending money. When I was 13 and had expressed an interest in the business, he decided I should try my hand at watchmaking. He gave me this Big Ben alarm clock and told me to disassemble and reassemble it for practice. I went to work, excited as I could be! Soon I had it all apart, but I'd forgotten to draw a sketch or make notes, so when I started putting it back together, I had no idea where anything went. Dad made me keep trying and trying until I was literally in tears. I hated that damn clock and never, ever desired to touch another one – at least for the purpose of fixing it!



Janice #4

I would give the kids large clocks to practice on.

My hardest lesson

In vying for attention as one of thirteen, I felt little support in my endeavors through school. This was exhibited by rare or no attendance by Mom or Dad at my events. My pursuits of experiences and activities while growing up were made in an effort to garnish whatever praise or notice I could get. It wasn't until my 30's that I began to understand and pursue those things that were really important to me and not to do things just to please others.

Judy #11

Pheasant du jour

Normally, after school, I would come home and do my chores and still have about 2 hours of daylight. I would load my 410 shotgun outside and go pheasant-hunting up the creek on our ranch. One day I did just that and came back with two nice roosters. I cleaned the exterior of them and put them in cold water in the kitchen intending to come back and clean "the interior" later. Meanwhile, I went out to feed John's pigeons and forgot about the pheasants. Jacque and Judy were in charge of getting dinner prepared for all of us because Mom was working in the LaGrande store. They noticed the pheasants, assumed they were for dinner and put them into the oven to roast. When we were eating, Jason noticed something strange. He said, "What's this doing in here?" We studied the pieces and realized what they were! Since we were already 1/2 of the way through the birds, I figured they couldn't have been THAT bad!

Jordan #12



Baby Aspirin

I guess I was always a little bit of a glutton. I had a voracious appetite and was – to say the least – a very chubby little girl. All the pictures of me before the 6th grade – when I finally thinned out – seemed like this toothless little cherub with such fat legs, my underwear was always showing in the pictures! And Joyce and Julie were so dainty! One evening when I was about 4, just before dinner, I was really hungry. Mom never let us snack before dinner so I was looking for something to eat. I remembered the little orange flavored pills she kept in the bathroom cabinet. She had given some to me one time when I wasn't feeling good. So I went into the bathroom, closed the door and found the bottle. I don't know how long I was gone, or how Mom managed to be aware that I had gone missing but I remember her bursting into the bathroom, just as I was chewing the last ones. I remember her grabbing me and sticking her finger into my mouth and down my throat. I started throwing up and I was really scared because I didn't understand why she was doing it. Then I remember she called Dad at the store, grabbed Joyce's new coat and pulled me out the door. Joyce was yelling and crying that she didn't want me to wear her new coat. Mom was moving faster and more frantic than I'd ever seen her. I don't know who stayed with the rest of the kids – probably a neighbor – but the next thing I knew, I was in the hospital and they were doing this gross thing called "pumping my stomach". All in all, I felt really good afterwards and didn't really understand what all the fuss was about. Joyce was still mad about her coat when we got home, but all I wanted to do was eat dinner!



Janice (far right) could never quite get enough to eat.

Janice #4



Stritsle and Stroodle.

My favorite dad moment

Sitting on his lap nightly after he got home from the store while he read the paper and watched the news. I, Stritsle, got one knee, and Jacque, Stroodle, got the other knee.

Judy #11



Always looking good

I was six years old and it was the summer before first grade and it was my turn in the big tire swing at the Missouri Flat ranch. While going VERY high, the rope got caught on a branch and threw me right out of the tire onto my back. This was my first experience with getting the wind knocked out of me and when I came to, I really hurt. One of the girls called Mom at the store and she came home to take me to the doctor. She insisted that I change into a nice, clean, little shorts outfit. Well, this little outfit had SMALL little armholes with a very small "v" in the back to enable me to put my head through. I remember screaming as she stuffed my little arms into this outfit, only to find out later that both arms were broken!

Judy #11

Ranchero bulls-eye

When I was about 8 or 9, all the guys were getting ready to go hunting at an old ranch near Dalgliesses. I was playing around with my BB gun shooting across the driveway at birds sitting on the fence posts. The old white Ranchero was in my shooting path, but I was oblivious to it. I accidentally hit the windshield, putting a hole in it. I panicked and told Dad I was really sorry and I would go get the tape....

Jordan #12

Flowers

Mom had a thing about flowers. She loved roses and wanted crisp little rows of marigolds to line all the flowerbeds. When I think of that 2nd street house and how many linear feet of flower beds there were all around it, I understand why I remember this. I think Mom must have planted all the marigolds in the Spring because I don't remember doing that. But, boy there wasn't to be a single weed in those beds for the rest of the Spring and Summer! We had to constantly weed the beds so the bright little yellow flowers had no competition and made a lovely frame for the gorgeous roses. We had to monitor those things every day because Mom always had fresh roses in the dining room and wanted them at the top of their bloom. When the marigolds, finished their bloom and dried up, Mom wanted to retrieve all the seeds. She probably never bought marigold seeds, but I remember retrieving BAGS of them!

Janice #4



Cheerleading and Volleyball

I loved sports of all types, but St. Francis Academy didn't offer a lot of variety. We did have decent football and basketball teams, however, and a great girl's volleyball program. I was always really athletic and probably would have gone out for boys' sports teams if they had allowed it. As it was, I tried out for the cheerleading squad when I was a freshman and got it! I loved it. I was always trying to jump up and touch the ceilings at home – which were at least 10'! I finally got to the point I could do it! I really developed a set of thighs! Volleyball was great, too. I loved playing the net because I could jump so high and spike the ball. The other team was always surprised at my spikes and blocks. I also developed an awesome serve – an underhand serve that would swerve about the time it reached its apex. I have no idea how I did it but I did it consistently and we scored a lot of points off it. Since St. Francis didn't have school buses, our parents would have to volunteer to drive the teams and squads to out of town games. I was always really proud when my dad would drive because he would get to watch me play and cheerlead. Every once in awhile, he would also slip into home games – the gymnasium was only a block from our house. I would just love to see him sitting in the stands. He never showed too much emotion but at least he was there! In my four years of high school, mom never saw me either cheerlead or play volleyball and I know she always wondered what there was about it that I loved so much.

Janice #4



A typical family dinner on a holiday.

Irene – The hostess with the mostess

From the spontaneous steak dinner set at the dining room table for one of Dad's salesman, to the special dinners when we had relatives from out of town, or brought a friend home from college, to the earliest Mack Mania reunion at her LaGrande home – Mom always prepared fabulous food and made a presentation that would rival the best of professional caterers....creative, out of the norm and usually elegant.

I don't think we had any choice but to acquire her finesse at putting on a party for a crowd – because a crowd we are!!

Joyce



Breaking Curfew

Jacque and I were about ten and nine years old and were not allowed to go past the busy four-lane street of Broadway after dark. Before it had gotten dark one summer night, we had gone down to the south Baker underpass to race our bikes up and down it. This was quite a distance past Broadway. It had gotten dark on our way back and who do you think passed us only one block before we reached Broadway. Yes, it was Mom and Dad returning from the jewelry store that evening. Of course they were waiting for us inside the back door when we got home with the "infamous" hose. I, being much faster than Jacque, made it to the stairs and up fast enough before Dad could swing. Jacque, unfortunately right behind me, got it good!

Judy #11



The Shasta Motor Home.

Home Away from Home

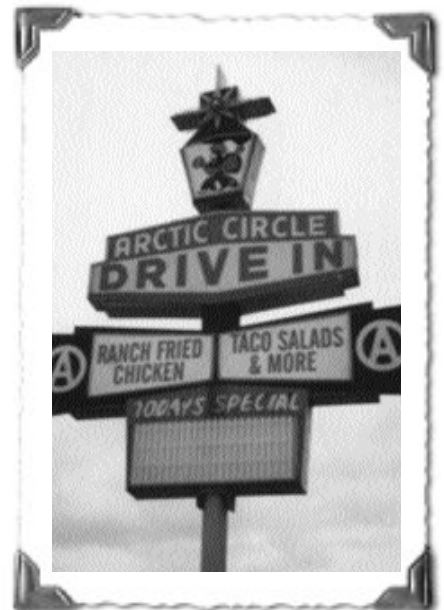
The old Shasta motor home was such a treat! We would take it and go "camping" at Marble Creek where we played softball on a meadow up the mountain or to the Eagle Cap Wilderness at Boulder State Park where we would pick huckleberries whenever we could find them. It always seemed like we were going on a very long drive – like out of the state – but usually it was just a day excursion!

Jordan #12

Artic Circle hamburgers

Mom and dad were always pretty rigid about meal times and menus. We always had square meals - a fruit, grain (cereal, toast, pancakes, etc.) and meat for breakfast; soup and sandwiches for lunch; and salad, meat, grain, condiments and dessert for dinner. It was rare we got to eat "junk food". So, every once in awhile, when Mom and Dad would announce we were picking up hamburgers, we'd just go nuts! Artic Circle hamburgers were the BEST! With all the goop and pickles and soft buns, it didn't matter if the meat was a little thin. They were only 19¢ each. To feed the troops, Dad would get about 35 of them along with soggy curly fries and milk shakes. What a great change at mealtime!

Janice #4





Not as big as I thought!

When I was about 10 or 11, I got my first chance to "drive" our new "driving lawn mower" that Dad had just bought. He instructed me like a Driving School Instructor would. "Do not get too close to the creek – the push mower will take care of that." Previously it had been among my duties to do all the edging and trimming, but this was my opportunity to advance to major mowing. I made it past the first bridge, where the lawn slope was pretty shallow; but near the second bridge, the slope was steeper and I got too close to the creek. I jumped off the mower as it angled down into the creek! I don't remember exactly how we – or DAD – got it out of the creek. I think he had to push it downstream to a lower embankment and then somehow pulled it out. That's one way to get out of a chore you're not used to!

Jordan #12

Whoops!

One day when we were living at the Wingville ranch, we had a huge snowstorm. Mom was in LaGrande working; John was home from OSU but not at the ranch. Jacque was in town at cheerleading practice. Judy, Jill and I were home alone. I realized that the snow was getting heavier and heavier and if someone didn't plow the driveway, Mom wouldn't be able to get in when she came home. Our tractor had a plow on the front so I started it up and began to clear the driveway. I had made three passes and was on my last pass along the right side of the drive. Halfway down the last pass, I noticed I was tending toward the fence and the ditch was going to pull me in. So I jerked the tractor to the left as hard as I could and the steering wheel popped off! There I was with the steering wheel in my hands and

the tractor tearing out fence posts and fencing down the line! I tried to stop the tractor but to no avail. The metal posts popped up and punctured the engine. When John came home, he helped me repair the fence before Mom got there. We threw the old fenceposts into to snow by the house and forgot about them. Mom came home to a well-groomed driveway. It wasn't until the Spring that she discovered the posts and I was grounded from the tractor.



There was a long driveway approaching the Wingville house.

Jordan #12



Lady

I guess dad figured that every farm needs a horse, so he bought this white mare which we called Lady. Lady wasn't good for much (we found out later) – not even for riding. She had a real attitude sometimes. Every once in awhile when we'd saddle her up, she'd just stand there and refuse to move. Then when we'd take the saddle back off, she'd run around the field farting! Dad eventually got rid of her – and never told us where she went!

Janice #4

Bang! Ouch!

After school one day, Jason and I were going to go pheasant hunting. Mom, Jacque, Joe and Jill were watching TV in the Family Room – the "downstairs" room of a remodeled garage. Jason and I were upstairs in the Game Room above the Family Room, preparing our gear. Usually, I hunted with a 410 shotgun, but dad had taken it to get serviced. So I found a different one in the gun case. It was a 410 bolt-action, single-shot that I was not familiar with, but Jason told me how to operate it. I put a shell into it, locked the chamber and – for some reason – pointed it at the floor and pulled the trigger. To my surprise, the gun went off, shot through the floor into the Family Room below, stunning Joe, Jacque, Jill and Mom, who was sewing. Jacque was in the wrong place at the wrong time – she had pellets up and down her leg and arm. Fortunately, all but a few bounced off! We took her to the hospital where they pronounced her fine. Joe patched the huge hole in the ceiling. I was not permitted to use a firearm for two years. So I took up archery instead....

Jordan #12

"Canned" hair

Mom and dad never figured out why we would make ourselves so uncomfortable, but it was the only way to get the 'look' we wanted with our hair. The 'look' was straight and sleek – and neither Joyce nor I were blessed with that kind of hair. We both had a lot of natural curl, natural wave and "cowlicks". So we figured out that the bigger the curlers were, the more our hair would "straighten" out. The best devices we found were tin cans – like soup and vegetable cans. We would wind our hair around them at night and sleep on our faces so that the next day at school we'd have the "look".

Janice #4



The mole business

We had lots of moles on our ranch in Wingville and I had lots of time on my hands after school. I contracted with Dad to eliminate the moles. As part of the arrangement, I had to buy my own traps at fifty cents each and check each one every day. I would show the catch to Dad and he would give me 25 cents per mole. Nikka, our Norwegian Elkhound, assisted me in most of these trappings, probably accounting for at least 30% of my income. Business was good most of the time, but eventually, I had eradicated most of the mole population. When things really slowed down, I decided to use the same moles twice. Dad finally caught on and I lost my job as Mole Trapper of Wingville.

Jordan #12

Bucking Bales

I would always much rather work outside than inside. When we lived out at the Missouri Flat ranch, I got to escape most household chores because I was strong enough to work in the fields. We grew a lot of alfalfa, which we cut and baled and stored for the winter. I didn't get to help with the baling, but when the bales were dry and ready to be plucked out of the fields, I was first on the wagon! I prided myself in being able to throw them up to the fourth level on the wagon – as high as Jim and Jerry could throw them – and for being one of the neatest "stackers" on the wagon and in the hay loft.



Janice #4

Haying season was always a busy time on our ranch.

Snipe Hunting

One night when I was about 13 or 14, John, Jeff, Joe and Jay asked me if I wanted to go "snipe" hunting. They told me a snipe is an elusive bird only found at night. I was very excited and said, "Yes!" We went across the road from the Wingville ranch into a tall wheat and cornfield. They told me the snipes usually came out between 10 pm and midnight and would run through the corn. So off I went, moving through the cornfields. An hour and a half later, I had not found any snipes. Nor could I find my brothers. Around midnight, I finally started getting a little scared and made my way back to the ranch. To my surprise, all my brothers were watching TV and enjoying themselves around home. They said they couldn't find me or any snipes so they came home thinking I would follow shortly.

Jordan #12





Long haul buck

I finally got my first mule deer buck when I was about 14 or 15. I was hunting with my brothers John, Jeff, Jerry, Jay and Joe in the Burnt River Canyon area. It was very steep terrain in which it would have been really hard to remove an animal if it were to be at the bottom of the canyon. Joe, who had no gun because he had shot two bucks in the same area two days prior, was guiding me. He and I went through the center of the canyon and the other brothers were fanned out on each side of us on the walls of the canyon. At about 8:00 a.m. Joe and I heard the rolling of rocks indicating movement of animals ahead of us. I had an old 30/30 rifle that swayed from right to left when you put it to your shoulder because the stock was not secure. To aim it you just had to find a happy medium in the sway, then align and shoot – all open sight. The muley emerged from the draw and Joe warned me to wait until it got to the clearing. But I was so excited, I had already shot by the time he got the words out! The huge buck dropped in its tracks, but then started rolling down the hillside. I kept shooting to stop him! He finally stopped about 1/2 of the way down and it took four of us about 4 hours to drag him back up to the top! I found out later that Jeff, John, Jay and Jerry all had the buck in their sights but were waiting for a better shot. Because I didn't hesitate, my first buck was an excellent mule deer with 4 points on one side and 3 on the other.

Jordan #12

State Police Escort

We never really had any pets except for our dog King. Out on the Missouri Flat Ranch, we had a bunch of barnyard animals – cow dogs and stray cats – but it wasn't the same as real pets. So we four boys decided we were going to get us some real pets – some pet ducks. We cleaned out half of the chicken coop and blocked it off and put in a trough full of water. We knew of a pond near 6-mile curve that had lots of ducks and baby ducklings. We rode our bikes over there armed with gunny sacks and fishing nets. We developed a system in which two of us would get on one end of the flock and two on the other. We'd force the ducks to run and net them and put them in the gunny sack. We took our catch back to the ranch and emptied the ducklings into the coop. I was the self-proclaimed duck expert and decided that since ducks lived on water, they must eat fish. So we would go around to ponds and ditches and catch little minnows and release them into the trough in the coop. Strangely, however, we couldn't seem to keep our pets alive very long. So every once in awhile, we'd have to go back and catch more.

One day we had just finished a successful venture and were about to head home on our bikes with our gunny sacks full of ducklings when a state patrolman drove up and asked what we were doing. "Catching ducks!," we answered proudly. He said, "You know, you can't do that." "Yes, we can!" we said. "See!" And we showed him our sacks full. He made us release them and then followed us back to the ranch where he informed our dad what we'd been doing and told him to make sure we didn't do it again. So much for those pets.

John #6



Easy Elk

I was 17 when I went on my first elk hunt with my brother Joe and our goldsmith, Don McClure. We had no luck the first day in Ladd Canyon and decided to try a different area – Pilcher Creek by Anthony Lakes – the second day. It was 6:00 a.m., cold and dark. Joe and Don split off into different directions across a meadow. I was armed with a 30.06 rifle and instructed to stay near the truck, laying in an old Chinese-dug draining ditch, watching the truck. I was freezing cold so I walked down the ditch about 1,000 yards, built a fire, warmed up and returned to the truck after about 30 minutes. By about 8:30 a.m. I was warmly ensconced in the truck listening to music when I noticed another truck stop on the roadside ahead of me. Thinking the hunter had seen something, I turned down the music and got out of the truck. My shotgun was propped against the tailgate. No sooner had I gotten out of the truck than I heard a thrashing sound. Before I could even raise my gun, a cow elk was jumping the fence beside me. I knew there would be a bull following, so I positioned myself beside the fence. All of a sudden he was there! I had no time to aim. I just swung the gun at my hip and fired two shots before he jumped the fence. He went down about 20 feet from the truck and rolled down the hill into the drainage ditch onto the snow and ice – terrific for the preservation of the meat! I cleaned and dressed the buck and then sat there for about 1 1/2 hours before Joe and Don came back through the meadow. When they asked me if I had seen anything, I told them I hadn't although I had heard shooting. It was about 20 minutes before they noticed the bull laying in the ditch about 15 feet away. They were jealous but congratulated me!

Jordan #12

LITTLE Indian

Jordan was always playing "Indian" when he was little. When he was about 11 or 12, he got a pretty nice little bow and arrow set that was somewhere between a play thing and the real thing. I was watching him one day when he was messing around with it and spotted a pheasant up the creek line. He sneaked up and jumped the pheasant but it flew off to the south toward the highway. He followed it over there and took another shot but it flew off toward the east. He followed it again - over by the shop – and I couldn't see him anymore. However, Mrs. Payton – who lived right across the road from the shop – was watching out her window and saw Jordy sneaking around in the grass. She saw this pheasant fly up and Jordy straightened and took a shot and got it – right up the butt! Mrs. Payton said it was the darndest thing she ever saw!

Jason #9



Singing in The Choir

If there was ever a Catholic school across the street from a Catholic church, the church, of course, had itself a "built in choir". Singing in the church choir was a prerequisite of participating in the junior high or high school choir programs.

I recall vividly the numerous Sundays I dressed a little more carefully for church because it was either the 7th and 8th grade's weekend or the high school's weekend to sing at Mass. If I wasn't in the group that had to sing, surely one of my brothers or sisters would be.

When we arrived at the church "at least 10 minutes early", we would have to tip toe up the 3 levels of winding staircase to the "choir loft". There we would kneel in the few pews overlooking the main body of people, until it was time to take our position on the built in risers behind and flanking the humongous pipe organ. You would always try to stand beside a good friend, and perhaps catch the eye of a particular boy or two as they also took their places. We always wanted to whisper to each other throughout the service, but, of course, had to be very discreet under the watchful eyes of Sister choir director. No inappropriate church behavior would be tolerated.

At the end of the service, we would dally around outside the church to visit with friends or talk to boys. Another day of the week, and an additional opportunity to try to chat with a potential boyfriend and maybe get invited to a Sunday afternoon movie.

Joyce #3

Making Lunches for school

When we lived out at Missouri Flat, we'd have to make sack lunches for school because St. Francis didn't have a hot lunch program. During the years we had that house, there were at least nine kids in school. Making all those lunches was quite a production. First, we'd lay out the sacks and put everyone's name on them. Next, we'd lay out 18 pieces of bread and spread them with mayonnaise, then mustard and slap some bologna on them – or spread them all with peanut butter, then jelly. The sandwiches would all be assembled and put in plastic bags. Next, we'd have to put chips into small bags, and finally, cookies or something sweet. After nine of everything was prepared, it would carefully be distributed among the bags and the bags would be left standing on the counter in order from oldest to youngest so we could each pick one up as we walked out of the house to the school bus.

Janice #4



Party City

Our first "good" party occurred one night out at the Wingville house when Mom was out of town for the evening. As soon as we knew she was going to be gone, we put the word out we were having a party. We didn't expect so many people, but as it turned out, the cars were lined up and double parked halfway to the next ranch – about 1/8th of a mile down the road. We didn't think about the fact that one of our neighbors was a sheriff's deputy. When he arrived home after duty and couldn't get into his driveway, he came knocking on our door. No one was arrested but he managed to break things up pretty quickly!

The next year, we were smarter. We staged a "Clean up Party" (we had sold the Wingville property and were moving to La Grande). We put the word out, but instead of having people park on the road, we moved the cattle and had everyone pull into our field. It had been a dry year, so the pond on the property was dry and served as a perfect place to have a huge bonfire! Mom thought that having all our friends out to help clean up the place was a good idea. She even approved of us ordering the kegs from a family friend, Connie's Distributing in LaGrande, but she got so busy at the store, she couldn't sign for them, so Connie's just sent their whole "Beer Wagon" down to us. Seven kegs were gone in record time. And the sheriff didn't seem to notice.

Our third great party was my Senior party. We managed to talk a guy who owned property north of Phillips reservoir into letting us use his property. He agreed if we'd clean up a bunch of logs for him. It was a perfect arrangement because the logs provided the fuel for the biggest bonfire we'd ever had. His house was the last house on power line so we had music, dancing, etc. Since I could hardly wait to graduate, I planned the party well in advance – and sold tickets to it for 4 months. Even when the party started, people still kept handing me money until I couldn't stuff anymore into the Ranchero's glove box. From the proceeds of that party, I paid for half my college education at Paris Junior College! We went through 14 kegs over a two-day period. The cops came out once but didn't do anything to break it up – I guess they felt outnumbered. They just told us to keep it under control. We made everyone who came, stay there. Thankfully, there were NO accidents or other unfortunate incidents during the party or on the way home. The next week, however, there was a notice placed in the paper by the police department that something similar "would never happen again."

Jason #9





BIG Suckers!

I was 23 when Joe, Jay and I went to visit John in Fairbanks, Alaska. It was my first of two trips to Alaska to go fishing. We went to the Copper River for the famous Copper River salmon. The plan was to dip-net for three varieties: king, silvers and reds. Since John was a resident, his limit was 50 salmon. The dip-net is a very long pole with a large net at the end. The technique is to throw it out upstream and let it glide downstream. The fish are swimming upstream. After about 45 minutes of warming up to the sport, I netted a large salmon. I turned the net over to lock it in but the fish was much stronger than I was. It pulled me right off the bank into the rushing water! Joe and John quickly ran over and dragged me out before the fish dragged all of my 145 pounds downstream! They saved me and caught the King salmon, which weighed about 40 lbs. Although I was freezing, it was a great catch and we ended up with a very successful trip, shipping lots of frozen fish back to LaGrande!

Jordan #12

Learning to sew

Mom was a fabulous seamstress and encouraged us to sew as much as we'd like. Since we didn't have allowance or any kind of budget to buy clothes on our own, we didn't have much choice. Mom would scour the fabric stores whenever there was a sale and just buy any fabric she liked. She had closets full of fabric. Aside from some of the very special ones she intended for herself, she let us choose what we wanted. With what little money we had, we were always buying new and fashionable patterns. When I decided I was ready to start sewing (I was about 11), I chose a simple jumper to make. Mom suggested I use some olive green corduroy because it wasn't too expensive and it wouldn't be too great a loss if I messed something up. I didn't get very far before I messed up. Mom had forgotten to explain "nap" to me so when I cut out the

pieces, they had different "naps" and looked different colors. She made me go ahead and finish it, though but I felt like a clown when I had to wear it to school. I never forgot about nap again! We got so good at sewing that on some evenings, when the dishes were done, the kids bathed and our homework completed, we would go downstairs and sew ourselves something new for the next day. We ended up with quite a wardrobe and I, personally, used my sewing skills well into my professional life to make beautiful skirts, slacks, jackets and gowns.

Janice #4



Irene made all the boys sweaters, and all the girls sweaters and skirts for this Christmas picture.



The result of milking

I'd do anything to get out of housework and so I readily volunteered to do the milking. Mom and Dad were more than game to teach me because it was always nice to have someone else to do it. But every time I tried to get out of housework by offering to milk the cows, mom would tell me that if I did the milking too often, I'd get flat fingers. She must have been right – and I must have been successful escaping housework – because I have big, flat fingers!

Janice #4

Living "in The Convent"

In the small town of Baker, Oregon, there once was a fairly large population of Catholic nuns who ran the Catholic School, the Catholic hospital and helped at the church. But as the numbers declined, the nuns consolidated their housing and moved into a smaller residence adjacent to the hospital.

Hence, Fabian and Irene purchased the "convent" house two blocks from the Catholic church and school. It was a beautiful, stately, 3 – story home with many rooms. The large rooms on the main floor had dark paneling and hardwood mosaic floors. There were huge picture windows and tall bookcases.

As a young girl, I remember weekends as the time "the house had to be cleaned". I had to help vacuum six large – almost dormitory-size-bedrooms, clean sinks and bathrooms and dust. Oh my gosh!! Not only were there rooms and rooms of furniture to dust, but we had to dust wide, dark baseboards everywhere. There was the ornate wood banisters going down the staircases from the upper floor to the main floor. We vacuumed the stairs, then dusted the railings and polished the wood that lined the carpet runner. (Let's see, that was 18 steps on the back staircase going up from the kitchen, and 25 steps on the front staircase going up from the front entry. That would total up to 43 steps each weekend, or 2,235 steps each year, or 13,416 steps in about the 6 years I remember being a part of that chore.) Of course, I didn't have to do the steps "every" weekend. One of my sisters might do them, and I would get some other lucky "chore".



My parents eventually raised 13 spry Catholic children in that home. And I bet they could tell you more "chore" stories.

Joyce #3



The perfect child?

Growing up as the youngest was not as great as most assumed it was. I was left largely to do as I pleased, as long as I did what was expected of me and did nothing wrong. That was simple enough but I longed for attention and affirmation. My way of achieving this was to strive for perfection. Mom and Dad were divorced when I was only 7, so I have very few memories of them together. I rarely gave either of them any reason to be angry with me, so my memories of both of them are very fond. I wanted to please and never disappoint. My biggest fear was failure. I always tried to be the perfect child.

We had some negative things in our family, but, by far, more positive ones. I've always believed one has to focus on the positive. Most of the time I was with Mom. I loved staying up late with her every night. She would sew, or iron and we'd watch television together. Our favorite programs were Charlie's Angels, Hart to Hart and The Love Boat. She would work and I'd sit silently by her side. When we weren't watching TV, we'd be listening to Neil Diamond. She had every record he's ever made. To this day, every time I hear a Neil Diamond song, it brings the memories flooding back. In La Grande, during the holidays, I would be her little helper. We would be up until 2:00 a.m. before Thanksgiving, making pies, cranberry salad and stuffing for the turkey. During Christmas time, we would decorate the house or wrap presents till the wee hours of the morning.

When we moved to La Grande, she would let me help her at the store. I remember her teaching me how to drape fabric in the windows. I loved her creative flair and am still in awe of all the things she knew how to do and how well she did them. From her I became multi-faceted! One of my greatest assets is my ability to accomplish just about anything I set out to do. I learned that from Mom.



Occasionally, I would take the train over to Ontario to visit Dad on a weekend. He would pick me up at the train station and I would have him all to myself for the weekend. It was great to have his full attention and affection for those short periods of time. Dad would have me help him with chores or the cooking or do little things at the store. To this day, I have great admiration for the "Mack work ethic". I watched both Mom and Dad work very hard and I do not believe I would have achieved the confidence I have today without them as role models.

Jill #13

I loved having Jill around. She was an easy, enjoyable child.



The Ranchero

Dad loved his white Ranchero. I can't really remember when we got it – but it was THE vehicle he used to go "out to the ranch" on winter mornings and the vehicle he used for all ranch-related work. No pick-up for Fabian – the Ranchero was a much better combination of practicality and luxury! Mom and Dad were always really good about letting the "next up" for a driver's license practice driving on the 6-mile trip to and from town or to and from the grocery store. It was like after you got your license, you didn't get to drive anymore unless you were alone because the next kid in line always had to practice. We drove both the Ranchero and the big Mercury station wagon.



The Ranchero was a practical vehicle for us.

One summer evening before my 16th birthday, I wanted to go out and practice driving. I was really eager to get my driver's license and the big day was only a few weeks away.

Mom and Dad were going out to dinner in town, but they told Jerry he could accompany me and we could drive up into the eastern hills and back. On the way back, we were just cruising along about 40 mph and I encountered a gradual left-hand turn with a gravel road feeding into it. I didn't slow down enough before the turn and so I braked as I was going through it. I hit the gravel and started to slide and really didn't know what to do, so I over-corrected and the Ranchero went rolling over on its side. We weren't going very fast when we rolled, so Jerry tried to jump out. His leg got caught and he pulled a lot of muscles and tendons. I just hung on to the steering wheel (no seat belts then) and when the rolling stopped, I looked up to see Jerry leaning in one of the windows yelling, "Get out!" I don't remember which window I crawled through – but I clearly remember the Ranchero laying on it's side and really smashed up. I don't even remember how we got back to the ranch – maybe 7 or 8 miles away. I think someone came by and gave us a lift home. I do remember having to call Mom and Dad at the restaurant and telling them what



happened. I was so glad that their first question was, "Are you all right?" instead of, "How bad is the Ranchero?" I was grateful for their concern, but I felt really, really bad about the Ranchero. Dad really loved it and was never able to replace it. I didn't feel much like driving after that and didn't get my license until I was almost 17!

Janice #4



The pony ride

After Dad got rid of Lady, he bought another horse – a spirited little filly. She was fun to ride because she'd go so fast and was a good jumper over the ditches. When she was old enough, we bred her and were all excited when she presented us with her new colt. One day when the colt was a few weeks old, I decided to take her for a ride. I saddled her up – she seemed anxious to go, too – and led her out of the barn, shutting the big doors behind me. When I got on her, I couldn't figure out why she was so reluctant to get going. She started bucking and turning and I had to really struggle to get her out into the field. I eventually coaxed her down towards the end of the field, but she kept trying to turn back to the barn. Finally I said, "OK, let's go back." As soon as I let her turn around and head toward the barn, she went flying! She sailed over the ditches so smoothly and ran straight toward the barn. She was going SO fast, I could barely hold on. Just when it appeared she wasn't going to be able to stop in front of the barn, she did indeed come to an abrupt stop sending me flying over her head and smashing me right into the barn door! It was then I realized her foal was whinnying and I should NEVER have left the foal in the barn!

Janice #4

Curfew Violation

Janice and I were the grateful recipients of an annual invitation to visit Bob and Dorothy Lambeth at their home in Mountain Home, Idaho for about a week each summer. From about the ages of 7 and 8 until about ages 14 and 15 we looked forward to the week where we were the only 2 children in the household.....and the activities were planned around us. During one summer visit we had gone out to the movies with the neighbor boy and a friend of his. After the movies we drove around the dry rolling mountains on the outskirts of town while the guys demonstrated how the local jack rabbits froze in the middle of the road when the headlights of the car hit them. We lost track of time until we found a pair of flashing lights shining on us!! BUSTED.....wrong place at the wrong time!! We were escorted to the local police department and booked on a curfew violation. The police phoned Bob and Dorothy to come and pick us up. They were quite good natured about it; and it was a great consolation to us that they did not feel it was necessary to mention the incident to mom and dad. I believe it was many years before the story was ever passed along to them.....at which point it was history.

Joyce #3



Radium Hot Springs

We had classic times the early 60's whenever the family would load up into the Mercury station wagon. One of our favorite outings was to "Radium Hot Springs". It was actually a large, outdoor pool heated with the water from nearby hot springs. It seemed we always arrived before it opened and had that painstaking wait before an attendant opened that big wooden gate. The tension was always heightened by the strong sulfur smell from the hot springs. We'd swim for hours – Mom and Dad would hang around the baby pool with the youngest kids. Before we left, we'd all get a treat – a candy bar from the snack window. Radium Hot Springs was like heaven on earth for us.



Playing with Jason and Jacque at Radium Hot springs in 1958.

Joseph #8

Exploding Rootbeer

Mom and Dad extended their resourcefulness for providing for their large family beyond the homemade sausage and canned fruits and vegetables, to the beverage department – homemade beer for themselves, rootbeer for us!! They had a huge crockpot – maybe 10 gallons in size. We would gather to help stir up the ingredients, wash dozens of narrow necked bottles, and finish by "capping" the bottles with the metal pop off caps. Then the dozens of bottles were stored away to age....and to be used discriminately. One weekend evening when I was a teenager, I was one of the "babysitters" in charge of the younger kids while mom and dad were out. I was up late sitting in the TV room with some others at our 2nd street house when we started hearing strange noises. Ppshshsh, ppshshsh.....followed by the sound of broken glass. After much searching, we determined that the sounds were coming from the next room – the bar/piano room – from inside the deep window seat. I don't think we knew until that point that that was where some of the hooch was stashed. And for whatever reason – maybe change in temperature- it was exploding !!

You guessed it – one sticky mess to clean up!!

Joyce #3



Mack Mania – Trouble from the younger set

One of our first Mack Mania reunions was held at Mom's house on 1st street in LaGrande and consisted of all the J's along with quite a few spouses and fiances'. The only children present were Travis Fryback and Michael Albritton, Jr. who were both about age 5. They were good companions for each other. So as we all visited and ate we left them to entertain themselves either in the basement game room or out in the large yard. They seemed to stay quite busy and content. One evening some of the guys went out to the garage to the pool table to play a few games. The balls would not roll.....they had been glued to the table. When Travis and Michael were confronted, they readily admitted that they had done it. They thought it would be helpful !!



The Volleyball Team – all family – at Mack Mania 1980.

The next day, we were more careful about keeping the two boys within our view. So, as we played volleyball in the backyard, they were confined to play up in the treehouse above the court. At one point, the volleyball bounced into the bushes under the tree house. When one of the boys went to retrieve it he felt a light "shower". The same thing happened a second time. Travis and Michael were laughing hysterically as they "whizzed" down on the volleyball players!!

Joyce #4

Hard to lie

One evening mom and dad went into town from the Missouri Flat house to go to dinner. They told us to stay in the house. Under no circumstances were we to go outside and, absolutely, were we NOT to play baseball in the front yard. As soon as they left, we had the usual discussion, "Well, how would they know?" So we went out and started a game. We weren't very far into it. I was batting and Julia was catching. I'm not sure how it happened – if she leaned forward or if I leaned back – but I swung really hard at a pitch and missed it and as my bat carried through it smacked Julia right in the eye. It immediately swelled up and we were so scared she was going to be blind, we had to call mom and dad to come back and get her and take her to the hospital. Julia ended up with one incredible black eye that lasted forever, but other than that, was okay. The rest of us were all grounded for a very long time.

Janice #4



Making boxes and bows

The holiday season was an exciting time at dad's store. It was always busy. Several months before the "season" set in, dad would ask us to help gear up by assembling gift boxes and making bows. He had this hand-crank machine that would make little starburst bows. Round and around we'd turn the handle – one, two, three, four.... up to eight rotations. Sometimes we'd do a few extra turns because we thought the bows looked prettier with more twists, but Dad would get mad if he caught us because he was so frugal and didn't see the need to waste even one inch of Sateen ribbon! The boxes he used for jewelry came as cut out flat stock, with tabs and scored to fold. We would make hundreds of boxes in numerous sizes and stack them neatly into bigger boxes so there was ample supply come the high season. Our fingers would bleed with paper cuts but we had to be careful because the last thing dad wanted on his boxes was blood spots! Even though we worked really hard, I always looked forward to doing it because I felt so grown up "helping out".

Janice #4

Ground squirrel hunt

The area around Missouri Flat Ranch was excellent for ground squirrels. Our favorite spot was about three miles to the west over near the Colton's property. Although there were many other areas we hunted, this was good because it was wide open and I believe dad could keep most of us in sight. There were always so many squirrels along both sides of the road as we were driving to the area, we'd actually start hunting before we even got there! I often wondered what someone driving by might think when they encountered that black station wagon with six guns hanging out the windows!

Joseph #8





Bonding?

When we lived in town at the second street house from October to May, one of the kids needed to go out to the Missouri Flat ranch with dad every morning to do the chores out there. Usually it was Jerry or Jim, but sometimes I got to go because I was strong and could do most of what Jerry and Jim could do. One morning I was helping Dad change the sprinkler pipes – I'd have to unlatch the pipe, pick it up, carry my end a certain number of paces, then put it down and make sure the line the pipes were forming was straight. On this particular morning, I couldn't seem to do much right – or dad was really in a bad mood – because he kept getting cross at me. Finally he had an outburst at me – I don't even remember what he said but it really hurt my feelings. It was the first time I could remember wanting to get away from my dad. We finished the pipes and went back to the house. I went out and did the milking and dad went about doing other chores. I eventually got ready for school (when we helped out there in the mornings, we took school clothes and then caught the school bus into town) and was leaving the house to walk the 1/2 mile to the school bus stop when dad caught me and said, "Come and I'll give you a ride over." I about fell over – he NEVER drove us to the school bus stop. In the car there was an awkward silence between us as we sat and waited for the bus to come. When it finally pulled up, I reached up and pulled the door handle but before I could get out, Dad reached over and took my hand and squeezed it and said, "I love you." I was stunned. He never said anything like that. I got out of the car dazed – and started to cry a little and when I looked at my hand, I realized he had pressed a \$5 bill into it. It was his way of saying, "Sorry." To this day, I remember vividly the collision of emotions I felt in those few moments. I believe it was the beginning of a special friendship and respect I have always had with my dad.

Janice #4

Camping

I have great memories of day trips to the East Eagle Creek destination "Tamarack Park". It was only a 45-minute trip from the Missouri Flat ranch up and over the first ridge of mountains into the trail head area of the Eagle Cap Wilderness. The road was always hot and dusty – so dusty that as soon as we stopped, we would write our names on the back window. Our artwork never lasted long before somebody hit the electric toggle switch and lowered that "cool" window. Once the window was lowered, out came the coolers filled with "Shasta" pop that required a real can opener. We'd have a long, great day playing in the woods.

Joseph #8



Fingers Lost...

In the spring we always ran the ditcher through the irrigation ditches on the Missouri Flat Ranch to clean them out and re-shape them in preparation for irrigating the alfalfa fields. Dad always borrowed the ditching equipment from the neighbors. One year, the wimpy thing we borrowed wasn't cutting deep enough; we had to put extra weight on it so it would burrow deeper. At the time, it seemed like the right thing to do was just jump on wherever you could and hold on and watch the dirt come piling out the sides while you went for a ride. However, five other brothers all had the same idea! As I was grabbing for something to hang onto and keep my balance, my fingers got caught between two plates, cutting off the tips of two fingers. I was rushed in to the hospital, where they sewed up the ends of my fingers the best they could. A year later, while playing in the front yard in our big grain wagon, my hand got caught between the wheel and the body of the wagon, pinching off the ends of a few more fingers. Alas, even though we found one of the tips of one of the fingers, they weren't able to reconnect it. At the age of six, our family doctor - Dr. Kostol - used to kid me that I must not be able to count to 10, only to six and I was probably trying to get rid of my other 4 fingers!



Judy, Jordy and King in front of the old grain wagon.

Joseph #8

Orthodontic appointments

To this day, dad claims responsibility for our "million dollar smiles". Most of us wore braces but since there wasn't a good orthodontist in Baker, dad took us over to Walla Walla for our appointments. We'd go about once a month and you'd think we were going on a two-week vacation! We'd load the big Mercury station wagon with everything we could possibly need - pillows, blankets, all our schoolwork, games, magazines, food - for the 2-hour trip. Despite the pain in our mouths after our appointments, we really enjoyed these trips. We'd usually leave early in the morning, be finished with the appointments by noon, and then stop over in Pendleton so dad could check in at his store there. Sometimes he'd take us out for hamburgers, or - if it was later in the day - we'd get to go to Cimmotti's Italian restaurant for dinner. Then we'd have the long drive back home, usually sleeping most of the way. When I look back on this now - and particularly when I think about how blessed we are to have great teeth and wonderful smiles - I really have to thank dad for being willing to put both the time and the expense into our orthodontics!

Janice #4



Sledding

Sometime around 1973 or 1974, the family was sledding up at Marble Creek. One of the boys had just taken us up to the top of the hill in the Ranchero and left us so we could sled down. We had decided that three of us would stack up on one sled because we could really get up a lot of speed. Judy was on the bottom, I was next and I think Jordan was on the top. We had a few good spills going down the hill and had to run and jump back up on the pile. Finally, as we came around the last corner where the fire was built, we noticed the sled was out of control and going straight for the fire. I rolled off, throwing Jordan off, leaving Judy on the sled to steer straight into the burnt out fire, which brought her sled to a screeching halt and she came up with her face black and her mouth filled with ashes. It was a great moment!

Jacque #D

Dolly Vardens

Joe, Jay, John and I took Dad for his first fishing trip in Goodrich Reservoir in the middle of the summer. We were after Dolly Varden fish – or red-spotted trout. Dad was able to hike more than 2 miles (all uphill) into the steep wilderness. We fished for about 5 hours from the snowbanks and glaciers near the water. We caught a record amount of fish – over 100 Dolly Varden trout. We had a great time, except when it came to cleaning them all!



Jordan #12

Heated up cows

Every year or two, Dad would rent a big bull to breed our heifers. Once, when he had expressed satisfaction that the timing was good and several heifers were in heat, I had asked what that meant. He had explained to me that the heifers would kinda jump around when they were "in heat". One afternoon when I came home from school, I noticed the herd in front of the barn and #4 was particularly agitated – "jumping around". I ran indoors and called Dad at the store, "Dad! Dinky's all heated up! What do we do now?" To which Joyce answered: "Give her privacy!"



Janice #4

When we bought the Missouri Flat Ranch, we invested in a small herd of Angus.



Mom's jeweled fireplace

As busy as mom was with all her kids, she managed to constantly have one project or another going. At one point, she raided the boxes of broken costume jewelry from dad's store for one of her "ideas". Apparently, she had always dreamed of having a jeweled fireplace. Over a period of a few months, she made one. She started by cutting out a sheet of plywood that would fit exactly around the fireplace. Then she organized all the "jewels" into patterns. When she was ready to start assembling, she used some kind of plaster or grout spread over the plywood into which she imbedded the jewels, piece by piece. It was like a wonderful puzzle coming together. Once it was done, she put it in place around the fireplace, perfectly framing it. We would sit in front of that fireplace for hours, studying the pieces, looking for favorites. It seemed like each time we studied it, we'd find something new. Of course the rumor started around town, that the Macks were so rich they even had a jeweled fireplace!



A Christmas picture in front of the jeweled fireplace. Irene made her own dress as well as all the girls dresses.

Janice #4

Hunting

Some of the most memorable times at the old ranch were hunting rabbits, ducks and pheasants with Dad, my brothers, the Coltons and the Dalglishes in and around the ranch. It was such fun! I remember the early morning fog and mist off the marshes.

Never-ending Laundry

The laundry in our household was never-ending. Every day after school, we'd have at least seven or eight loads to fold. Each person had their own separate pile. There was always so many white briefs, the only way we would know which was whose, was by the size. Through the years, we just matched up the size to one of the boy's age and put them in that pile! Since we always had one or two in diapers – and mom used all cloth diapers – there'd always be lots of those. The ironing would usually build up over the week, but we'd have to plow through it on Saturdays. Every bed had to be changed every other week, so Saturdays included lots of sheets and bed-making, too. Mom had a "mangler" and insisted that all the sheets be ironed before being replaced on the beds. Thankfully, she did that part!

Janice #4



Christmas in The Mack Home

To this day I am still amazed at how our parents managed to pull off such delightful Christmases for us – year after year. As I grew older, I became privy to some of the planning and preparation – but I’m still in awe of the execution.

I’m not sure, but I assume Mom had a budget. I don’t know when she started shopping, but I know she accumulated the purchases at the store – up in the attic space. I’m not sure when she wrapped everything – and EVERYTHING was always beautifully wrapped. She must have made lists because everyone always seemed to be treated equally. But the most awesome thing was making it all come together on Christmas Eve.



On Christmas Eve, things were organized like clockwork. Dad (who ALWAYS came home by 6:45) would be home a little late this night. Of course, we always knew it was because the Christmas season was so busy and this was the last big day. At 6:45, Mom would sit us down to dinner as we always did. The food was passed around and we all ate excitedly. At 7:15 sharp, the front doorbell would ring and we would all tense up with anticipation while Mom went to answer it. Interestingly, Dad would come through the back door about the same time. Mom would return to the kitchen, serve Dad his dinner - while we all waited anxiously. Dad would finish quickly and "release" us from the table. We’d all rush for the living room and – voilé! – Santa would have been there! All the presents were stacked under the tree. We’d whoop and holler, but the dishes would have to be done and the kitchen cleaned before we could start. That never took long! We’d settle into the living room and each child would select a present. I don’t know how mom and dad kept track of who was opening what, but they always seemed to! One Christmas, Jordy started grabbing and opening really fast – then throwing the gift to the side. They quickly took all the rest of his presents from under the tree and hid them. It took just moments before Jordy realized there was nothing else for him under the tree and he panicked. It was really funny to see him freak out – and several hours before Mom and Dad gave his other presents.



It would take two to three hours before all the opening was done and all the paper was folded. (Mom would make us open things carefully and she would "save" every piece of paper she could for the next year. We thought this was so DUMB, but we always had gift-wrapping paper when we needed it! She'd store it in the closet under the front stairway – which, from time to time, held other "secrets" she was trying to conceal from us.) Sometime during the festivities, we would call our godparents and thank them for the gifts they gave us. We'd stack the toys under the tree and carry our individual loot to our bedrooms. Then we'd get ready for midnight Mass. All but the youngest would go to midnight Mass. We'd return home, tired, hungry and happy. The next day we'd have a wonderful turkey dinner and enjoy our presents. Somehow it always was peaceful.

As a parent, I know how hard I work to make Christmas successful and memorable for my two boys. The planning I do, the effort I put forth, makes me even more appreciative of the efforts our parents put into making sure our Christmases were as memorable as they were.



One of our many Christmas pictures.

Janice #4

Tom and Jerry Drinks

12 eggs	
1 lb. Powdered sugar	1/2 jigger rum
1 tspn. Cinnamon	1/2 jigger brandy
1/2 tspn. Nutmeg	1/2 cup boiling water
1/2 oz. Vanilla	

Blending the Batter:

Separate egg yolks from whites. Beat egg whites with electric beater until stiff. Add sugar gradually. Blend in cinnamon, nutmeg and vanilla. Add in 6 egg yolks and blend until smooth.

Making the Drink:

In a large mug, put 1/2 cup of batter, add in the rum and brandy and top off with hot water. Stir well and sprinkle with nutmeg. Serve with a cinnamon stick.

Tom & Jerry's were one of the Kids' treats during the holidays.

Mom's Tree

We had our differences with Mom regarding her taste in Christmas trees and decorating. One year she decided she really wanted something "different" and decided to build one – a TALL, triangular module out of plywood. I think the concept was good – she took blue satin material and draped it gracefully over the three sided structure, tying up each drape with a silver ball - but I think we all just loved the natural look and never really accepted her concept. She used the structure a few times, but mostly we had a gorgeous natural tree with very traditional ornaments.

Janice #4



The Mice

In 3rd grade, all 3rd grade elementary students at North Baker Elementary were in makeshift classrooms in the gym. My teacher was Mr. Baker and he liked white mice. One day during lunch – when no one was around – I released ten white mice from their cages. They had the run of the place throughout about six classrooms. It was about an hour after lunch that the screaming began and the white mice were seen scurrying everywhere! I never did get caught and we retrieved all but two.

Jordan #12

Our Dog King

I can't remember why Mom even allowed Jerry to get a dog, but she did. One of his classmates had had a litter of German Shepherd pups and Jerry REALLY wanted one! He was so cute with his big feet and floppy ears! He was a purebred and had registered papers and was our first real pet. We named him "King" and he lived in the backyard at the 2nd Street house. He would go out to the Missouri Flat Ranch with us but we never used him for cattle or chores. Instinctively, King was very protective. Jim demonstrated this to one of his buddies once. He asked the guy to push him around a little and as soon as he started, King jumped in fiercely and warded the guy off Jim. We thought it was so cool, we showed our friends the same thing several times!

King was Jerry's responsibility and when Jerry went into the military, the responsibility to care for him fell on me as the oldest boy at home. I fed him and played with him, but King was pretty bored in the backyard. One of our babysitters was dating a man from the Air Force base in Baker and learned that the military was looking for good dogs. We decided to enlist King in the Air Force. The soldiers came and took him away – it was a sad day – but we heard stories of him from time to time. Our sitter's boyfriend sent a letter telling us that he had seen King in training in Texas and he was doing well. Later, he also informed us that he met up with King in Vietnam, where he had been assigned to a Vietnamese general. Several years later, we were saddened to hear that King and his general had been shot down over Vietnam and both had died. We were proud, however, that our dog had been of service to our country.



John #6



BB in The Eye

We had a huge front porch on our 2nd Street house and we loved to play on it. Mom couldn't see us out there to call us in for chores and we could see our friends up, down and across the street. The porch had shapely railings and sometimes we'd stick our arms or legs through them and wouldn't be able to get them out, but Mom always seemed to be able to do it when we started wailing. One hot, sunny day we were playing out on the front porch and our paper boy, Timothy Sullivan, came riding by on his bicycle with "no hands". We teased him a little but mostly we were minding our own business playing. He rode by a second time – then a third time shooting BB's at us from his sling shot. We really don't know why he did it – maybe he was practicing his aim – maybe he had the hots for Joyce or Janice – or maybe was jealous of Jim or Jerry – we don't know. On the last ride by, the BB he shot zonked me in the left eye! I went down with my hands over my face and someone escorted me into the house. Mom rushed me to the Emergency Room but after examining it and determining there wasn't any hemorrhaging there was little they could do other than put a patch over it. When the patch came off a week later, we noticed that part of my pupil had been severed and was lying down on my iris in a little half moon shape. I was still really mad and my mom and I went to Sullivan's house to make sure his parents knew what had happened. His parents gave me two little tea cups - which I still have to this day - thinking that would make things okay. I have no idea if he was ever punished. I have never seen him to this day but I have seen pictures of him in his military dress and read about him in the newspaper. He never said he was sorry, which is what still makes me angry. If he had, maybe the whole thing would have been okay. The incident, however, was the beginning of my lifelong relationship with glasses. In an effort to compensate for my bandaged eye, I strained my good eye and ended up with different vision in each. And I still have the "mark" in my eye to remember the event!



Our front porch at the 2nd Street house was a popular place. Our big Mercury station wagon is in the driveway on the right side.

Julia #5

