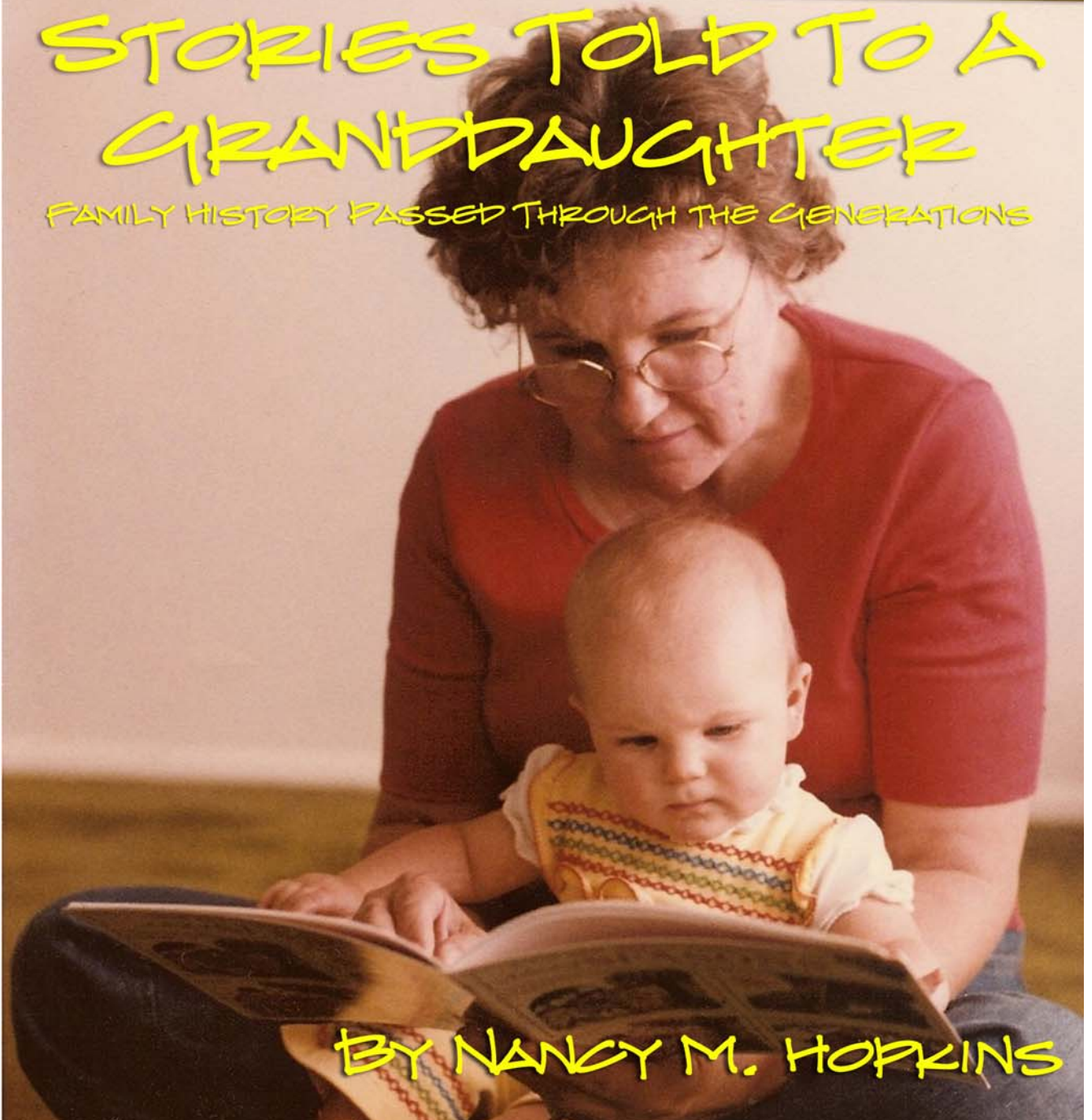




STORIES TOLD TO A GRANDDAUGHTER

FAMILY HISTORY PASSED THROUGH THE GENERATIONS



BY NANCY M. HOPKINS

STORIES TOLD TO A GRANDDAUGHTER

A collection of stories told by Nancy Myers Hopkins to her granddaughter, Jessica K Griesemer Adams, then preserved in print for all of Nancy's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and continuing posterity.

Cover design by Christopher E. Hopkins.

The cover picture is of Nancy reading to Jessica in 1977. Photograph taken by Terri Hopkins Clawson.

The font used on the cover, title, and section pages was chosen to capture the essence of an artist's hand.

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When an old man dies, a library
burns to the ground. (Alex Haley)

Forward



Each generation has a story to tell whether it's on the Mongolian steppes, around the campfire of an American Indian encampment, or a family compound in Ohio. My generation's stories were told to a granddaughter* who found herself living with her grandparents while working for a firm headquartered in the eastern United States. I would find myself telling her stories about my early life, my parents, and my extended family. It occurred to me that I should write the things down while I still remembered them so I created a file on my computer entitled "Stories Told to a Granddaughter."

My family lived in eastern Ohio. My mother and father were born and grew up in towns on the Ohio River. Mother lived in Toronto and Dad about 15 miles south in Steubenville. During WW I, Dad served in the Signal Corps division of the Balloon Corps. It was in the muddy trenches of France that he turned 19. During the war, Mother quit school to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad as a freight clerk, completing the piles of paper work generated by the busy trains of the era. After the war she went back to school and, upon graduation, went to Kent Normal School (now known as Kent State University) to get a teaching certificate. At the time it was a two-year teacher preparation school.

After returning home, Dad re-joined his father's painting/decorating business and eventually met Mother. They were at a popular dance spot for the young people of that area, called the Half Moon Club, built in Stanton Park on a bend of the river. Till the day he died, Dad could tell us what piece of music the orchestra was playing ("Beautiful Dreamer") and what Mother was wearing when he first saw her. "I had noticed this girl go past several times and I started to wonder who she was. I remember that she had her hair in rolls over each ear, a flat turtle-shell-like hat, a white blouse, and black baronette-style satin skirt. I can still see her." Mother was a senior in high school at the time. After she went to Kent, Dad visited her there on the weekends, traveling on the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad.

Mother began teaching school in a one-room schoolhouse in Goulds and Dad didn't have to make the trip to Kent anymore. They married in 1920. They lived for a very short time with his parents, Ross and Daisy, until they rented a house in Toronto and then soon moved into an apartment over the "tailor shop" in her parents' house on Third Street. After the tailor moved out, Dad remodeled the shop into a nice apartment, doing all the work himself. (Their first son, Walter Jr., was born in Toronto.) They stayed there until their first real house was built on Langley Avenue in Steubenville, where their second son (J Alan) was born. Ross and Daisy lived not far from them on what was called The Hilltop.

I was the last of three children and the only daughter born to Walter and Elizabeth. As it was the modern thing among some at the time, we children were "planned" with approximately five years between each of us. My oldest brother, Walter Jr., was born 10 years before me and then my brother, J Alan, almost five years later. The end of the next five-year period fell during the Great Depression, 1932, when I was born.

I was born at home in Snug Harbor, Wintersville, Ohio. The family doctor lived in Toronto, some distance up the Ohio River. Since Mother had been a sickly child (see "Black Liz"), he and she had become quite close, Mother even riding with him in his horse and buggy to make house calls, so she wanted him to deliver all of her children. Needless to say, since they had moved to the country some distance away, he wasn't able to get to Snug Harbor in time so Dad stepped up and delivered me. I felt that experience resulted in a special bond between the two of us.

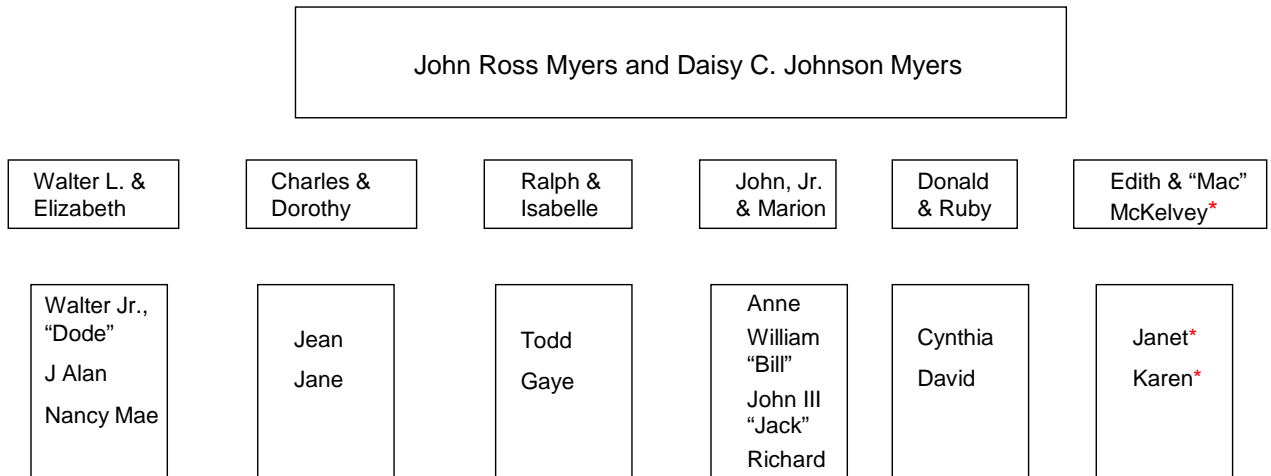
*Jessica K Griesemer Adams

Family Names

To clarify some of the names used in these "short stories" the reader needs to know that my Mother's maiden name was Myers and she married a Myers -- which meant that all of my grandparents, aunts, and uncles were named Myers. As far as my grandparents were concerned, they had discovered with the birth of their first grandchild, my oldest brother, that some sort of designation other than Grandma and Grandpa Myers had to be devised. So, my father's parents in Steubenville/Snug Harbor became Dad Ross and Grandma Daisy. Mother's parents in Toronto became Mama Myers and Papa Myers.

As Walter and Elizabeth became grandparents, their names were changed to MiMi and Ba--their oldest grandchild, Steven, being credited with calling Mother, "MiMi" and our first daughter, Kim, calling Dad, "Ba" (shortened from "Grandpa"). Kim also named Charles "Uncle Fa."

Ross's father's name was John K and was called JK by everyone. The K did not stand for a middle name and was a stand alone letter. My brother was named J Alan, a cousin was Cynthia K, our first daughter was Kim K, and her first daughter was Jessica K. Through the years official government and Church documents converted Kim's middle name to Kay. When Alan was in the military they were very uncomfortable with a stand alone J so required his putting quotation marks around it, thus he became "J" Alan Myers. All who carry one or the other of the lone initials are proud of the heritage it connotes.



Occupants of Snug Harbor

*Did not live in Snug Harbor

ROSS AND DAISY



Photograph of Ross and Daisy having breakfast,
taken by Walter.



Dad Ross

John Ross ("Dad Ross") Myers set an example for his children and grandchildren that gave us a pattern to follow in our own families. We learned from him how much more we could accomplish if we worked together.

Early in his adult life he saw the importance of the family and exercised his position as patriarch to assure that his growing family had the best possible experience in raising their children and his grandchildren.

Ross was the father of five sons and one daughter, raising his children within the bounds of an industrial city in eastern Ohio. As they became adults, they married and scattered in homes around the area. Since he wanted a close-knit family, Ross began toying with the idea of gathering everyone together in one place, where they'd build individual homes and be a community unto themselves. They found a nine-plus acre plot of land out in the country and began building their homes---each a different architectural design. They were all artists and each home was distinct in décor with original art and murals on the walls. Our collective homes were called Snug Harbor.



This was a marvelous place for us grandchildren to grow up. We ran between each other's homes and were in and out of our grandparents' home where the cookie jar was always filled with sugar cookies and the sound of slamming screen doors was only matched by the laughter and shouting of young children. Dad Ross told us stories of woodland fairies that came out at night and danced in the moonlight. He would show us a ring of toadstools and tell us that this is where they sheltered themselves from the rain the night before. In the spring they would sit under the May Apples and carry small "spring beauty" flowers for an umbrella. Our eyes widened as these things seemed real to all of us.

He was also a devotee of the circus. When his children were young and it came to town, even if school was in session, circus day started at sunrise with the children being roused out of their beds to go to the freight yard and watch everything being unloaded from the railway cars. Ross and the children followed behind as the animals were marched through the middle of the town and hauled up Market Street Hill to an old racetrack on Pleasant Heights. Later in the day there was a street parade and in the afternoon the circus performance began.

Years later, when they were living in the country, a circus came to a small private airport each year and he'd round up the grandchildren and take them there, giving them money to buy tickets and \$2 each for refreshments.

Ross was quite an acrobat, even in his older years. The family moved into Snug Harbor in 1929 and a year or two later, Ross was turning cartwheels and doing back-flips across Charles's front lawn. He would have been 55 at the time.

His generous nature was displayed every time one of my children (his great-grandchildren) stopped by for a visit. He would declare that it was their birthday and give them a dollar. That could happen three times in a week! As graduate students we were able to put good use to that "birthday money" by purchasing winter coats or other articles of clothing for the children that would otherwise have been hard to come by. After a while, my grandmother began hiding the money in order to contain him somewhat (see "Grandma Daisy").

Although Ross didn't appear to practice any particular religion, several pictures show him and Daisy with a group of other young adults at religious camp meetings. Possibly he wanted to make a good impression and this was where they courted. I have no idea how they met but he rode the train from Steubenville to Cadiz to visit and court her. On the records, he was Episcopalian (see "Religion").

Ross's irreverence was a counterpoint to the gentility of Daisy and I am so happy to see in my own children the marvelous sense of humor that was passed from Ross and his sons to the next generation.

My cousins and I didn't realize at the time the impact that this strong patriarch and his wife had on our lives. [It is interesting to note that some of us selected Snug Harbor or some other aspect of those years as we named our own homes or created e-mail addresses.] All Ross' and Daisy's children raised their families with the same strong bond of familial love. Both my grandfather and father held these sentiments. Neither left any wealth, to speak of, but the lessons they taught and the examples they set were far beyond anything money could buy. Our family name became widely known for honesty and trustworthiness.

Ross took the children to museums in Pittsburgh and he and Daisy took them to New York City several times. Upon occasion, when they visited their Aunt Minnie in Pittsburgh, they'd put them on a train, by themselves, with a shipping tag tied to their coats, indicating who they were and their destination.

Ross inherited his artistic talent from his father and grandfather. His grandfather, Samuel, was a painter of stagecoaches and medicine show wagons. His son, John K, was well known for his fresco art and design and operated a scene shop for vaudeville shows.

Ross's own youth was quite different from that of his children. He quit school in the fourth grade. A local barber of the time told Walter that Ross was different from all the other boys in the group, saying he intended to make something of himself when he matured. To quote Walter, "He had a fine vocabulary.....used good grammar....spelled perfectly...had a well rounded conversational grasp on many every-day subjects. He never read books but was an avid reader of the Literary Digest, Colliers, and The Saturday Evening Post [magazines], but most of all the Pittsburgh Post Gazette."

Ross made good on his desire to "make something of himself" as he went to New York City where he attended the New York Trade School and then the Cooper Institute, later called the Cooper Union. While attending school in New York, he earned money for his schooling by painting on the Brooklyn Bridge. Upon graduation, he became the manager of the J.C. Goode Studios before returning to Steubenville.



Ross' business card

His sons called him Dad or Himmy, the latter being the nickname his sisters gave him. On the whole, father and sons had a wonderful relationship. Someone asked, "Ross, how do you get along with all those boys?" to which he replied, "Fine." The questioner asked, "How do you account for that?" Dad Ross said, "Simply because they would as soon tell me to go to hell as they would you."

He had an additional nickname that he used professionally, "Tid," given to him by his sisters, derived from the fact that he couldn't properly pronounce Tilden (Samuel Jones Tilden) during the presidential election of 1876 when Ross was 2. He eventually signed his works of art with "Tid Did It," developing it into the palindrome "Tididit." When Walter was born, the announcement in the paper simply read: "Tid Did It."

In an 1899 Steubenville paper, a notice appears:

J. ROSS MYERS, 409 Market Street. 'Tid' Myers and his force of workmen began repainting the outside and frescoing the interior of the U.P. church today.

An ad in another issue the same year states:

TID'S SIGNS: Displays are aggressive advertising, permanent, prominent reminders that make your name and goods household words for miles around. Tid's prices are away [sic] down for way up quality. When in want of quick made signs, when in a hurry, come to me. I now have control of over 50 good walls in this city, Mingo, Toronto and along all railways.

He had an outgoing personality, instantly drawing new acquaintances into a friendly relationship. When Dad would go to a church years after the company had painted it, the first question was always, "How is your father?" He could also fabricate falsehoods instantly and make them sound perfectly credible. Dad noted, "He used this faculty frequently."

When our daughter, Kim, and her husband Dan Griesemer, had a billboard sign printing company, the first of their signs erected on Times Square in New York City had written on the back, "Tid Did It" in honor of Ross and his years as a sign painter.



One of the last paintings my father created was of his father. I had seen the piece while Dad was still working on it, but didn't know what had become of it after his death. Some time later, while going through the many slides he had taken during his life, I found one of the portrait. Kim took the slide to her printing plant in Utah and had her artists tweak and print it onto canvas. Several months later I received a large package and in it was the portrait, enlarged and beautifully framed.

I now have it on an easel in our living room, where each time I pass it, or catch a glimpse of it out of the corner of my eye, it brings back the feelings of love, warmth, comfort, and security I experienced under the eyes of my family in Snug Harbor.



Grandma Daisy

Grandma Daisy's childhood was probably a bit more structured than Dad Ross's. Daisy's father, Wheeler, "was a cultured and refined man, of gentle manner and quiet in speech." [Walter Myers]

Her mother, Josephine Wilson, was the second wife of Elias Wheeler Johnson, his first having passed away three years after they were married. Five years later he married Josephine. Grandma Daisy told Walter that Josephine did so at her parents' insistence as Wheeler came from a well thought of family and was "such a fine man," his pedigree reaching back to Provisional Governor Thomas Greene of Maryland who emigrated to the U.S. on the Ark and the Dove in 1634.

Wheeler's upper body was deformed, due to the spinal meningitis he suffered as a child. He was normal from the hips down, but the upper portion of his body was shortened by a humped back that necessitated his eating all of his meals sitting in a high chair, even as an adult. I'm sure this disability made him less attractive to Josephine.

Wheeler had a restaurant in Cadiz, Ohio for which Grandma Daisy baked all of the pies and helped out generally. She baked wonderful pies and gladly shared her recipes. In later years, she'd now and then bring a piece of some dessert over to our house for my Dad. Actually, she was excellent in all aspects of food preparation and for a number of years prepared family holiday dinners.

Grandma Daisy inherited Wheeler's genteel, kind, loving, and thoughtful characteristics. With her mother's help, she raised seven children, five boys and one girl (an additional daughter passed away at age two) (see "Grandma Daisy's Lawn Chairs").

It is important to know that the family in which I was nurtured were themselves molded by a combination of two characteristics: raucous and offbeat balanced by gentleness and refinement. Grandma Daisy surely had a mighty task as she quietly tried to mold her tobacco-chewing maverick of a husband into an example of Victorian manners while he constantly encouraged his boys in their mischievous ways. I don't know how many times we heard her say to him, "Oh, Ross."

I have no information on Daisy's education, but I surmise she and her sisters had a traditional schooling of the time as she was very articulate and read the newspaper from cover to cover. Each afternoon she could be found sitting in her rocking chair, next to the window, reading the paper. They also owned an extensive library of reference books and sets of encyclopedia.

Dad told me he was lucky that he was born into such a happy, well-adjusted family!



Reading her newspaper.



Daisy



Elias Wheeler Johnson

There was a piano in the living room of their Snug Harbor home for some years. Grandma Daisy played and she and Ross would sing such songs as Silver Threads Among the Gold, Maggie, Beautiful Dreamer, etc. Daisy also sang at revival meetings where one or two of her brothers preached. She had a lovely alto voice. My guess is that she had to quit playing the piano when rheumatoid arthritis crippled her hands terribly. Walter said that Ross had a pretty good voice and once, at a painters' union meeting, stood and sang a solo, unaccompanied.

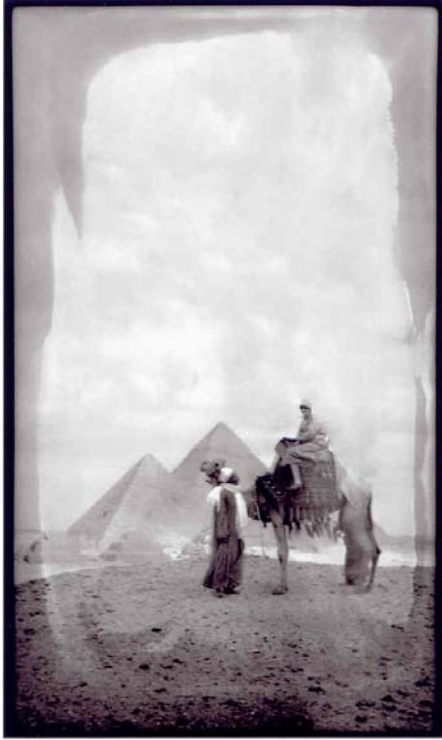
It's my understanding that Daisy told Ross when they were first married that she would not clean his spittoon so they came to the agreement that she would keep a clean, empty tin can close by his chair for him to use while in the house, which he would discard when full and get a clean one. This seemed to be an agreeable arrangement for the two of them. They always did the dishes together, Daisy washing and Ross drying, but he never cut the grass, shoveled coal into the furnace, carried out the resulting ashes, or did any repairs around the house.

During their retirement years, Dad Ross's generosity with birthday dollar bills, which he generously handed out to his great-grandchildren, must have become an issue for Grandma Daisy. Although she never said anything about it in front of us, her concern was evidenced in her face. Then one day, while I was in their bedroom with her, she rolled their large dresser away from the wall and there, tacked to the back, was a muslin sugar bag in which she had secreted some money from him. I thought it was so clever of her.

She was called "Mom" by her children. She confided to me that she never liked her name, Daisy, because it was the name for a cow.



Front: Ross, Edith, Daisy, Donald
Rear: Walter, Charles, Ralph, John



Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross Tour the Mediterranean

Dad Ross and Grandma Daisy, made a trip to the Mediterranean.

Ross and Daisy left Steubenville, Ohio January 25, 1927 on a Pullman car to New York City. It appears they shared a lower berth, #7 in car 85. They traveled on the Cunard Liner, Scythia and visited the primary cities in the following places:

Spain, Algeria, Sicily, Italy, and Malta. They landed in Egypt on 20 Feb 1927, where they visited Cairo, Heliopolis, Giza, Haifa, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem (both considered part of Egypt at the time). They then went to Turkey (Constantinople), Greece, Italy (again), Monaco, France, and England.

They returned home on the ship the Mauretania out of Southampton, England, which sailed at noon on April 2, 1927.

The following is an entry from Dad Ross's diary dated March 3 1927, written in Jerusalem. "We were taken by auto to Bethlehem where we were shown the spots where Christ was born, also the manger, also the cell in which St. Jerome worked 32 years translating the bible from Hebrew to Latin. Also a place where Herod had children killed and spot where Joseph had a vision of the angel [who] told him to flee. We then came back through Jerusalem and to the Mount of Olives and shown the spot from which Christ ascended into heaven.Was shown the room where Christ had the last supper with the apostles....went to see the church of the Holy Sepulcher and saw the marble slab on which Christ was laid to be anointed after being taken from the cross, also the tomb where Christ was buried and the spot where Mary stood when he was crucified....."

Since the time Dad Ross wrote this entry, we have learned that archeologists are not sure where some of the sites are actually located. Nevertheless, it was the trip of a lifetime for them. I believe I remember hearing Dad say that Dad Ross cashed in his life insurance policy in order to pay for the trip. Then, just two years later, the stock market crashed and the Great Depression arrived.

Dad also told me that when they returned home someone asked Grandma Daisy how she enjoyed the trip; her reply was, "I'd rather have gone to Cadiz." This was Cadiz, Ohio, her childhood home.

It was during this trip that Dad Ross acquainted himself, personally, with the Renaissance art for which he became so well known in the Ohio Valley. In addition to using it as frescoes and decorations in his home, he embellished many public buildings, theaters, Masonic lodges, clubs, and churches in the Ohio Valley and tri-state area of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia with his artwork.

WALTER AND ELIZABETH



Top: Elizabeth Myers and Walter Myers, studio portraits.

Bottom: Family photograph of Walter and Elizabeth's family, circa 1932.
Walter, standing. Elizabeth seated with Nancy on her lap. Walter, Jr.
(Dode) at left and J Alan, right.



Walter

Walter Lorain Myers was the first-born child of Ross and Daisy. As with most first-born children, he grew up feeling a lot of family responsibility. He learned the skills of an artist from his grandfather, John K Myers (JK), and his father, John Ross. From an early age he worked in the scene shop operated by Ross, learning perspective and technique.

He had a happy childhood, enhanced by his parents and siblings. At one time his maternal grandparents and paternal grandfather lived with his family. He told many humorous stories of he and his brother, Charles, being sent around town to find their Civil War veteran grandfather who had a problem with alcohol, especially on pension day. As they would help him navigate the steps to the family home on the Steubenville hilltop, he would continuously tell them that there was nothing wrong, he just had sore feet. Dad and Charles often laughed together about the experience. Grandma Daisy did not appreciate JK's behavior.

While attending Steubenville High School, Dad played football. During his senior year, he quit school and worked a short time as a crane operator in one of the local steel mills. When the United States entered WW I, he enlisted and served in the Signal Corps division of the 5th Balloon Company as an observer and mapmaker. His artistic and wireless skills were frequently called upon. He was in the battles of St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne Defensive Sector.

Dad wasn't discharged immediately after the Armistice. He and a few other servicemen formed an entertainment group that was sponsored by the YMCA, traveling around France entertaining the remaining troops. He played the ukulele during their musical numbers and drew cartoons depicting the humor of army life.

Approximately sixteen months after his discharge, he was married and soon began a family of his own. He worked in the family business, a partnership between his father and another gentleman. That eventually ended when the partner was found to be dishonest in some of his dealings and Myers Brothers Decorators was established.

It began with good times until the Depression, which was to change things, dramatically.

Dad, stepping up to his role as "first born," worked unceasingly to find work for the family. He had not only his own family to support, but also his parents, brothers and sister, and their families. During the Depression, one of the tactics he used was to follow construction vehicles to their jobs where he would attempt to sell the family's skills for that project.

He carried the weight of the company until his retirement and I can remember his being up at night, pacing, worrying over a project design, figuring a job estimate, or wondering if they were going to be awarded a specific job.



Captured German officer's uniform.



An envelope decorated by Ross in which a letter was sent to Walter.



Pvt. Walter L. Myers, AEF

In his own mind, he was going to continue with this “calling” that he felt until his children were all educated and starting their own families. Then he would go out on his own, which he did, working for other large companies.

During his last professional years he designed the chapels at Notre Dame University, the Air Force Academy, and a memorial chapel donated by Perry Como (a popular singer) for a church in the Pittsburgh area. He also designed many wooden and marble pieces for Catholic churches. His designs were then sent to Italy where the final pieces were produced.

He visited us a number of times after we moved to Bucks County, Pennsylvania. On one of his visits he showed me a church in Doylestown that he and his family had redecorated.

After her death, he missed Mother very much and framed a number of her pictures that he placed around the house. He also painted several portraits of her, one standing on the beach on Cape Cod, facing the ocean, her back towards the viewer. It looks more like Mother than if it were a front view as he perfectly captured her stance.

An example of Dad’s coping skills after Mother’s passing: The collar of one of his shirts became unattached, so he super glued it back together, creating a very stiff seam. Another example: Doing his own laundry in the wringer washing machine one day, while he was feeding a bed sheet through the wringer, one side went a bit awry and got some grease on it that he couldn’t wash out. Never mind, he just mixed some paint to match the color of the sheet and painted the spot. (He was always a color master and could create an exact match!)

Dad died of colon cancer in June of 1978 and was greeted by Mother on the other side.



Dad’s art studio and radio “shack.”

Above the easel are pastels of Alan and Dode he drew, and Nancy’s graduation picture. On the right is a picture of his parents, Daisy and Ross.

Over his radio equipment is a picture of Mother.



An example of a sketch Dad drew for a prospective client.



A completed job, not the same as the sketch on the left.



His oil of Mother at Cape Cod. He painted two of these. Nancy has one and Kim has the other. Kim’s has more whitecaps and clouds.



Black Liz

When Mother was young, she contracted typhoid fever. The illness required her to be put to bed and remain there for a lengthy period of time. During her convalescence her mother (Susan Williamson Myers) would bring her a pitcher filled with hot chocolate to encourage her to eat. As she climbed the steps with the pitcher she would intentionally rattle the lid so Mother knew she was on her way. This remained a fond memory with MiMi throughout her life and she often spoke fondly of her mother, who she referred to as an angel.

As a result of this serious illness, Elizabeth was a sickly child, and was, unfortunately, nicknamed "Black Liz" by one of her aunts. This name was used in a hurtful way and remained as a painful memory throughout her life.

Since Elizabeth couldn't play with the other children while she was recuperating, the family doctor, Dr. McCulloch, used to stop by in his horse and buggy as he started his rounds to pick her up and take her with him. This forged a relationship that lasted over the years. He delivered Elizabeth's first two children, Walter Jr. and J Alan, and the plan was that he'd also deliver their third and last born. But, by this time, Elizabeth and Walter lived in Snug Harbor which was 15 miles away and Nancy wouldn't wait and had to be delivered by her father at home.

The Real Elizabeth



Teen



17 years old



Elizabeth with Dode and Alan



Her mother made this coat out of an old overcoat of her father's.



Proud but frightened for her sons during the war.



Mother and I in New York City, 1945.



Drying her hair.

Lib



Dad's affectionate name for Mother was "Lib". She was a good sport and had a great laugh!



A week's cruise on a sailing ship off Maine.



Reading through a new Christmas book with Nancy.



With granddaughters Kim and Terri.



In front of kitchen mural painted by Dad.



Mother on Cape Cod, their favorite vacation place.



Taking care of Steven while his Mother was hospitalized with polio.



50th wedding anniversary. Mother died of bladder cancer three months later, February, 1972.

Mother and Dad

A Love That Never Ended

From the moment they first met at a dance, my parents loved each other deeply. There were financial ups and downs as they steered through the Depression years, and the deprivations of the war years, but it only tended to weld them closer together. Upon occasion, Mother would be found gazing out the back door and when Dad asked her what she was looking at, she'd reply, "I'm looking for my ship to come in."

I NEVER heard a cross word exchanged between them, which Dad told me was the example set for him by his parents. They seemed to be evenly yoked and when one struggled the other pulled harder.

During the latter part of the Depression I was shopping in a department store with Mother and she saw a hat she loved, trying it on and gazing at it in a mirror, turning in different directions, admiring the effect. Although encouraged by the sales women, she put it back on the model and left the department telling me she really couldn't spend that much money on a hat.

Sometime after we were back home, Dad asked me how our trip went, and I told him about the hat. Without a moment's hesitation, he went to Mother, took her to the car, and they went together back to Steubenville to the store. When they came home, Mother had a large hatbox. They both had smiles on their faces.

In my parents, I saw O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi" played out over and over as they loved and served one another. Mother became terminally ill with bladder cancer, but the week before she passed away she was ironing Dad's underwear and washing his socks by hand.

When she passed away at the hospital, Dad was given her effects. He asked me what he should do with her wedding ring. I told him that we'd have it put back on her, as they would be married for eternity. She was buried wearing her ring.



Mother and Grandma Daisy on Easter.
They were good friends.

Dad, Mother, Nancy



Dad loved setting her up in pictures without her knowing the background!



Dad would nicely point out that every picture she took of him, she was too far away. However, she did get the Cape Cod scenery.



While Dad was at a ham radio get together, Mother read the paper. She was still making her own clothes. Dad finally convinced her they could afford to buy them. He had to do the same about her canning vegetables every year. When he told her they probably only cost 5 cents a can to buy, she stopped canning.

The Secret of Mother's Chest

When I was a very young girl, there was one area of my home that held much fascination for me. It was the dark, low ceilinged attic with its many boxes, little corners, and small spaces as it narrowed to the eaves. Blazing with heat in the summer and cold enough to see your breath in the winter, it provided only a few days of welcome comfort during which to explore.

On a very few occasions I was allowed up the narrow, steep stairs in the company of an older brother or parent to retrieve the roasting pan for Thanksgiving dinner or Grandma Daisy's large serving bowl for the mashed potatoes.

I was still unaware of an object sitting in a far corner that would later hold even more fascination for me.

Gradually, as I grew and my brothers went into military service, the "chore" of getting things down from the attic fell to me. Preceded by warnings of "Don't step between the boards or you'll fall through the ceiling," my explorations expanded and each time it took me a little longer to "find" the needed object.

Finally, in answer to the call, "I'm waiting!" I'd grab the necessary item and run back down the stairs into the kitchen.

One comfortable day, I ventured into the farthest section and saw the object that was to become of great interest to me. It was a large chest which had been covered with fabric. As I ran my hand around its shape, I felt its outlines and, locating the lid, attempted to lift it. Finding it locked, I went back down the steps in great disappointment and hoped my curiosity would be satisfied another day.

The war came to an end and my brothers returned home, bringing with them uniforms, souvenirs, letters, pictures, and all manner of paraphernalia, all of which was to be stored in the attic.

I was now 14 and, while helping Mother carry these things up the stairs to place them into boxes and mothballs, I finally asked about the chest.

She reached up to a nail near the rafters and took down a key. As I watched with unbelievable excitement, she lifted the dusty cover and I saw an old, dark, crazed chest with a dull brass hole into which she placed the key.

With the soft click of the lock my anticipation grew. She lifted the lid and the most wonderful, sweet smell of cedar filled my senses.

As I looked in, I saw pictures, letters, baby shoes, sweaters, bonnets, magazines, ribbons – a potpourri of treasures.

As she took out each object, her memories became a part of my being. I held the shoes that were mine as a baby, and my bonnet which had to be handled so very carefully because its silk had become brittle. I held the beautiful fringed shawl my grandmother purchased in Spain, an Egyptian fez, my father's first drawing, a copy of the very first *Life* magazine, and the arithmetic flash cards my father had painted for me as he tried to break my habit of counting on my fingers. The afternoon passed as we talked about each item.

I was to reach up and take that key down and revisit that chest many times as I grew up, and as I handled each item those contents became very familiar to me.

As the years passed, I left home for college and later marriage, but still held the memories of those objects and the people who came alive through them.

Then my children began growing up and showed the same fascination for the attic and were always pestering Grandma to go up and explore, but never asked about the chest in its corner.

I made my final visit to the chest soon after my mother died. This time, my father supplied even more details about various items as he added his recollections. Having become concerned about the final disposition of the chest, I inquired about it. I explained to him how it had become important to me and a strong tie to the past and he promised that it would be mine.

After Dad died, John flew over to my home. With the use of a trailer, he brought several items to our home that were to be mine. Among them was the chest. After my sons helped lift it down and placed it before me, John pressed the key into my hand. They returned to unload the remainder of the trailer's contents. I stood alone, reached down and took hold of the now very faded, dusty fabric covering, and tore it away. For the first time, I saw the brass fittings that matched the dull color of the keyhole. The lid had been enveloped in its own, separate covering, and as I tore it away, and lifted the lid, I saw, for the first time, something that had been hidden by the cover for all those years. Painted in my father's own script was the inscription "To Lib - Xmas 1920", below which he had added - "Nancy."

With tears streaming down my face, I learned the final secret of Mother's chest. It had been my father's gift to mother for their first Christmas, one month after they had been married.

The refinished cedar chest, with its brass keyhole and trimmings shining, now sits in our home where the warmth of its color is exceeded only by the memories that glow from within it.

Written in 1981 for a Philadelphia Stake Relief Society Conference

SNUG HARBOR



Entrance to Snug Harbor, circa 1930.

Marion Ross Myers, wife of John R. Myers, Jr.

Snug Harbor

While living in Steubenville, a friend of Ross and Daisy invited them to the country for dinner and Dad and Mother were invited as well. While engaged in dinner conversation, Dad Ross commented on the beauty of the countryside. His friend suggested they consider finding a suitable spot and move their growing family out from town. The idea seemed like a good one and the seed had been planted. Obviously, it became a topic of family discussion because Ralph came home one day and said he had found the perfect place.

On December 8, 1928, Frank C. and Ella G. Mansfield entered into an agreement with J. Ross Myers to sell him, for \$1.00 and "other valuable considerations," the 9.29 acres that were to become Snug Harbor. It was located in section 24, township 6, range 2, in Cross Creek Township of Jefferson County, Ohio.

The price of the land was \$1,000 per acre. Though all the surrounding land was selling for \$100 per acre, this particular parcel had trees and a stream running through it that increased its value. Ross paid Judge Mansfield for the entire parcel with the money he received from the sale of his hilltop house in Steubenville, Ohio.

An 1871 atlas of the area shows this parcel to be a small part of 139 acres owned by one Charles Elliott, later acquired by F.M.—probably Frank Mansfield.

The plot was rectangular in shape and bounded on the west by a creek and on the east by a forest and farmland. After its purchase, it was divided into seven parcels--one assigned to each of the six children and the seventh set aside for Ross and Daisy. The one set aside for their daughter, Edith, remained empty since she married and her husband's work required them to live in Cleveland, Ohio. Her space provided a lovely wooded spot for family picnics and "weenie" roasts. Eventually, Charles and Walter sold their homes in Steubenville and paid Dad Ross for their shares. The "compound" was to become known as Snug Harbor and eventually had eight homes built and occupied by Myers, each in a different architectural style.

During the initial clearing of the land, hundreds of arrowheads were unearthed, remnants of those who first roamed and hunted in the territory. The huge old trees had many initials carved in them from road builders and campers who had used the site prior to its being purchased by the Myers.

Some adjacent swampland was uninhabitable. This had the added value of providing open space that was unavailable in the city.

Snug Harbor Is Snowed In

The family functioned under the doctrine of common consent when it came to maintaining "the Harbor," such as improvements, snow clearing, additional land clearing, etc.

In 1936, there was a 30" snowfall. Due to the isolation of Snug Harbor and the hills surrounding it, it was impossible to drive out. The men took turns walking to the village of Wintersville to bring back food for all of the families. One of them had his ears badly frost bitten due to the severity of the weather and the length of the walk as they had to break their way through fields covered with snowdrifts and along uncleared roads.

This snowstorm also caved in the roof of the Jefferson County Courthouse in Steubenville.

The Four Original Houses



Ross and Daisy



Walter and Elizabeth



Charles and Dorothy



Ralph and Isabelle

Later Houses



John and Marion



Donald and Ruby



Walter, Jr. (Dode) and Nancy F.,
Post-WW II



Tim and Fern, Dode's son



The Great Depression

I was born in 1932, too young to remember the specifics of the living conditions brought about by the Great Depression but its effects lasted with my parents for a lifetime.

After putting everything they had into building their new Snug Harbor house, Mother and Dad prepared to move from Langley Avenue in Steubenville. Their move was hastened by the 1929 stock market crash as they had to move into an unfinished home with wet plaster and several windows covered with burlap. (They eventually completed the Cape Cod style fieldstone and clapboard home with a large combined living/dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms and one bath. They also added a porch, which was eventually screened in. Dad painted a compass on the ceiling pointing to Mother's home in Toronto.)

The family business, Myers Brothers Decorators, had been riding high from 1922 to 1929. They were so busy they were unable to keep up with the work that poured in, but things changed quickly and radically when the Depression struck. Although everyone in Wintersville and Steubenville had the impression that the Myers' were wealthy, the family never returned to this economic high again.

Mother and Dad handled the loan payments on their home until 1932 when it became necessary for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to intervene on their behalf. Frank Mansfield held a \$4,000 mortgage on Walter's house. He became a real Simon Legree during the Depression when he prepared to foreclose on the house for failure of payment because he saw it as a way to get a nice house for his son. He showed no mercy. This was one of the severest tests Walter and Elizabeth were to face during their marriage and its effects stayed with them the rest of their lives.

While they agonized over how they could save their home, they heard one of President Roosevelt's Fireside Chats, during which he promised that no World War I veteran would lose his home if he contacted him (the President). Walter, desperate and putting his trust in the new president, wrote him a letter. One week later he received an acknowledgement from the White House. A week after that a letter arrived from the Home Owners Loan Co. in Cleveland. In another week, the Home Owners Loan Co. branch in Steubenville arranged to refinance the house for \$4,700 at 4-1/2% interest. They never missed another payment. I heard this story over and over while growing up and assumed that the mortgage must have been huge. Dad told me many years later, after I was married and John and I were buying a home, that the balance of the mortgage was \$2,000. That was a monumental amount in those days. When the family greenhouse was later sold, they took their share and paid off the mortgage completely. I was present when they had a mortgage burning party where that piece of paper was thrown into the living room fireplace and burned.

Needless to say, Dad and Mother remained Democrats for most of their lives if not their entire lives. There was a period of time, though, when my oldest brother, Walter Jr., was chairman of the Jefferson County Ohio Republican Party and participated in the national convention.

Another hero or heroine to the Myers' at that time was Jean L. McCoy, owner of a small general grocery store in Wintersville. A widow, Jean McCoy carried Snug Harbor through the Depression. No one ever went hungry, as Mrs. McCoy never stopped delivery of foodstuffs due to unpaid bills. Why she did this, I don't know. Whether there was a special friendship or arrangement entered into, I don't know, and what the total of the accumulated goods came to I never knew.

As we climbed out of the Depression and the bills were paid, we continued to patronize Jean L. McCoy and Son (Ralph McCombs). Jean expanded and sold shoes and Mother bought tennis shoes there for the grand kids every summer.

When the supermarkets began appearing, first in Steubenville and then working their way out towards Wintersville, we initially kept our allegiance to Jean McCoy despite the higher prices she charged. Finally, the inevitable day arrived, and after a lot of agonizing Mother began patronizing the supermarkets. The disparity in prices became too great and the one big lesson she had learned during the Great Depression was ECONOMIZE.

Walter wrote in his personal history, "When I was 29 (in 1929) the Depression hit and I did not get up to an income of \$3,400 a year until 1937.... In 1932 it was \$600 for the year. So the Depression, at least for me, was from October 1929 until the last of 1937. Almost 8 years...I can never forget that, in 1932, by working hard an entire year, all the money I had for a year's work was \$600---\$12 a week!"

Dad Ross had a farm close to Cadiz, Ohio that they had not yet sold. It had an apple orchard that had not been very successful, having something to do with being on a hill above the frost line, but they did go out there, harvest what apples they could, and sell them where they could.

There was a popular television show called "The Waltons," but Dad would never watch it as he said he had lived "it" [the Depression] and even the reminder of it was difficult for him.

A House Guest

At one time during the Depression my parents housed in the attic a painter friend of my Dad's. He was struggling with an alcohol problem as well as being out of work. I was warned time and time again never to go up into the attic when he was there.

Being quite young at the time, I don't recall how long he stayed or what season(s) of the year he was there. It's hard to imagine that he could have been up there for a prolonged period because of the extreme temperature changes in that un-insulated space. There was sub flooring in some areas to facilitate walking around that also created storage space. Out toward the eaves the joists were exposed.

I did sneak up once when our guest lived there and saw a pallet on the floor where he slept. Despite all of my mother's warnings, which led me to believe it must be an ogre who lived there, he was extremely kind to me.

As repayment for my parents' kindness he made me a set of play furniture--a table with four chairs, and a dresser with mirror and chair.

I have always cherished those pieces and my daughters and granddaughters have played dress up and had many a tea party with them. As of this writing, at age 76, I still have them.

Picnics and Holiday Dinners

Family picnics were an important part of the socialization of the families in the Harbor.

Donald recalled, during the summer of 1929, that they had "great picnics while Dad's [Ross'] house was being built. Mom and Dad, all my brothers and what families they had then, my sister Edith, and myself were there. I don't know how many grandchildren were there then, but I definitely remember Dode and Jean."

Marion [John Ross, Jr.'s wife] also recalled that one of her favorite times took place during the Depression: "...the year of the Depression when we all ate at the picnic table at Walter and Lib's and Anne was a baby in the play pen with some cereal. Everyone brought a covered dish and chipped in on the meat. We even washed the dishes outside at the picnic table."

Don also noted, "We always got together on Thanksgiving and Christmas at Grandma Daisy's house. One Thanksgiving, when Alan was quite young, he was so hungry and so eager for dinner he could scarcely wait. Dad Ross had prepared a squab and had Grandma Daisy cook it with the turkey. Dad put it on a huge platter and brought it into the dining room where Alan was already seated. 'Sorry, Al,' he said, 'the turkey shrunk.' Alan almost cried."

These get-togethers continued for many years, especially in the summer. There was one Snug Harbor lot still empty---the only daughter, Edith's. It was on that piece of property that the men and boys cleared the brush, built a brick barbeque grill, added a picnic table, and made it the family gathering spot during the warm summer evenings. While the children roasted marshmallows and hot dogs, the adults cooked a variety of meats. Salads and desserts were brought by the women and an old washtub was filled with ice into which each family placed their soda or beer.

Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross came and stayed until the hour became late. We sang, the children played games, wild tales were told, and loud laughter echoed among the trees. The children were also sent to their individual homes to bed when the hour got late. Since I was still young, I don't know who was the last to leave – or when! I believe we usually went up the next day and "policed" the area so it was always neat.

Daisy didn't approve of the drinking of alcohol, but seemed to accept the fact that she was fighting a losing battle with her husband and sons. She had been a member of the local WCTU [Women's Christian Temperance Union] and one of the family stories was of her throwing a glass of wine in Ross' face when she was still young and strident.

When Donald enlisted in the Army, his wife and daughter moved in with Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross. His house was rented and those who lived in it were always included in the Harbor activities. They became adopted members of the family and continued to be such after they left the Harbor.



During the winter, the adults would take turns going to each other's home, probably once a month or so. Even though they were family, and saw each other every day, they dressed up for these evenings. When it was my parent's turn, I remember helping mother make a tray of canapés and gathering other snacks. Trying to sleep during the late hours was difficult as the decibel level got pretty high.

Sports

With so many people living in the Harbor, and being so isolated from sports venues, Donald proposed we make a tennis court so we could have a place for organized exercise.

One day I saw two huge dray horses coming up the lane, driven by one of the local farmers. A hillside spot had been marked off next to Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross's house. Attached to the horses was a very large, heavy scoop that would be used to clear the designated area. As the horses walked in a straight line, the scoop began digging in and moving large piles of soil. After a very long day, a spot had been leveled and those horses left the Harbor, back down the lane, with the farmer holding their reins behind.

We children sat on the bank the entire day watching those large animals snort and pull as they dug their hoofs in and threw their weight against the burden they pulled behind. The farmer shouted commands and urged them on, resting them now and then when he sensed they needed to regain their energy.

The next few days the men took turns rolling the loosened dirt to make it firm and flat. I believe they sprinkled it with a hose now and then during the process. Once Anne and I tried moving the roller when it was sitting idle and were barely able to budge it. It was made of solid cement with an iron handle. Each man seemed to have a different style of moving it, some pushing, some pulling, and others stepping into the handle and pulling it around their waist.

The ground was eventually smooth and well compacted. Next, the men pounded metal poles into the ground, with a perfectly measured space in between, to hold the net. A round device into which they poured chalk was then used to mark off perfectly straight boundary lines according to the prescribed dimensions.

We all greatly anticipated the first match and held our brand new tennis racquets as we waited our turns. I'm sure Donald was one of the first to take the court, but I don't recall who his opponent was. Lawn chairs were placed on the bank, under the chestnut tree, for those who wanted to watch. Some brought blankets and spread them on the ground.

For me, that tennis court generated a love-hate relationship. It was fun to play, but it quickly became the job of the young ones to pluck the grass/weeds that popped out of the ground in order to keep its surface pristine.

Eventually, after everyone had had enough of having to chase balls down the lane, or into Grandma Daisy's lily of the valley patch, or her pond, a tall fence was constructed with metal poles driven into the ground to support the wire.

On holidays, especially Memorial Day, it provided a place for an extra-special event---a tennis tournament. All inhabitants and their friends were invited to participate. It lasted all day and was fun, sometimes even exciting. Dad Ross always presented the winner(s) with a cup---one of Grandma Daisy's coffee cups with a broken handle which he had painted with an inscription and to which he added the appropriate name(s). There were singles and doubles matches. My cousin Anne and her boyfriend won the doubles match one year. We continued the event during the war. Since Donald was in the Army, he had rented out his house and its occupants were like members of the family and also participated. They were quite good at tennis.

Some of us preferred a slower pace in our sports so another spot in our back yard was chosen for a badminton court. The elevation wasn't as steep as where the tennis court had been placed, so it was easier to dig out the proper dimensions by hand. We also decided to let it be grass covered and thus it only needed to be cut weekly with the rest of the yard. We didn't bother with chalk lines and agreed the poison ivy was out of bounds. The tennis court was in the direct sun, and hot, but the badminton court was well shaded by the many tall beech trees that surrounded it. Many shuttlecocks could be seen nestled down, under the poison ivy, at the end of each summer.

My oldest brother, Dode, played football in high school. Among other positions, he was the kicker. He would practice in our front yard and have me hold the football. I was the proto-type for the character, Lucy, in the Peanuts cartoon strip. I would see this large young man running towards me with cleated football boots, prepared to kick the upright ball that I was holding with one small finger, and ALWAYS let go just before he actually kicked it. He used to get so mad at me! I just couldn't see the process through to the end! Sorry, Dode.

When Dode and Alan were still teenagers, our house was where friends gathered to play ping pong. Our dining room/living room became the center of the activity with paddles slamming the small, light weight balls from one end of the room to the other. Fortunately, Dad was able to devise a way to protect the chandelier by raising it above the action with a hook he made out of a coat hanger. A plywood tabletop was placed on the table to which a net was attached and the competition began. It was wise for the rest of us to stay out of the way.

Throughout the large Myers property various other sports apparatus' appeared. There were basketball hoops, a horseshoe pit, one winter a shaky wooden ski jump, and, at one time, Alan constructed a pole vault area. I was out there with him one afternoon, retrieving the bamboo pole as it fell after he vaulted. On one of his jumps, the bamboo shattered. As he fell, the sharp wooden shard jammed into his thigh. He had to be quickly driven to the hospital in Steubenville for his leg to be treated. It was a terrible and frightening thing to witness! He was still recovering from the large wound when he went for his physical for entrance into the V-12 Naval program. It took a long time to heal completely, but he passed the physical. He eventually became a pretty good lacrosse player while a V-12 student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (see "1948 Olympics").

The Bag Swing

Dode made a "bag swing" one summer that provided us with many hours of fun. Up over the garage he found a burlap bag that he stuffed with leaves. He took a very heavy piece of hemp rope and secured it tightly in two places around the top of the bag to keep it from slipping out of the rope. He climbed to one of the high, thick limbs of a huge, old beech tree in our back yard where he secured the other end. After climbing back down the tree, he took hold of the suspended bag and walked up a small embankment to the base of the tree. While holding onto the rope, he ran down the bank, jumped onto the bag, wrapped his legs tightly around it, and swung way out over the bank and towards the creek--back and forth until his momentum died.

The stronger you were, and the faster you ran, the further out you could swing. It was a smooth ride once you survived the jolt of jumping onto the bag and becoming firmly seated with your legs wrapped securely around it. The squeak of the rope as it moved back and forth on the limb, its thickness and roughness difficult for little hands to hold onto, and the smell of the burlap are all wonderful memories.

As the leaves became broken and compacted, the bag became easier to wrap your legs around. Eventually, a platform was created from which we could jump and this gave us even more height and speed. After several summers the bag rotted and had to be replaced. Once or twice the rope broke and I can remember one time Dode landing terribly hard on his back, making a loud thump as the breath was knocked out of him. After Dode went away to college, it was the end of the bag swing because no one else would maintain it.

Grandma Daisy's Lawn Chairs



Before television, the Snug Harbor adults spent the long summer evenings either playing tennis or visiting in Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross's yard. Once the dinner dishes were finished, we made our way to their front yard, rearranged the metal lawn chairs, and talked until dark. I don't remember any bugs or mosquitoes bothering us, but possibly the small aggravation they may have caused was far outweighed by the marvelous memories of that time together spent in conversation.

I slowly realized that I had graduated from the kid games of "red-light, green-light" and "tag" and was now sitting with the adults. I have a special memory of sitting there, embroidering baby sacks while expecting my first child, and Grandma Daisy telling me not to have as many children as she did so that I didn't get myself tied down. She was 75 years old at the time.

During one of those conversations I asked her how she was able to cope with the death of her two-year old daughter and her reply stunned me. "We never expected to raise all of our children." This was a thought I never entertained in the early 1950s.



Cousins build snow fort.



After the realignment of some of the country roads, a portion of Fernwood Rd. was re-named "Myers Drive."



Cousin reunion, 1996. Donald, front left, last surviving child of Ross and Daisy, died 1999.

WORLD WAR II



Walter and Elizabeth Myers Family, circa 1944.

Front: Walter and Elizabeth

Rear, l to r: Alan, Nancy M., Nancy F., Dode

December 7, 1941



Dad's short wave radio provided me with several memorable experiences. On a Sunday afternoon in December of 1941, he was calling "CO" (an invitation to engage in dialog with anyone who could hear his call) and checking the dial for any replies when he heard a report coming out of Hawaii--the Japanese were bombing Pearl Harbor. He called us all down to listen and then dispatched me to take the news to the other homes in the Harbor that by now numbered 6. I was 9 years old.

At this young age, I had no idea the impact this news would have on the world, as well as our Snug Little Harbor. I ran through the harbor like a juvenile Paul Revere with steady feet jumping over each memorized tree root that encroached on my path.

Dad's wireless afforded us a particularly personal glimpse of the war in England and its impact on the people there.

Before the outbreak of the war, he had struck up a friendship with a family in London over his radio. At a pre-arranged time every Sunday, Dad would contact his fellow "ham" and both families would gather around their radio and converse by passing the "mike" around. We exchanged photographs and their young daughter and I became pen pals.

The war soon changed things. The terrible beating London was taking at the hands of Hitler's Luftwaffe made it difficult to communicate, even by mail. Dad and Mother really feared for the lives of their friends. Upon hearing of the horrible food shortages in the cities in England, they packed and sent boxes of foodstuffs to them. I remember receiving one or two thanks and then all contact stopped. I always wondered what happened to our British friends. Over the years I have wished I could remember their names so I could try to locate the daughter again.

Winston Churchill



I grew up with Winston Churchill. Well, not literally, but he was like a member of our family. Dad's hero became my hero. We had a picture of him hanging in our home. We listened to his wartime speeches that were re-broadcast to the states. Quotes taken from his addresses were frequently reported in our newsreels and radio broadcasts.

As a sidelight to the parcels sent to our wireless radio friends: On the customs sticker that had to be applied to all such mail, one had to list an alternate name in case the package could not be delivered to the addressee. Dad always designated Winston Churchill. We had a framed picture of Churchill in our home then and I still have one in my home today.

When Dad was terminally ill with cancer, I had one of Churchill's quotes calligraphically painted and framed for him to have in his room.

The War Years

December 7, 1941 injected the outside world into the tranquility of our “Snug Little Harbor” and provided many stories I found myself telling Jessica (see “Snug Harbor”).

The war affected the residents of Snug Harbor no more and no less than the other citizens of the United States. We sent off three men to serve their country—Uncle Donald (Dad's youngest brother), and my brothers, Dode and Alan. Dode enlisted in the Air Corps where he went through officers' candidate school, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant, and was assigned as a bombardier on B 29s.

Following graduation from high school, Alan tested for the Navy's V-12 program and was accepted. He was first sent to Baldwin Wallace College in northern Ohio and then on to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Following his commission, he was sent to camp LeJeune for Marine basic training. (Alan eventually served in Korea, and was a Major when discharged.)

Donald entered the Army and Ruby, his wife, and daughter Cynthia moved in with Daisy and Ross for the several years he was gone.

Walter, Sr., a veteran of WW I, aged 41 at the outbreak of WW II, attempted to enlist and was refused because of his age. It was a real disappointment to him so he pursued various avenues that would permit him to serve, but on every side was turned down.

His desire to serve the war effort was finally realized when he was appointed Jefferson County Civil Defense Director with headquarters in Wintersville High School (see “Civil Defense”).

Paper, Tin Cans, Rubber, and Gasoline

We all threw ourselves into the war effort and saved newspapers, tin cans, tin foil gum wrappers, rubber tires, scrap metal, etc. At home, our garages were stacked high with anything that might be useful in ending the war. Newspapers were bundled, tied, and transported to the schools from which they were loaded onto trucks that took them to local plants and “recycled” into new paper which had become scarce. Scraps of plain paper were carefully cut and used for notes before being discarded or tucked into the newspaper bundles. I have items that I gathered after Grandma Daisy passed away that have a grocery list written on them.

We children bought savings stamps every week at school and pasted them in a book until they added up to enough to purchase a savings bond. Contests were held to see which class could bring in the most paper, tin foil, cans, scrap aluminum, rubber, etc.. (Rubber bands were virtually non-existent.)

Fierce battles were fought over the rubber tree plantations in the Pacific--the plantations that furnished most of the rubber used by the U.S. and Great Britain. The supply was cut off when Japan invaded South East Asia, so we needed to salvage every item of rubber we could find. What rubber production there was was required to keep our military forces equipped, and very little was available to the civilian population. Automobile drivers sacrificed by using their tires until they completely wore out or put their cars up on blocks for the duration. Bald tires were a sign of the times.

Old tires were pulled from "over the hill" dumps, behind gas stations, and public dump sites. These were also taken to collection sites from which they were gathered and transported to plants for re-processing. For those whose occupations were essential to the war effort, ration stamps were needed to get new ones. If your occupation was a priority towards the war effort, such as farming, you received special coupons for tires when yours wore out. Even though Dad was given a tire allotment, he never used it.

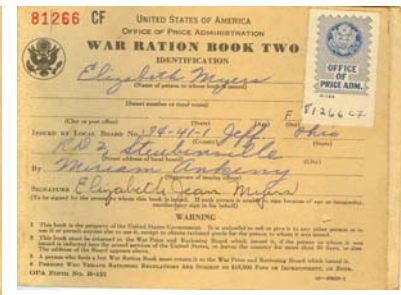
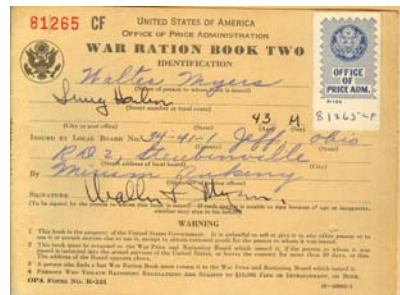
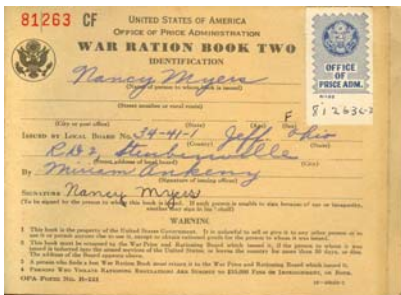
The oil fields of the Far East were also affected as, in a number of cases, the Allies blew them up to keep the Japanese from getting benefit from them. So, in addition to rubber conservation there was not much gasoline to be bought. In most cases, because of gas rationing, few personal cars were on the roads. Many cars were put up on blocks in favor of public transportation. Car owners were issued gas stickers—A, B, or C. The stickers were issued depending on how essential the car was to the war effort. Most car owners received "A" stickers that sharply limited the number of gallons they could purchase in a month. Dad received a "C" sticker that provided us with almost unlimited gasoline. The main reason he was awarded the "C" classification was to enable his service as Civil Defense Director that required his traveling around the county to administer the program.

Nylon hose and cigarettes were very difficult to find. Long lines would form at stores when a shipment of a scarce item came in. Dad had a secretary who, when out running an errand and seeing a line, would get in it and buy whatever was at the end, just because the line indicated the availability of some scarce commodity.

We never threw away a used tin can! They were carefully washed, the labels removed, as were the tops and bottoms, then smashed on the floor to be saved and taken to a collection point. This process was not without hazard. An incident that took place in our home involved just such a tin can. Mother was removing one of the lids when she cut her hand badly. She and I were alone in the house, so I ran over and got Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross. They quickly came over to our house. By this time, blood was all over the kitchen counter and towel after towel was used to soak up the blood by twisting them around the base of Mother's thumb. Dad Ross looked at it and dismissed the matter by suggesting a band-aid would take care of the matter. Daisy and Mother were not so sure. Eventually, a trip to the doctor's office provided the necessary stitches that stopped the bleeding. A large bandage was wrapped around her hand and she was hampered for a number of weeks as she tried to go about her household duties with that clumsy bandage. A large scar remained for the rest of her life.

Our parents donated blood, took First Aid classes from the Red Cross, and planted Victory Gardens. After battling the rabbits, and losing to them in most cases, we dutifully ate whatever was left over and over and over. In our case, it was the green beans and brussel sprouts that survived--yuk (see "Butter or Bullets").

During the four years of the war, we all coped with the shortages but, as children, we were not as involved with the nuts and bolts of caring for the family as our parents were. In my more mature years, I have often wondered if it ever occurred to anyone the danger it was with all that paper piled high on the well oiled, wooden floors of our schools. I still save every rubber band, carefully wash and recycle tin cans, and marvel at how long modern tires last and how easily accessible they are for the correct amount of money. However, we were well aware of the fears that abound during a war and the dreaded telegram or phone call that might announce the death of a loved one.



Butter or Bullets

The war effort required choices to be made between the military and the home front. Without any grumbling, the home front willingly gave up some of the items we thought of as necessities. Butter was one of them. As a substitute, we could buy a bag of white margarine, also referred to as oleo. It looked like lard and could be used in its white form, but if you were really particular the bag also contained a capsule filled with yellow coloring that could be broken and kneaded into the white substance to make it look like butter.

If I understand it correctly, fats were used to produce the explosive powder used in bullets and shells, thus the shortages of fat-produced products, including Crisco. To support the war effort we placed empty soup cans on our stoves to hold cooking fats from bacon and other meats. When the cans were full, they, too, were turned in for recycling.

A variety of shortages existed and, as a show of our patriotism, in addition to displaying the flag, we learned to cope or do without. Each member of a family was issued a ration book filled with stamps that were required to be surrendered when buying a rationed item. There were red stamps for meat, green stamps, and blue. I can remember my mother sitting in her chair in the living room with the ration books spread out on her lap figuring out what meals we'd be able to have during the week.

During wartime, illegal activities spring up, e.g., profiteering, black marketing, and hoarding. There were shortages of sugar, a variety of canned goods, potatoes, and probably others that I have forgotten during these many years of plenty that have since passed. Extra sugar could be purchased if it were going to be used for canning and I remember 5 lb. bags of sugar being stored in the attic. Dad used to tease Mother about how much she had up there and she always replied, "I have to get them before the hoarders do," following which he always had a great laugh.

Each ration book had the owner's name on it and was surrendered to the grocer. He would tear out the appropriate number of stamps so people couldn't trade stamps with one another. Even shoes required a stamp. "Change" was given in tokens as not one point of those stamps went unused. Ration stamps became a type of currency, and lost ration books a major headache.

I remember my oldest brother (Dode) coming home on military leave from the southwest with a can of pineapple he was able to buy at the base PX. It was such a treat! I also remember when Mother was able to buy several potatoes and it was such a big event Dad took a picture of her holding them.

The government encouraged all of us to plant a victory garden and so we did. Dad, who was not a farmer, worked diligently at digging and planting a large garden. I remember him and Mother going over what seeds they wanted to plant. There were tomatoes, green beans, brussel sprouts, lettuce, chard, spinach, onions, and probably several other things that I have either blotted out, blocked out, or have forgotten. I remember that the only things the rabbits didn't eat were the onions, green beans, and sprouts. Dad loved brussel sprouts and I ate enough green beans through the "duration" that they are my clearest food memory of that time. We not only had them for every meal, our already hot August kitchen was filled with steam coming from the cooker where canning jars of them were filled and "put up" for the winter along with tomatoes and fruit. Fortunately, we shared some of our surviving vegetables with Dad Ross and Grandma Daisy, whose garden didn't survive the rabbits at all.

Uncle Charles was an excellent gardener, which is why he supervised the family greenhouse and floral business. He also raised turkeys for which he built a shed and an elevated, wire-enclosed "exercise" pen where they could strut around. We could hear their gobbling while sitting on our screened-in porch. They were also fun for us children to watch as we anticipated their strutting around with feathers fanned out. We would sit and watch for long periods of time hoping to see their display.

I'm sure the experience of raising a family during the Depression and the many shortages of a war, spanning 16 years in all plus recovery time, was to affect the buying habits of Mother and Dad, as it did all of our parents, for many years. Most of Mother's and my clothes were home made. For many years I also wore many hand-me-downs from my Toronto cousins. I continued the practice of making our clothes when I had a family of my own.

Civil Defense

Homeland security during World War II consisted of mobilizing the civilian population into what was called Civil Defense.

The organization was national and then divided into smaller units: state, county, town, blocks, etc.

My father tried to enlist during the war but was rejected due to his age. The next best thing was that he was chosen to be the Jefferson County (Ohio) Director of Civil Defense. He was a ham radio operator, had served in WW I, was well known in the area, and a practical, organized man.

By that time, both of my brothers had enlisted and were gone from home, so their bedroom was turned into an office. Dad functioned from two offices: one in the local high school (the former teachers' lounge) and the other in my brothers' bedroom.

The bed was pushed against one wall and a large oak desk that had been brought down from the attic was put next to the opposite wall upon which he set up his ham radio and other equipment. Blackout curtains (made by Mother) were installed in the one window in that room and the living room.

Dad organized the county and, after becoming mobilized, held air raid drills. Some of the drills were called by Dad as training for the county organization and members of the surrounding communities. Other drills came from the State Command Center and were surprise drills. The air raid siren was on top of the high school and could be heard for many, many miles. It was the signal for various volunteer heads--fire department, police, air raid wardens, medical, etc., to take their stations and a warning to the rest of us either to turn off all lights inside and out or close the blackout curtains.

Dad had a key to the siren, but when a surprise drill was called by the state or federal government he'd call the minister of the Methodist Church, whose parsonage was next to the school, and it was his assignment to ring the siren until Dad got there.

Dad would then drive from Snug Harbor to the school building without his headlights so he could supervise the command central where his staff was also assembling. During these drills, air raid wardens would spread out around the county to make sure everyone was complying with Civil Defense requirements. Manning a bank of phones at the school, the assembled staff received reports from the various communities within the county. When the drill ended, the "all clear" siren sounded and lights went on all over the hills and valleys of Jefferson County, Ohio.

Grandma Daisy, at age 64, was the air raid warden for Snug Harbor. She had a white helmet with a red reflective "C D" on the front. Her reflective armband also displayed the Civil Defense logo. She carried a special flashlight that could not be seen from the air. After the air raid siren sounded, she'd walk through the dark around the Harbor, picking her way around and over the many roots and stumps of old trees that occupied those nine acres of isolated Ohio countryside, checking each house's inhabitants to make sure no lights could be seen from the outside. She would confirm that everyone was complying with the requirements of the national Civil Defense organization and report it to her area supervisor. That report would be sent up the line, with all others in the county, to Dad and his staff in their school office from which he'd report to the state.

The wartime volunteer fire department was the genesis of a number of the volunteer fire departments that continue to serve their communities to this day.

Dad's Civil Defense responsibilities included training and the overall supervision of wartime volunteer activities. It also included some fund-raising activities to enable the county to buy some appropriate fire and police equipment.

I Was a Painted Lady

Yes, I was a painted lady. During the war most of the nylon was consigned to the military for parachutes. This led to a scarcity of women's hose, but, even with a run or two, the most proper lady had to wear them. Occasionally, a department store would get in a small number of nylons and a long line of women would stand and wait, each hoping to be lucky enough to get a new pair.

Bare legs became one of women's contributions to the war effort, until a substitute was found. A foul smelling liquid was developed that mimicked the extinct nylon stockings. It came in bottles of various shades of pink, orange, or brown and was applied to the legs to simulate hose. In order to avoid a real mess, the best way to apply this liquid was to sit in an empty bathtub and pour some of the liquid into your hand, then apply it with long, even strokes up the leg. It was a tedious process because it streaked easily and, if put on too thick, would crack, like dried up mud. Some real sticklers even painted a stripe down the back of the leg, to simulate the seam that all stockings had at the time. The make-up rubbed off on your skirt as you walked and Heaven forbid you got caught in the rain with it on because it would run down your legs and into your shoes.

The process was reversed before going to bed. The best and only place to remove it was where we applied it—in the bathtub—this time filled with water. When lowering yourself into the tub, the water became cloudy and muddied by this concoction and, in order to get really clean, the water needed to be changed once or twice.

V-Mail

To save space and weight on mail that was sent between families and their servicemen overseas, the government copied a system that had been developed by the British called "V-Mail," probably standing for "victory mail" as everything was labeled "victory" something.

A one-page, pre-paid sheet that combined letter space and an envelope could be purchased from the post office. After the letter was written, the single sheet was folded and sealed for mailing. These letters would go to a location where they were microfilmed and the accumulated rolls sent overseas. The reverse process was used for those serving overseas. The rolls were then printed and much smaller versions were sent to the recipient. The mail sent by the military men was censored and stamped by the appropriate censor.

Not only did this process take up less space for the shipping of supplies, it was faster since these bundles could go by air and normal letter mail went by sea, taking a month or more to reach its destination.



Nancy and Anne dancing

The Music of War

Wars have a way of inspiring composers to recognize their times with tunes and lyrics that romanticize and create memories. WW I was noted for "Over There," "It's a Long, Long Way From Tipperary," "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag," and "Goodbye Broadway, Hello France," among others.

WW II also inspired its own music, beginning in England with "When the Lights Go On Again All Over the World", "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley (Barkley) Square," and "The White Cliffs of Dover," made popular by the British Singer, Vera Lynn.

When the United States joined the war, our own writers and composers created music that spoke to us, i.e., "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree With Anyone Else But Me," "I'll Be Seeing You," "White Christmas," "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," "Rosie the Riveter," "Comin' In on a Wing and a Prayer," "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "I Don't Want to Walk Without You," "Bugle Call Rag," "This is the Army, Mr. Jones," "Remember Pearl Harbor" and the stirring music from the TV series "Victory At Sea."

The big bands of Goodman, Dorsey, Miller, Calloway, James, Armstrong, and others arranged these and other songs for dancing which were recorded on 78 rpm records. It was to these at school and community dances to which servicemen were invited that I learned to dance. We even danced to "Little Brown Jug" and "American Patrol." We jitter-bugged and danced The Big Apple. Couples slow-danced and held tight because they didn't know if they'd see each other again.

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony also emerged as a patriotic symbol with its first four notes (dot dot dot dash) the international sign in Morse Code for the letter V which in all cases and all places around the Allied world was the symbol for Victory. It repeated over and over throughout the piece. Audiences cheered when it was played. I cannot hear that symphony without those war years enveloping me again and seeing in my mind's eye Winston Churchill giving the two fingered V for Victory sign each time he emerged from 10 Downing Street or stood before a crowd.

One of the most successful Broadway musicals ever written was *South Pacific*, based on a book written by James A. Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific*. The story was put to music and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein and Richard Rogers, and gave a glimpse of life lived by the local population, Navy personnel, and a French plantation owner and his children on an island in the South Pacific during the war. The book and musical both won a Pulitzer Prize. One of the songs, "You've Got to be Carefully Taught," addressed racial prejudice and provoked much discussion. Although this musical had its debut several years after the war ended, it has become closely associated with the war years.

War Games

John Boorman's 1987 semi-autobiographical film "Hope and Glory" depicts his growing up in England during the war. Despite the tragedy that surrounded him and his friends, the young British children made games out of various aspects of the war. Just as our young British cousins did, our playtime evolved from activities centered around the war. Jane recalls how we used to collect the fluffy seeds from milkweed pods because we were convinced they would be used to fill life jackets for sailors.

Anne and I would take the chalk-filled line marker for the tennis court and write messages on the court to be read by airmen flying over. She also recently reminded me of how we'd crouch down in a small hole and pretend we were spies. In our hands were cards that had air plane silhouettes printed on them. There we'd wait for planes to fly over so we could identify them and warn the authorities if they were German or Japanese. We also hoped maybe Dode would fly over and see one of our messages on the tennis court.

We children used to put on "shows" of music, recitations, and jokes for the extended family. They were usually held in one of the garages with a bed sheet for a curtain. Anne and I usually instigated and wrote them. During the war, these shows had a decidedly patriotic theme. We actually took them on the road several times when invited to a women's church group or other community activity. We put costumes together and on several occasions were able to persuade Dad and his brother, Charles, to play their banjos.

Anne and I also became aware of a flagpole in the Harbor that wasn't being used so we decided we certainly should have a flag raising and lowering each day. We cleared away the brush from the pole, found an appropriate flag, and notified the Harbor residents that we'd have flag ceremonies twice each day and we'd appreciate it if they all came. After we raised it, we said the Pledge of Allegiance with our right hands over our hearts. Before the war with Nazi Germany, that arm would be extended toward the flag at the words "to the flag of the United States of America" and remain there until the end. That gesture was eliminated because it was similar to the Nazi salute.

As I think about it now, I'm amazed how long the adults did gather for these short ceremonies. It was another evidence of the patriotism of those on the home front who also had great Hope of Glory for the United States and her allies. Again, I don't remember how long we were able to sustain this activity, but it was during these years I learned how the flag was to be hung, treated, and honored.



Anne and Nancy as Raggedy Ann and Andy with Anne's brother, Bill.

W W II Roll of Honor



Throughout the country, the men who served during the war were honored by having their names displayed on a "Roll of Honor" or "Honor Roll" which was prominently displayed on a piece of public ground.

The Jefferson County Honor Roll was placed on the front lawn of the Wintersville Elementary and High School. Dad and Dad Ross painted the completed wooden structure white and added specialized artwork and the names. Dad painted the same spread eagle design on its top that he had created in Texas for the Signal Corps at Kelly Field while stationed there during WW I. Dad Ross then lettered the name of each man as he entered the service. They also had the sad duty of adding a gold star beside the name of each man who was killed in action.

Family and friends would lay flowers and wreaths at its foot in memory of their loved ones and geraniums were planted each Memorial Day.

The structure remained there for several years following the war as we remembered those from our area who had served, and particularly those who had made the ultimate sacrifice.



Edward Casey Myers

Edward Casey Myers was the youngest of the nine children of Fred H. and Susan Williamson Myers. As most "babies" of the family, he probably received much attention from his parents and siblings.

I remember Uncle Edward as always having a smile on his face and being very kind. He enlisted in the U.S. Army 10 August 1943 at Akron, Ohio, a few months short of his 30th birthday. At the time, he had a wife and a son who was not quite one year old.

Following basic training, he was shipped overseas and killed 17 Aug 1944 at St. Lo, France, soon after D-day and the invasion of Europe.

The report of his death was devastating to the family. Mother and I were in the basement grinding vegetables to make India Relish. The phone rang, and since Mother's request was always prefaced with, "Your legs are younger than mine," I ran upstairs to answer it. It was Grace, one of Mother's sisters. She was crying and asked that I call Mother to the phone. I called to Mother and she came up the steps.

Mother spoke into the phone and the next thing I remember she dropped the receiver and started screaming. She screamed and screamed. She was finally able to convey to me the information she had just received, so I hung up the phone and lifted it again to call Dad at his office. He told me to run over and get Dad Ross and Grandma Daisy to stay with her until he could get home. Mother was still screaming when the three of us arrived back at the house and Dad was there about a half hour later.

With the realization that Uncle Edward had been killed in the war, the fear that hovered over every home during those war years finally descended upon and enveloped us for some time to follow.

I last saw Uncle Edward when he came to visit us before being shipped overseas. Mother and I were in that same basement and he came down the stairs to see us. Mother was doing some hand laundry. He looked very handsome in his uniform, but as she talked with him she noticed his white military belt could use some laundering. So she had him take it off and scrubbed it with Fels-Naptha soap and a scrub brush until it was snow white again.

Another of Mother's sisters, Irene, told me many years later that when Mama Myers answered the knock on the door, and opened it to find several service men standing there, she knew what they had come to tell her and became paralyzed from the top of her head to her toes. She remained that way for many hours. Her baby was gone.

By this time, Mama Myers was a widow. Papa Myers had passed away while walking in his rose garden with Edward while he was home on leave. She had lost her husband and youngest child within one year and seven days of each other.

After the war, we eventually learned where he was killed and that he was buried in France. The family brought Edward's body home, had a funeral service, and reburied him in the family plot in the town cemetery. I attended the funeral and heard a woman ask my grandmother how she knew that the body was really that of Edward. Her reply was: "Then some other mother's son is back home."

Edward had assigned half of his military insurance to Mama Myers and half to his wife. Irene told me that Mama Myers never cashed any of the government insurance checks, but let her share accumulate in a bank account. She referred to it as "blood money." She wore black or dark prints for many years following the deaths of these two men. Mother's screams remained with me for some time and it was impossible for me to eat India Relish for a number of canning seasons thereafter without remembering that horrible day. Today, I make that relish and remember Mother and Uncle Edward with love.

Unaware of Edward, one of our sons (Patrick) named his second son, Jonathan Casey.



The War Ends



In August, 1945, Dode was home for his last leave before being shipped to the Pacific for what would have been the invasion of Japan. While he was home, the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki put a quick end to the torture and killing that began when the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor. The European campaign had ended the summer before to celebrations that were slightly restrained due to the horrific battles still being fought in the Pacific.

Such excitement!! Our three Snug Harbor service men had made it through unscathed! We rang every bell in sight. We had a bell attached to one of the pillars on our back porch that had been used to call us from play and I repeatedly pulled the attached rope and rang it over and over. Remembering that Dad Ross and Grandma Daisy had the large old bell from the original family farm built into the wall of their courtyard, I ran over there and rang it so long and hard that it finally fell to the ground, never again to be set back in place.

This time, all restraint could be let loose and there was literally dancing in the streets of most small towns and large cities. We drove to the center of Steubenville to experience the celebration. The streets were filled with revelers and dancers. On occasion, Mother made me cover my eyes due to what she considered explicit dance movements.

As I recall those years, I now realize that I served as the messenger to the Harbor at the beginning of the war and then again at its end. As I have grown older, I realize how those four years shaped my life and were indelibly painted on my mind.

Thanks for Finding Me



Rick (Myers) Kirkendall

Shortly after D-day in 1944, my uncle, Edward, was killed in St. Lo, France. A young man of 31, he left behind a wife and two-year old son, Rick. Needless to say, his death was a tragedy for our family.

Eventually his widow remarried and her new husband adopted my young cousin and his surname was changed. Rick's stepfather was in the military so they moved from base to base until we all lost track of him. Fifty-nine years later, in the summer of 2003, I was strongly impressed to try to find my cousin. Contacting several other cousins, I found they were unable to help me other than to look in the phone book of our original Ohio hometown to see if a similar surname was listed. One such name was listed, to whom I wrote a letter of inquiry. He called me several days later and told me that he didn't have any specific information, but did have an e-mail several years old that included the name of a corporation in the east where Rick may have worked.

I next went to the Internet to search for the company, hoping that their employees' names might be listed and there was Rick's name and email address. I was filled with excitement as I contemplated the possibility of re-connecting with him, and sent a message to him introducing myself and asking if it were possible that he was my "lost" cousin. Several days passed before an email reply came saying, "Yes, I'm your cousin. I'll call you later today." As I read that short message tears filled my eyes and flowed from the bottom of my soul. After fifty-nine years we had been able to reach out and retrieve that which had been lost and the mystery of who and where he was was finally going to be answered for us.

Later that afternoon, Rick did call and we had a wonderful conversation. He told me that he had to think for several days before replying to my email. He had only really known one father---his stepfather. All that he ever had of his biological father was his Purple Heart and his mother never spoke much of him. Rick had also spent a number of years in the military and traveled from place to place, having served in Vietnam.

During the phone conversation I told him a few things about his ancestry and that he was named, in part, for his paternal grandfather. He vaguely remembered his grandmother and aunts, several cousins, and even remembered a little about me.

Rick and I have stayed in touch since we made our connection. We both get teary when we speak or write to each other. I was able to send him a package filled with his family history and pictures with faces, some familiar to him, but others of flat boat captains who plied the Ohio River to New Orleans, early settlers in the Western Reserve of Ohio, Indian Scouts, and a great-grandfather who, with his large family, immigrated from Ireland. He is still coming to grips with all the information and slowly sharing it with his children.

That Christmas I received a Christmas card from Rick and following his signature he wrote, "Again, many thanks for 'finding' me."

This could be the end of the story, but I had one final thought when I read that sentiment. How many of our dead ancestors have we sought out in similar ways and found them, taken their names to the temple and performed their ordinance work? I don't believe I'll ever perform another vicarious temple ordinance without hearing a voice in my mind that says, "...thanks for finding me."



After Rick and I reconnected, he returned to Ohio and visited the cemetery where his father had been reburied. He is shown here with my cousin, Grace Elizabeth Myers Clegg, who used to babysit him when he was a young child.

Written for the *Ensign* magazine, January, 2006.

POTPOURRI



Nancy and Alan, Spring circa 1938/39.

Girdles and Cotton Dresses

During my young years, women never wore slacks or jeans. Mothers and grandmothers wore flowered housedresses and usually full aprons that were also patterned, creating a mixture of bright colors.

In my family, girdles were also a staple item of clothing, even when scrubbing the floors. There was the good girdle and the everyday girdle. When the good girdle became "old," because it had lost its elasticity, it became the everyday girdle. Likewise, hose were worn each day and were somewhat like the girdle---when they had become badly snagged or had a number of runners in them deeming them no longer suitable for good, they were relegated to everyday hose. Shoes were sensible---usually with a slight heel and silk laces.

These were the days before television so often in the evenings Dad would ask if we'd like to take a ride into the country. Now, we lived in the country so a country ride meant going farther out into the country. There were several familiar routes we always took and often points of interest would be noted: "This is the town where Custer grew up." "Over there was where your great-great-grandfather had a farm." "That cemetery is where some of your ancestors are buried."

Before we would go on these rides, Mother would ALWAYS say, "Walter, I have my old girdle on. I should go in and change it." To which Dad ALWAYS replied that he would drive carefully so as not to end up in the hospital where everyone in Jefferson County would eventually hear that Elizabeth Myers had her old girdle on when she was admitted to the emergency room. (In keeping with that train of thought, I was constantly being cautioned not to use pins in my underclothing to hold one thing or another together as I might end up in the hospital where they'd see my safety pin and I would be thought of as slovenly. I mentioned that to someone recently and they observed that they'd just cut the clothes off so a pin wasn't going to matter.)

Girdles were made with rubber elastic and, as noted previously, there was no rubber available to the civilian population during the war. Since synthetics hadn't yet been developed, and most of the rubber in the world went to the war effort for tires, automotive belts, and the myriad of items that run the machine of war, a woman's girdle was not even on the low priority list. It wasn't on anyone's list. Her one girdle, with supporters that held up the hose, was no longer worn for everyday but saved for good. Either old round garters were used to roll the stockings at the knee, or short white anklets were worn with sensible shoes while at home. There was also a way to knot and roll the hose if nothing else was available, but it was a tenuous application.

There was also a scarcity of elastic for our panties and half slips. Buttons instead of elastic fastened them around our waist. More than once, the buttons would accidentally become unbuttoned or fall off! Our bras were all cotton so had to fit perfectly.

Housedresses were 100% cotton and with men's shirts had to be dampened and ironed. The aprons also required ironing, thus the weekly task of ironing a bushel basket full of dampened clothes was a daunting task.

Women didn't begin wearing slacks until during the war when many of them worked in factories while the men were in the service. Following the war, it still took some time for it to be acceptable for us to wear slacks. When I went to college in the early 50's we weren't allowed to wear them anywhere but our dorm rooms. To be found otherwise meant being campused. I actually remember when my Mother bought her first pair of slacks to take on their vacation trip to Cape Cod and Dad loved teasing her about them.



Nancy Steals 10 Cents

An example of the family support system we had in Snug Harbor and the love my grandfather had for all of us is illustrated by a transgression I committed while in the first grade.

During a morning recess, I took ten cents from the teacher's desk drawer. Then during lunch time, I went across the street to Finkowski's variety store and bought ten cents worth of candy. At this time that was a large amount of money for a child to have to spend on candy. When the money was discovered missing, it was easy to determine the culprit by simply asking Mrs. Finkowski who the child was that day at noon who had had ten cents to spend--and they remembered it was me! Imagine!

When confronted with the theft, I admitted to taking it. (As a 5 year old I hadn't yet understood the concept of theft and other people's property, and was amazed at the "big deal" that was being made over it.)

My father was called and that night I received the prescribed, terrible lecture from him about going to jail, etc. if anything like that ever happened again. I felt ashamed and was sure everyone in the world knew that Nancy Myers was a thief. I was visiting my grandparents when Dad Ross brought up the subject of my childhood indiscretion and was outraged that one of his grandchildren would have to steal money to buy candy. Within the week he had gone to the little candy store and opened a "candy account" for every one of his twelve grandchildren. We could buy candy or ice cream whenever we wanted and it was charged to the Myers Grandchildren's Account. You should recognize, however, that in those days candy was probably 3 pieces for a penny and a large candy bar or a one-scoop ice cream cone was 5 cents. The amazing thing about it was that we never took advantage of his generosity. Not knowing the specifics of the agreement that he made, it may have been that there was a limit to how much we could buy at a time. I don't remember the length of time this arrangement was in place but it sure was fun while it lasted.



A Child Shall Lead Them

When I was in the first grade, we had a rhythm band. The instruments were bells, tambourines, triangles, drums, cymbals, sticks, and bird whistles. Everyone in the class participated. From an early age I demonstrated the ability to keep time, so I was chosen to direct the band. We dressed in blue and gold capes, white pants, and shirts. I was very proud of the wooden baton with which they gave me to lead.

When the senior high school band performed its yearly concert on the stage of the gymnasium, our rhythm band was also asked to perform—a very exciting time for us. The gym was filled with parents, friends, faculty, and students. After the senior band played several numbers the music teacher (the conductor) brought me out on stage, handed me his baton, and asked me to lead the senior band while they played a Sousa march. What a big evening for me! I was five years old!

Dad's Ham Radio

A familiar sight around Snug Harbor was Dad's ham radio antenna. He actually had two of them, but one was hidden far out of sight as Mother didn't want it detracting from the looks of the house. So, Dad climbed one of the highest trees close to the house carrying a long rope attached to a piece of wire that would serve as his antenna. When he got up as far as he could climb, he threw the other end of the rope over a large limb and pulled up the wire that he then permanently attached. This antenna served him for many, many years.

Of his early interest in short wave radio he wrote, "At about eleven years [of age] I first heard of radio through Walter Porter, whose brother Charlie was operator of a U.S. Navy station at Key West, Florida NAR."

Charlie gave Walter Porter several pieces of radio gear so he, Dad, and Howard Welday all became interested in this new miracle.

Howard Welday and Dad made all of their own equipment: crystal detectors, and coils on Mother's Oats boxes. "Howard Welday connected two coils in a reverse manner and we criticized him for it. However, it did work and it was, although we did not know it, an instrument now called a 'variometer' and it is still used as a method of varying inductance in a circuit. Without a doubt, Howard was the unknown inventor of this instrument, rediscovered by another at a later date."

"We could talk with each other, using our initials as a call sign, usually calling first on the telephone. We listened to the time and weather reports at 10 p.m. from Key West NAR (in Morse code), and if Charlie Porter was sending them he used to end the transmission with his initial so we could tell it was him we were hearing.

"At this time there was no way the public could get the correct time from the phone or radio as radio was not yet available to the public and did not arrive until KDKA [went on the air in Pittsburgh, Pa.] in 1922. I put a large light on a pole on top of my home (in Steubenville) and connected it with a key at my receiver. As the time signal came from NAA (Arlington, Va.) or NAR (Key West), I would relay the impulses starting at 9:50; impulses one second apart, until exactly 10:00 when the light would cease flashing with one long flash. This proved very popular with all who could see it. The newspaper featured it and it really provided a valuable service. I kept it up for a while, maybe a year or so.

"The first licensing law was passed about 1912 or so. You got a license simply by requesting it. I was licensed at 8ABD (U.S. Department of Commerce listing 1913-1916, p. 144). This license expired while I was in the Army (WW I). I got interested again during the Depression, made a receiver out of an old broadcast receiver, studied up on new techniques, passed the examination, and was licensed as W8MKT. [I] Now have the highest grade license, 'extra class,' given to me because I was first licensed before April of 1917 and classed as a 'pioneer' in the art..... In 1911, radio was called 'wireless' and [the term] radio did not start to be used until broadcasting started in 1922."



Dad's experiences with Charlie Porter and the NAR led him to try to enlist in the Navy during WW I, but because he was so young they turned him down and suggested he apply to the Army. He went to the Army, asked to be assigned to the air wing of the Signal Corps, and that was where he served. His artistic ability, coupled with his knowledge of Morse code and short wave radio, made him a valuable resource. In France, he would be suspended in the basket under a balloon where his artistic eye could detect enemy camouflage. When he reached the ground, he would radio that position to the artillery.

An article in *The Steubenville Herald Star*, sometime in 1919, reports that "A local soldier boy, Walter L. Myers, who is painting the eagles on the memorial arch at Sixth Street, originated this design at Kelly Field, Texas, when his C.O. sent for him to paint a patriotic design on [the] headquarter's entrance." Permission was requested "to adopt and use this design as the official emblem" of the Signal Corps. "Myers served in France as camouflage man of the Fifth Balloon Co. and when not engaged at the paint work drew maps from an observation balloon. After the armistice the Expeditionary Entertainment Bureau sent him on a tour of France with a vaudeville company doing a cartooning act illustrating the comic side of a soldier's life."



Dad's ham radio shack between garage and main house. It was also where John and I lived before returning to Bethany.

Dad expanded the one-rm. apt. by building a small room from the apt. into the garage for newborn, Kim. Dad Ross painted the "Rock-a-bye Baby" mural on the wall.



Snug Harbor Fire

One summer there was a fire in Snug Harbor. I think it was during the war. Uncle Mac was burning some brush around Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross' house and it got away from him. All the brush around Snug Harbor was eventually on fire.

All of us gathered up brooms, shovels, buckets, etc., and Uncle Ralph's house became the "command center." There were outside steps down to his basement and the women formed a bucket brigade up those steps. The kids went out to the edges of the fire and beat the flames with brooms and shovels while the adult men dug trenches to save the homes.

As a result of that conflagration, I have an intense fear of fire. As we were beating the flames, the heat was scorching the hair on our heads and faces. It was so intense that we had to force ourselves to get close enough to reach the flames. We didn't have to worry about the side toward the swamp so concentrated our efforts towards the houses. As we stopped the flames coming from our area, we went back to the command center at Uncle Ralph's house to get new instructions.

Sixty-some years later, I can still picture Grandma Daisy's panic stricken face, covered with black soot and strands of grey hair wet with sweat, as she passed heavy buckets of water to the woman beside her. She was in her late 60s at the time.

From that time on, there were very definite rules in effect in Snug Harbor with regard to burning.

Religion

The Myers' practice of religion covered a wide range. Protestantism was the tradition.

Ross was practical in his practice. He waited until most of his children were born (all except Edith) and, on 19 January 1913, he rented a horse-drawn undertaker's hearse, with a driver and all the trimmings, to drive the entire family to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Steubenville. There, the Reverend Martin Sidener baptized all the children. Dad's brother, Charles, complained that the Rector put too much water on him and it ran down his neck.

Dad Ross probably did not bring much of a religious heritage to his and Grandma Daisy's marriage. His father, raised as an orphan, more than likely had to fend for himself, although in his obituary he was listed as a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Daisy, on the other hand, had a strong religious upbringing and, as a young woman, attended many summer religious camp meetings with her family.

After moving from downtown Steubenville to The Hilltop in 1907, the La Belle View Church of the Campbellite Christian Church became the center of the family's social activities. In the summer there were picnics, called "lawn fetes," with sandwiches and ice cream. They also held revivals where songs of repentance were sung and the congregation would be urged to move forward and be saved. Dad said that when the invitation was made to "go up front" to be saved, rather than argue about it, "we 'went up front' and got saved--again--for perhaps the tenth time. This was repeated at other churches. I expect I have been saved in almost all the Steubenville churches at one time or another. It was the thing to do, so we did it." Another of Dad's favorite stories was how he and Charles used to be sent to an uncle's house where they'd have to attend church with his family on Sunday. It was a Methodist church and they kneeled for all the prayers. While they were kneeling, Dad and Charles would reach forward and pull the legs out from under the young people in front of them. These are just two examples of how the Myers men were an especially colorful and irreverent lot. Not having been old enough to have known JK, I don't know if he had a similar personality, but Dad Ross certainly passed his on to his sons.

Grandma Daisy's brother, Lorain, sat in the "Amen Corner" of the Methodist Church. It was so designated because the men who sat there (never women) punctuated the minister's sermon by shouting, "So be it," "God be Praised," "Amen," "Praise the Lord God," etc. Another of her brothers, John, was also deeply religious for a short time.

Grandma Daisy told me she used to sing with one of her brothers at revival meetings. She had a beautiful alto voice. When I attended church with her and my mother in the new Presbyterian Church in Wintersville, I loved singing alto with her.

My maternal great-grandfather was one of the six founding members of a religious revival camp near Toronto, named Hollow Rock. In the summer, itinerant preachers would preach the congregation into a frenzy. The family owned a cottage there, and spent every summer sitting on the screened-in porch that faced the camp meeting. It's my understanding, from some things intimated by Mother, that the teen-agers who attended with their families had some other-than-religious experiences while their parents were entranced by the preachers.

My first baptismal certificate states that I was baptized in the First United Presbyterian Church in Steubenville. Even though the family had been living in Snug Harbor for a while, the women of the family associated themselves with this church that was not far from Dad Ross and Grandma Daisy's former Hilltop home.

During my teen-age years, I was active in the local Methodist church as that was where most of my school friends attended. We also had socials and lawn fetes and the ministers provided many wholesome youth activities to which we all looked forward.

Eventually the Presbyterians started a church in Wintersville, in the Grange Hall across from the school. Due to the schedule of their meetings, I was first able to attend the Methodist meeting and then join Mother and Grandma Daisy at the Presbyterian meeting afterwards. It was during these years that I began questioning my understanding and beliefs which eventually led to my investigating and joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at age 27, married and with two small daughters.

Walter wrote to Nancy in 1977 about a visit he had from two Mormon missionaries. They left a Book of Mormon and, after visiting with him, asked if he'd kneel and pray with them. He replied, not surprisingly, "No." So, unlike all the many churches and revivals in Steubenville, where he responded to the call to come forward and be saved, he chose not to be saved by the Mormons. He did add in his letter, though, that he thought they were fine young men. One was from Arizona and the other from Idaho. Ironically, both Elizabeth and Walter were buried by a Mormon Bishop, my husband, John. Dode's services were performed by the Catholic church, although he was not a member, and John once again performed the services at the burial of my brother, Alan. All are buried in the Fort Steuben Burial Estates in Wintersville, Ohio.

A Little Night Music

A description of the sights and sounds of my youth would be incomplete without mentioning the music of the Lash family. They lived across the creek in a large farmhouse that, in earlier years, had been occupied by the Johns family.

The Lashes were a sizeable family with a strong interest in mountain music, which we referred to as "hillbilly" music. In today's vernacular, it would probably be referred to as Blue Grass. In contrast to today's teenagers, with their high decibel boom boxes, the Lashes created their own music without electronic amplification. Every evening after dinner, they'd sit on their big old wrap around porch, and, to the accompaniment of their guitars, sing the West Virginia hillbilly music they loved. As we sat on our porches or in our yards, our conversations were always accompanied by the sweet sounds of mountain music. Although we could never clearly hear the lyrics, the mournful chords and sounds spoke of the troubled life of these people. Several of the boys visited the funeral home to pay their respects when Dode died, and I believe one of the boys became a preacher.

In my later years, I've come to enjoy what is currently labeled as Country Music, perhaps because it brings back fond memories of the Lashes who first introduced me to the music and lyrics that speak so plainly about everyday life.

The Pigeon Coop

Dad Ross had a pigeon coop built at the same time as his home and of matching stone. He was an avid racer of pigeons. There was a long flight of wooden steps leading up to the loft that were open and a bit scary for a youngster to climb. Nevertheless, I often went up with him and entered into one of the two wire-enclosed room-sized cages that had at least 2" of dried pigeon droppings on the floor. Scores of birds would fly around our heads but they weren't as scary to me as the steps.

We would feed "the birds," as he always called them, and go back down the steps. When finished, he would re-enter his house through the laundry without changing his shoes or wiping his feet. Keeping to his routine, he would then walk through the house to his bedroom and lay down on the bed to nap, shoes and all.

There was a room beneath the pigeon coop that had elaborate alcoves built into its stucco walls, but I never knew the purpose for which it had been originally intended. It always had pigeon crates stored in it. Perhaps it was originally intended as an artist's studio. When it rained, the whole place really smelled. Upon occasion, we'd clean it out, sweep it clean, and have "club" meetings in it.

After John and I married and were living in Columbus, Ohio, Dad Ross would send a crate of pigeons home with us in the trunk of the car. We'd then release them at an assigned location on the way home, let him know what time they were released, and with a clock he had in the coop he could see how long it took them to fly home. Previous to this, they would be shipped via the railroad where they'd be released at a given point and according to the train schedule he could determine their travel time.

At the cemetery following Dad Ross's funeral, the local pigeon club released a number of white pigeons in respect of his many years involved in the sport. Pigeons he had given many of them had started their flocks. As the pigeons left their cages and formed up, they circled above our heads several times before they started home. It was a touching moment.



Pigeon coop, building to the left.

Memorial Day

Memorial Day meant big parades in Steubenville, Toronto, and Weirton, W.Va.. The parades went through the center of town and often ended at the city's cemetery. There, graves would be decorated and speeches given. Memorial Day was especially significant to Dad and me. The American Legion Post in Steubenville turned out a contingent of veterans to march in the parade, and Dad, a WW I vet, marched with them. As he explained it to me, it wasn't that he was especially "gung ho" militarily, but it was his way of showing respect for his comrades who fell in France and those who died in other wars.

When I was small, he would take me along to march with him. As the years passed, the veterans' contingent got smaller and smaller, and on several occasions it was just Dad and me, followed by the American Legion band, wearing their faded uniforms and playing untuned instruments.

We would wave to the people we recognized and Mother was always especially proud as we passed by her, standing at the curb, waving a small flag, remembering her brother and her two sons serving in the armed forces.

As I got older and marched in parades with the high school band, Dad continued to march by himself--representing the entire American Legion Post of Steubenville, Ohio, of which I'm not sure he was even a member!

There was never a patriotic holiday that Mother didn't hang a flag on the back porch. It was always the 48 star flag--she never bought a new one when Alaska and Hawaii joined the states.

When Dad died, I had his coffin draped with a flag in recognition of his service in World War I, his voluntary service as Civil Defense Director for Jefferson County during WW II, and for all those Memorial Day parades he marched in.

My brother, Dode, questioned my desire to show this one last form of respect as he didn't feel Dad was especially patriotic, but I knew otherwise. Dode was gone during the World War II years and I was there to see Dad's frustration when they wouldn't allow him to enlist because of his age--even with a special exemption. Instead, he threw himself into Civil Defense and became its director with a "situation room" in Wintersville High School and a smaller version in the boys' bedroom in our home.

Following his funeral, I took the old 48 star flag and left with Dode the flag which had draped his coffin to be flown over Snug Harbor--the place he loved most on earth.

A post script to Memorial Day: A year after Dad's death, I got up early on the morning of May 30th as the rest of the family lay sleeping and drove alone into Doylestown, Pa. to watch the Memorial Day parade in honor of my father and mother. As I stood alone on the curb and watched the American Legion pass by, handing out small flags, I reached out for one to hold close to my heart and was told by a crusty veteran that they were only for the children.

He never knew the hurt he caused in this now mature woman who had marched hundreds of miles in her youth on behalf of veterans and their deceased comrades. I've always been drawn to the "poppies" referred to in Flanders Field because of this. I never pass a vet selling poppies without making a contribution.



Walter, lone American Legion marcher.

Snake Dance

My home in Wintersville, Ohio, was a small town in the 1940s. Everyone knew everyone else.

Football was the big fall activity. Many of us were either on the team or in the band. A large number of community members were involved one way or another in the peripheral activities of band parents, concession stand workers, football mothers and fathers, etc.

The Wintersville Golden Warriors were usually a good team and we had our share of wins. When we won a game at home, a snake dance would be formed. It was like a conga line with the many participants holding on to each other's waists and snaking through town. We'd "dance" down the middle of the main street (highway US 40!) and go in the front and out the back door of several homes. It was a lot of fun, but as a wiser and more mature adult, I'm amazed at such goings on.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Since Dad was a pioneer in things electronic, we had a television set fairly soon after they went into mass production, and it was among the first in our small community. They were small in those days, and, of course, black and white. In our home, it meant having to have another antenna, but this wasn't an obstacle for Dad as he just attached it to his already installed ham radio antenna. Eventually, he installed the typical TV antenna on the roof of the house that could be controlled from inside and rotated in the appropriate direction towards Pittsburgh, Wheeling, or other larger cities that had television transmission. "Rabbit ears" were the preferred antenna for the majority of people.

During the war, the only way we could actually see the news was at the movie theater when, before each main attraction, there was a segment of news---The March of Time, RKO News, etc. Dad was quite excited to be able to view the news at home on our TV set so each evening we were sure to have dinner over in time for the six o'clock news where we gathered around the set in the living room. (TV trays and meals were soon developed as the population, in general, adopted the same habit.)

When I was a senior in high school, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed with a significant ceremony. The signing was such an historic event that the school gave permission for the senior class to be bussed to our home where we all crowded around the small set and watched the signing of this instrument that was going to be another step toward ending all wars.

There were about 38 students in my graduating class and I'm not sure if any of them even remember they were "present" on this auspicious occasion, crammed into our living room and crowded around that small set, but it brought a lot of hope around the world as we were emerging from World War II.

The Parsonage

As an infant, I was baptized in the Presbyterian Church, but as a teenager I attended the Methodist Church in Wintersville, Ohio. It was the focal point of our little town, not only in its placement at the crossroads of the main streets, but as the major Protestant church in the community.

All of my friends went there and a special friend's father was the pastor. I often went to the parsonage that sat on the top of a hill next to the church. It was a large house and had lots of closets and little rooms in which to play. It had tall doors, some of which slid back and forth. The dark wood was highly polished and its large stairway wide and uncarpeted.

I remember playing there and hiding in the closets, on shelves, and in the pantry of the large farmhouse type kitchen. It had a large front porch with steps leading up to it. Down the front hill, beside the crossroads, was a granite stone with a plaque noting that this was the farthest northern point to which General Morgan and his raiders advanced during the Civil War.

Upon several occasions in my life, there have been foreshadowing events, and playing in that parsonage was one of them. A number of years later I was living in that parsonage with my young family.

John was completing his BA degree in Elementary Education and it became necessary for him to do his student teaching. As he was also working at Weirton Steel during the 4-midnight shift, he had to be able to teach close enough to be able to get to work. An arrangement was made between Bethany and one of the Steubenville elementary schools that would necessitate our moving from Bethany.

The parsonage was going to be torn down and the hill leveled so we negotiated a deal that we could live there during the six weeks while John completed his last requirement for graduation. We knew we'd be moving to Columbus, Ohio, where John had been hired to teach, as soon as he was finished student teaching and the fall term began.

Terri was still a baby, and in the evening, after she was in bed and John was at work, Kim and I would sit on the large front porch and watch the cars go by as the traffic light on the corner changed from green to yellow to red.

During one rain storm, the ceiling in the entry hall fell in, thereby confirming the decision to tear down the parsonage. It was a lovely old house. I recently found a picture of me as a teen-ager sitting on the front steps of the church and in the background is the white parsonage sitting on the hill, close to where Morgan's Raiders advance had been stopped during the Civil War.



Teen-aged Nancy with parsonage in the background.

Prejudice

John's and my lifetime spanned the years from racial discrimination and atrocities through Martin Luther King, southern night-riders, the march on Washington, and, although not complete, equal rights for those of the African-American race still being accomplished.

It was the custom in our small school for the senior class to take a trip to Washington, D.C. It was a much-anticipated activity and, in the spring of 1949, my class of about 38 students set out on a bus for the big trip. For many of my classmates it may well have been their first trip out of the small tri-state area in which we lived. It was to be my first experience in seeing just how far discrimination towards African-Americans was carried out.

Our bus arrived in Washington at night. We proceeded to our hotel and began to check in. We had one African-American girl in our class and when it was her turn to be checked in the hotel clerk refused to let her stay. When I asked what the ruckus was about, my teacher/chaperone told me that they weren't going to let Vivian stay because she was black.

I told our chaperone that that was no problem--she could room with me. He took me aside and explained the "facts of life" concerning racial discrimination. He pointed out that it didn't matter that I would like Vivian to room with me, they wouldn't allow her in the hotel. I was always a compliant child, but in this case began to protest and was prepared to make an issue of it. I was shushed and, after some time and a few phone calls, a place was found for her to stay with a family among "her own kind" in an area of D.C. She would be brought to meet with us each day as we toured our nation's capital.

How grateful I am that I was raised in a family without prejudices. My parents embraced all peoples, nationalities, cultures, and religions. Mother, as president of the PTA and Band Parents for many years, was welcomed in all homes, Black and White, Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile. She took me with her and I learned "goodwill towards all men" through her. Two trees were planted in the schoolyard in her honor when she stepped down after serving the community in this way for a number of years.

"I was blessed with goodly parents."



My friends and I sit under one of the trees planted in front of the school in recognition of Mother for her service to the community and school.

Charity Begins At Home

The first act of charity that I remember observing was in my home when I was a pre-teen. There was a young teen-age boy standing before my parents, in front of a bedroom window. My mother's sewing machine was open and sitting nearby. He was trying on new clothes and they were admiring, along with him, his image in a mirror. He looked pleased and proud of his image. Mother was running her hand across his shoulders, examining the fit. There were several additional articles of clothing on the bed that he had already tried on. Dad looked pleased, in his way, that they were able to help someone. These were but a few years following the Great Depression when just a short time earlier he had been literally selling apples from his father's orchard. He had made \$600 in an entire year.

The Depression years were very difficult for most people. We lived in the country, in a rather isolated spot that was about 3 miles from a remote stop on the Pennsylvania Railroad where the steam engines stopped to fill their water boilers. During those years, the hobos (as we called them) rode the rails looking for work. They would hop off and walk to the nearest town, stopping at homes along the way to ask for food. We had a number of such men walk up the lane to our home, knock on our kitchen door, and ask for food. They were never turned away, but were invited to sit at the kitchen table just inside the door and have a sandwich. I also remember a water spigot outside that door where a tin cup always hung for those who needed a drink of water.

Who were these people? The teen-age boy came from a poor family. He had been elected to represent our small country school at Boys' State in Columbus, Ohio. His hard working parents could not afford to dress him to the level his election elevated him, so my parents used some of their meager funds to purchase the proper clothing.

I learned many years after that young boy stood before the mirror in his new clothes that, during WW II, my father was earning \$50 a week. While looking through papers, gathering documents for our family history, I came upon his pay envelope. There are those who would say that that was worth more then than it is now. However, that was not a lot of money with which to raise a family even then.

We never knew the names of the "hobos" who stopped by our home. These men had a mark they would put on or near a home indicating to those who followed that this was a home where they would be treated kindly and food shared. Obviously our home was marked in some way. After our oldest daughter married, her husband, who grew up in Indiana, told us his grandmother's was also a house where these men had placed their mark and were never turned away.

I am also grateful that my parents did not base their concern for others according to race, religion, or color. During the 30s, and 40s, when race relations were tense, I went with my mother as we were welcomed into the homes of our African-American friends and neighbors. As the PTA president, she became a negotiator when tensions arose in the school community.

In his retirement years, my father never forgot those he had helped. I remember he drove to different parts of the countryside to visit friends who had fallen on bad times. Mother frequently went with him and once, upon arriving home, I heard her telling Dad how upset she was to see one of the elderly gentlemen sleeping on a bed without sheets or pillowcase, but only on the bare blue and white striped ticking into which corn husks and hay had been stuffed. He assured her that he probably felt blessed to have a bed. On another occasion, he told me that he was the only person at the funeral of an old friend---not even family members were there.

These days, when we teach our children to be wary of strangers and we, ourselves, must use good judgment as to whom we invite into our lives and homes, we can still use our hearts and eyes to see ways in which we can help others. Charity is not looking down on others from our mansions of plenty and displaying a false sense of pity. It is walking arm and arm, heart to heart, in the valleys of despair with feelings of genuine love one for another. Unlike the Pharisees who did all their works to be seen by men, genuine acts of kindness are given in secret. As Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and (strengthen) the feeble knees." (Hebrews 12:12 and JST Hebrews 12:12) We must use our eyes to see and our ears to hear.

Charity does begin at home. Charity is the pure love of Christ and except we have charity we can in nowise be saved. I am grateful for parents who, through their actions, set an example for me at a young age.

(Also refer to "The Great Depression, A House Guest" in reference to the man who lived in our attic.)

1948 Olympics, London, England

Our family was represented in the 1948 London, England Summer Olympics by my brother, Alan. The demonstration sport at that Olympics was lacrosse and the team chosen to represent the United States was from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). The team was coached by Hall of Fame coach, Ned Harkness.

In Wembley Stadium, before a crowd of 60,000, Rensselaer tied the British All-Star Team and left England with a record of 8-0-1 for the year.

Though World War II was over, Europe was still feeling the effects of the war. When it was announced that the Olympic Games would be resumed, many debated whether it was wise to have such an event when many European countries were in ruins and the people near starvation. To limit England's responsibility to feed all the athletes, it was agreed that the participants would bring their own food. Any surplus food was donated to British hospitals.

No new facilities were built for the games, but Wembley Stadium had survived the war and proved adequate. No Olympic Village was erected; the male athletes were housed at an army camp in Uxbridge and the women were housed at Southlands College in dormitories.

Germany and Japan, the aggressors of WW II, were not invited to participate.

Though there had been much debate as to whether or not to hold the 1948 Olympic Games, they turned out to be very popular and a great success. Approximately 4,000 athletes participated, representing 59 countries.

The U.S. team was transported by ship out of New York City. After docking on the return trip, Alan was met by Mother and Dad to be driven home to Snug Harbor. On the way home, the trunk of the car inadvertently opened and most of Alan's memorabilia, pictures, and uniforms from the Olympics were lost. Needless to say, it was a crushing discovery. The only piece I have with which to remember his participation is a post card Alan wrote to me from England.

(Portions of this article were taken from the Internet.)



The RPI 1948 U.S. Olympic Team.

Alan scored three of the five U.S. points during the only demonstration match that was played against the all-star team of Great Britain. He scored two in the first period and one in the fourth. The game ended in a 5-5 tie.



The Model

The summer between my high school graduation and freshman year at college, I was a model at one of the department stores in Steubenville. They selected several local models from various schools in the tri-state area to model the newest fall fashions.

The best part of it was getting to try on all those clothes. I was blessed to have a mother who could sew and she made most of my clothes, including formals. So, to be able to walk into the ladies' department and try on a variety of the newest styles was a real treat.



Sewing School Drop-out

Mother thought it important that I learn to sew so she enrolled me in the Singer sewing classes. (At the time, I couldn't take Home Economics in school because my course track was college preparatory and home ec. wasn't a part of it.) I selected fabric that was probably a bit expensive and proceeded to follow the instructions given by my teacher on how to lay out the pattern on the fabric and carefully cut the pieces.

Needless to say, I didn't do well at all as I attached the pieces together and remember how disappointed Mother was as she followed my progress. Eventually, she asked for a refund and received it.

Some years later, I saw that I did need to learn to sew so that I could make my own and our daughters' dresses. Grandma Daisy gave me her treadle machine and I proceeded to teach myself to read the patterns and sew dresses, coats, drapes, table cloths, and all manner of items.

One of the projects I undertook was to use the very full skirt from one of my formals (see picture on "John and Nancy" page) and make it into Christmas dresses for Kim and Terri. The bodices were red velvet with white, gathered skirts. They were quite pretty.

Once again, Mother was right.



Mother and daughters' dresses made for Easter, 1965, Columbus, Ohio.

Polio

In the 30s and 40s, in the late summer we had the same worry in Snug Harbor as everyone else in the country--polio. When the polio season began each year, our activities were curtailed. We couldn't go to swimming pools or other large public gatherings.

We all knew people who had been stricken by this crippling disease, which was often fatal.

Home remedies abounded. One summer we gargled incessantly with salt water because a sore throat seemed to be one of the early symptoms.

Since no one had any idea where polio came from, or who it would choose to strike, they were summers of fear. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, U.S. President for all of my young life, had been stricken with the disease after coming in from swimming, so I suppose that fed the belief we should stay away from pools. Some pools actually closed during the worst times.

American youth threw themselves into the March of Dimes campaign and each school participated in an annual drive held in January--the President's birthday month.

We saved our dimes all year and went door to door collecting them from others. Mother had a special dime bank that she filled each year so I could take the coins in as our contribution to fighting the dreaded disease. That small bank couldn't have held more than \$5 worth of dimes, but that was a large contribution in the post-Depression days.

Polio struck Snug Harbor in the late summer of 1950. Dode and his wife, Nancy, were living with Dad and Mother. They had one son, Steven, and Nancy F. (which she was called to avoid confusion with Nancy Mae as I was soon called) was pregnant with their second child.

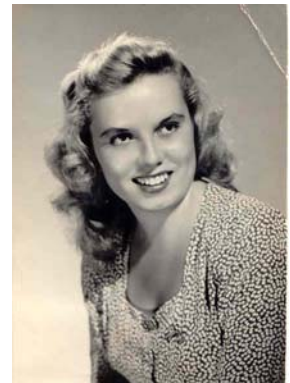
Slowly she began feeling unwell and her throat was involved. Eventually, she was diagnosed as having Bulbar polio. From the moment of her diagnosis, the March of Dimes organization took over the expense of her care, including the cost of the hearse that transported her to Pittsburgh for treatment.

The memory of his mother being taken away "in a big black car for dead people" was very traumatic for young Steven. The long separation from his mother was made bearable by his "Mimi" (Elizabeth) who spoiled him by allowing him to do a few things that in other times might be forbidden.

If you can call anyone who came down with the disease fortunate, Nancy F. was. None of her limbs were involved. The doctors were not certain whether the baby she was carrying would be affected, and in those days that couldn't be determined until the child was born. So, an additional fear was involved.

Questions were raised as to whether the family should be quarantined, and since it was time for me to return to Bethany College to begin a new semester a decision had to be made. It was decided that enough time had passed without any other member of the family showing symptoms, so I returned to school and Mother cared for Dode, Steven, and Nancy F. from the time she returned from the hospital until she got back on her feet.

In March, when Timothy Alan was born, it was determined that he had suffered no major effects from Nancy F.'s bout with polio.



Nancy F.

Dad Ross Retires



Front: Charles, Ross, Walter

Rear: John, Ralph, Donald

As Dad Ross advanced in age he continued to paint with his sons, but Walter noticed that it had grown difficult for him to do walls and ceilings since it required working on scaffolding or ladders. The brothers had to follow him around to catch the spots that he missed.

His hands had become very shaky. Where he previously had created the sketches with proposed designs of the work to be done, he now had difficulty steadying his hand. Finally, Dad took over that responsibility in addition to being the man who met with prospective clients.

Dad described the situation to me in a letter. "I remember when Dad Ross was trying to paint a sign for St. Paul's Church. I was watching him and he was having a hard time simply because his hand was so unsteady. Finally, he said, 'That's it. I just can not do it,' and he quit. He was probably a little less than 80 at the time."

Ross also recognized that as the family grew the money earned by Myers Brothers had to be divided into more portions. He wrote the following letter to the family:

10---14---52 Myers Bros----

I suggest that you take one half of my pay each month, split it four ways among you which will give you an additional 650.00 per year. Mom and I have 62.50 per month S.S. and we can get along fine on this arrangement and Don plans to take over eventually when he gets going right. [Following WW II, Donald entered medical school and graduated in 1952.]

J. Ross Myers

W.[alter]---

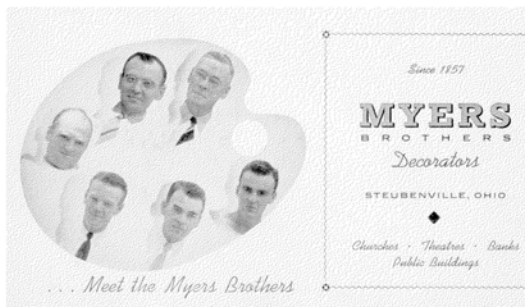
Mom and I have a surplus on hand and we will have plenty of everything. So tell Ida to just cut my pay in two. I sent a note to the others: Charles, Ralph, and John giving them the low down, they all owe money and it will help. We will probably go to Cleveland before you get back.

J.R.M.

With Donald providing part of Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross's support, the company lasted a short time longer.

Within a year or so, Myers Brothers came to an end. Walter continued designing and selling, but as an employee of larger companies. Charles soon retired. John and Ralph formed a partnership and continued painting together.

Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross both died in Snug Harbor. Dad Ross died at home, November 4, 1958. Grandma Daisy died at Walter and Elizabeth's home, April 11, 1960.



Myers Brothers Decorators was in business from 1932 to approximately 1952, provided college educations for all of the grandchildren, and launched them into the world. Donald provided support for Ross and Daisy and his two children's educations. Donald delivered Nancy's first two children, completing the circle that started when another of Ross and Daisy's sons (Walter) delivered her.

Family Treasures

Grandma Daisy, Dad Ross, and I had developed a close relationship through the years. It was probably more due to location than personality or character. Our home was closest to them and I easily ran back and forth between them. I also seemed to be accepted by them as an adult, even while young, as they often talked with me about adult subjects.

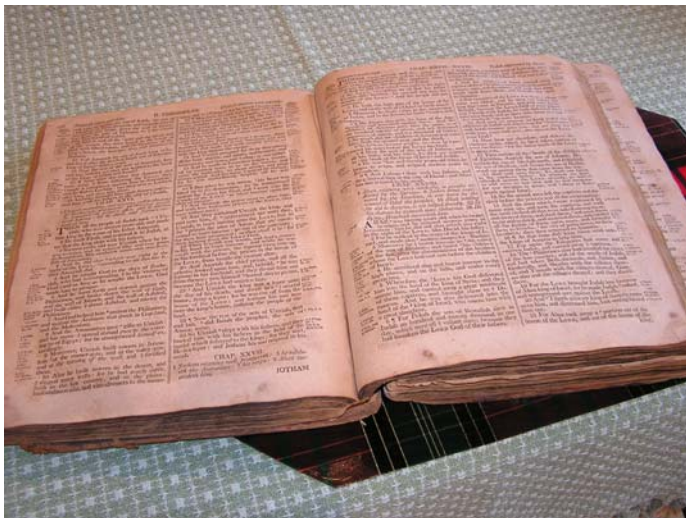
About six weeks before Grandma Daisy passed away (Dad Ross was already deceased) we were home visiting Mother and Dad when she called on the phone and asked me to come over as she had something she wanted to give me.

Upon entering the living room, I saw spread out on the floor newspapers, photos, an old Bible, and other family memorabilia that had been passed on to her and she had cared for. She gestured with her arm that all this was to be mine. She said she had kept it all during her lifetime and was now turning it over to me for safekeeping.

I don't know how long we sat together as she identified the people in the pictures for me to write on the back and noted newspaper articles that contained obituaries or special notices. She placed in my hands the family Bible in which births and marriages had been recorded dating back to the Revolutionary War era.

We talked about her parents and her Revolutionary War ancestor, Griffith Johnson, whose descendants held several family reunions in Snug Harbor.

Those records have helped me build a genealogy for my children and gain an appreciation for those who went before us and pioneered the Western Reserve. I hope I have lived up to her expectations.



Thomas Johnson Bible.



Record of births.



JOHN AND
NANCY



Top: Nancy and John at sorority Rose Dance, 1951.

Bottom: Christmas, 2007

High School

John attended Langley Jr.-Sr. High School in Pittsburgh and I attended Wintersville (O.) High School. Wintersville was still small, so the elementary, junior high, and high school were all in the same building. Being promoted meant moving to the next door in the hall.

I had begun clarinet lessons while in the third grade, so by the time I was in high school I was first chair, following my cousin, Jean. I was involved in all things musical: marching band, orchestra, girls' chorus, church choir, and specialty groups.

Journalism was of special interest to me. I performed a variety of jobs on the school paper, including typing, composition, and duplicating it on a mimeograph machine. In my senior year I became the editor of the annual year book. In reflecting back, it is interesting to note that as each of us Myers cousins became the appropriate age, we were named the editor of one or both of the school publications. My brother, Alan, also drew cartoons for the school paper. While I was in elementary school, he took me into the room where they mimeographed the paper and I actually did smell the ink, so maybe I was attracted to journalism then.

Another interesting note in regards to the year I edited the year book. I was called into the principal's office where he explained to me that the group the year before had gone into debt with their year book and it would be necessary for us to publish our book AND clear their debt. We did it by finding a method of printing that was cheaper because it involved cutting and pasting each page which was then photo-copied. Our book did not have a padded, hard cover, but was one we could be proud of despite the small amount of money with which we had to work. We had an excellent sales staff who went into the community and sold advertisements to supplement our budget. I was voted into the national journalistic honor society, The Quill and Scroll, and also the National Honor Society.

John was elected school president when he was a senior. His school had a very active and accomplished stage crew in which he took an active part. Amazingly, at the same time he was also elected the home room President and the senior class Vice-President. And, of course, he was also involved in the activity that eventually resulted in our meeting in the college swimming pool---the swimming team.



John conducts a meeting as Langley High School President.



Nancy and Ruth at mimeograph machine



Stage Crew

Nancy Myers and John Hopkins

As mentioned earlier, I was born in the home of my parents. It was a happy time, growing up among my extended family. Being born in 1932, I was too young to feel the affects of the Depression, but probably benefitted from my parents' experience of learning how to do without and make do.

John was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the third child of David and Margaret (Perzo) Hopkins. He also was born in 1932, so grew up during the same era though his father was employed by the U.S. government in the railway postal service and had a steady income throughout the Depression.

We met while attending college in Bethany, West Virginia, and, as with my parents, it was love at first sight. I was in the swimming pool during a phys ed class and, as a member of the college swimming team, John came in to do laps. I was engaged to another young man at the time but that was soon taken care of with a "Dear John" letter John wrote on napkins in the college student hangout, the Beehive. I transcribed the letter and mailed it with the engagement ring to Georgia Tech where my now-former fiancé was attending school.

Following a courtship that during the summer necessitated John's occasionally driving from Pittsburgh to Snug Harbor, we were married and moved into what was supposed to be Walter's ham radio shack, but had been taken over by each child as they married. When one couple moved out another moved in. When we moved out to return to Bethany College, Walter stood with his ham radio in hand to finally reclaim his territory.

Upon our return to Bethany, it was necessary for the small school to find accommodations for us as married students. Not only was the school small, but the town only had the basics, so there weren't rental apartments. A solution was found when the college dean offered to convert several rooms for us in the empty V-12 barracks left from the war. A door was cut between two of the apartments, creating one larger apartment. So, we had two kitchens, two bathrooms, and two living rooms/bedrooms.

John and I were both students. Since we were the parents of two little girls, we alternated our classes so that at least one of us would always be home. John worked the 4 to midnight shift at Weirton Steel so I would take the 8 o'clock class, he the 9 o'clock, and we continued through the day in that fashion. We had our large meal at noon and he left for work at 2 or 3 o'clock since it was a good drive to Weirton through the West Virginia hills and one-way tunnels.

We turned the second kitchen into a laundry and it became a very unusual sight, in the middle of campus, to see a line of diapers hanging out to dry. In the winter, we strung a clothesline in the laundry and hung our clothes there. After some months, John was able to purchase a used gas dryer from one of his mill co-workers. We had a wringer washer that we purchased when we knew we were moving from Snug Harbor, so as far as we were concerned we had all the necessities.



The summers were very difficult for me. There was no summer school or other activities on campus, so I was essentially the only one there after John left for work. The loneliness was like a heavy stone around my neck. I find it difficult to think about even now without tears coming to my eyes. Even with my two lovely little girls, each time John walked out the door and got into our old Chevrolet for his trip to work, I felt the weight of loneliness envelop me. On several occasions, I saw my parents walking up the gravel path to our apartment for a visit and I jumped with joy!

I waited up each evening for John to get home. He usually arrived between one or one-thirty a.m. We had a sofa bed so I would be laying in it, listening to the radio—no TV. What a thrill every time he came home!

It was unusual at that time for a husband to pay not only his own way through college, but also to pay for his wife's. I was so blessed to be able to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree along with John.

It is important to note how the older men at the mill where John worked watched over him. They made sure he was able to get his homework done and encouraged him to persevere. Several of them kept in touch with him after his graduation and our move to Ohio.

One morning, when John was rushing to a class after his usual late night at work, he was stopped by his major professor and a gentleman who turned out to be a recruiter from the Columbus, Ohio public schools. There was John, unshaven, tousled hair, in his jeans and a T-shirt, being shanghaied for an interview for a professional position! The recruiter seemed not to mind, though, because men preparing to work in elementary education were a scarce commodity those days. His "pitch" included the dazzling information that teachers in the Columbus Public Schools were able to attend The Ohio State University tuition-free – in return for the Columbus Public Schools providing teaching opportunities for Ohio State's student teachers. That was all we needed to hear. We signed up that very morning and the next portion of our lives together was signed, sealed, and delivered – just like that!

After graduation, we moved to Columbus, Ohio where John attended The Ohio State University graduate school. Over the years, John taught the 5th and 6th grades, moved up to the Central Office of the Columbus Schools, then became the principal of two elementary schools. Sixteen years later he had earned the Masters and Doctorate degrees. We added three more children to the family, two boys and a girl (Christopher, Patrick, and Jennifer).

John's beginning teacher's salary was low, with no income during the summer, so he drove semi-tractors and trailers to supplement his salary (see "John Becomes a Teamster"). Those were difficult days for us, financially. Fortunately for us, we didn't have to pay for any of John's graduate schooling. It was a long process since he taught all day and could only attend classes nights and weekends, thus the sixteen years. Our children grew up with the sounds, late into the night, of typewriter keys slamming against paper as he wrote his many assigned papers.

While completing his doctoral dissertation, John was invited by one of his major professors in Educational Administration to go with him to Indiana University, in Bloomington, Indiana, where he had been named Dean of the School of Education. John was named his Assistant Dean for Administration.

We moved to Bloomington. While at IU, from time to time he was employed by the Department of Education to do consulting jobs for them. One of those consulting assignments resulted in his being hired by a Regional Educational Laboratory in Philadelphia PA, where we have lived for 35 years.

During all this time I was a full-time wife and mother, and raised five perfect children!

Off To The Races or Jail

While John and I were courting, we enjoyed attending stock car races in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. On very rare occasions, John was able to get his father's car, drive over to visit me, and we'd take off for the nearest race.

One Saturday, we were traveling through Wellsburg, W.Va. and I guess were traveling over the speed limit through the small town. We were pulled over by a policeman. Of course, his first question was, "Where do you think you're going? To the races?" And John's answer was, "Yes, sir." A very smart alecky answer, the officer thought, from what looked like a local college kid. So we were told to follow him to the local jail where we would be given a citation for speeding.

After we arrived at the police station, we were told what the fine would be and there's no way we had that much money. So, I had to call Dad to come and bail us out. (How embarrassing for both of us!)

The next thing I knew, John was typing his own arrest record, as he was the only one in the station that could type! They also informed us that since someone was coming with the money for the fine, they wouldn't need to put us in a jail cell, and to make ourselves "comfortable" there in the office.

I could tell Dad had arrived when I heard his cough as he entered the building. I braced myself for a terribly embarrassing situation. But Dad obviously guessed how uncomfortable the situation was for us and just smiled and paid the fine. John assured him he'd repay him and he did, from his salary from the various part-time jobs he held in the summer.

We never did make it to the races.

Clean Clothes From the Post Office

Bethany was a small West Virginia town. In order to reach it, one had to pass through two one-way tunnels on the road that wound its way through the foothills of the Alleghenies.

This was a college town where everyone supported the small college in one way or another: professors, small grocery store, post office, church, public school. The local people were referred to as "townies" by the students.

There was no movie theater or other form of recreation (although I think there may have been a bowling alley). The college hangout/bookstore was called the Beehive and had the only TV on campus. On Tuesday nights, when Milton Berle was on, we all crowded into the corner where the television sat on a shelf mounted onto the wall. The screen was quite small but we all laughed at the weekly antics of Uncle Milt. Any movies we saw were brought in by the college and shown once a month in Convocation Hall. Many of our first dates were at those movies and in the Beehive.

Another facility that was lacking was a laundromat. These were still the days of wringer washers and no dryers. In order to have clean clothes it was necessary for us to mail home our dirty clothes in what was called a laundry box---a box made of some thick substance (plastics were just being developed) that was held shut by heavy straps with metal clasps. We took them to the post office where they were mailed to our mothers who washed and ironed them and then returned them in the same manner.

John had a laundry service that provided weekly clean sheets, pillowcases, and towels. I, on the other hand, had to send my clothes and bedding home in the laundry box. It just occurred to me that that was a good way for my mother to keep track of how often I was changing my sheets. John, on the other hand, used the same bedding week after week and the sheets and towels kept piling up, and his mother never knew.

Only in my advanced years can I appreciate the efforts Mother made, not only in providing me with clean clothes and bedding, but those were the years when she also ironed the bedding.



The Barracks

Family sitting on the porch of the barracks at John's graduation.

Having two small children on a college campus was a novelty during this time so they received much attention from the young students. The second year we were there, the college decided to house several football players in the barracks and we had two of them next door to us. They would stop by (in their red convertible) and ask if they could take our oldest, Kim, to the Beehive for ice cream. Since she was so bright, they also taught her to play several of the game machines that she loved. She was also used in several of the education classes to work through puzzles to demonstrate her high intelligence.

Terri was still a baby and a sound sleeper. We had her crib pushed against the paper thin wall shared with the football players. As she grew and became more aware of her surroundings, we had to move her crib to another part of the room as she was coming out with shocking expletives she had heard through the wall.

A crow seemed to adopt Kim. When she was in our small yard, it would fly down and stay close by her side. When she wasn't in the yard, and if we had the laundry window open, it would fly in and steal some of Terri's diaper pins from the open shelves.

One day Kim went missing. It was a very frightening thing and we were fortunate that with all the students still on campus, there were many people looking for her. She was finally found next door in the boys' empty apartment, asleep on their kitchen floor with her pink blankie, waiting for them to come home.

The barracks were beginning to need maintenance, but the school had had plans from the end of the war to remove them so they weren't prepared to put any money in their upkeep. John resolved a problem with the leaking hot water tank by drilling holes in the floor underneath it so that the water would go through to the ground underneath.

As mentioned previously, John and I were both pursuing degrees in elementary education so had many of the same classes. Most of the time we were able to juggle our schedules so we weren't away from the children at the same time. However, we both needed to take the Senior Seminar to fulfill our graduation requirements. Fortunately, the class was small enough that our suggestion that it meet in our barracks apartment was accepted. For that entire semester we hosted a morning seminar group. One morning, after we had all gathered, the class was interrupted when the floor fell several inches, leaving a wide gap between the bottom of the wall and the floor.

Knowing that the school wouldn't put money into our residence, we lived with the situation and the gap wasn't a problem until winter. Not only did we have some cold breezes blowing in (fortunately it wasn't the side where the girls' room was), we also had a number of unexpected, unwanted visitors---mice coming in to get out of the cold. To help with the problem, we lined a series of mousetraps along the open edge to catch them as they hopped up from the ground. We soon learned that we didn't even need to bait them as they were caught as soon as they attempted entry.

I do not like mice, dead or alive. Sometimes the traps didn't kill the mice that merely got caught by a leg or tail. I remember laying in our hide-away bed about 10 feet away from those that were still alive but couldn't get loose, flipping and flopping, trap included, and I'm holding my hands over my ears or have the radio turned up loud to avoid listening to their struggles. Those were long nights waiting for John to get home from work so he could empty the traps and give me some relief.



Children from town come up on campus to visit Kim and Terri.



Terri gets a bath in "second kitchen" as Kim looks on.

Childbed or Puerperal Fever

A few weeks after Terri was born, I became quite ill. I didn't realize how ill I was until someone knocked on the door of our barracks in Bethany while John was at work. I could barely make it there and felt I was going to faint. Having a new baby and a small two-year old, I just assumed it was fatigue I had been feeling.

I had such intense pain in my abdomen that even to touch it was unbearable. I believe it was the next day, on his way to work, that John took me to Wintersville to see Uncle Donald, my doctor. I waited in his waiting room for more than an hour, pretty much out of it. When I finally got in to see him, he pressed on my belly and I let out a scream that seemed to enable him to immediately diagnose my problem.

He told me I was to go to bed and he'd drop off medication. I was to take it every four hours without fail---day and night -- and he'd stop to see me twice a day. I asked him what was wrong and he said I had childbed fever, and since it was highly contagious I'd be cared for at home.

Since John was at work in Weirton, W.Va., Uncle Donald called Dad to come get me. On our way home he asked what was wrong and I said I had something called childbed fever. He went white and told me this was very serious – that it was what many women used to die from following childbirth, but was unheard of in “these days.”

We got home, Dad whispered to Mother what I had, and I was quickly put to bed. Of course, Kim and Terri were being taken care of by Mother and Terri was a newborn with all that that required. I think I was out of it for some days as all I remember was Dad setting his alarm during the night to get up and give me my meds. Uncle Donald stopped regularly to check on me and always pressed on my belly. Slowly the intense pain diminished and I could gradually get out of bed a few times a day, but only to sit in a chair.

It is only now, writing this, that I fully appreciate the care Mother and Dad gave me during that time. It was probably the first time John and I were really separated, as he had to stay in Bethany to attend classes.

When I was up to it, Dad got a volume from their set of “Harvard Classics” and had me read the essay written by Oliver Wendell Holmes on childbed or puerperal fever. (Oliver Wendell Holmes, “The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever”, Harvard Classics, Vol. 38, part 5.)

Only then did I realize the seriousness of my illness and the blessing of antibiotics that had been developed during the war.

The following is a description of the illness from the Internet: **Childbed fever:** *Fever due to an infection usually of the placental site within the uterus. The fever is also called childbirth fever or puerperal fever. If the infection involves the bloodstream, it constitutes puerperal sepsis. In Latin a “puerpera” is a woman in childbirth since “puer” means child and “parere” means to give birth. The puerperium is the time immediately after the delivery of a baby.*

Before the 19th-century, it turned maternity wards into morgues, but today few pregnant women have even heard of puerperal fever, an aggressive infection of the reproductive system following childbirth. It probably changed the course of English history by killing Jane Seymour, third wife of Henry VIII. It destroyed Isabella Beeton and ruined her husband's life and business. It finished off proto-feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, leaving Mary Shelley motherless.

In the 1700s, when it was known as childbed fever, puerperal fever could claim the lives of as many as 20 per cent of new mothers and would sweep through communities in terrifying epidemics. The infection - most commonly the bacteria staphylococcus and streptococcus - was often carried on the dirty hands and medical instruments of doctors and midwives. It usually occurred up to two weeks after childbirth.

Nancy: Mother and Student



Mother and Dad brought a birthday cake over to me in my dorm room.

It was assumed that I'd attend college after I graduated from high school. In addition, the school I'd attend would be Bethany College in West Virginia, a Disciples of Christ institution. Since Ross' family had become involved with the Cambellite Christian Church (the Disciples of Christ) while living on the hilltop there developed a social and business association with them. Donald was the first in the family to attend, followed by my older brother, Dode. So, I applied and was accepted.

I was assigned to live in Phillips Hall, a girls' dorm. My roommate was from New Jersey and we didn't have much in common as she was from the metropolitan east and I was from the countryside of Ohio.

Mother made matching curtains and bedspread for my side of the room. She even covered a chair from my bedroom at home with coordinating fabric and made a cover for the headboard of the metal bed. Dad made a bulletin board. It was a corner room, so we had two windows that made it bright and airy on the hot days.

My freshman year was one of adjusting to being away from home and on my own. I received \$3 a week from my parents for expenses. I was an average student while taking the typical required courses: Biology, English Lit, French, Psychology, Religion, and Phys Ed.

John and I met during my sophomore year. When Bethany introduced an elementary teaching program, we both became a part of it. Our major professor, Margaret (Maggie) Mathison, had a great influence on us and encouraged both of us in the field. She became more like a friend than our professor (see graduation picture on "The Barracks." Maggie is sitting next to the porch pole on the left.)

We did well in all of our courses once we chose our career paths and had completed the general freshman/sophomore requirements. I enjoyed Child Development, Child Psych, Teaching Methods, etc. They were invaluable while raising our children.

At one time, John and I both waited tables in the dorms to earn extra money. I also worked in the Dean's office doing secretarial work. We both pledged and became members of on-campus fraternal organizations: John, Beta Theta Pi, and Nancy, Alpha Xi Delta. I was elected President of our pledge class and John was his chapter's music leader. He was active in the Men's Chorus of the college and I was part of the local Disciples of Christ Church choir.

John had a unique way of communicating with me when I was in the dorm. He'd stand under my window and give one of his distinctive whistles. It was Romeo and Juliet as I ran to the window to talk with him. The rules were very strict -- boys couldn't enter a girls' dorm and the reverse was enforced for the boys' dorm. There were no cell phones. The only phones were pay phones on each floor.

Maggie recognized our potential and especially encouraged John. He was the only male in all of our classes in a day when men didn't choose elementary education as a vocation.

After we were married, but before we returned to Bethany, we attended The College of Steubenville, a Franciscan college. John was still working during the day so we went to night school and continued taking education courses. They were all transferred when we went back to Bethany. Of the twelve classes I had taken there, I received all As and Bs.

When we returned to Bethany to pursue our last credits towards graduation, Maggie was glad to see us back and approved holding the Senior Seminar in our apartment (see "The Barracks").

We did our student teaching in different schools. I did all of mine at the Bethany Elementary School and John did his in the Steubenville public schools. There were two segments to the student teaching requirement---a three-week and a six-week stint.

The shorter three-week portion, John fulfilled by living in Snug Harbor with my parents while I remained in Bethany and did all of mine. The girls went to Pittsburgh where they were cared for by John's mother. I guess I did O.K., but I was physically "homesick" for my family as I lived in the barracks alone. It was winter and terribly cold. I had to walk from our apartment on campus to the school, several miles away. Living in Snug Harbor, John was still able to travel to the mill after his day of teaching.

By the end of his three-week requirement, we had finished all our other on-campus courses and he only had to serve his six-week's student teaching. We were able to move to Wintersville where we lived in the soon-to-be-demolished Methodist parsonage while he completed that last requirement (see "The Parsonage").

The next move was to Columbus, Ohio into a lovely apartment John found on one of his preliminary trips there---\$90 a month---which I couldn't believe we'd be able to afford!

He graduated, started teaching at Glenmont Elementary School, and began his graduate studies at The Ohio State University. I had a few more credits to complete for my graduation---after all, I had had two babies which threw me a bit behind.

It was arranged that I would complete the remaining few credits by doing an independent study project which I was able to do.

It was a happy day when we traveled back to Bethany for my graduation.



Nancy with Mother, John, and Kim
(I made her coat)
Terri was with a baby-sitter.

What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?



Master's Degree with his parents and daughters.



With Nancy's parents. Notice Mother-Daughter home-sewn dresses!



PhD



Executive Director of Research for Better Schools.

Hindsight, so they say, is 20/20. It is much easier looking back on the road we have traveled than looking ahead. It's only human to want to start out with a job that provides a rich life style. When we were living in Mongolia, the young people there always wanted to start as managers, not realizing that the usual work path is slow and, hopefully, upward. So it was with John and I after we married.

We were still college students when we married. Since it was the rule in our families that once you married you were on your own, financially, John set out to find whatever job he could. His first was working for the Singer Sewing Machine Company. He was given a truck to use, a list of contacts, and sent off to sell and repair as many machines as he could to make "Plan" each week. The truck became our transportation and we'd even go to drive-in movies in it until we bought our first car, which was quite used.

The work with Singer provided us with a good start, but it became difficult for John to convince women to buy a sewing machine he knew they couldn't afford. (That job also made it possible for me to get an electric sewing machine at a good price.) So, it was on to the next.

At that time, the Ohio Valley was a busy industrial area so he next worked at Weirton Steel as a diesel maintenance person, making sure the railway engines were filled with diesel fuel and their filters were clean. This job made it possible for us to return to Bethany. When he moved from the day shift to the evening shift, he could attend classes during the day. He made a good salary and was provided health benefits.

He had a career plan in mind, though, and from that time on, we moved upward---not in salary, but on an upward educational path that would hopefully provide the income necessary to raise and educate our family.

Seventeen years later, many of them financially difficult, John received his PhD degree from The Ohio State University. During those years he progressed from teacher of a 5th and 6th grade combined class to the central office in the Columbus Public Schools, the principal of two elementary schools, back to the central office as the Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel and Health Services, and an Assistant Project Director of Research at The Ohio State University.

During his last year at Ohio State, he was awarded the E.E. Lewis award as the outstanding student in educational administration. It was accompanied by a financial award that helped us during his last semester which the university required you spend full-time on campus and he'd had to resign his position with the Columbus Schools.

Upon receiving the PhD degree, we moved to Bloomington, Indiana where he was named Assistant Professor and Assistant Dean for Administration in the School of Education.

One summer while at IU, John was invited to Washington, D.C. to do consultant work for the Department of Education (see "A Modern Parable").

In 1973 we moved to Doylestown, Pennsylvania. John had been employed by Research for Better Schools, a regional educational laboratory in Philadelphia. He was the Director of Planning and Evaluation until 1979 when he became the Executive Director until his retirement in 1996.

All of this is to say that he didn't start out as a manager, but worked towards the goal, doing whatever was necessary to get there and provide well for his family.



John Becomes a Teamster

During the time John was teaching school, his salary was \$3,250 a year, but that was the school year and paid nothing for us to live on during the summer months.

Never one to leave his family without financial support, he learned that one of the other teachers in his school owned a trucking company. He contacted her, asked for a summer job, was hired, and promptly joined the Teamster's Union, a requirement at the time.

During those summer months, as a vacation-replacement for other truck drivers, he earned more than the entire nine months teaching school. He was able to do this for several summers, driving between Columbus, Cincinnati, and other Ohio cities.

In the mid-60s, a recession hit the country and businesses had to cut back. John was no longer needed to drive the semi-trailer rigs, but the teamsters tried to keep their union members working. If you needed work, you called into their headquarters each morning around 5 a.m. If they had a job, you had work for that day.

He was fairly successful the first summer of call-in employment and got us through an otherwise tough time. This work was often what others didn't want to do and one such job has stayed with me all these years.

A company needed a semi-trailer emptied of rotten potatoes in 100 lb. gunnysack bags. It was a hot summer day in a hot trailer and the stench was awful.

When he arrived home after that day's work, he was covered with the foul odor, but even worse, from lifting those 100 lb. rough bags all day his arms were burned as if they had been burned by fire. I cried when I saw him and tried to relieve his pain by coating them with Vaseline. Fortunately, that kind of job was never repeated.

Communist Cells and the FBI

While undergraduate students at Bethany College, John and I were the only married students living on campus for a year or so.

We returned to Bethany around 1953 to complete our undergraduate degrees in Elementary Education. After a year another couple moved into town, but did not live on campus as we did. They weren't students, but we somehow met and they befriended us, stopping by now and then. They invited us to spend time with them and visit their apartment. Since we were the only married couple on campus, it didn't seem unusual that they pursued our friendship. However, John was working at Weirton Steel on the 4-midnight shift, so going to school and studying didn't leave much time for socializing.

A semester after the couple's arrival, two young men, veterans on the GI bill, arrived on campus as students. They were wonderful men to whom we took a liking and they seemed to reciprocate and visited with us in our apartment frequently. They took one or two classes with John.

During the summer, we would occasionally return to Snug Harbor for a weekend visit with my parents. Once, while there, we read in the Steubenville Herald Star that a couple living in Bethany (their names were given and they were our couple) had been arrested as Communists who were suspected of setting up a local Communist cell among members of the college community. They had been under surveillance by two young FBI agents who were posing as returned veterans on the GI bill. Although the two agents weren't named, we knew they were our friends. That fall, they didn't return to school.

TV Network Exit Pollster

On Election Day in 1960, when Kennedy was running against Nixon, John, along with other Ohio State University students, was hired to conduct exit polls for a consortium of TV news networks. This was a new concept, predicting the outcome of an election before the results were announced.

For future election night coverage, the networks hired their own pollsters. Nevertheless, John was a pioneer in the instant reporting of election results, and was paid for it!

Extremists' Agenda

In 1961, while we lived in Columbus, Ohio John was assigned to be the principal of two elementary schools in the suburbs of the city. Having previously been an elementary teacher he was well liked by the students and, as a principal, it wasn't unusual for the children to knock on the door of his office and ask if he'd come out and play tetherball with them.

The echoes of the Army-McCarthy hearings still rang in many ears, especially those of right-wing extremists. A parent who was a member of the naval community led one such group who were determined to assume control of the school's PTA, influence the curriculum and teaching methods, and subvert the school's influence. When John stood up to them, they added to their list of complaints that he should be dismissed as principal.

We were young---in our late 20s. It was frightening for me as I was aware of the support the John Birch Society enjoyed by the far right, and here they were taking us on, threatening John's professional future and the livelihood for which we had worked so hard. Those were the days when a loyalty oath was required to be signed by all teachers, disavowing membership or sympathy for the Communist Party, which John signed although others refused.

On showdown night at the school, the auditorium of the school was filled with parents, teachers, and, most importantly, the PTA president. She was a young woman, probably a young mother, but had obviously put in many hours rallying support for the young principal. It was probably to become the hallmark of her presidency.

Following the usual business of the board, the motion to dismiss was brought forward and the accuser restated his demands. I think there was some discussion from the floor and among the PTA board members and then the issue was put to a vote. The vote was unanimous in favor of the young principal and this young wife was engulfed with relief.

While writing this, I was looking through John's papers and found his description of the event attached to an application for a scholarship. The following are his words describing the situation.

"During 1961-62, while in my first year as principal of an elementary school and before there was any concern in the school system about extremists, such a group attempted to gain control of the school's PTA, influence the curriculum and teaching methods, and subvert the school's influence in this new residential sub-division in which no other source of leadership had yet developed."

"In the PTA, the extremist group attempted to assume control of the program committee, attempted to pack the nominating committee, and, after a campaign of numerous telephone calls throughout the community, strategy meetings, 'educational' meetings involving a variety of visual aids and filming equipment, an attempt was made ultimately to elect an entire slate of their supporters through a parliamentary floor fight in an auditorium filled with as many sympathetic voices as they could muster."

"Within the school, the extremist group worked in various ways to discourage teaching anything about the United Nations and Communist China. Children brought materials to 'refute' information presented in class. Certain bulletin boards were identified as 'illegally' influencing the minds of the children."

"In approaching this situation, I first involved the professional staff in a probing examination of our curriculum and teaching methods. When thoroughly satisfied that our position was valid professionally, staff representatives and I met with the full PTA executive board for an examination of both sides of the issue. To this the PTA president added her opinion of the 'scurrilous activity' being carried on in the community. The PTA board then joined the professional staff in working actively to inform the community of the issues and to get a large turnout of members at the election meeting. I worked extensively with the relatively inexperienced president in briefing her on parliamentary procedure. I also regularly apprised the central office administrators of the activity in our district and conferred with them periodically on the developing events."

"The slate of officers nominated by the PTA committee was elected. However, to assure all points of view being given consideration in the future, and to maintain our awareness of developing positions, the new PTA president and I appointed persons from the entire range of opinion to positions within the PTA and community advisory structures. This 'co-optation' apparently was successful for the extremist group has not since proposed a slate of candidates for PTA office."

Thus ended our confrontation with the extremists of society. This and the work John did later with the government as a consultant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research and Evaluation in the Health, Education, and Welfare Department of the U.S. Government (HEW) and Executive Director of Research for Better Schools showed that his experience as a principal was a foreshadowing of the program of the extremist conservative right to take over the basic workings of our society.

A Hot Summer in Washington, D.C.



Kim with Senator Hartke.



John, Nancy and the young family with Senator Hartke. Chris was given a flag flown over the Capitol which he presented to his Cub Den in Indiana.

In the summer of 1970 we lived in Washington, D.C.. John was working as a consultant to the Department of Education and it provided the children opportunities that they couldn't experience in the university town of Bloomington, Indiana. Kim was almost 18 and Terri was going on 16. Christopher was 8, Patrick 5, and Jennifer, 3. We lived in SW D.C., a culturally diverse neighborhood that gave the younger children a variety of playmates. The two older girls were able to work in the office of Senator Vance Hartke several days a week.

On the days the girls were home, I was able to do genealogical research in the many repositories filled with the treasures of government records, and private libraries such as that of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

We visited all the Smithsonian museums and many art galleries. Although it was a typical hot and humid summer, we visited most of the historical buildings. One of John's co-workers at the Department of Education lived on a boat on the Potomac and she took us on a cool, evening trip down the river.

One of the favorite things we did, as a family, was to go out to the National Airport (as it was then called) and stand under the landing approach as the huge planes were about to land. The heat of their engines and the compression of the air around us was exhilarating.

During a very hot visit to Mount Vernon we lost Patrick! It was panic time! We all searched and searched. Finally, someone spotted him in the line to tour the house. As we all grabbed and hugged him, he couldn't understand what all the fuss was about. Wasn't this what we were supposed to be doing?

A Modern Parable

Washington is a marvelous place to be during national holidays and 1970 found us there for the 4th of July celebration at the Washington Monument. We decided to provide the children with this once in a lifetime experience.

This was the anti-Vietnam War period, so it was anticipated that there might be demonstrations. When we arrived at the site, John pointed out a place where we would meet in case any of us got separated. Several of us were given specific responsibility for the younger children and were to keep hold of their hands at all times.

We spread our blanket and prepared to watch the fireworks. After some time, we heard explosions coming from a different direction and then saw the crowd turning and running toward us in a panic. We could see clouds of smoke behind them. We jumped up, took hold of the hand of the child for whom we were responsible, and then a terrible, acrid smoke filled our mouths, nostrils, eyes, and lungs. It was tear gas.

Kim remembers a voice repeating over and over, "Walk, don't run." "Walk, don't run," and she consciously paid attention to it.

We did become separated as the thousands of people, not all of them obeying the voice, pushed people aside or knocked them down.

As we each went our separate ways to avoid being trampled, we continued to cough and our eyes teared up making it difficult to see. However, we had a destination in mind and were eventually able to make it there.

As we slowly gathered together once again, we were each thankful for The Plan that the Father of our family had explained to us, giving us a Place to become a family again, if we became separated and were Obedient.

Indeed, it WAS a "once in a lifetime experience."

The Journey

The joy is in the journey. There is a Pennsylvania Dutch saying, “We grow too soon old and too late smart.” Mother used to constantly point out to me that I was wishing my life away when I’d say, “I wish it were time to...” or “I wish it was Christmas.” She noted that as you get older time goes faster and that I should just enjoy the moment.

I didn’t learn that lesson very well and now as I look back over the 56+ years that John and I have been on our wonderful journey, I can truly see that the joy is in the journey. During the 17 years he was in school, I could often be heard saying, “When John gets out of school we’ll.....,” or “When your Dad finishes school.....” In my mind, we’d finally begin living the normal life that I imagined others did.

When that period of our life ended, I soon learned that “normal” had its ups and downs and challenges. The test is how we face the day, or, as is often repeated, “Carpe Diem.”

We are children of parents who emerged from the Great Depression, who had the blessing of being afforded an education---John, not only the first in his family to go beyond high school to graduate from college, but continued on to receive post-graduate degrees, and Nancy, whose husband saw to it that she received a Bachelors of Arts degree.

What’s the old saying? “We had nothing when we were married?” That was certainly true in our case. The only thing we had of value was a gold wedding band that was bought on sale for \$9.54, that I still wear. There’s also a saying, “When you’re young, you’re dumb.” Fortunately for us, we were deeply in love and were able to overcome obstacles that may have ended a marriage for others. There was a Nat King Cole song at the time entitled, “They Tried to Tell Us We’re Too Young” and that was the general feeling about us by our families at the time.

We pulled ourselves up by the bootstraps. John continued school and I learned the ways to stretch a dollar. I’ve frequently heard the remark, “Well, \$3,250 was worth more then.” Yes, it was, but it was still not enough to live on and we had to scramble to make it all work.

I was what is now called “a stay at home Mom.” However, I was able to find some things to do at home to earn a bit here and there. TV phone surveying was one of those jobs I did for a short time.

A bag of chicken backs was cheap and I could make several meals out of them as I cooked and popped the two small pieces of meat off the back bones. Chicken and “yellow” gravy over biscuits is still a memorable meal for some of our children. (And John!)

As previously mentioned, I made the girls’ and my clothes. Dad took me to one of his fabric suppliers to show me how to make drapes, a task which I still do today. Mother taught me how to take worn sheets, cut them down the middle and then sew the stronger edges together making a seam down the middle and making them last twice as long.

When we lived in Dad’s ham radio room, I learned to cook on a two-burner hot plate. When in the barracks, we had an ancient gas stove with no thermostat so I learned to pre-heat the oven and after a while, stick my hand in to see if I thought it was hot enough. I could even bake a pretty good pie. We had hand-me-down furniture, including baby beds from Aunt Edith who also gave me beautiful baby clothing from her children.



John in his mill work clothes.



John's Mother was generous and slipped us \$100 now and then, that she earned waiting tables in an exclusive men's club in Pittsburgh. That, with the "birthday" dollars Dad Ross gave the girls, helped buy some of their necessities. Uncle Donald, our family doctor, gave us cases of baby formula that he received from the salesmen that visited his office. John's mill salary had to pay for the rest, including our tuition, books, and other school expenses.

We have five children, three girls and two boys, spread over 15 years. Three of the births were breech and in those days, were delivered normally, not caesarean.

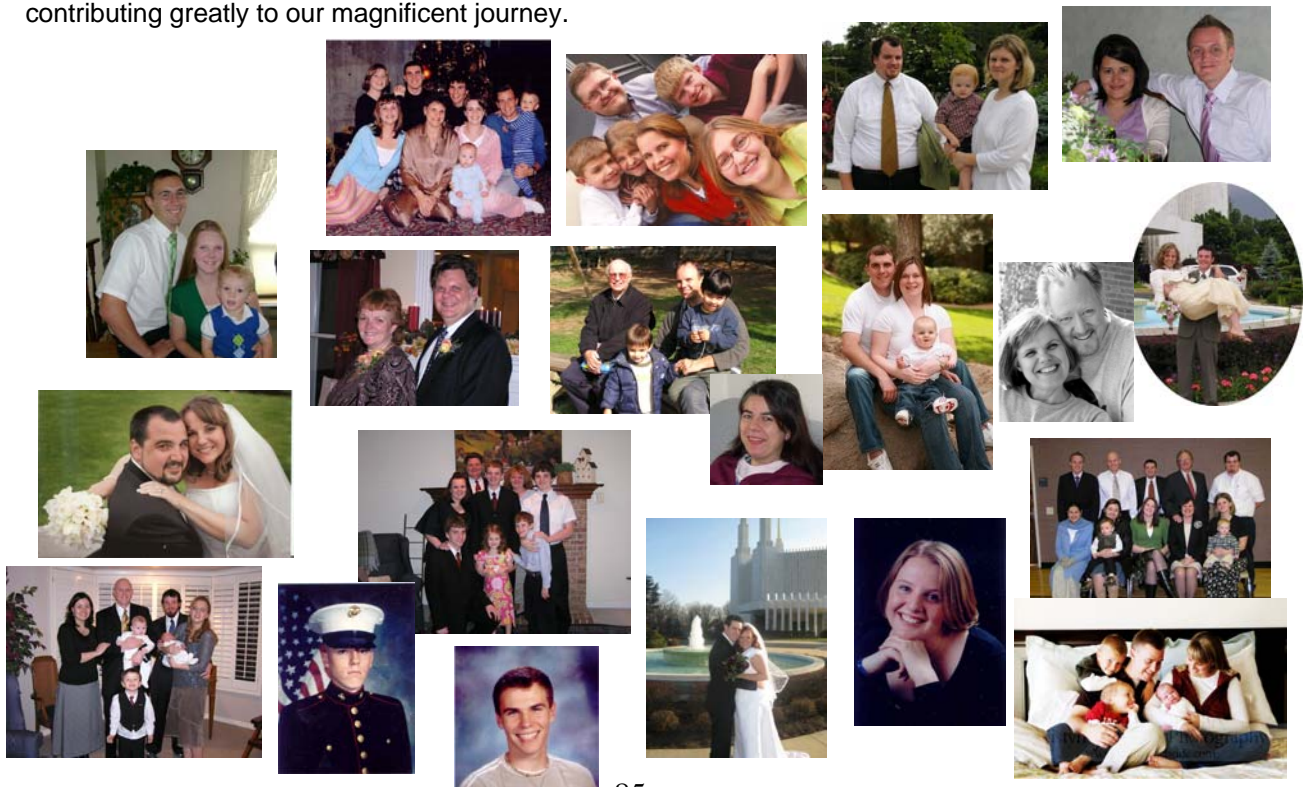
Although I never professionally taught in a public school, I have taught for fifty years in Church, community and volunteer groups, a local college, and English as a Foreign Language in several Mongolian universities.

John and I, separately, became members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon). It made a great impact on our family's lives. The two boys served missions, Christopher in Taiwan and Patrick in Italy, where he still lives. Our oldest daughter, whose husband was tragically killed in an automobile accident in India, is serving a mission in Quito, Ecuador. After John retired, he and I served two missions: Mongolia and Hong Kong. In Mongolia, I used the skills I had learned when a newly-wed, cooking on a two-burner hot plate. In Mongolia I had one burner! (We wrote a book about our experiences there, entitled, "Mongolia, The Circle in the Clouds.")

During the second mission we had humanitarian responsibilities in China, Taiwan, Laos, Viet Nam, Mongolia, and Hong Kong. We traveled in those countries and met with government and education officials in each.

Our family is an International family. We have daughters-in-law and granddaughters-in-law from Nova Scotia, Italy, Mexico, and Brazil. We now number 41 in the family and are still growing.

The Lord has blessed us beyond the imaginations of John and Nancy Hopkins, contributing greatly to our magnificent journey.



Psalm 25

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Shew me thy ways,
O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth and teach
me. Psalm 25: 1, 4, 5

A person's conversion is a sacred experience, one which would often be kept confidential. But since it had such a spiritual and social impact on me and our family, it is important that I include my story in this volume.

I believe I was endowed from the beginning of my life with a spiritual nature.

As noted previously (see "Religion"), I grew up attending Presbyterian and Methodist churches. As my brothers and I were each children we were given a Bible with our name embossed in gold on the front cover. However, the difference between my brothers' and mine was that my Bible had a prominent place on my dresser and I often picked it up to read Psalm 25.

As I matured, I realized the words I was repeating in church each Sunday, contained in the Apostles/Nicene Creed, weren't statements of my intrinsic religious belief. I began leaving out sections that were unacceptable to me.

At college, I was actively involved in the Disciples of Christ Church. Alexander Campbell founded the college and church, and it was the only denomination in the town. I sang each week in the choir and enjoyed the sociability of the other members.

The first Mormon I ever met was John at Bethany. When he arrived in our 8 a.m. Old Testament class, late, I leaned over to a classmate and asked who he was. The reply was, "I don't know his name, but he's a Mormon." On the way back to my dorm following class, I went to the library, took an encyclopedia off one of the shelves, and looked up the topic, "Mormon." As I read the description of this religion, I'd have to say that the few facts the volume spelled out as their doctrine did not impress me.

After John and I became acquainted and were dating, I asked him about his belief. He explained that he didn't really know a lot of the doctrine as he had joined the Church to satisfy the desire of his best friend, who was a member, to baptize someone, having just become a Priest. He said a little about the Word of Wisdom and that the members tithed. So, between the encyclopedia and John's answers, I didn't feel much impressed by the Church's tenets.

After we were married and moved to Columbus, I attended many different churches, sometimes taking our young daughters with me. Still, I didn't find one that I felt was teaching God's true principles. The final experience came when I attended a Presbyterian Church not far from our apartment and was refused the Sacrament. I got up, walked out of the sanctuary, went down to the basement where Sunday School was being held, got Kim and Terri, and walked home.

John was surprised to see me home so soon and I explained to him that I just didn't know what to believe. That night, after putting the girls to bed, I found a quiet place and kneeled down to pray. I wanted and needed guidance from my Heavenly Father.

It was a simple prayer. I told Him that if he really existed and had a Church on the earth that was His, I wanted to belong to it. I had gone to all of these different churches and didn't feel that any of them were the right one. Then I made a deal and "told" Him that the only way I'd know which was His church was that the next minister who knocked on our door would be His. [This was not an unusual thing. Since I had been attending various churches, each minister wanted to add me to his flock and visited me at home.]

The middle of that week, home teachers came---the first home teachers John had ever had. We joke that they were probably trying to locate him so they could take him off the records in Pittsburgh.

We offered them iced tea and they kindly refused. I knew they were the answer to my prayer. They sent full-time missionaries to teach me, and several months later I was baptized.

As they taught me, I felt the spirit and embraced each principle. At one point I asked why these were the exact things that I had been looking for all those years. Elder Jones pointed out that they were taught to me in my pre-mortal life and that I kept searching for them until I finally recognized them when I heard them from the missionaries.

After I was baptized, several families in the Columbus, Ohio Branch embraced and friendshiped us. In addition to the Branch socials, they included us in their family get togethers and supported me in my decision.

What a blessing it is to have the personal knowledge that God hears and answers our prayers.



Soon after I was baptized, with John, the girls, and three missionaries. Elder Western, next to me, baptized me. Elder Jones was taking the picture. The other two were greenies, just arriving in the mission field.



Elder Jones took this of us at Christmas, 1959.



In front of the map in the Asia Area Office. Over John's left shoulder are the countries we served.

The Hong Kong Mission

I feel I should provide a flavor of our retirement years. We served two missions for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We captured the essence of our first mission in the book, "Mongolia, The Circle in the Clouds." The following are excerpts from our journal during our second mission, which we served in Hong Kong. We were called to serve as Asia Area Welfare Agents with two other couples. The countries for which we had oversight of the humanitarian and welfare services were: China, Hong Kong, Laos, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Mongolia. We traveled to these countries each quarter of the year to do training and oversee the Church-sponsored projects that were being directed by senior missionary couples. We also were assigned to a branch in Macau that required us to travel from Hong Kong to Macau every Sunday evening by ferry. We served in Hong Kong from 1999 to January, 2001 when we were transferred back to Mongolia to set up an employment program for unemployed returned missionaries. We were there until October of 2001, because the Area Presidency asked us to extend our two-year mission by another six months.

Countries Served by the Asia Area Office

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Ponape, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, India, and Vietnam.

Star Light

When we were in Mongolia, as I lay in bed each night, I could see a star framed in one of the windowpanes next to me. It was somewhat comforting to know that one of God's beautiful creations had been placed there "to watch over us." At least to me, it was watching over us.

Last night, as we lay down for the first time in our apartment in Hong Kong, I gazed out the bay window in our bedroom and saw that we were surrounded by a different kind of "stars." Dozens of high-rise buildings surround us with their lights twinkling in the night. It took me back to Mongolia and that one heavenly light that said good night to me at the end of each busy day. Now that we're in a city of 6.6 million, living in apartments clinging to sides of the mountains surrounding Victoria Harbor, I find myself being lulled to sleep by the twinkling of the man-made stars that light this city.

Black Flag Typhoon

We've been experiencing a typhoon here in Hong Kong. The winds have been fierce and the rain comes down in torrents. The television stations post various colored flags and numbers as warnings of the strength of the storm. This morning the color was black. We're new here and although we'd seen amber and red, and the numbers 3 and 8, we'd never seen black. As we left [walking] the apartment building we didn't see many other people out and about but there was another Elder leaving at the same time we did. After we had been in the office a short while, other couples began arriving, carrying dripping umbrellas, their clothes wet half way up. Then Anna, one of the Chinese secretaries to the Area Presidency (8 months pregnant), came and asked if we didn't notice the black flag on the TV and didn't we know what that meant? We confessed our ignorance and she pointed out----as SHE stood before us----it meant to seek shelter in a safe place. So, this was our safe place.

[After we learned about typhoons we adjusted to them. During one of the worst, John went to the office and I stayed in our high-rise apartment. I'd rather have been at the office as our building swayed back and forth---our apartment was on the 24th floor of a 30+-story building.]

Receiving Our Hong Kong Visas

[It was necessary for us to leave Hong Kong and return in order for us to receive visas that permitted us to live and work in Hong Kong, so we were taken to Macau for the day. The following is a reflection I had on the way back to Hong Kong.]

It was time for us to return to Hong Kong so we once again went through the lines at immigration and boarded the ferry where Tony had seen that we each had window seats. Several of the men dozed off while the women watched out the windows into the mysterious country of China. As we gazed past her shoreline, I kept thinking of Pearl Buck and her China. She had a home in Bucks Co., Pennsylvania, not far from our home, and we made occasional visits there. That is where she is buried and her simple grave is marked with Chinese characters. I remembered taking one of our sons, Christopher, there when he was doing a school project on China. Years later he went on a mission to Taiwan and here we were in Hong Kong with visits scheduled to Taiwan, interior China, and other countries in southeast Asia.

After docking in Hong Kong, we received the all-important stamp by the Hong Kong immigration officials saying we could legally reside in the city. We could now wear our missionary nametags. We were no longer strangers.

Hong Kong Identity Card

Once we had our visa officially stamped by the immigration department upon our return from Macau, we were ready to go to the registration office to receive our ID cards. After I had my picture taken and was fingerprinted, I was told to take a seat where I'd be interviewed by a policeman. The veteran couples who had been prepping us for the interview, told us the correct answers to the questions were: Yes, Yes, No, Yes, and Yes. The question he asked me was, "Tell me about your apartment." I said, "You want to know about my apartment?" He said, "No, I want to know about your apartment." "My apartment?" I asked again. Slower this time, "No--your em-proy-ment." "Oh, my employment! I'm a missionary." I passed and my paper was stamped. He asked John about McDonalds. It turns out he lives near the Area Office and knew many of us eat at the McDonald's just down the street. So simple a question! Not nearly as complicated as mine.

When we finished and returned to the office, it was time for lunch so we voted to eat at the McDonald's, just a few doors away. So, you see, now that we have our ID cards we're just like all the other card carrying residents of Hong Kong – we eat at McDonald's.

Walking Up to the Asia Area Office From Our Apartment Building

The count that I gave you about the number of steps the couples walk each day to "work" was the route that most of the couples walk. The "ladder" [very steep steps] is the torture that a few others of us take. I made a full count of it this week and there are 244 steps going from our apartment building to the top floor of our office building. There are 182 to the front of 7 Castle Street and another 62 inside the building to our third floor office. For one of the couples it isn't enough to have to struggle up those steps once a day; they go home for lunch! I asked "Why?" and the Elder said, "She does it to keep her girlish figure. I do it because I love her."

A Grandchild Born

While in Vientiane, Laos, we were having breakfast with one of the missionary couples when one of the other senior sisters came running in, waving a piece of paper. It was an e-mail message that our youngest daughter, Jennifer, had had a baby boy and all was well. Her doctors had feared there would be a major birth defect from things they had seen on an ultrasound.



Hanoi, Vietnam

Washington, D.C. is a city of monuments but the one that causes my soul to cry is the Vietnam War Memorial. As we walk down into the earth beside that memorial, our images are reflected against the engraved names of the men and women who died in Vietnam and we feel a heaviness for the loss of their young lives. They died in places foreign, but with names that too soon became familiar to us from the evening TV news broadcasts.

Last week, John and I traveled to Vietnam, north and south; we saw some of those places. As the plane prepared to land in Hanoi, we saw people working in the rice paddies and many thoughts washed over me. As we rode from the airport to Hanoi we were fairly silent with our individual thoughts. Slowly our car became lost in the melee' of bicycles, motorbikes, and pedaled rickshaws. Women carried long poles over their shoulders with baskets full of fruit suspended from each end. Their burdens were heavy but they settled into a rhythmic gait similar to that of a horsewoman, posting to match the gait of her horse---gently bouncing up and down.

Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam

After leaving Hanoi we flew into Than San Nhut airport and Ho Chi Minh City. [This was the main airbase used by the U.S. military during the Viet Nam War. We could still see some of the abandoned buildings lining the runway.] Another set of news clips played across my mind.

After our appointment with several officials and a school director we returned to the hotel. While there we received a phone call from Hong Kong calling us back due to a major earthquake in Taiwan. We had to cancel our plan to fly on to Laos and took a late night flight into Bangkok. We arrived in our room a little after midnight and then up at 6 a.m. for a flight to Hong Kong.

Reflections on Missionary Fields of Service

While we were in the Senior Missionary Training Center before going to Mongolia, we had two sisters in our group who were going to Vietnam. They were nurses going to Ho Chi Minh City.

One day the group of us was sitting around musing about our assignments and why we might have been called to where we were going. Several were humorous, like mine, being threatened to be sent to Outer Mongolia if I didn't behave or another being labeled the "Wild Man of Borneo" and ending up in Indonesia.

We were all brought up short when Maxine... told us the following experience. Her husband was a doctor. As a family they were in South Africa for a number of years. While flying home to the U.S. the pilot announced they were passing over Vietnam where some terrible battles were raging right below them. Maxine said she was so affected by that announcement that she bowed her head and prayed there would be some way she would be able to help the people below. When, many years later, she was called to serve as a Humanitarian Missionary in Vietnam, she knew her prayer had been answered. We all sat silently.

If Today is Monday, It Must be Taiwan

From time to time we do a lot of traveling and it is difficult for me to keep track of which country we are in. On one of those occasions we were visiting Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, Vientiane in Laos, and Kaohsiung, Taichung, and Taipei in Taiwan. We spend about 1½ to 1¾ days in each city and then fly to the next. In addition to meeting with humanitarian couples, we train Regional Welfare Committees and young missionary sisters called MWOAs [Missionaries With Other Assignments] who spend part of their time doing welfare service and training, often having been trained as nurses.

It becomes difficult for me to remember which city/country we are in when speaking or teaching and John gently reminds me when he can tell I am drawing a blank. Smiles break out among members of our audience.

The day before we traveled to Taipei had been our son, Christopher's, 38th birthday. That day we were in Taichung where he spent a large part of his mission. We called to wish him a happy birthday and heard the excitement in his voice when we told him where we were. When we told him in which hotel we were staying, he asked if we could see the mission home/office out of our window. He had lived above the mission office, about a block away, the last four months of his mission.

As he reminisced about his days in Kaohsiung and Taichung, we marveled together that we were now walking in the footsteps that he had trod. Rarely in our lives do we follow in the footsteps of our children---hoping, instead, that if we live a worthy life, they'll tread in ours.

[On another visit to that city, following a huge earthquake, we slept in one of those rooms above the mission office.]

The Terracotta Warriors

We visited several of our couples in the interior of China who were teaching English at universities or private schools. During one of those visits we went to Xi'an where we were able to visit the excavated site of the Terracotta Warriors.

In Xi'an we were made honorary members of Mao's Young Pioneers with red scarves tied around our necks.



The amount of traveling we did during these missions required us to go to the American Consulate in Hong Kong twice to have additional pages placed in our passports.



In some countries we went by the name The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and others Latter-day Saint Charities [LDSC] and others, Deseret International Charities [DIC]. We had different name tags for each, but couldn't wear any in China.



Name cards used in Mongolia.

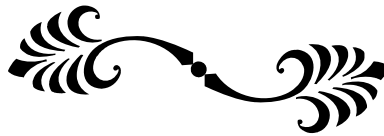


A Private Millennium Moment

[When a young girl, I wondered if I'd still be alive in the year 2000. It never occurred to me to wonder where I'd be. I found myself in Hong Kong with our children gathered in the Salt Lake area having a family reunion that John and I had originally planned to attend. Late on the night of December 31, 1999 I found myself alone. John had gone to bed and I was in our living room feeling lonely during this auspicious occasion.]

I logged on to the Internet in case one of the children happened to log on sometime during the evening so I could share a bit of the evening with them.At about 11:40 I heard an "uh oh" come from the computer and knew that someone in the Griesemer home had logged on. Through ICQ "real time" texting I would be able to "talk" with [that] someone. I asked if anyone was really there and Pat answered back that he had just logged on to check for e-mail messages.

Patrick and I spent the last twenty minutes of the 20th and first few moments of the 21st centuries together, electronically. Oceans apart in this huge world, Patrick and I had a private moment as only a mother and child can.



"We've Been There"

John and I never had the drive to travel as many do. When my parents took vacations on Cape Cod, I stayed home with Grandma Daisy and Dad Ross. So, it is strange as John and I look at the road(s) our lives together have taken.

We now play a fun game that began with an observation we made while watching television news. They were showing an exotic location in the world and we noted that we had been there. It still surprises us when politics on the world stage have television cameras focusing on a location that we have driven by, stood on, or passed daily.

We didn't do "touristy" things on our missions, but found that our missionary responsibilities provided us with more than enough exciting venues to enrich our lives. Add to the missionary years, travels to the British Isles to do genealogical research, Christopher living in Nova Scotia for a few years, and Patrick living in Italy, our lives have been "travel rich" beyond our imaginations.



Mongolia



"The King and I" palace, Thailand.

September 11, 2001

On 9/11, John and I were serving as humanitarian missionaries in Mongolia, having been transferred back there from Hong Kong in January of 2001. It was our custom to turn the radio on to the BBC at night when we were going to bed to catch up on the news of the day. It was no different on the night of September 11 and, following our prayers, we were settling down under our down-filled comforter. As always, I looked out of the window on my side of the bed, at the moon and stars that were shining on that clear night---as they do every night in Mongolia. I knew that same moon would be seen by our family during their night and it was my connection with home.

As we clicked on our small transistor radio, the broadcasters on the BBC sounded confused about news reports they were receiving from the U.S. Something had happened in New York City, but they weren't sure what and were frantically trying to clarify the information coming to them. It was something about a great fire in New York City, but the cause and specific place were unknown. Communication was difficult and scattered reports were coming to them from throughout the world, so it was with difficulty that they were trying to pin down the facts. All they knew for sure was that there was a huge fire and smoke was billowing into the sky on a very sunny morning.

We had a television set in our apartment and, fortunately for us, had arranged to have cable as the local station in Ulaanbaatar only carried CNN news for about an hour in the afternoon, beginning at 3 o'clock.

I was hoping that one of the stations would have something---some pictures, at least, so we could see what was going on. The first station I found that had anything was Chinese and then another that was Russian. Of course, the broadcasts were in those languages, but the pictures were clear and we could see from an aerial view, smoke spreading over Manhattan.

I called to John to come and look and we sat for about a half hour wondering what was happening. Eventually, the BBC was able to confirm the news reports and, while listening to the radio and watching television, we were able to see and hear what all Americans were waking up to and we were going to sleep to.

When we went back to bed, I had a panicky feeling as I knew many of our family members' work required them to fly and these planes had been hijacked and innocent people were in the planes in addition to those in the towers, the Pentagon, and Pennsylvania.

I don't remember if I called or emailed Kim, but I did contact her that night and asked if she knew where everyone was. She took some time chasing down Jessica, Chris, and any others who might be flying and found that all were safe. Relieved, I was able to go back to bed for a short night.

By the next morning, our TV was carrying CNN and all the other missionary couples came to our apartment to see what was taking place in New York City. One of the Elders had been a United Airlines pilot and it hit him pretty hard as there is a strong camaraderie within their profession. He watched a bit of the coverage, and told us the pilots have a silent way of notifying the ground when there is a problem such as this in the cockpit. He soon left the apartment.

Rumors began to fly in our mission. We were told that missionaries in NYC were just about to have a mission conference in one of the towers, but the Elders were late setting up the chairs so all were saved. This later proved to be a false report, even though the Welfare Agent in Hong Kong told us that his son was among those missionaries.

During the rest of the week, as we were out and about Ulaanbaatar, Mongolians, who were strangers, stopped us and told us how sorry they were, some with tears in their eyes. We even received email from some of them that had our address. The outpouring from those wonderful people was heartwarming and made us realize that even in isolated Mongolia, the extent of the horror had reached them and they felt compelled to reach out and comfort us, for most, the only contact they'd ever have with the United States.

We began hearing from former senior missionaries who had returned home, telling us we'd be surprised when we came home; more flags were flying outside of homes and there was an outward expression of patriotism.

We did return home a month later and found that those observations were true. Thus, another war was about to begin.

THROUGH THE YEARS



Bloomington, Indiana 1967
Front: Patrick, Jennifer
Rear: Kim, Terri, Christopher



1977
Rear: Kevan, Terri, Dan, Kim (holding Jessica), Chris, Pat
Front: John, Nancy (holding Michael), Jennifer



Jennifer, H.S. football trainer.



Off to Church in Indiana.



Chris wins Punt, Pass, & Kick.



1994
Standing: Kim, John, Terri
Seated: Pat, Jennifer, Nancy, Chris



Chris directs plays.



1992
Family prepares to meet Pat and Alfonsina in England for reunion.



Cole rides his bike, coast to coast.



Christmas, 1986
Reunion at Snowbird, Utah



1994



Terri physically builds their home in Utah.



Dan takes Kim spelunking.



Pat plays H.S. football.

THE JOURNEY



College



25 years



42 years



34 years



50 years



High School



Beta Theta Pi



Alpha Xi Delta



55 years

MISSIONARIES



A tuk-tuk in Laos



We also sang and danced!



Xian, China



Nancy and Gallia, Mongolia



Nyamdorj and Enkhtsetseg, Mongolia



Terracotta Warriors



Ho Chi Minh City University, Vietnam



All China Women's Federation



John signs an agreement with a university in Vietnam.



Taiwan earthquake



John interviewed on Chongqing, China television.



Tiananmen Square



Mongolian farewell dinner with Baatar's family.

SNUG HARBOR, 2008

Photos by Steven Myers



Ross and Daisy.



Remaining tower.



Walter, Elizabeth, Dode, Alan, Nancy.



Charles, Dorothy, Jean and Jane.



Ralph, Isabelle, Todd, and Gaye.



Dode, Nancy F., Steven, and Tim



John, Marion, Anne, Wm. (Bill), John III (Jack), and Richard.



Donald, Ruby, Cynthia, and David.



Tim and Fern's cottage, built by Dode and Walter.

MYERS ART



DODE & NANCY MYERS
FRONT DOOR IN
SNUG HARBOR
PAINTED BY
J. ROSS MYERS

Dad Ross



1920s/30s club mural.

Masonic Temple, Steubenville, Ohio.



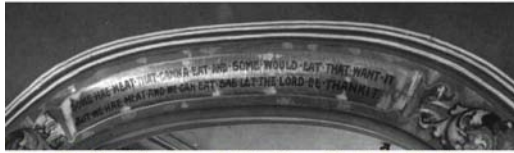
Photo: Winning Color Oil Painting
by John Ross Myers, Jr. at the Marietta School of Art
John Ross, Jr.



Scottish Blessing Over Dining Room Door At Dad Ross & Grandma Daisy's Home in Steubenville, Ohio



Violin Still Life in Oil by John Ross Myers, Jr

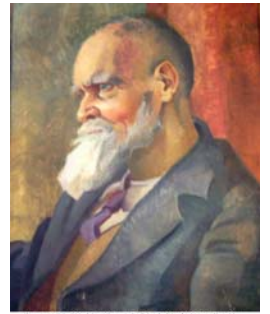


Some Hae Meat That Canna Eat And Some Would Eat That Want It
But We Hae Meat And We Can Eat Sae Let The Lord Be Thankit



Nancy

Marion



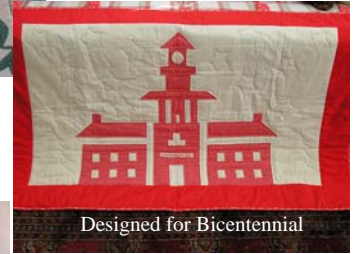
Portrait in Oil of Model at Marietta School of Art by Marion Ross Myers



Ross's ceilings and door moldings.

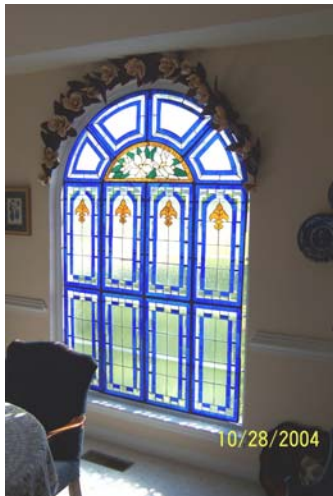


Hand cut, pieced, and quilted.



Designed for Bicentennial

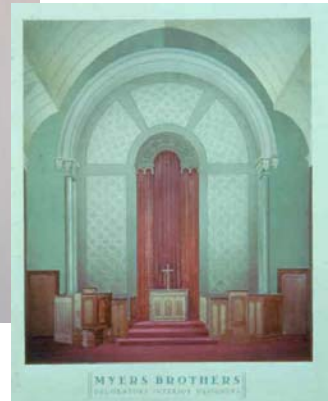
Third generation
Richard
Myers,
son of
John, Jr.
and
Marion.



10/28/2004



Walter



The Snug Harbor Tree

To many, Snug Harbor probably conjures up thoughts of a place where a ship is safely docked. However, in my life, it was the safe haven in which I grew up surrounded by two generations of family. Semi-isolated in the countryside of Ohio, it was an ideal environment in which to raise a family and instill a positive value system.

The tree on the right is our “Snug Harbor Tree,” planted in our front yard a year or so after we moved to Pennsylvania from Indiana.



The tree had been watched over as a tender seedling by Dad and Dode. It had grown from a seed that fell from a parent tree close by, nestling itself into the fertile soil in the nearby creek-bed. When they determined it was large enough to dig up and transport in Dad's trunk, he brought it over and we planted it. It has grown from that small sapling to a large tree and is still growing.

Snug Harbor was filled with many of these red maples as they shaded our homes from the hot and humid summers. Gone unnoticed most of the year, in the Fall they burst into the bright colors of autumn and dressed the Harbor in a festive color intermingled between the beech and sugar maples.

Each Fall as I watch our Snug Harbor tree turn from green to red, I think of the blessings of family and our roots. Roots that were once in the Ohio soil of the Western Reserve and now transferred back to the land of William Penn and the Quakers, and to the Pennsylvania Deutch (Germans), reversing the order that our ancestors came to this country. Ross's family were Germans (later named “Pennsylvania Dutch”) who immigrated through the port of Philadelphia, settling first in the counties north of Bucks County. [The original name was probably Moyer.] Others came through the ports of what was then called New Amsterdam, and settled in the Mohawk Valley of upper New York state. These families eventually moved to central Pennsylvania where they farmed, prospered, and fought in wars to defend their new homes. When the Western Reserve opened they packed up their large families and moved to the area around Fort Steuben on the Ohio River. Among the original settlers of those lands, they traded with Indians and cleared their land of forests of maples—yellow sugar, and red—beech, pine, and the large variety of trees found in the uncleared land broken only by Indian trails, streams, creeks, and rivers. [It is interesting to note that some of Kim's husband's (Dan Griesemer) family took the same route as they immigrated to the United States. His grandmother Cole's family settled in Jefferson County, Ohio, at one time. I (Nancy) went to school in that county with several members of the Cole family.]

Our family, today, like the seeds of the maple that twirl in the Spring winds, have blown across oceans and borders, planted themselves into new soil, grown, put down their roots, blossomed, and leafed to add to the beauty of their surroundings.

The granddaughter to whom these stories were told graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and received an MBA from Brigham Young University. She is presently employed by GE finance as the Global Migration Leader with an expected move to American Express as a Director sometime mid-summer, 2009. She also finds time to feed her secret love by “moonlighting” at a quilt store.

Jessica is currently “writing her life story” through living it. She is married to Steve Adams and they make their home in Salt Lake City, Utah.



An encounter with a sweet Peruvian Hatucha (Grandma), while on a business trip.



Nancy is a support to John as he serves as patriarch of the Philadelphia Stake. She teaches in Relief Society and occasional family history (genealogy) classes. The only international travel they currently do is to visit Patrick and his family in Italy.

They enjoy a comfortable retirement in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and are grateful for the Church activity that keeps them young and lively, although with a bit slower gait. From time to time, she still has the opportunity to read a book to a grandchild or great-grandchild.