

*No memory of having starved
atones for later disregard
nor keeps the end from being hard. **
Robert Frost

Roots LSJ

by: Louis S. Jablonski

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* Mom writes, "The Frost lines were on a scrap of paper with his story, so there was meaning for him there."

Editor's note: It was important to me that my children have access to my father's autobiography. Of course, this is difficult with his challenging penmanship. I imagined others may have this difficulty as well, so here is a print version.

I've edited as little as possible for readability, as little was needed. I've made my best attempt at spelling names; however, you may want to have your copy in Dad's own script nearby as you read this. Please let me know of any errors herein, and I will correct them.

Thank you to Elaine Tveit for her many hours of typing.

I've chosen the apple tree motif (in Polish, Jablonski means "of the apples") for the cover; it is the same one carved on Dad's gravestone and inside his coffin lid.

Low/Bill Host-Jablonski , Spring 1998

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3/31/78

One of my many office mates at MU was an 80 yr. old prof., Don Lescoheir. He said he had signed the doctoral papers for Dr. Scrimshaw, another ancient, who in turn had signed my father's apprenticeship papers. Don had heart trouble and told me that if one day he failed to appear, whatever books of his were in the office became mine. One book I failed to find when he did not appear was an autobiography he had written to satisfy his family. Just today I read in the ND Magazine that it was an interesting and useful activity for the aging. This writing by an old timer of whatever vocation could be a life history for his family to read and appreciate and a mechanism for narrating phases of life, reconciling contradictions, and examine goals and achievements that otherwise "pass in the night" as just living. And of course other things such as searching out and reveling motives and dreams came true as aborted or dying in youth. So I believe I will try to do something akin to Don's effort, not in an attempt to justify or glorify but to tell a story of who I am, how I got to be that someone and whether it mattered. I leave it to a reader, if there is one, to decide its worth or significance. So on to the beginning--my parents.

Ma, born Mary Teresa Karolczak of John and Mary (Razmierczak) in Posen, then Germany, June 26, 1884 arrived as a child of eight in the U.S. I believe through of Port of New York. She told me of a very long journey on a combination sail and steam ship which was blown by storms so far off course that some thought they might head for Brazil instead of the U.S. Who besides her parents came along I'm not sure, but my uncle Joe was born at sea. Ma was the oldest, then Joe, and later in Milwaukee Andrew, John, Roman, Charlie (Casimir), Stanley and Alvina. I'm not sure of the order. I think three others died in infancy. Grandma died about July 4 in 1923. I barely remember her and then only as a smallish woman over an ironing board set on the backs of two chairs. She was ironing in the kitchen of the front house on a lot on Weil Street between Chambers and Locust Streets, about mid-block. The house was of stucco with a full front porch. There is a picture somewhere of me, Stanley, Bernice and a big black dog on that porch. We lived in the rear cottage on that lot. It was a wooden house and I remember only that it butted on an alley and the railroad tracks to the east. The lot ran E-W. That picture was taken about 1918 because we didn't move out to N. Pierce Street until 1918.

To the north next door lived the Holz's. I remember little except Mr. Holz played a bass drum in some band and wore a uniform while beating that drum. His daughter Elsie I also remember but only slightly. I had her son in class many years later at MU, but don't recall his name. To the south lived another family with a Polish name. Across the street lived Uncle Peter Sznkowiak, and wife Stella. They had three kids, Stella, Walter and Chester. Stella was a school teacher, married an engineer Joe Gorski, and moved to Bakersfield CA. She is widowed now. Walter still lives in the homestead and Chester died some years ago. There is a death notice in the black bound Bible under Szmko. As kids we always called them Uncle and Aunt. "Uncle Shimkowiak and Auntie Shimkowoczka.

Next door (north) Aunt "Swolinska" (Stella) lived in Uncle's house. He lived in the rear house, a smallish place of wood with no basement. She had a passle of kids Julia, Josephine, Antoinette, Harriet, Sophie, Mary, Casey (Casimir) and Frank. Aunt was a widow. Uncle Joe, her husband drowned in Lake Pewaukee while fishing. I never saw the man nor do I remember him. The front house was a dark gloomy thing but big.

Down the block (North) lived "Gypsy" (Crazy) K&azir (Casmir), a mason and further down another cretin "Crazy John". Both were much hassled by the "normal" kids and were simply lost when their mothers died.

On the NW corner of Weil and Locust (S) was a bakery called "Szmikocy". The rest of the neighborhood is still much the same today but of that early day I remember little as to who lived, where.

Grandpa and Grandma Karolzak are a bit hazy to me. Grandma died in 1923 after an illness. I remember Ma all broken up at her death. We lived at 1438 (now 3330) N. Pierce then.

Grandpa was a tall 5'11" and sported a broad mustache and a full head of hair. Ma always said he was a bit of a Prussian at home. He walked with a purposeful stride that had a little hitch in his right leg. Herb walks this way. Grandpa worked at the Municipal Garbage Plant on Erie St. Just what he did I don't know. One day on his way home from work he was run over by a truck of the Hansen Storage Co. He had remarried a widow, Nikko, by name. I never really knew either him or her. She was a strange woman, heavy of feature and one who rarely spoke to us kids and then in Polish which we hardly knew. Grandpa, Grandma, Uncle Joe, Uncle Roman Liss (Lisecki) are all buried in Holy Cross Cemetery under the red granite stone inscribed J. Karolczok. Grandpa on the west and north, Grandma to his left and an empty spot and to the east on the north is Roman Lisa then an empty grave filled (now by Aunt Alvina, the last of my Aunts and Uncles), then Uncle Joe on the SE corner of the six grave plot. No dates or names grace the stone except that of Grandpa John.

Pa was born Jacob on July 4, 1886 in the small town of Chody in present day Poland. It is about 50 miles SE of where Ma was born. He had three sisters I believe. Pa never really ever talked about his old country life. Even when questioned directly he'd never really tell. Why, I don't know. His father was named Anthony and his mother Josephine (I think). Pa was a kind of mill wright as nearly as I can say from his conversations. He told of his family living on an estate governed by a landlord. From my studies and reading I surmise he lived on one of those estates ruled over by the "schlochta" or the "starostas" of that time. The territory was Russian when he was a boy and had an affection for the Russian soldiers who patrolled the borders and a kind of distant affection for the Czar. The "lord" of his father's farm or whatever it was evidently a "good guy" because Pa never, to my recollection, ever felt oppressed. Nevertheless Pa decided to immigrate.

6/14/79

He told me that his uncle, a Russian army colonel, advised him to migrate to Milwaukee since the climate, geography, culture and people were very similar to his home. So Pa sailed (I'm not sure of this) from Hamburg on what I think he told me was the Hamburg America. I questioned him on that as I thought he meant the "line" and not the steamer but he said it was the steamer. After a most uneventful crossing during which he never suffered seasickness and got some refreshment for hoisting beer kegs from the lower deck to the saloon. He landed in Baltimore, MD and passed thru the immigration process with no trouble. He was 19 at the time so it was 1905. I don't know but I suspect he took the Baltimore & Ohio to Chicago and then to Milwaukee.

Exact dates and places are hazy but I heard he boarded near St. Casimir's Church. This parish was an offshoot of St. Hedwig's. At any rate a great number of Polish people populated this area. Though they were Polish, most if not all came from countries which held Poland's pieces. They came from Germany (and different parts like Posen, Westphalia [?] etc.) from Austria (Silesia Galicia Kielce etc.) and Russia (Ludow, Cracow etc.) Pa came from the Russian sector. He talked at times of how close he lived to the German and Austrian borders. That he spoke Russian, Polish, German and understood some of the other Slavic tongues like Croatian and Slovak. I wish he had passed these on to us but he insisted that this was America and English was the language. So we had little except English. Yet I spoke only Polish until I was six. I don't recall any but feeble attempts later to "learn" it. I still understand most of what's spoken provided it's not the high brow stuff Ma and Pa used when alone and we eavesdropped from the bathroom above the kitchen. There was a ventilator in the floor (like Dave's room [at 8447]) and we sometimes heard Ma and Pa argue in classy Polish. Some sessions were really lulu. But on to Pa.

His first job was unloading hides from wagons at A. Hallurn tannery on Commerce Street just east of the Holtan Street Bridge. The hides he said were loaded with maggots and stunk so that he could hardly eat. He managed because just across the street he could get a pitcher of beer for 5 cents. He told me that if he had the money he would have gone back to the old country. This story would be over had he done so.

The year was 1907. Allis Chalmers had opened a new plant in West Allis, having moved from what is now S. 15th street (the old Reliance Works). Pa was one of about 200 who appeared there seeking work. It was a depression year and jobs were scarce. Pa said the man who hired him simply felt his arm muscle and asked in German, “Arbeit” (work)? Pa answered Ja and so began a fifty year plus stay with Allis Chalmers. Pa saw the company grow from #1 shop to the 160 acres of buildings now there. He always favored going to work on the National/Greenfield Ave. streetcar. The fare was 3 cents then and the street car company had run tracks to the plant with a turn around at the main gate on Greenfield Ave. All the time he worked at Allis Chalmers he went that way. I used to work there too in 1935-37 in the same shop (#6 erecting) and the Wells St. car line was closer to that shop yet Pa always went in by the main gate.

I figured it out that going that way and walking all the way to a shop through the Erecting floor about 3 blocks, that he met all his friends, got the scuttlebutt and most important kept tabs on all the jobs that were bound to end up in our shop for erection and testing. He never told me because he was close mouthed most of the time about what was going on.

Anyhow, he served two apprenticeships, and as a machinist and as an electrician. He was married by this time and how Ma survived on that pittance is another story even she never told me.

How Ma and Pa met. He told me “It was a Sunday after Mass at St. Casimir’s”. He saw her standing near a tree and crying. He asked her why and she told him her father had kicked her out of the house, (for what I don’t know). Anyhow from there on they apparently dated (he had some competition, she told me) and they were married. Just where, whether at St. Casimir or in St. Mary Czestochawa I don’t know (Bernice does I’m sure) It was on Nov.10, 1910(?). Their romance I never heard more about. It was not the custom in those days or when I was a kid for the old folks to admit to any kind of lightness or frivolity. But I do remember how one time Ma was showing us some old pictures (Bernice must have them) and one had her seated next to a mustached young fellow. She got a bit pink when she explained who he was and how he stole a few kisses now and then . Why she chose Pa over him I don’t know. So there must have been some sparking around even in those old days. I’m in the dark as to where they went on dates. There must have been spots, carriage rides? I don’t know but compared today 1910 must have have been real “cool” yet it was enough to do the job.

July 21,79

So they were married, where I don’t know, probably St. Casimir. Again I’m fuzzy on details. They lived in that back house on Weil street right after marriage or on Brenan street between Wright and Meineckea (then called Lee street). It was there that Bernice was born in 1912 (Aug. 3) and two years later I came along on Aug. 14, 1914 born in that same house. Selma must have been born there too but I don’t know. She was born Oct 19, 1915 followed by Herbert on Feb. 16,

1916. On we moved to 3330 N. Pierce St. (then 1438) in 1918. I was four then and remember only that I could see the nickel knobs on the gas stove in the kitchen. The house had three bedrooms with a big bathroom upstairs and a big kitchen, dining room and two “front” rooms downstairs. It was a frame house with a tall basement and with a boiler and hot water heat. There was a very scary toilet down there that served only when we were in a condition of “had to go”. I think Pa bought it for \$3500 from people I remember as Berry or Barry (?) There were other detail like a big pantry and closet and a vestibule in front all of which disappeared in a remodeling Pa arranged just about 1929 - the year of the big crash. Another story that George and Jeannette were born in that house. I remember getting up to “go” at the very moment the midwife was carrying Jeanette to the bath tub. We crossed paths-the midwife did whatever she did and I did my thing then went to bed again. Impressed as hell. The next morning there was Jeanette in the family. Big deal for me that’s all I know.

Back to me now. Some of the remembrances I have. Most of them trivial I suppose.

The house was in a German neighborhood. Starkes to the South then the Tyrzyuski’s and further on South the Boelkes, then a grocer, Weiss, then the Winklewski’s and then Gennrichs saloon and bowling alley. The “school” clock comes from that saloon. It hung over the bar. Sniff close and you’ll smell the ages of beer, booze and cigar smoke it soaked up.

To the north were the Froemings. (Mrs. Froeming was a pillar of strength in emergencies when Ma fell apart). Then across the alley the Kofelers [?]. On the east across the alley were the Lamsters. Mr. Lamster worked at Warden Allen in the powerhouse and was greatly admired because “he” pulled the cord that blew the whistle on New year’s Eve. I also was introduced to auto mechanics when I helped him install a brake stop light on his Model T. That light was a marvel in its day. I don’t know how many brake shoes he wore out demonstrating how that fantastic thing worked, but we all were impressed by the fact that that light would signal when he braked and thus prevent accidents. (We didn’t say tail enders then.) Then there were the DuPays precisely east across the alley. He was a big florid faced fat guy who drove a big new Buick and oiled the overhead valves every Sunday on that big six. Pa shook his head about the ---- job. Mrs. DuPay (the second) was a scary witchy looking gal we avoided. There was also a crybaby daughter Audrey, who was miniature of her father.

Then the Prien’s [sp?]. He was an avid Socialist and Ma hated him because he delivered the Milwaukee Leader (a labor and socialist rag) on Sundays. All other papers were also delivered on Sundays but he peddled that rag and so he was desecrating the Sabbath. The Protestants in those days cut grass and did yard work when all good Catholics were at Mass. Some were Masons to boot and that made the offense even more vile. Of course Ma told them off, what else?

And on to the Striblings, known for a good apple tree and a consumptive daughter. The then Irish Beyers. Ma Beyer baked fabulous chocolate cakes in a sloppy kitchen. There was a pretty

daughter and Mike, called Mikey - my buddy. Then the Voights, German of course and talented as hell. They all wore glasses and looked intelligent. The boy spoke a fluent German, the girl played the piano and one was a teacher. They were all so “cool” we hardly saw them and just never played with them. We were just below them - I mean everybody was. So we just ignored those snooty creeps. And on the corner were the Goertz’s, Mrs. Goertz had some fine apple trees in the lot next door and a fine garden. She gave us all the apples we could eat so it was no fun to “raid” her trees. Also she had only one arm. A wondrous thing.

Across the street to the NW there were the Fribergs and Kronbergs - Lithuanian. Mr. Friberg made everything big and husky. His fence was heavy and the yard swing he made was massive and everything was painted barn red. The women folks made rag rugs in a tidy shed on the alley. The Kronbergs had three kids, Elsie, Albert, and Raymond. Ray was weird but turned out all right. Albert was in the army and died in service. His funeral was from the house. It was the first military funeral I’d seen. The big flag impressed me and old John always hung it out on holidays like the 4th of July.

I remember how old John packed me into his Chevrolet with 3 other of his cronies for a trip to Waupun prison. We went through “O can -----[?]” and drank some of his delicious home brew that had little things floating in the bottles. They talked in German and I looked at the scenery. Now and then Mr. Friberg would remove his curved stinky pipe from below a big heavy mustache and would ask me “You like ride?” I answered Ja and he then returned to puffing his Peerless.

In those days before supermarkets, family stores were everywhere. In our neighborhood we had Sommer’s, Weisse’s, Wenzel’s, TK and further away the A&P, Golden’s and Schroeder’s. Meat markets were around too as were three bakeries. The bakery on Booth and Auer was a favorite. “Schneck’s” were 2 dozen for 25 cents.

Saloons were also around (at least until prohibition), Genrich’s with a bowling alley and Belot’s across the street. There must have been others but since Pa was a not a drinking man I don’t remember.

I first went to school to the Fratney St. School which is still there. When it came time for Holy Communion Ma transferred me (and Bernice) to St. Mary Czestahowa on Burleigh and Fratney. It’s still there but the church then was part of the school (or the other way around). Now there is a “new” church resembling Christ King’s, though built first.

Some of my teachers - Miss Kwolinamn[?] , Miss Shermerrer at Fratney and Sisters Stanislaus, my favorite, Emmaroma, Bernadine, Teresa, Ludwicka, a red head we found out. They are still around some of them at Elm Grove, but I suspect most of them have passed on to a well deserved reward. Those were hard days.

I graduated in 1928. There's a picture of that group somewhere. I have a pin dated '28 in my collection. It fastened a ribbon, white and yellow I think, which we wore as graduates. The whole affair is memorable to me only because it marked the first time I had a suit with long and short pants. All suits had two pair of pants then. I recall how I chewed up those knickers so as to get at the long pants. Never again did I wear short pants. If you knew my mother you'd know what a triumph that really was. I revolted too against the "Buster Brown" shirts she made me wear. Beauties they must have been since she was seamstress but to me her collars were wide and rounded and the cloth of rebellion was a pink chiffon left over from the "girls" dress also sewn by Mom. I was my own man once I wore out my knickers (I wore them below the knees to tear them up). Once a guy got to long pants a lot of things happened. He got to wear short stockings instead of the long black lisle stockings. This meant he no longer had to wear those hated garters fastened to a vest-like thing called a "Stavick" in Polish. Shoes were still high tops called "bicycle". You can see them in the Sears catalog of 1927.

We wore longies in the winter and they doubled as pajamas. We must have smelled sweet? These longies were buttoned up the front and had a trap door in the rear seat. We called it a "clappa". It was fastened by two buttons in the corners. Often the button would be missing and the clappa would droop and give a guy a cold ass, and the roll of cloth gave the distinct impression that he had unloaded prematurely. As a matter of record two of the kids in our gang did so with same regularity. One we called "shitki four". He stayed outside until his mother saw substances leaking down his legs. A disturbed kid we'd call him today. Actually he was having fun and couldn't bother. We used to tell him to run home when he kind of bent over and got a kind of glazed look for a moment or two but we were too late. We played on with him to the lee of the wind. To get down wind from him and the other guy was the occasion for some comment. Eddie's Ma caught up with him because he delivered his duty but walked spraddle legged afterward. Bad tactics.

High school loomed ahead. I wanted to go the Boys Tech but Ma mentioned car fare and how it was a rough house. She prevailed and sent me to what was then newly established high school called Diocesan. It was in the old St. Elizabeth's grade school now called Harramby. Later the high school moved to Capitol Drive and was called Messner. Naturally I resented this and jazzed around until Ma finally switched me to Riverside High, called East Division by all of my generation. There too I despised all attempts to education me and dropped out.

So to a job. I got it somehow. It was with Universal Engraving Co. on 13th and Cherry above Krueger Printing Co. I was a messenger delivering cuts[?] to various printers and publishers. I rode street cars all over the city and learned where all the lines and streets were. I also had to sweep the studio and clean glass photo plates. I picked up an interest in photography there. I got \$10 a week which was really good since I worked half days and had to go to the Vocational school the other half. At Vocational I took showcard writing, electric wiring and machine shop. All of which

helped me but were really diddling around.

As the depression deepened I was laid off, but got another job with Badger State Dental Labs. For \$3 per week I delivered false teeth etc. Things were not so good. I had to buy a \$1 pass for streetcars so I had \$2 left and Ma promptly took it away. Things were rough at home by now. Pa was working short hours and every buck counted. I lost the job as most other kids did and was on the bum but not for long. Pa said “Back to school” and back I went to EDHS. By now I’m older and wiser so I settled down.

In 1934 I graduated with an 81 average. No bad for a dropout but all thru school I wore pants and a suit so shining and varnish laden the pants stood by themselves. I rarely had more than a dime in my pockets and more often than not had no lunch or just bread and butter wrapped in the paper the bread came in, or in newspaper (which I took home for reuse).

Those depression years were something. They marked all of us and we remain marked today. Pa was a proud man who always worked hard and was a good provider who paid his bills on time. When the depression hit in 1930 he had a good job and was making \$240 a month. As the depression deepened work fell off and eventually Pa was down to \$6 a week. With 6 kids, he and Ma got really desperate. Ma aged a lot and Pa got real quiet and perhaps cynical. He was forced and it hurt him to the quick to apply for aid. We got it like most of the people I knew but it was humiliating and disgraceful. I don’t think Pa ever recovered from the shame of it.

We got flour, yeast, dried prunes and apricots, lard and I don’t know what else, but it all stuck in Pa’s throat I’m sure. But we staggered through. Allis Chalmers sold Pa steam coal cheap and lent him a truck to haul it. I remember driving the truck. I shoveled the box full from a gondola car in the A-C yards. Every damn lump I shoveled on and off that truck into the basement. I was supposed to get a ton but not knowing anything about how much a ton was I ended up loading better than two tons. I recall some sharp remarks made by the A-C people about how much I had loaded but home it went. Whether Pa appreciated the extra amount I’ll never know. Pa was not one to admit anything and I suppose he had reasons for that.

The government had all sorts of programs going in on attempt to resolve the economic problems and one of them was the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). I applied and because we were on relief, I got in. I had just graduated from high school (June 26)? and up I was sent to Minocqua, Wisconsin to Camp Blue Lake 654th Company CCC. My number was CC 6 10 5731 [or CCC 10 5731...ed.]. I was up there only a short time when I was chosen to be Assistant Educational Advisor at \$36 per month, up from the normal \$30 for enrollees as we were called. Why I was given that job I don’t know but it seems the job fell vacant just before I arrived and since I talked like a school teacher I got the job. Not one of The older enrollees seemed ever to resent a rookie taking over that job so I suppose I was in a sense the last resort or suckered into it. I prefer to think I had something on the ball because later on I got to run the PX units boost in pay to \$42 per

month. All but \$5 went home to help out. Ma sent some back from time to time so I never felt broke. I even managed to save a part of that five to buy Xmas presents for everybody at home. Laugh if you want to but I got Ma a purse and Pa a pocket knife with his name stamped on it. I didn't know it at the time but some Europeans including Pa never gave knives or sharp thing as gifts. Knives were supposed to sever friendships if gifts. However true this was of Pa I can't say, but when I got home from Notre Dame many years later he gave it back to me. I've lost it since. All the gifts were ordered from Sears and arrived in a box about 8 inches square. Big stuff you see. I felt great about the whole affair.

What did I do in the CC's? Well as Asst. Ed Advisor I ran the library, lined up some courses like auto mechanics, Spanish etc., none of which really took off because the boys weren't really interested. When I ran the PX or canteen I had charge of the library, mail and all the candy, beer and soda sales in camp besides care of the building itself, keeping it clean with all kinds of help, and eating mouse-nibbled candy. I'd cut off their share and eat the rest. When I got sick of authority I went into the woods where we built fire breaks, bridges and roads and fought forest fires. We all loafed a lot (we worked 6 hours a day) and ate very well, especially if we were on permanent KP. Finally the Commanding Officer was changed and many of us got sick of him and decided to quit the Corps.

Pa had arranged for me to work at A-C and so in April of '35 I left the north woods on North Western Railroad from Woodruff, Wis. It was hard parting from that bunch of buddies, but I was on my way. Lots of guys didn't connect with jobs for a long time. The depression was fading a bit in '35 but wasn't over yet.

So now I was a working man at Allis Chalmers and I stayed on until June 10, 1937. I will always remember it as St. Margaret's feast day and here's why. But first —

Jan. 1, 1980

I started at A-C in April of 1935 in #1 tractor shop. It's so long ago I'm not sure if it was this shop or what I worked at. Vaguely I recall moving things around on skids so I was a flunky. Somehow I got transferred to #5 shop. No doubt Pa had something to do with it. Five Shop was then making generators, motors and other electrical stuff like commutators, bus bar, switch gear with some bearing work in the north half.

My job here was many things. I worked a punch press, sawed copper bars and soldered windings on drive motors for steel mills. These were impressive since they stood over 20 ft. tall. I also worked on giant switch gear for Boulder Dam, which was Hoover Dam before the depression struck. Hoover was held responsible for the depression, so monuments to his memory were few (reminds me of the Egyptians blocking out Amenhotep's name and tearing down his temples to Amon, and the purge of Stalin's name after old Nic Kruschev came to power, from even Stalingrad,

that famous battlefield. The powers have since renamed the dam the Hoover Dam and even a child of the depression like myself agrees that it is right.

There is a picture of me standing alongside one of the switch gear of put plates and doors on with old Pete Gasper and Chris Christenson who carried an IWW card — the only Wobbly I ever met or knew. I remember him because he never had his overalls cleaned.

One time old Chris was pouring hot insulation pitch above where Pete was working and a thin strand of that hot stuff hit Pete on the neck. Pete raised the hubs of hell to new heat [?] as he stormed up, down and around. Chris stayed up top for a long time. The two finally made up but it took weeks and a threat from Chris to Pete that he'd kill him next time. Pete had a big wad of tobacco always juice loaded and had been using Chris' toolbox for a spittoon. Both are dead now but our switches still work out there on the Colorado River in the bowels of the Hoover Dam.

Eventually I was transferred to 6 Erecting. In this shop, the machinery built from scratch in other shops was assembled and tested, then marked and disassembled for shipment. Giant generators and motors were about all that came through, although smaller motors (500 hp) for the Navy or the Coast Guard sometimes appeared.

I worked the third shift from the time I got to 6 Erecting until I left in June of '37. What happened is that I was working on the same things all the time. Big stuff, sure, but build one and you've seen them all. I got to wondering if there wasn't something else around more worthwhile. A job was a job in depression times but I couldn't see myself doing these same things over and over even out "on the road". Night work isn't the best for social life but I went to the library and the museum, joined the Elks to go swimming and exercise. And took up photography right down to the darkroom stuff. I did it for fun and had fun with my big 4x5 Graphic press camera. Then too, I liked symphonic music and listened to the Philadelphia and New York orchestras on Sunday afternoons. It was during one of these sessions that I saw an ad in the Sunday Vistor. It read "Be a teacher", write so and so, and I did. Well, Brother Ephrem CSC answered and told about the Holy Cross Brothers and how they worked in high schools and boys homes like St. Charles in Milwaukee. It read pretty good so after a few trips to Watertown where the Brothers had a postulants house. Frankly I enjoyed riding the interurban more than the visits. Anyhow, after backing and filling and hemming and hawing for about six months, I wrapped up my affairs, bought a trunk and on June 10 Pa drove me to Watertown. Brother Jacob met me and welcomed me into his office where he took all my tobacco away. He said "we" wouldn't need it. There were cigarettes (Chesterfields) some cigars, pipes and tobacco and some chewing tobacco. He gave me credit for the stuff. Then I told him I had just come off the night shift and could use some sleep. He put me in a big room with iron pipes and white curtains hung on this to form little rooms containing a bed and a chair. I slept like a log and was wakened for supper.

Supper over, I got acquainted with some of the guys, some kids but older fellows like myself. Then

after night prayers quiet descended, and I mean quiet. Having slept most of the day and being a night owl for almost two years I had one hellava job sleeping. I heard every train (the Milwaukee Road ran nearby) barrel thru the town and every beam in that old building creak and groan and even more in that ballroom. After a couple of weeks I got turned around and slept with the best of them - at night.

On about August 10 we were shipped out to Rolling Prairie, Indiana, the novitiate. There, all of us brothers-to-be and seminarians were given the habit (cassocks). It began a stay of 13 months. Nothing exciting happens in a place like that, except on Sunday afternoons with fine weather we took hikes and played ball. During the rest of the week we kept the place spotless, worked the farm - all starting at 5:00 am with a bell waking us. Bedtime was ten.

I helped build a barn - a big one, 125' x 195', built a road over a hill, set up fence, fed cattle, cleaned manure from barns and pig pens, dug sewer trench, peeled apples and canned peaches and envied Joe N--- because he drove the Model A pickup around the place. I did little weeding and planting in the garden. I'm sure I'd never get through if I had to weed etc. and Brother Seraphim knew it. Seraphim was a Schwartzwolder [sp?] (German Block Forest region). He was a taskmaster and often caught me breaking silence. Silence was the thing. No talk at all. Even at meals you signaled. Pass the salt - wiggle your two fingers. Pass the milk - make like milking a cow etc. Silence was so golden that when Jim Donnelly — an old power shovel salesman and shill (poker sharp) — was sliding down the roof of the barn we were building, he “whispered” his “help, help!”. We of course saved him and laughed — quietly.

Thirteen months went by pretty fast in that place. We had all kinds of talent around. There was the “Dean of the American Organ”, Raymond Hill, who rewired the Hammond so it shook the walls of the chapel. Though Pat Judge was more popular; he was an old band leader who played ragtime piano. And Clarence Bernard, who socked out Char----- [?] and sang in French. He was from New Orleans and later left the outfit and ended up a Captain in the Army, G-2, as an interpreter in France. Jim Donnelly was a tremendous hit with cards. They talked for him. He shuffled a deck in midair.

There were some holy rollers too. One had a habit of hanging his head in “humility”. Seraphim used to get livid with a “holy” rage. “Keep your head up. You're a man not a slave!” he'd roar in his German-accented English. He failed. Sko--y [?] never did come around. He ended up in the Trappists, where they have lower doors I suppose. Then a little dumpy guy from Kame, PA who slopped his soup on his habit and snooped in everybody's prayer books. He went back to the hills. Even Seraphim helped in the laugh department. He often led prayers, and when he recited the rosary his German got in the way and he'd say “Holy Ghost” like it was *hoody ghoost* and bring down the house. Anything brought down the house. He'd pause and begin again and once more the chapel got the giggles. He'd say “Those who can't stop laughing please kneel in the aisle” and twenty guys slid to their [haunches ?] and more titters. A long long pause then one little snort

set everybody off again. We finished out in private. Good clean fun. I'm sure the Lord enjoyed too.

Came August 16, 1938 and we were processed and shipped to Notre Dame and into D ----[?] Institute, the house of [foundation?] for the Brothers. It was the residence for most of us through college.

At D---, discipline relaxed a bit and we all loosened up a bit. We arrived when most of the house was either on vacation (Juniors went home and Sophomores and Seniors went to camp a Lawton [?] Michigan near Paw Paw) or on missions, so when they all returned the place had 150 double-decked in a firetrap over a hundred years old. It still stands as Carroll Hall for Notre Dame freshman, preserved no doubt by a special fire-fighting brigade of angels.

I was enrolled in Liberal Arts, majoring in History and minoring in Politics. For four years including summer sessions I enjoyed every minute of collegiate life. We brothers were not a part of the regular Notre Dame life, as we lived apart and went only to classes as students. But we were Notre Damers all the way. We owned the joint.

On a Sunday in December, I was reading in one of our rooms when the radio announcement came that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. It meant war but we were concerned because we had some missionaries enroute to India via the Philippines. They never did reach India because they were interned at SantoThomas outside Manila by the invading Japanese. We didn't see them until after the war.

Notre Dame was filled by Navy and Marine Core V7 and V12 officer trainees during the war. Thus when our high schools closed, the Brothers like myself who were working on MA's had no place to study in the summer. I and about 30 others were sent to Fordham University, New York for that summer. So I have some courses on my record from old Fordham University.

My first assignment (we called them missions or obediences) was to Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. I got there in 1942 (September) and stayed on until I got transferred to Vincention Institute in Albany, New York.

At Cathedral I taught History, Sociology, Citizenship, and Religion. I was Sophomore class sponsor and in charge of their Cotillion and other events. There were some real sharpies in that class. I was play director and put on the Gypsy Baron which featured a prima diva from the girls school (St. Agnes High School) next door. The play will be remembered for the male lead's missing a cue and completely eliminating the diva's showpiece of a song. All her relatives and friends and supporters were there and she got euchered[?] out of her song. Oh the tears and howls and confusion. Frank Maly couldn't walk the same streets where she trod. She got over the affair eventually and took up with Dick Ahearn, one of our hot-lips trumpeters. It was most evident that I

was no Korda or Griffin, so I retired to my darkroom as school photographer. There I was a howling success in the opinion of those who mattered and that included me.

I was not happy in that school for all sorts of reasons. The people I lived with were sharp and real workers but mostly loners. I became one too. The rule prevented real friendship, so it was a lonely existence.

I was transferred to Vincentian Institute in Albany, New York a high school where much of the same spirit prevailed. I decided to leave so I went through the proper channels. These proper/paper channels were appeals in Latin which supposedly went all the way to Pope and Rome. I'm sure they were pro forma and settled the issue in Washington D.C. and by some functionary unknown to me. The term applied then to people who left church service was "defecting", to imply a deserter. I never did nor will I ever accept that version of my action. I joined of my own free will and left the same way fully satisfied that I had done my duty fully right to the day I left. At any rate, pre-Vatican II churchmen rode high and rough (or thought they did) on those unwilling to be further burdened with a service which had become a sort of bondage.

I was not alone in this belief, as many (I don't know how many) of my friends also left for similar reasons. I have made no attempt to keep in touch which is in conformity with the tradition of departing brethren.

While in Albany I contacted the local IBM officer, Mr. Day, and arranged to go to New York to "World Headquarters" of IBM for an interview for a job. This I did and got a job as salesman stationed in Milwaukee. I left Albany for Milwaukee with \$50 given me. I spent \$30 on train fare. This left me with \$20. The date was January 1946. Things would have been rough indeed except Pa invited me to stay at "home" and George gave me his checkbook in effect. Since he had been drafted into the army he felt he would not need too much. I was to repay what I drew and this I did. I also wore his suits until I could get some made. 1946 knew war time shortages and it was some time before I could get a suit made because cloth was scarce. Pa loaned me \$500 for a car I needed for IBM work and with it I bought a 1936 Ford — my first car ever. It was a real scooter(?) and was home for me as I was on the road most of the time.

IBM opened an office in Madison and I was transferred. (IBM meant, according to the story, 'I've Been Moved') So off I packed. I rented a room in a boarding house on Oakridge Street and had a desk in the IBM office in the Tenney Building right on The Square. In 1946 everything was in short supply. Even typewriters (IBM called them EWM's — electric writing machines), but mine were rare birds indeed and cost \$375, where conventional machines cost about \$100. Thus sales were not terrific, but covered my draw. My territory included all of Dane County and Southwest Wisconsin. I was given all time clock sales (ITR, International Time Recorder) as 10% of my quota. I never sold one. They too were out of sight pricewise.

Life as an IBM salesman of expensive office equipment was not luxurious. I ate two meals a day and did nothing else but try to drum up sales which were not so hot. Really missionary work for IBM.

Madison's office was attached to Milwaukee initially, so I picked up my machines there. It meant too many trips back and forth but on one of these trips I was returning to Madison via Wisconsin Avenue (Highway 18), when as I passed Marquette University I noticed a parking place open just across from the Service[?] Building. On the spur of the moment I slid into it and crossed over to Johnston Hall to inquire about teaching at Marquette University. I saw Father Barnett, the Dean of Language Arts. He said he was filled up but Father Divine in Business Administration was looking for someone. Over I went and got almost instant attention from Father despite an "imperious" secretary. He said he needed a history major with a politics minor. That was me. I majored in history and minored in politics and had graduated cum laude with 28 hrs of graduate credits, besides having taught for four years in high schools. He hired me on the spot and asked when I could start. I asked when school started and he said in ten days. I said, "I'll be here." Date September, 1946.

On to Madison I went and to my first act there was to write out a resignation. It was accepted and I was on my way to 33 years as a Professor at Marquette University Business Administration, teaching veterans American Economic History, British Economic History and American Government and Politics. I taught every day and at night for extra pay and took graduate courses for an M.A.

Since Notre Dame disallowed my return to their campus to complete the 2 hours I needed for their M.A. and refused flatly to accept 2 from Marquette University, I repeated all but six hours of my masters courses at Marquette University, and in 1950 had an M.A. in history from Marquette University. I began taking additional courses in economics since I was in that department. I tried to amass enough for an M.A. in economics but it was a Catch 22.

In Econ, the chairman was Father Bernard "Bud" Dempsey. It was he who pushed me on in economics and made me department secretary.

March 30, 1980 Sunday,

This sounds high and mighty, but actually involved note taking at meetings and distributing a printout. What mattered most was that at last I had met a scholar down-to-earth (he wrote 16 books) and more important, my friend. It was he who put me thru (by tutoring) statistics and money and banking and urging me to take other courses in economics to get an M.S. in economics. I almost made it but as I gained on one end the University disallowed on the other end, so I gave up that task as hopeless. An econ Tantalus I was.

Well, Father Dempsey had lung cancer and one day in 1960 he was found dead in his room. It was during exam week and I had a 10:30 appointment with him. He didn't keep it, and since I was rushing to be ready for a seminar in Willaimstown Massachusetts, I didn't even get to his funeral. He's watching over me from Jesuit Hill in Calvary Cemetery as are some of my other Jebbie friends — Father Divine, old Hooks, Dachbauer and that old West Pointer Father Markoe with his ramrod stance and gentle straight talk.

Years flew by and I was made counselor to evening students with an office in the main office, and thru those years the old gang slowly faded. Willis Jackson left for the Lutheran ministry, Charlie Tobin died in Madison, Billy Bergston died, Al Sievers retired and has since died, Old Uncle John McDonald the English Professor died, as did Herman Karl, Walter Froelich and others. That left, after 33 years, only Herman Loebel and myself of the original guard. On my retirement a virtual transformation occurred in the department. All, or almost, are young Turks excellent mechanics and friends of a sort but not of the "Alte ---Kameraden" [?] kind. Herman is now alone and having stepped down from Associate Deanship resumes the roll of professor again — by his choice he has come full circle. For how long I don't know, but he has told me he will take early retirement. When he does the old Marquette Business Administration will have vanished and the old camaraderie gone forever.

It is hard to believe, but I had few dates or girlfriends in my life. During the depression and in my early youth lack of money and the general conditions of my life and temperament added up to no girl time. Oh there were a few I went sweet on, but they never knew it because I never told them. Then too, I went to the Brothers at age 23 and stayed 10 years, so my youth passed without my learning to dance or play or enjoy the frivolous things outside reading and some sports. I could have been good in sports but I never took sports seriously. There seemed to be more important things, like reading and listening to symphonies.

My first great heart throb was Mary Ellen. I met her and her family thru her brother Dick, a student of mine. She was in a TB hospital. When I left the Brothers I began to write her and then, as my finances permitted, I visited and finally was deep in love. The romance was mostly epistolary. I wrote almost daily and lived for her letters. As she grew well and finally left the Sanatorium, she took up her old ways and finally the affair simply petered out for lack of contact. Good for me or I would never have met Marion. Now of course, I can understand what a mistake it would have been to go further. But, oh, that gal could play the piano. She was a concert pianist and her favorite piece was the Warsaw Concerto, as it was mine. Even today I feel pangs when I hear it. But it was not to be and wasn't.

Once I got to teaching at Marquette University I began to date. How utterly stupid I was in the ways of romance — still am for that matter. But I went thru the motions with other girls, all of

whom were great good gals. I can't think of one who wouldn't have been a good wife. But being what I am they didn't think as I did until one came along — Marion. There in lies a story.

One of the gals I dated was a Rosemary, a real ok gal. Her friend was Marion. They had graduated 1-2 from Port High and were at Marquette University. Rosemary was a grad student and Marion had just graduated (1948) and was working in town.

Well, as fate would have it, I was dating Rosemary and Marion was dating Wally Diel. Wally was my friend and an excellent one. Anyhow, the Port High reunion was impending and Rosemary coaxed me into taking her and Marion did the same for Wally. His unlucky day as it turned out.

We all gathered at the Port Washington country club for dinner etc. and while at the table I saw Marion with Wally down the table a ways and fell. Later we met in a hallway between the dining room and the bar. It will never be said that I met your mother in a saloon but just barely. What else happened at that gathering I'll never know.

So when we all got back to work (whenever that was Monday)? I began calling Marion at her job. I had asked Wally if he and she had some kind of understanding - a nice way of saying "is the field open" and he said yes. So Marion and I began to date and stay out till terrible hours. We used to get to five o'clock Mass at Gesu on Sundays and stay out late even on working days. Eventually we were so at one that I "ringed" her at the altar rail one day. It was a big diamond I'd had reset from my Mary Ellen days and the deed was done. (Later in our life we both agreed that the ring was a stupid thing and I sold it for grocery money. I got \$75 and we ate it up.) In all our courtship (I call it that now but I wonder) lasted from June to January. We decided to marry in January.

To marry in those days was a real tradition. Things had to be done right. We had decided on a small wedding. One of those quiet inexpensive affairs attended by close family, relatives and friends. But it was not to be.

I had, of course, to let my family in on my plans. So I did and then Ma brought out The List of those who had attended George's, Herb's, and Bernice's weddings. One by one she went thru the list and came up with a list.

Then over to the Fellenzes for Marion's side. Grandma took over too and her list got to be a long one. Our simple wedding was out of our hands.

Now the plan was to do the thing in St. Mary's in Port and have a breakfast at the farm. The reception was to be at Hubbard Lodge on the Milwaukee river that night.

Well the Fellenzes went all out. Grandma and her helpers got a tremendous breakfast together for supposedly the close relatives but a lot of people crashed the gate. So the day continued on a note

set up during the week.

It was miserably cold and snowy. Snow storms had piled drifts to ten feet and the winds howled. The temperature was -20.

I had delivered Marion and Shirley to the farm on Friday. Dad [Grandpa Fellenz] had told us he'd meet us in Port so he could guide us to the farm along the Middle Road. Snow was falling and winds were drifting it so literally nothing but snow was visible as a kind of fog. He met us, of course, and said "Follow my tail lights". That I did in the old Studebaker, and what a ride. His tail lights were a hazy pink as I bored through the snow behind him. He told me he guided by the telephone poles by the side of the road. Years later I wondered what would have happened to all of us had he been blocked by a snow drift with me on his tail so close. Ugh!

I went back to Milwaukee because the plan called for Herb, George, Leah and myself to return to the church Saturday morning.

Saturday morning early Herb arrived in his Mercury with the windows all frosted up on the inside and he driving with a tiny[?] slit in the windshield. Leah is crying because of a row they'd had and they were late. So we're all late to the wedding. It is so cold motors won't start and the only people in church are those too stupid to stay home.

We men, Herb, George and I are wearing the same suits we all wore at their weddings in June past. These suits were of Australian wool and a deep purple and they are tropical weave and this at 20° below in Port.

February 21, 1980

(Inspired by an article of Hugh Moffet in an article in the Milwaukee Journal of February 20, 1980 Food Section).

I too am fairly well equipped to return into the "Old Days" of the Depression. There was little money for eight in the family so the diet was simple but robust.

Breakfast usually consisted of oatmeal (not the "quick" type but the old fashioned kind prepared in a double boiler. A great glob of the "koska" was sprinkled with brown sugar and soaked in milk (not the homogenized kind). If you were quick and sneaky you'd get the cream on the top of the mild before someone shook the bottle. Ah delicious, only it was so constant a breakfast I once had a nightmare with oatmeal the villain.

In those days we slept under feather beds (a big bag, bed-sized, filled with goose feathers). The feathers used to gang up at the foot of the bed and from time to time had to be beaten to the head. This was Ma's job after we were asleep (two to a double bed). She did this one time and I awakened sometime later. My head was below the hump of feathers and I began to holler. Ma came rushing in to find out the trouble and I told her the room was filling up with koska and that it was already half full. Ma had saved me, but since that time koska is not my favorite breakfast food.

There was also home baked bread (always white) with butter, Ma's bread didn't ever come out too well, but her coffee cake (kuchen) was out of this world. Every Saturday she would mix and knead a tremendous pile of dough. It filled two big pans. These were put on the dining room radiator to rise. Once risen, she'd put it into big baking tins and again let it rise. Just before she put it into the oven she'd spoon melted butter on the tops and sprinkle sugar and cinnamon over it. Now and then she'd make a stroezell[?] topping. That kuchen would come out about a yard high and so tasty she'd forbid eating it until it cooled. So it lasted through the week and even at week's end when it was hard it tasted great when dunked in coffee. No preservatives, as natural as can be and made with "three cents yeast". The cake yeast, not the dry stuff

Another great meal consisted of potato pancakes sopping with maple syrup. These pancakes started out with spuds that were peeled and then grated. It took a whole big pan (the same pan Ma used for cake raising) full of potato mush mixed with eggs and whatever and then fried in a big cast iron skillet. Ma used two skillets to keep up with the demand at the table. The skillets held lard (not Crisco etc.) which had bits of bacon here and there (this added flavor but caused some consternation in Lent when meat was prohibited. Can you imagine "bits" of bacon being a problem? Anyhow the mush was spooned into the hot lard and it spread into all sort of shapes. When done the pancakes were a crispy brown on the edges and softish in the middle. They were the meal.

The same mixture of potatoes but a little stiffer went into a concoction called kluski or potato dumplings. Ma put a tremendous pot (gropa) of water on the stove to boil. While it was heating Ma would mix the "dough" adding bacon chips and bits of onion. With the water boiling she'd move the pan over to the stove and begin to drop tablespoon size dumps of the dough into the water. This took some time but when it was all done the pot contained a grayish ----soup with globs of cooked "kluski". Delicious! Especially in the big soup dishes we had. These had a bowl with a big rim (we called 'em sideboards). It was too bad we didn't have kluski more often. The reason was that volunteers to "scrub" the potatoes were scarce and only reluctantly came forth. Why? Well grating or scrubbing spuds on that grinder "always" gave you skinned knuckles because Ma insisted that even the little nibbles of potato be used and that put your knuckles right on the sharp metal. Nobody ever thought we were cannibals because we ate the bits of knuckle that dropped into the mix.

Another cheap meal that no longer is around is sauerkraut and spareribs. Again the big kettle, into

which water, then spareribs, then barley and finally sauerkraut were placed was the water. Once done (whenever that was) the steaming mixture was heaped into serving bowls and set on the table (covered with red and white oilcloth another victim of “progress”) and in turn spooned out on individual plates. The aroma remembered can’t be “explained”. The kraut was eaten with a fork but the ribs which most often broke apart in the cooking, were fingered. There wasn’t too much meat but the bones were soft enough to crunch. Only my sister, Bernice admitted she liked the bones and to this day makes much of her taste for bones. ---I believe is an attempt to “be different” since she wears double dentures. Anyway spareribs today are merely bones and expensive and usually end up having grilled on smoky backyard grills. Not so in the beginning.

The kraut was home made too. Ma and her friend Monica, Mrs. McK----[?] we called her, would spend hours shredding cabbage on a two blade kraut cutter. This gadget (there are two in the house — one is the genuine) had a sliding open box which held the cabbage which was then passed over the blades and then fell into an earthen ware crock below. Periodically handfuls of salt were thrown over the shreds and the process would go on until the crock was full. Then a board or two or and old plate were put on top and a big fieldstone put on top. As the weeks went by the cabbage mix would cure amid gurgling and stink and eventually end up as kraut. We kids rarely got in on the cutting because it was dangerous. The kraut tasted better to us as a result.

Kippered herring (schledge?) in ten pound wooden kegs are also a bygone treat. As Lent approached, Ma would get a keg and have it handy in the basement. When a meatless meal was in order (Wednesdays and Fridays under the old regs), she would break open the keg and remove some of the very salty herring. This was the day before the meal. She would soak the fish to desalt them and then slice them into chunks and put them in a dish of sauce made from (I think) vinegar, pepper (the round black ones) and lots of onions. A marvelous something to remember. Now and then during the holidays these herrings are available in supermarkets. Ma Beusch supposedly put them up (or down if you’re from New England) and strangely enough they they taste remarkably like Ma made them. I’m certainly mistaken though. Ma’s herring was the world’s best and will never again be produced - maybe imitated but no more than that.

Lent in olden times meant certain traditions were observed. Down South, Mardi Gras, but in Milwaukee among the Poles and their imitators, ShroveTuesday was “punchki” day. “Punchki” resemble Bismarks but only barely. Punchki were made from kuchen dough. After the dough had risen, Ma would flatten the dough on a special board Pa had made for her. She would then take a drinking glass - not any glass but “that” one of the right size and begin to cut out circles of dough. She’d put the glass in flour then punch out a circle of dough. The little cakes were put on a dish towel (these were flour sacks ripped open and washed) on which was spread on the kitchen table with its oil cloth and allowed to rise.

Meanwhile Ma got the gropa ready for deep frying. She would load in lard — not steam and pressure rendered, but kettle-rendered by some farmer friend — and start the burner. By the time

the lard was heated (she had some way of telling if it was hot enough (no thermometers then, maybe a sample of dough dropped in?). The doughnuts had risen to the size of tennis balls. One by one she carefully dropped these into the kettle of lard until the surface was covered. The dough as it fried would get a beautiful brown on the under side and Ma would turn them over for the other side to brown. The very aroma was nourishment. When Ma judged (---- --test [?]) the punchki were done she'd lift them out with a fork (not tongs in those days) let them drain a bit and carry the lot over to the table. As they cooled a bit, she reloaded the kettle then returned to the table where she rolled each doughnut in a sugar cinnamon mixture or just sugar and set them aside for further cooling. After the first batch, her big job was keeping everybody away from those punchki. At supper time we feasted and by next morning only a few were left for the early birds. Thus Lent was off to an official start. Today the practice is now and then mentioned among old timers and the advertising crowd trying to cash in on a family and ethnic tradition. And sad to say they fail. Most old timers don't bother any longer.

Christmas time in older days was also an adventure. Weeks before the day, Ma would have shopped for the presents, books coloring paints etc., and [would] have managed to sneak them into the house unseen and have hidden them for that day. But the spirit or fever of Christmas came with the baking that went on. Mostly cookies.

Ma baked the world's most delicious oatmeal cookies. Her genius lay in the ingredients and how she put them together. There were nuts walnuts, pecans (the old thick shells ones) hazelnuts, almonds and (what were then called nigger toes) Brazil nuts. Being in the shell all the vast heap had to be cracked open and the meat set aside each nut in its own container. All the kids got in on this. Some (the smarties) cracked and the younger ones picked the shells clean. Ma watched to see that the nuts ended up in the dishes rather than in hungry bellies. There were raisins light and dark. These had little stems to be removed. An unappreciated chore. And currants everybody called little raisins and wondered about as part of the cookies to be.

Rolled oats in great gobs, butter, flour and who knows what else. All was piled here and there ready to be added at the proper time and only Ma knew when that was.

Again the big bread and cake pan came out and Ma would begin mixing. As each dish of nuts or what-all was added, the dough got thicker and harder to mix. After a while I got a chance to squeeze and push, but only after washing my hands at the kitchen sink. The bathroom was upstairs and we almost always, except in the morning, washed at the kitchen sink and dried hands and face on a roller towel fastened to the chimney nearby. When Ma declared the mixture just right, cookie making began. Pans were greased and tablespoonful were fingered off onto these pans. The oven being just right — again no thermometer, she would spit into the oven (while it was empty of course). If there was a quick sizzle the oven was hot enough. In and out went the cookies which had spread out to about 2-1/2 inches. Ma guarded them. The cookies were for Christmas two weeks away. We all got a warm cookie and Ma stored the rest in an old 50 pound lard tin. She

covered this and stored the lot in the attic. The cookies got hard as rock but as time passed they softened to a monstrous tastiness. I know because from time to time I'd sample them being careful to rearrange the remainder so the pilfering wouldn't be discovered. I shouldn't have bothered. Ma knew cookies don't shrink that much. Yet there were enough left. Christmas and Santa Claus came anyhow despite the bad mouthing Ma gave me, though I repeatedly declared my innocence and blamed mice for the foul deed. I never figured out that if mice got the cookies how would I know. Ma did.

Supermarkets didn't exist. Little stores were everywhere. There were five within three blocks of our house so shopping was different. Where today I go by car to a market once a week, then I would be sent for butter during the meal and be back before Pa had finished slicing the bread. No sliced bread for some time and the bread was a coarse textured rye bread. Tasty as no bread today ever pretends to be.

We used a lot of potatoes. The little store had a bushel always standing, but Ma bought potatoes directly from farmer friends who, in season, brought wagonloads (later on truckloads) into town and peddled them to perennial customers. Ma bought 12 bags of 100 pounds at one time. These were carried to the basement where Pa had built a big tight box big enough to fit. This box was in a back corner in the dark next to the coal bin. It had a hinged door in front that was locked in place when the box was loaded and could be dropped as the spuds were used up.

It was one of the terrifying things about that dark basement. Although we had electric lights, there were only three bulbs to light it and none near the potato bin. When sent for spuds after the top layers were gone, I had to lower the door and reach in for each spud. The lower the pile sank the more of me had to reach in. There is nothing to compare to the delicious terror felt with my body half in the black box reaching for elusive spuds and then dashing up the steps with "something" right behind me. This was bad enough but in the spring potatoes sprout and rot. The box had periodically to be cleaned up and the bad spuds removed. Imagine reaching full body into a black hole, reaching in and grabbing a gob of stinky gunk. The shock was terrible enough with a hand full of gunk but what of the other dangers? There were bogey men in there I swear it.

Ma also bought carrots in big bulk. These she put up in a sand filled crock. And cabbages too. When these went bad there was a real stink difficult to describe. It has to be experienced this grabbing stinky mush business. There were bags of onions too.

We canned some things, like pickles. Big pickles in vinegar juice and dill. Smaller pickles in slices and different juice. Finally the big guys who soaked in wash tubs, I don't know how long, in water, salt and alum. Sweet sour they were called when finally packed. Real crunchy they were.

Tomatoes had to be peeled, then packed or canned in Mason jars with zinc tops set in red rubber rings that sometimes didn't seal. And then "Chicago Hot" was concocted. Tomatoes were the

main ingredient, green ones. These were ground by hand in a grinder fastened to a table. Guess who turned the crank? All sorts of things found their way into this mix. Horseradish was also tearfully ground up and canned. Who ate it I don't know but just looking at a jar brought tears to the eye. That was horseradish I tell you. It neighed at you.

Ma kept chickens right in the back yard so eggs we had in plenty. Enough to sell to the neighbors at times. So we had no need to store them nor did we have more than an ice box to keep them cool. Some friends used to put eggs up in water glass. To do this, the eggs had to be chicken fresh and unwashed (you know what that meant). Whatever waterglass is, it had to be mixed, and the eggs put into it. The stuff looked like clear jello. Ma didn't use it. Cold storage eggs were available but no housewife who could help it ever used them or did so in secret and embarrassment. Then too the chickens ended up on the table.

Though Ma's garden was a riot of flowers all summer long, she also had a vegetable garden. Here onions, radishes, kohlrabi, and much lettuce kept us in fresh greens. In spots she had herbs of one kind or other. In fall she'd gather in seeds, put them in brown paper sacks and hang them from nails in the attic on rafters. She knew what they were but I doubt anyone else did. Come spring time and the bags and seeds would vanish into a new garden. There were even spearmint plants which gave off a pleasant odor and ended up in mint jelly. A cherry tree stood there too until Ma had Uncle Mike cut it down. I remember him as the shaky uncle. He had Parkinson and looked fierce to me.

Pa would get Ma boiling mad when she planted flowers. He'd call them weeds and when she served the greens he'd call them rabbit food. She'd cool off after blistering him in Polish and German.

I remember some things about Pa too. These are my impressions of what happened in the time passed and no doubt suffer in accuracy. It is better to call these remembrances.

Pa was an electrician (industrial) and a machinist whose job was erecting giant generators, motors etc. at Allis Chalmers in West Allis. As years went on he "went on the road". It meant more money and adventure, I suppose. He'd never admit it that, I'm sure. He erected generators in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Columbus, S.C., Niagara Falls, Sacramento, California, Indiana Harbor, Indiana in the Fox River Valley and I don't know where else. Being the silent type, he'd have short answer to questions like "what was it like in California"? He'd say "well lots of trees and rocks, water and mountains". Period. Because of the travel, he was away for a long as a month at a time and Ma had to carry on. She never said too much about how she managed but it must have been rough at times, especially with little kids around.

Pa was one of the first in the neighborhood to get the car bug. His first car was a tan second-hand Overland four-banger, 1918 vintage. It was a touring car, which meant putting up side curtains

when it rained or got too breezy. These curtains were stored under the back seat, so when on the road and rain threatened everybody had to pile out and help put in a rod in each door and slip on the curtain and snap the fasteners. If the isinglass was cracked or broken, too bad. Whoever was nearby got the draft and/or wet.

Whenever on the road and Pa was driving, the car was quiet. That is, we kids were. There was so much wind and noise, talk was useless anyhow.

Ma called the car a “rudera”. What that is I don’t know. Probably a junker. Many people called their cars “the machine” or “the auto”. Finally it was just “car”.

The car had 34 or 36 inch tires and carried 70 pounds pressure. These were mounted on rims fastened with lugs on the wheels. Since tires and tubes were not what they are today, they went flat with regularity. To keep going, Pa had spare tubes and tires always ready. When [there was a] flat, it meant he’d have to remove the tire and rim unclench this rim, patch the tube reinsert it and pump up by hand to 70 pounds. He had a double action pump which was somewhat efficient. He pulled on the handle and the small tube would work and on the down stroke the big tube would operate. It was real work especially when it had to be done six or seven times between here and Green Bay.

That Overland had a big engine and Pa kept it in tune [once] each year, as most owners did. The fan belt was flat and after starting the ignition ran off a magneto exactly like the one in the garage [at 8447]. Pa was proud of the way his car ran.

Once, however he was out on his periodic tours of auto showrooms. We had stopped at a Willy’s dealer’s down town to view the new Whippet which had just come out. It was too small for Pa even with its tilting steering wheel so we left. On the way home there was a swishing noise up front which Pa wondered about but dismissed as a noise. When he checked things out at home he found there was no oil in the crankcase. Well, he tore the whole engine down and had the block rebored at a machine shop on Weil & Concordia [Streets]. The building is still there on the southeast corner. New pistons pins and bearings were fitted and the crankshaft reground. All this cost about \$45 and raised all kind of cain when Ma heard about it. But Pa stood up under it and rebuilt the engine with my help. I handed him wrenches and things. I learned sizes and types the hard way. When he said “3/8” open end” his hand was out and ready. If I handed him a 1/2” you’d think my salvation depended on that 1/8” difference. It would would have been real hell had I handed him a monkey wrench. But I learned, the car got fixed, and Ma enjoyed riding again.

Soon after, Pa traded the car for an open, 7 passenger, 6 cylinder, 1923 Hudson. That was traded for a 1925 “closed” Hudson with only five seats. How we all fit in, I don’t know. I learned to drive in that old 1923 Hudson and got my license while I was in high school. No driver’s test, just 25 cents and a filled-in application blank at the [Milwaukee] Journal Building on State Street.

Lots of trips were made in that old black bus. Mostly on Sundays we went riding to Holy Hill or Port Washington or to visit farmer friends. But I remember we once visited Uncle Marcel and Aunt Anna in Laona, a long trip that needed preparing for — in detail. Pa spent weeks tinkering with that Hudson. He checked the brakes, greased everything, changed the oil in the engine transmission and differential. He regapped the plugs, set the timing and cleaned points, and made sure the battery and radiator were filled. Most of all he saw to it that he had half a machine shop in the trunk, hanging on the rear in case repairs were needed enroute. There were few gas stations around in those days and even gas was hard to find. Then too, he had 4 spare tires and 7 tubes with a patching kit, and 2 spare axles. And lucky he did because we had four flats before we hit Green Bay and another three by the time we reached Uncle's place.

I remember two things about that trip. First, we were on a road being constructed. The road bed had been plowed and leveled but not surfaced and it was raining. It was my job to sit in the front seat between Ma & Pa (ordinarily a place of high honor) and work the manual crank on the windshield wiper. The car slipped and slid sideways in the mud and Ma was saying her rosary. Tension was high and the car really quiet. All spoke in whispers as Pa in deadly earnest took us through with not even a stall. The other event was that great feeling of speed that Pa brought on by going 72 miles per hour on a gravel road. Dust flew behind us in a tremendous cloud. The side curtains billowed out and Ma was having fits. Pa finally cooled it but it took some time before Ma talked to him. That was the highlight of the trip for me. The rest was anticlimactic.

To this day I remember the open road and the "north woods" which began just north of Pulaski. The winding and twisting thru trees and brush with an occasional farm house. As I travel old 32 today I can see parts of the old road curves to the side of the new wide concrete and asphalt highway.

Pulaski was a stop enroute. Here was the Franciscan Monastery and church where one of Ma's friends was a Brother (Zakezewski), In Pulaski Pa got gas and checked the car while Ma brought out the lunch. She too had prepared for this trip with a big basket of goodies. There were sandwiches full of sausage and meat and bananas, oranges and apples and endless cookies. We bought milk from a grocery store up the block. That store was smallish and I recall it was not at ground level but higher up and reached by about six steps and a porch. Today that store would be quaint; then it was like most of the stores I knew at home.

When Ma packed that lunch she did all kinds of shopping. She was anxious about all kinds of things. I know now that she knew what she was about. There were no hamburger joints or stores around except restaurants in towns, and since we left at midnight, none of these were open as we burned through the towns. So had she not packed a big lunch we'd all be hungry and when you leave at midnight and arrive somewhere at 9:30 hunger is something to be reckoned with. One last thing. When the car was loaded up Ma & Pa went through a kind of check list and the last item mentioned was a hushed "Got the black one"? Years later I found out this meant a .32 revolver —

loaded. There must have been something on the open road besides trees and shrubs. Whatever or whoever was out there never appeared and lucky for it. Pa was ready as always. Oddly enough I don't remember the trip home.

In the "old days" before permanent anti-freeze, plowed roads and salting and garages, most car owners did their own repairing. It was usually in winter time that work was done.

When cold weather really set in, most drivers put their cars in the garage on blocks to wait spring. Until snow piled up some ventured out, but then engines were blanketed like horses to prevent freezing. Another trick was to frequently go out in the freeze and warm up the motor. However once the heavy weather set in most traffic disappeared from the road and highways. Farmers of course moved with horses and sleds.

Pa decided that the Overland needed work, so after the last run he blocked up the car, took the battery into the basement and drained the radiator. Then in that frigid tin garage he began to pull out the engine for removal to the basement. He beefed up the roof braces, installed a swatch [?] block and lifted that smelly greasy engine out and onto a skid of sorts. He dragged that mess, by himself, to the basement steps and horsed it down and set it up on blocks near his work bench. Most of the winter he diddled and tinkered pulled out parts, cleaned and reinstalled them. This entailed using kerosene for cleaning parts. The stink was awful and filled the basement and seeped upstairs too. Ma was furious. Her laundry was in another part of the basement and the stench of kerosene, gasoline and old grease when added to coal smoke from the boiler and dust of wood and coal put her into a sullen snit. She stood it all the while down to nearly the end.

By this time Pa's work was almost finished. The engine was all clean and bright there on the blocks. Oil was in the pan and the battery connected to the starter. For fuel Pa had connected the gasoline to the house gas and the exhaust (no muffler) to a hose and into the boiler ash pit. He double checked the set up and then he fired her. The engine roared and barked then ran sweet and smooth but with a loud snarl that shook the house. Pa beamed and horsed a few more revs out of that motor then cut it back then up again. He became aware of Ma screaming at the top of her lungs and the basement steps. Ma was afraid to come down but Pa knew the test was over. When you could hear Ma above a roaring engine you had to suspect she was mad - damn mad. So as not to surrender too weakly, Pa diddled a bit with the carburetor then shut her down, satisfied with his winter's work.

Come spring, and again Pa, by himself, pulled that engine up the cellar steps and over to the garage. There he lashed it up and shoehorned it into the car. I was helping him. He would mutter under his breath now and then — Pa didn't cuss with the kids around — and finally the engine hung just right in the blocks and he began with the nuts and bolts. It was bitter cold in that tin garage and the metal was icy cold as were the tools. While he was under the car he'd holler for a wrench. I'd hand him one - the wrong one and he'd slide out in rage and grab the right one plus a few more and

slide under again. He never slugged me, just talked to himself. The only heat in the garage was the lamp I held. I was so cold I could barely move and Pa was working with bare hands. Eventually Ma had raised hell with Pa for keeping me out so late and in the cold. He looked surprised. I'm sure he never noticed how cold it was or how frozen I was. I wasn't embarrassed to leave him and grateful to get into the house and warmth again. It took me a week to thaw out. When the car was on the road and running sweet, Pa always told everybody we did it and I felt good.

It was back in the sixties. The decade of the "troubles". I was chairman of a committee of one organizing a convention of historians. We had been to meeting annually at various colleges in the state and this year my university was host. All the gatherings had been on campus but the "troubles" made it prudent to find an off-campus site for a meeting, even if our placid friendly group was in no way connected with campus problems.

Thus I began by calling for papers from the members and hiring up a meeting place at the Red Carpet Inn. It started off real easy as these things do but as the time, "H-hour" approached, tension mounted. The menu had to be selected with the cost. The number attending determined and all the rest of the minutae. All went well, but I felt more and more pressure as this detail or that had to be adjusted, until finally the day arrived.

I awoke that morning at five. At once I realized that it was too early but I couldn't get back to sleep. I reminded myself to relax and not get nervous. Everything was OK, I insisted. Don't go nervous. But I got up anyhow and showered and shaved after my constitutional. I got out the wrong under things and got that straightened out. Don't get nervous I kept reminding myself.

I dressed and had some breakfast. After making the coffee too strong and nearly upsetting the cereal in my lap, I started out too early to check on the arrangements I had made at the Inn. Were they all as I had arranged? Don't be nervous. Sure they are. Those folks are responsible and experienced inn keepers. Relax. Don't get nervous. And surely as I checked out the setting, everything was in order. The out of towners were beginning to arrive and I greeted them and showed them around. By now the strong coffee was making demands on my bladder. I had to ignore the call time again as more members arrived. Finally begin to get edgy. It was more and more urgent. Don't get nervous now I said to myself. Just relax. But as time passed I knew something had to be done and for that condition only one thing was vital. Get to that men's room. Yet every time I got near the door something or someone needing help got in between me and that door. I was approaching desperation when finally the group was seated and the first speaker introduced and into his speech. In great relief I strolled to the rear of the room and quietly slipped out and over across the hall to that room. "See, I said to myself, nothing to be nervous about". But I hurried in anyhow. I got the apparatus designed for our express purpose and gratefully

unzipped. Relief was at hand. But!

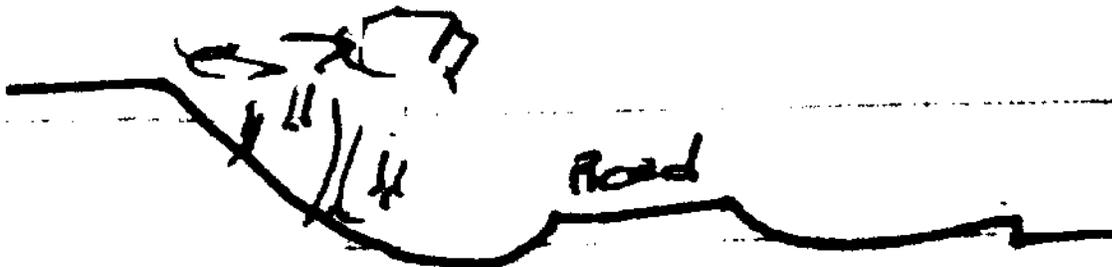
Consternation! I struggled. I couldn't believe it. I had put on my shorts on backwards.

When I was a kid, I had buddies who thought certain things were fun and so did I. We had season favorites. In summer we played ball and went swimming in the “crick” at Pleasant Valley Park, run in those days by Tubby Mallard. In the winter we skated and on the “crick” and slid down the hill at Pleasant Valley.

We called it Devil's Hill because I suppose that made it really bad. If you sledded a hill, what could you say about it? But Devil's Hill was something else again.

Devil's Hill was at the foot of Concordia Avenue. The street stopped, but a long sweeping curve of gravel road swung in a big crescent, first north then east and south and ended at the bath house. Running the road was treacherous because of the curve. If your sled was a Flexible Flyer you could steer to the right and make it — maybe. If you couldn't steer you dragged your feet but that slowed you down to a sissy speed. So you let her rip and if you couldn't hold the inside of the curve you just flew off into trees and bushes and got all snowed under. If you hit a tree you got hurt, yet nobody I knew ever did. I didn't have a “Flyer” but Herb had a sled and I did too, so we bolted a plank between the two and had a long bobsled. The front sled steered with a rope. When we first ran it we dumped and rolled A over T [*ass over teakettle*... ed.] because the lead sled buckled. We fixed it and tried again. It was great. We all (four of us) leaned to the right on the turn and buzzed all the way to the bath house. Over and over we ran, then climbed the hill dragging that sled behind us. Well, after a while we got tired of that tame run. Besides, only one guy had fun steering and the rest just rode. So we took the bobsled apart and had a better idea. Why not shoot the steep hill right in the middle of that crescent? Devil's Hill was born.

From the top of the hill to the river was about 200 feet as I reckon it today. It dropped steeply at about a 60 degree angle and curved up sharply to meet the road, then over the flat road and down another drop of about ten feet, then a gentle slope to the river's edge where another drop of two feet off a pier put us on the frozen river. In profile the hill looked like this:



The hill had ruts and ridges and trees and things stuck up thru the snow. There just wasn't a straight path down. We stood at the top. "We" meant Herb, George, Fats and some other guys I don't remember. We discussed the prospect of a run. I do too recall who the other guys were Mike Beyer, Lenny W---- [?], and Jerry Berger. Fats said he'd try it first. As always before hazardous action, Fats crossed himself, and belly whopped his short sled straight down Devil's Hill.

Before we knew it, he had wiggled around a stump and flown over a rut about half way down. While airborne he headed for and smashed into a solid 18" oak. He and his sled kind of climbed three feet of the tree and then fall back. Fats lay quiet for a bit then got up slowly and thoughtfully climbed the hill along the path he blozed [?].

As a philosopher, actor and general con man, Fats had no equal in our gang. (He joined the Police Force later). Anyhow, he analyzed his run, complete with gestures and commentary and finally decided that, if he ran to the left of that stump and steered before he got to that rut, he could make it all the way. Fats licked his lips, signed himself again with the cross, stared intently down the hill for a long moment, then belly whopped. He went flat out. He zipped past that oak, a stump, and a big rock, then hit the road incline at top speed. Up he sailed then flopped and disappeared behind the road. We saw him again as he barreled on to the dock and dropped to the ice. He slid about 40 ft. and stopped. He sat on his sled for some time then started back up the hill.

We saw him red faced and out of breath up there on the top and he nonchalantly said it wasn't too bad. He lectured us on where the danger spots were and how to avoid them. He answered our questions with an off hand remark or two and took off on his third pass. This time without crossing himself. God had come through and we knew he was with us. After all, you call on God in danger and Fats proved there was no danger to really bother God about.

One by one we tried to run. We followed Fats' path, then dared a new one or two and finally reached the point where the run downhill was routine. Now the object was to get out as far as possible on the icy river. I got halfway, to beat them all, but after all these years I can admit I cheated a bit.

That year's winter was a great one. We had discovered, named and conquered Devil's Hill. I don't know why but we never ran that hill again after that first year. Maybe it was because we had more fun skating on the playground ice rink. That's another story though and not at all exciting.

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I have always believed in God , in Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I can't remember a time in my life that I doubted. I also believe that Mary is the mother of Jesus. I never doubted this either. I believe that most people who were ever born on this earth and died are saints. Some are not, I'm sure. I am convinced that I will be a saint and that I'm practicing being one now, though I'm fumbling at it. That doesn't worry me too much because the fight is many-sided and most confusing and my born-with bent for evil is always ready and willing to frustrate my best intentions. With St. Paul, I agree that I do what I should not at times. He lived with that nagging condition throughout his life, convinced that the grace of God would prevail over all evil. That doesn't mean I don't have my doubts about the whole affair. I don't know if Paul is in heaven. I don't know where heaven is or what. Oh, I've been told by other humans who tell me that God says this and that or in the Bible. But men wrote the Bible and other men tell me it was under God's direction. But I don't know - I believe for all sorts of good reasons. Good to me anyhow.

I reason that this great universe, including earth, just couldn't simply happen. An intelligence and power are evident to me. The process by which everything came to be doesn't bother me. Direct creation or evolution — no matter — God did it and perfectly.

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Epilogue

After proofreading the a early typed version, Mom sent along another bit of Dad's (unfinished) writing:

Rock Hounding

I almost died because of rocks. In high school science class we looked into (I cant's say we studied) all sorts of marvelous things. One study caught my fancy. It was rocks. I found out some were fire-formed, others by sedimentation, still others by deposits on sea bottoms and so on. There were samples of these in boxes and jars all with fancy labels. I determined to have collection of my own. It was cheap and rocks were everywhere for the picking.

It was either Spring or Fall. All I remember is there were no leaves on the trees, no snow or ice, but chilly enough to be wearing longies and at least a couple of sweaters, with heavy socks and leather highshoes.

Mom now:

This story was not finished, but Louie told me how he filled all his pockets with chosen rocks, some of which were very heavy. He came to the river and some in the water that he decided to add to his collection. He walked into the water, it was deeper than he thought, his wool underwear and heavy pants got wet, he started having difficulty walking but continued after his chosen rocks. It never occurred to him to empty his pockets, he said. He picked up the rocks, headed back to shore, fell head first into the water, still hanging on to the rocks. Somehow he struggled up and walked his soggy way home, got into the basement where he dried off. He saved his stones and never told anyone about his brush with disaster.