

*Many Memories  
Of  
Elenore Dahl McKinin*



**Elenore Dahl McKinin**

I was born on Hastings Street in Detroit, the 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter of Nellie (nee Rehfeldt) and William Frederick Dahl on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, 1912. They named me Elenore Anna Dahl, Elenore being the German spelling of my first name and Anna after my Aunt Anna Rehfeldt (nee Kraft), the wife of Nellie's brother Bud (Charles) Rehfeldt. However when I went to get my birth certificate to get my social security I was shocked when my birth certificate listed my name as Wilhelmina Dahl. I figured Grandma Dahl Henkel was the one that put that name on the birth certificate as that was her first name and I guess she wanted to have a grandchild named after her. (I know full well that my mother Nellie would not have been the one to put Wilhelmina on my birth certificate.)

I had two older sisters at the time of my birth, Mildred Pauline Agnes, born May 3, 1908 and Dorothy born December 19, 1909.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker**



**Dorothy & Mildred Dahl**

There was a sad story Nellie tells about a few months before I was born. Ma says that there was a whole lot of snow on the ground when my dad took off in the evening. Ma, very heavy with child followed Pa to see where he was going and what he was up to. Pa got on a street car so Ma lost track of him then. Dad was often going out leaving Ma alone. She was very upset, wondering where he was going. As we can see later in the story Ma had reason to worry about what Pa was up to.



**1608 Holcomb, Detroit**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, 1913 Ma was getting ready for the home birth of her 4<sup>th</sup> daughter, Marie Henrietta Dahl. We lived at 1608 Holcomb in those days. Pa got dressed up in his Knights of Columbus Uniform, leaving Ma all alone and in labor. While Ma was alone she said she was spreading newspaper on the bed in preparation for the impending birth. Pa got a fit of conscience, turned around and headed back home to be with Ma for the birth. When my little sister Marie was born at 4:30 in the afternoon, she was very tiny, by far the tiniest of our 6 kids. Dad and the doctor was afraid for her life, so they put her in a cigar box and placed her in the warming section of the oven to keep her warm. Mildred, my 5 ½ year old sister told a real cute story about the afternoon my sister Marie was born. After they got Ma and the baby all settled in, Pa told Mildred to make supper for himself and the doctor. So Mildred obliged the best she could – she opened a can of spaghetti and a can of pork and beans and mixed them together, warmed

them up and served them on a plate to Pa and the doctor. Pa chided Mildred for the dinner but the doctor told Pa that was just fine, that she was just a little girl after all.

Ten days later Marie got whooping cough, so Pa took her and me to the Church and had us baptized together as they were afraid Marie might die. They say I walked down the aisle of the Church. Pa had to put his finger down Marie's throat to pull out the phlegm so she wouldn't strangle.

They tell me when Marie was born Pa placed me up against the wall to learn to walk by myself. Just think, that means poor Ma had to carry me all around all the while she was carrying Marie. That must have been really hard on her.

Fifteen months after my sister Marie was born Ma had their first son, William Frederick Dahl Jr. Were mom and dad ever happy to have their first son after having 4 daughters! Ma made no bones about how she felt about having 4 daughters when Marie was delivered. The doctor said to Nellie, "Mrs. Dahl, you have a lovely daughter." Nellie's reply to the doctor's enthusiasm was "Another girl!? Take her away!" So now Nellie and Bill, who wanted a son from the beginning, now had their wish fulfilled. As a result of being the only boy for the next 19 months, Bill was one spoiled little boy. He was the whiner in the family. He would just sit on the steps and whine and whine and whine until he got his way.

Nineteen months later Ma had another boy, Harold Joseph (Shorty) Dahl. He was also a very welcome addition to the family, but on the other hand Ma had enough of having kid after kid, 6 kids in 9 years. She jokingly but resolutely called Shorty "Harold quit" and she meant it.



**Dorothy & Mildred Dahl 1913**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, 1917 I was sitting on our back porch on Kercheval with my bigger sister Dorothy who was reading a book to me. My oldest sister Mildred was upstairs on our part of the house and she came out onto the upper back porch and started shaking out rugs over our heads. The dust and dirt started coming down on us so Dorothy and I left the back porch and went around to the front of the house and sat instead on our Grandma Dahl's front porch where Dorothy continued to read to me. As Dorothy was reading a school friend of hers came down the street on the other side of Kercheval and called to Dorothy. Dorothy ran off the porch and ran right into the street without looking first for traffic. Mr. Zanith's car struck Dorothy, threw her up into the air, she then came down and flew under the wheels of a truck. Dorothy died within 15 minutes of being struck by both vehicles. I was only 5 years old at the time I sat there on the front porch and witnessed the whole thing. I knew Dorothy was badly hurt and went running in between the houses crying out "Doroty hurt, Doroty Hurt!!" My dad was coming home at the time of the accident and when he saw his daughter Dorothy laying mortally wounded in the drug store he thought at first it was his older daughter Mildred.



**Elenore Dahl McKinin – 1916**

Dorothy was laid out in our front parlor on Kercheval. Somewhere in my old pictures I have a picture of my sister Dorothy in the casket. Somehow I have no recollection of Dorothy's funeral – she was laid out in our parlor, but I don't remember it. She was buried in Mt Olivet cemetery in the babies' section on November 13, 1917, my sister Marie's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Dorothy would have been 8 on her next birthday on December 19<sup>th</sup>.



Elenore

Dorothy Mildred

That same year my oldest sister got small pox and was taken away to the hospital for 2 weeks so the rest of the family wouldn't be infected, but after she came home all the rest of us kids except the baby Harold (Shorty) came down with small pox too. I remember my sister Mildred warning me not to scratch the pox marks so I wouldn't get scars. I have a scar on the side of my forehead from one of the pox marks. My sister Marie and my brother Bill also came down with smallpox. Dad was not allowed in the home as he had to work so for several weeks he stayed with his mother Minna Dahl on Kercheval and after work he would come to the back fence and talk to ma over the fence. We lived on Seyburn, where we moved shortly after my sister Dorothy was killed, living there for 6 months until Ma and Pa bought their first home on 1763 Baldwin in Detroit, between Kercheval and St. Paul. Ma and Pa never got the smallpox, and baby Shorty who was always in his crib away from the rest of us kids, never got it either.

As a sequel to Mildred coming home from the hospital after her bout with smallpox - she not only infected the rest of us with small pox, but also while she was in the hospital she used another patient's comb to comb her hair and to all of our horror we later found out the comb was infest with lice nits and Mildred bought home lice and infected some of the other kids. Again Shorty, being an infant, escaped the lice. Grandma Minna Dahl soon heard from her son Bill that his kids now had lice. So she took immediate action.



Elenore, Nellie & Minna Dahl



Bill Dahl Sr (dad)

She took all the kids down to the basement to the laundry tub and washed each one of the kids hair in kerosene! Boy did that ever burn! But it sure did the job! Now all the kids were lice free! But what harsh treatment that was!



**Shorty, Elenore, Bill & Marie – Easter 1920**

Ma and Pa always dressed us kids up nice for Easter. We were really proud of our Easter outfits. Our Canadian cousins from Woodslee would always come and visit us just before Easter. They would go shopping downtown Detroit for new Easter clothes for all the kids. They would then wear the new Easter clothes home and leave us with their oldest clothes that they wore over. We would later bring their old clothes back to them, with Pa saying the old clothes were cast offs from his kids that he was donating to the poor.



**Jenny & Bill Dahl of Canada and their children**

I was real close to my cousins in Woodslee, Canada. Bertha, Beatrice, Ida and Isabelle and their brother Walter were the children of Bill Dahl Jr and his wife Jenny. We would go over to Canada quite often to visit them. Those girls were really handy and quite mechanically inclined. They drove an old model T Ford, with the crank in front. The girls would drive us all over and in order to start the car they would have to stand in front of the car and throw the crank around until the car started. Also that car was always getting flat tires and those girls were a real pro at changing tires. They were

also experts at pitching hay on the farm. Those girls did heavy farm work as well as any boy. In fact those girls referred to their brother Walter as a wimp, saying any one of them could do the farm work better than their brother. All the girls were miffed when Bill Dahl Jr. gave the farm to their only brother Walter as they all felt they were much more capable of running it themselves.

I remember one time Ma and Pa left Marie and me at the Dahl farm for a whole week, picking us up on the following weekend. What a long week that was for us 2 kids. Every night we would sit on the front porch at the farm looking down the road for Pa's car. That was the longest week for us two kids. How we longed to go back home. The worst part of the stay was the bed bugs! Boy, did that farm house ever have the bed bugs. My younger brother Shorty thought at first it was a patterned wallpaper as he studied the bugs, but when he saw they were running all over the wall, he realized it wasn't wallpaper, it was bugs! (We had bedbugs in our home on Baldwin, but no where near the extent that they had them on the farm in Woodslee. We had bedbugs and no sprays in those days, today the people have no bed bugs and cancer from all the bug sprays. That may not have been a good exchange.) And Aunt Jenny put us to work that week too. She would tell us to go out into the field and pick carrots and potatoes and bring them back into the house. Boy, was that ever a long walk into the fields and back! We weren't used to that.

My sister Marie said she must have been a real pain in the neck to Aunt Jenny because she was afraid of everything at the farm. They put Marie up on a horse and she was terrified of the horse and the height. They had a large farm dog that barked at Marie and scared the wits out of her. And the geese also chased Marie, making her run for her life crying. I guess we just weren't country girls at heart!

When I was 6 ½ years old I started first grade at St. Charles Boromeo School at Baldwin and St. Paul on the east side of Detroit, only a block away from our home. I remember one semester we spent the entire semester in the basement of the church as they were doing construction work on the school. I remember one day the nun sent me home to get a broom and dust pan to clean up the room. I guess she sent me as I lived closest to the school.



**Clockwise: Elenore, Eddie, Bill Jr., Ruthie and Marie, 1922**

There was one nun I felt liked me. Her name was Sister Adelbert. She had Mildred before me and she said she liked Mildred. I think she liked me too. One nun was really mean to me. One time I was chewing gum in school so she came up to me and struck me really hard across the mouth.



**St. Charles Borromeo Church & school**

When I first started school at St. Charles the convent was in a really old house in the middle of the next block on Baldwin. We had class one time in that old building. Later on they built a new convent for the nuns.

My Mama used to grow beautiful ferns. She kept them in the living room and in the dining room. She used to have a green thumb when it came to ferns. Mama also always kept a canary. The cage with the canary in it always sat in our kitchen. Mom used to love to hear it sing. Mama always watered the canary and gave it its bird seed regularly. And every night she carefully covered the cage. But we often lost the canary in the winter time due to the cold weather. Most canaries were pure yellow but occasionally one of Ma's canaries had a dark spot on it.

Mama had a set set of recipes for certain days of the week. On Sunday we always had a nice roast right after church with a ½ peck of potatoes. On

Saturday Ma always made a hamburger dinner, usually just hamburgers with lost of potatoes. On Friday Ma always made some kind of fish, usually salmon patties or fried fish. We had fresh vegetables only in the summer time. Otherwise we had canned peas or canned bens all winter long. We almost never had a salad, only regular type of vegetables. We never had spaghetti while we were growing up until my sister Mildred was about 16 years old and had spaghetti at her girl friend's house and she loved it so much that she made it at Ma's house afterwards. Boy, did we all love that spaghetti that we were tasting for the first time in our lives! Later on when we would go to a restaurant, we would order spaghetti off the menu. We never had chili either when I was growing up. I never tasted chili until after I was grown and married. Ma always liked to make a certain kind of cake too – yellow batter with vanilla pudding and bananas in the middle and chocolate icing over the top. A favorite treat Ma would make for us was to take a piece of white bread, smear it with butter and then sprinkle cane sugar all over the top. Marie and I liked that treat so much that we also fed it to our children. Ma used a lot of saltine crackers when we were growing up too. Once in great while she would buy those little round ones too, but mostly she preferred the saltines as we got more of them in the box for the money. She would put cheese , butter and jelly on top of them. She also used peanut butter a lot in those days. Mom also served tomato soup a lot with saltine crackers. Mom never made it with milk, always with water.



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl**

Mom made kidney stew a lot, putting in kidneys, hearts and livers along with potatoes. We also ate fried liver a lot. (Once my sister Marie got really badly poisoned from a piece of liver and got really sick but all the rest of us didn't get sick at all. Whatever the offending agent must have been, it evidently was only in Marie's piece.) We seldom had a chicken for dinner as they were expensive in those days and sometimes you had to pluck all the feathers off the chicken, although you could buy a chicken already plucked, naturally for even more money.

For dessert, Ma made mostly the above mentioned layer cake. It was a very heavy cake, not like the light cakes you make today out of cake mixes. Sometimes she made tapioca pudding. But she never made any pies. We did have lots of store bought cookies for dessert, and sometimes graham crackers. We also had sandwich cookies which usually had chocolate on the top and vanilla on the bottom. Inside they had strawberry or coconut in the middle. We also had ginger snaps sometimes. I remember in colder weather we all sat around the base burner in the kitchen every night and often ate an apple most nights. Pa ate alone, us kids ate at 4:30 pm. After we ate mom wanted us to go upstairs to the bedrooms and get out of her hair for the evening.

In the summer time the sheeny man would come down the alley behind our house and we would buy all kinds of fresh vegetables from him, also corn on the cob and musk melon.

We never had a salad as we know it today. The closest thing we had to a salad was some lettuce cut up with a banana or pear laid on top with cool whip spread over that. Nellie did make a cucumber salad often in the summer time. She would slice up cucumbers and put sugar and vinegar over them. One thing Ma made which was one of my favorites is when she would stuff a celery stick with cream cheese.. She would serve these sticking out of a glass.

Ma kept all the potatoes, onions, carrots, apples, beer, root beer and other such staples in the bedroom off the kitchen. Ma kept the potatoes handy as we had a ½ peck every night, with gravy over them. No matter what kind of meat ma cooked, she always made gravy for the potatoes. Ma had special caps she used to put on the beer bottles in those days. Ma brewed the beer in a big crock in that bedroom off the kitchen.

We bought most of our food stuffs at the Eastern Market. Pa and Ma used to buy a whole keg of herring and a whole wooden box of cheese. Ma and Pa also used to buy shoes for Marie and her brothers at the Eastern Market. Then after we were done shopping at the Eastern Market we would go visit Grandma Rehfeltdt who lived on Antietam which was kitty corner from the Eastern Market. We would also visit Uncle Bud and Aunt Annie who lived next door from Grandma Rehfeltdt. There was no fence between their yards so it was like one big back yard. It almost seemed as though two houses sat on one lot. Grandma Rehfeltdt had a 6 foot high wooden gate in her yard.

Every time she finished supper and did the dishes in good weather she would sit outback in the yard by the wooden gate. We have a picture of her and Uncle Bud sitting in a chair by this wooden fence. And when you had to go to the bathroom it was one long walk to the outhouse at the back of the yard at grandma's house. There was a wooden walk to the outhouse.

Sleeping accommodations were tight. Grandma Pauline slept with Aunt Lizzie. Grown Bill slept with young Bill. Marie slept on a cot in the front room. It was a small 2 bedroom house. I often wondered why they didn't do something to give Marie some privacy, a curtain or something.

Grandma Rehfeldt had a regular kitchen and then she also had a summer kitchen that lead into the main kitchen of the house. Uncle Bill lived with Grandma until she died. He was single all the years he lived with her and supported her and her daughter Lizzie and Lizzie's two kids, Marie and Bill Kraft. After Grandma Rehfeldt died Uncle Bill married for the first time in his life. Lizzie however, did a lot of work. She did a lot of cooking and baking. When I think back I realize that Lizzie had a hard life.



**Marie Kraft Klassen**

My sister Mildred was always good friends with our cousin Marie Kraft, and when I got older I was also close to Marie Kraft too. My Grandma Rehfeldt was a good grandma to us kids. She was friendly and kind and when we came over to her house on Sunday she always put out a nice spread of food for all of us. Grandma's sister Louise Herbertz who never had any children of her own, was not so kind and generous to us. Louise never helped Grandma at all with the Sunday dinner. We knew she was cheap and we came to understand that she was not about to share her candy with us. She would have a bag full of candy and never took out even one piece for us kids. She never gave any of us kids any money either.



**Louise Herbertz grave in Elmwood cemetery, Pauline Rehfeldt's grave is to the right**

Grandma's brother Charles Brueckner was also often over Grandma Rehfeldt's house through the years until his death in about 1921. He lived with his sister Louise Herbertz after the death of her husband. When Louise died she left her brother Charles the sum of \$1.00 Charles was a civil war hero, having served in almost every battle of the civil war that the recruits from Michigan served in. He was wounded in the eye at Manassas and still was not discharged until after the war was over. He was a baggage master for the Michigan Central Railroad for 54 years, both before and after the Civil War until his retirement. But in his later years he was quite a drinker and the family looked down on him because of this. The Detroit historical society publication recorded that he was also a Detroit policeman but was discharged for drinking and for visiting a red light house. He died shortly before Grandma Rehfeldt. Grandma Rehfeldt had another brother Edward Brueckner who in their early years lived on the same street in Detroit, but he must have predeceased her by a number of years as none of the kids every remember seeing him at Grandma Rehfeldt's house. Edward was a Detroit city fireman. One day in cold weather he fought a major fire and got soaked to the bone from the water used to put out the fire. He took a chill, got pneumonia and died.



**Grandma Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt**

Lizzie Rehfeldt married Sonny Kraft and had 2 kids, Marie and Bill. Sonny Kraft was always quite a character. One time he just got out of jail and

walking home from there he stopped by Nellie's house and found that she had no electricity because the Detroit Edison turned the electricity off because Ma couldn't pay the bill. Sonny told the family they didn't have to suffer with no electric, it was a simple problem to remedy. Sonny took a metal slug and put it in the electric meter box and voila! the family had electricity again! Shorty could not believe that Sonny Kraft would do something like that on his way out of jail! Then later Sonny had some kind of bad accident with a milk truck, and he must have been found substantially at fault and it must have been a bad accident as he got 7 ½ years in prison for it. Marie divorced him while he was in prison and later she met and married Mr. Klassen. The Kraft kids were about 15 and 16 years old when Marie married Klassen and then after they married Marie and Klassen had a child of their own.



**Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt**

When I would take the streetcar to visit Grandma Rehfeldt Marie was always very good to me, driving me home afterwards so I wouldn't have to take the streetcar back home.



**Dorothy Dahl, Marie Kraft, and Mildred Dahl Stocker**

When I was in the hospital after John was born Mildred and Marie Kraft visited me and Marie gave me a present of a comb and brush for Christmas. Marie and Mildred went to the nursery and saw my John. Mildred said she

put her hand up to the nursery window close to the baby John's and she said John's hand was as light as her own.



**Bill Dahl Jr.**

Boy, was 1923 a year of tragedy for me and Pa. In March of 1923 my brother Bill was sitting on the upstairs steps and whining and whining and whining that he wanted ice cream. Ma got tired of listening to him and gave me money and told me to go to the corner grocery store and buy ice cream cones. The corner store was right on the corner, on the same side of the street as our house, one did not have to cross any streets to get there. But to this day I still do not understand why ma sent me out there alone as it was dark out when I went there. All of us kids just came home from the show and we were safe inside the house. I made it to the store without incident and bought the ice cream and candy. Then on my way back home a black man grabbed me from behind, dragged me with my feet straight out between the houses past my house but close to my home and into the alley. Afterwards he told me to go back the way I came, but I was so frightened that as soon as I came to our gate I opened it and ran right in and to the back door of our house. The back door was locked so I had to bang and holler for Ma to open the door and let me in. I ran home to Ma and told her what happened. Pa was not home. He was out, probably with his girlfriend, Edna.



**Elenore Dahl McKinin**

Ma tried her best to take care of me and when Pa came home he took me to the hospital for treatment and then at midnight the police were called. The man was never caught. There were no black men in our neighborhood in those days but because they waited over 3 hours before calling the police he slipped away. They had me view pictures of criminals but I was never able to pick him out of the pictures. John was meant to be in God's scheme of things because despite all precautions John was born on December 23, 1924. Grandma Rehfeldt paid for me to have a private room in the hospital.



**Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt**



**John, Elenore, Judy & Virginia**

I never got to see my baby. They kept me away from him. I left the hospital and he remained there. Dad took me to St. Vincent De Paul and we signed papers for this society to take custody of John. Much later I learned my baby spent a whole year in Women's hospital before he was put into foster care with Mrs. Parker. When they tried to remove John from her care she disappeared with John and remained undetected until John started school. She called John Vincent de Paul Parker. The St Vincent de Paul society put out a notice that John was absconded with when he was 5 years old. A school reported that John had been enrolled there and the Society immediately went to the school and removed him from the classroom. John asked that he be allowed to go home and say goodbye to his mother and to pick up his clothes and toys. They refused to allow him to go back home. They put him in a car and drove him to Newport, Michigan where he was placed in a foster home with 4 other foster children. This home was right on Lake Erie and John said in warm weather the foster mother would give them a bar of soap and tell them to jump into the lake and take a bath. All 4 boys would jump off the porch and spring into the lake. John said when he first got there he was so terribly scared. The new foster mother put him on her lap and told him he came from a very fine white family and that they couldn't keep him.

When he was 11 years old the grocer keeper's daughter got sweet on John. John had no interest in this girl but never the less the grocer freaked out over his daughter's romantic feelings and demanded that John be removed from the community. Believe it or not, St Vincent de Paul actually removed John from this placement and brought him back to Detroit. He lived right behind Nellie Dahl but neither was aware of the other's existence. John saw Uncle Frank's bar and he wondered if Frank was his Uncle but he never had the nerve to walk in and talk to Frank.

John's last placement was with an unkind family. John lived on Holcomb St in Detroit and was very close to his maternal grandmother Nellie Dahl. John said he used to walk to school in order to save the 10 or 15 cents which he used to buy donuts. John lived on the north side of Gratiot and Uncle Frank and his tavern was on the south side of Gratiot very close to where John caught the street car to go to school (or should have caught the streetcar when he bought donuts instead.) The foster father was especially unkind and was confrontational with John as he entered his teenage years. At age 15 John had enough of this family. He walked out and hit the road south. He walked past his old home at Newport and just kept walking right out of Michigan along Fort street. He ended up in Indiana. He cut his hand badly and went to a colored gas station owner and asked where he could get his hand treated without being asked a lot of questions. He directed John toward a colored doctor. The doctor asked John how old he was. He lied and said he was 18. The doctor said he didn't believe him, but if he was 18 the best place for him was in the service as that was the best place for a biracial person to get ahead in life. He took John down to the recruiting station and got him signed up. John then went to boot camp and while there a priest from St. Vincent de Paul came and looked over the boys and told the sergeant that John was one of theirs. He allowed John to stay in the service but being they were told John was only 15 he was not allowed to be shipped overseas until he was over 18.

John later was stationed in France where he met and married Virginia. Virginia was a very good wife for John and they have had many good and happy years together. Virginia also was in the service and so they had a good double income for all of their earning years and a double pension when they retired.

I never knew where my son was or who was caring for him. Every year on his birthday I would cry and cry and pray fervently that he was having a good life.

The same year that John was born dad also got a shock when his girlfriend Edna told him she was going to have his child. Dad's child was also born this same year and dad also named this second son John. Mildred said that right after dad disappeared she went to visit dad's son John who was living in a boarding house. She said the boy looked quite sickly. That was the only contact our family had with that boy. We do not know what happened to him after that.



**Ivy Hudson's house next door to Nellie on Baldwin**

When I remember back on those days I realized that we never had a friend over our house for dinner and we never stayed over a friend's house either. And we never had a friend sleep over at our house and I never slept over any of my friends' houses, although my sister Marie said she used to sleep a few times over her friend Ivy Hudson's house. (The Hudsons were our next door neighbors).



**our house at 1763 Baldwin in Detroit**



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl**

Ma did try several times to make home made root beer and regular beer. As those days were the Prohibition days Pa tried to make hard liquor. What he did try to make didn't last long, I guess it was unstable as P was just experimenting with ingredients in those days. I remember big trucks coming to our home on Baldwin and delivering the ingredients for Pa to make hard liquor and beer. Pa was hoping to make a good batch of the stuff and sell it. But he never sold any as his product was never that good. I remember in those days Pa used to send me to the store to buy malt or hops for his brewery experiments.

Our dishes were every day sort of porcelain – heavy, white with circular type edges on them.



**Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel**

Grandma Minna Henkel used to make a huge meal every Sunday just in case company would show up. Eddie said if no one showed for Sunday dinner Grandma would make him eat that dinner the entire week until all the food was gone. One time I remember that Pa and Ma and us kids were invited to Grandma Henkel's house at Helen and Lafayette in Detroit for Sunday dinner and for some reason we didn't go that day. Then the next day Grandma Henkel came walking down the street on Baldwin with two big shopping bags full of the left over food. I remember my mom looking out the window and seeing Grandma Henkel coming down the street laden with all that food. Nellie's response was, "Here comes old lady Dahl!". (Little

did ma stop and think that she was going to become the next old lady Dahl herself!).



**Clara Dahl, Minna Dahl Henkel and Robert Henkel Jr 1906**

Grandma Henkel was a really good cook. Every Sunday afternoon she would make a big dinner in case company dropped in. She made a hot potato salad, which we called German potato salad, which was wonderful. It had a slightly sour taste to it and was sweet and sour with some bacon and onion in it. She also made a layer spice cake which was delicious.



**Elenore, Nellie and Minna on Belle Isle – 1928**

My younger sister Marie talks about being invited by Grandma Henkel to the German Arbeiter club picnic on Belle Isle in the summertime. Marie said she and our brothers had a wonderful time at those picnics with lots of picnic food and all the ice cream a kid could eat. For some reason I don't ever remember being at one of those picnics.



**Marie Dahl Bender & Elenore Dahl McKinin**

When I was 10 years old I made my first Holy Communion at St. Charles Borromeo Church, but we were unable to make our confirmation that year as there was no bishop available. So the next year my little sister Marie made her first Holy Communion and also her confirmation at the same time. I was also confirmed with her on the same day. We were dressed so beautifully for our confirmation that day – beautiful white dresses, white shoes, stockings and gloves and a white purse to match. And in our hair was a beautiful big white bow which was the height of fashion in those days. Ma sure dressed us up beautifully for this occasion.



**Shorty, Marie, Nellie and Bill Jr.**



**Shorty and Marie Dahl**

My brothers Bill and Shorty were also dressed up real sharp for their first Holy Communion and Confirmation. They had fresh, professional looking haircuts. Pa always cut their hair with a pair of shears. I have those shears with me at the cottage today. They wore navy suits with white collars which was the standard fashion for the boys in those days. We always dressed up really nice for church in those days, always a nice dress and the boys in their Sunday best. Not like today with kids coming to church in baggy jeans and tee shirts.

Ma and Pa never bought the boys guns for Christmas. Every Christmas the boys would get a horn or a bugle, but never a gun. When the boys would play cowboys with one another, they would use their index finger and thumb to shoot with, pretending it was a gun. I remember getting a doll in a shoe box for Christmas. How I loved that doll. I would play with it for hours on end, decorating the edge of the shoe box with lace and dressing up the doll in doll clothes. I played dolls for hours with the deaf Coonhorst girl who lived several doors down from us. She lived in an upstairs flat in a house owned by her grandparents. I remember the last Christmas we had before Pa disappeared. He gave me and Marie \$20 each to go and buy presents for the whole family. I bought 2 scarves for \$1.95 each, one for my dad and one for

my boyfriend. With the rest of the money Marie and I bought a present for every member of the family. Marie remembers the boys getting better presents through the years than we did, probably because our parents waited so long for a boy that they went overboard with presents when they finally got two of them at the tail end of their family.

We used to wrap all the presents in red and green tissue. It was very thin paper which we tied up with a little bow. We always had a Christmas tree, always a pine tree with large needles. We hung colored glass ornaments on the tree which really looked pretty. We also bought candy canes and hung them on the tree to give it a more festive look. We also made red and green chains out of wrapping paper and strung these chains around the tree. The very last Christmas with dad at home we bought for the very first time one string of colored lights with those bigger bulbs and strung this around the Christmas tree. That sure made the tree look awfully nice.



**Ken, Bob, Sonny, Wm Dahl Sr      top: Nellie, Mildred, Mae Stocker, Minna**

Just before Pa disappeared I remember visiting the Stockers at Christmas time. Mrs. Stocker had a present for almost everyone in my family but not for Nellie or for me. Mae Stocker was mad at me because I broke up with her son Bobby and did not want to have anything more to do with him. She gave Marie her first doll and dad, Bill and Shorty received wrist watches from them. Nellie got nothing and then Mae ran into a bedroom and came out with a freshly wrapped up present for me, but I knew that this was just something she had laying around just in case she needed an extra present and was not really meant for me. Pa was uncomfortable receiving presents from the Stockers as he had nothing for them.



**Top: Dr. Stocker, Marie, Elenore, Bill Jr, Sonny Lower: Kenny, Shorty 6/29**

Pa tried to help Sonny Stocker out by getting him a job at Dodge Main as a pipe fitter. This occurred before Mildred married Sonny. That job didn't last very long as Sonny was let go. One time dad was walking through the plant and saw Sonny sitting down on the job. Pa stopped and said to Sonny, "Get off your ass and get to work!". That was probably Sonny's first job as before that he sat at home in Dr. Stocker's house and drove his mom Mae Stocker where ever she wanted to go. Later Sonny's brother in law Ray Schneider got Sonny a job as a night watchman at the City County Bldg in downtown Detroit. Sonny kept that job until he retired. When Sonny got drafted and went into service in Chicago the city gave Mildred Sonny's job except instead of being a night watchman she was a cleaning lady. Sonny got out of service after a few months as he said he had ulcers and couldn't eat any of the food they served him. After leaving service he took his night watchman job back.



**Sonny in his sailor uniform in World War II**



**Charles Rehfeldt**



**Bill Rehfeldt**



**Nellie Rehfeldt & Bill Dahl Sr.**

I always felt that Pa was far too blunt, just like his mother, Minna Dahl Henkel. I guess it is a German trait. When he didn't like someone he sure let us know how he felt. He liked Ma's brother Bud (Charles) Rehfeldt, but he really disliked her other brother Bill. Bill was about 16 or 17 years old when he met him and pa felt that Bill had a smart mouth.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker**



**Doris Stocker**

Later my sister Mildred went to work in a plastic factory and her daughter Doris stayed at home and kept house. Mildred worked in the plastic factory for maybe about 5 years. After she stayed at home Doris got a job with the IRS and kept it until she retired 17 years later.



**Mildred, Bobby, Nellie, Dr. Stocker**



**Sonny Stocker**

I had problems with Bobby on the trip to visit Pa in Syracuse New York too. Bobby and I were sitting in the back seat when he put his hand on my leg. I

told him in no uncertain terms to get his hand off my leg. Sonny, who was driving the car, got so mad at me for telling Bobby off that he almost pulled over to get mad at me. The Stockers just couldn't accept that I just didn't like Bobby and wanted nothing to do with him. I was so upset with his actions after I told him I wasn't interested in him that I took my professional photographer's picture of the wedding party and cut my picture out of it, throwing away the part that had Bobby in the wedding party. I am so sorry that I destroyed such an important picture! I am trying to find another copy of that picture so I can have another copy of it for myself.

I remember many a time taking my younger sister and two brothers to the show on Saturday and Sunday. It cost 11 cents to get into the show in those days. Pa always gave us the money to go – I guess they just wanted to get us out of their hair for a few hours on the weekends. Shorty was really little in those days. He had no interest in watching those mushy love stories so he would crawl all around under the seats then later would sit in the seat and fall sound asleep and while sleeping he would pee the seat. After the show was over he was still asleep and I remember many a time I would grab him under the arms and drag him out of the show backwards with his britches soaked through with urine. Sometimes when the show was over we would leave the show by the front entrance, then sneak back into the show by the side entrance and see the same show over again. It was always the same show on Saturday and Sunday so the owner's wife would say to us, "Weren't you here yesterday?" We would often see the Sheikh of Arabi and the Perils of Pauline, which was a serial that would always end in the middle right at a cliff hanger and you would have to come back the next week to see how the heroine managed to squeak out of the mortal peril she was always in.

I used to help Ma with the ironing. I would iron a whole huge basket full of ironing and afterwards Ma would give me 15 cents to buy a soda. Nellie used to send the wash out every Monday to a commercial laundry facility. They used to take it out in a big canvas bag. They would bring the damp wash back to Ma on Tuesday. We would then hang the wash in the attic to dry. on Tuesday. Then on Wednesday I would do the ironing all day long. I especially remember ironing my brother's corduroy knickers. We had to iron these pants inside out. I remember Pa's shirts hanging out on the line. Pa's shirts were so beautiful, I used to love to see them hanging there. Dad bought white shirts for work. He also bought white shirts with broad stripes

– some of the shirts had blue, brown or rust colored stripes. Those shirts looked really nice hanging on the line.



**Celia & Frank Dahl**

Ma got me into trouble one time with Pa's brother Frank. For some reason I can't remember any more Ma didn't like Frank very much and one day she spent a lot of time running Frank down in front of me. So when Frank showed up at our house and I came downstairs and saw him there I didn't say hello to him as I was just a kid and didn't know what to do when faced with him knowing Ma didn't like him. Later when I went to visit Uncle Frank on Gratiot upstairs from his saloon with my sister Mildred he threw this up to me, saying, "what are you doing here, slumming?" I felt so bad but I figured he should never have held that against me as I was just a kid when that happened. My brother Bill didn't like Uncle Frank either though. He said when he worked for him at his gas station that Uncle Frank cheated him.



**"Nellie" & Mildred**



**Bill Dahl Jr.**

A funny story about the horse my sister Mildred is holding. This horse was bought by Bill Dahl Jr. of Woodslee, Canada shortly after dad married ma. When ma found out they named the horse "Nellie" she was really upset with them.

When Ma got her inheritance from her mother Pauline Rehfeldt Uncle Frank told Pa that Pa should use all of this money to go into business with Frank.

Evidently neither pa nor ma thought this was a good idea as they never did this. It never would have worked out anyway as the Great Depression hit 3 years later and almost everybody lost everything in the ensuing 13 years.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker**

One hilarious story about Mildred and I walking down Gratiot Ave going to Frank's place. As we were walking Mildred suddenly appeared to be in considerable distress – she had to go big and there was no toilet near by. Being nature was calling in a big way Mildred did what she had to do – she walked into the recess of a store on Gratiot Ave and then right in front of the store's front door she took a big healthy dump! I was so embarrassed I could have died! I often wondered how she got that stuff past her underpants!?



**Marie Bender in front of St. Charles School**

I left St. Charles Boromeo and went to the Van Dyke school starting in the 6 A which was at Van Dyke and Kercheval. Later I went to Eastern High School at Mack and the Grand Boulevard. The Van Dyke school is no longer there. My good friend Mathilda lived right behind the school. She later married Harvey Hintz. (They later got a divorce.) I remember visiting her when she was first married. I thought she was the best cook there was when she made fried pork chops and canned peaches. Her mother, Mrs. La Blanc, took my ma's coat apart and made it over into a coat for me. I was so proud of that coat.

I had another girlfriend named Goldie. I guess she was named that because she had golden colored hair. They lived on Kercheval and her dad raised pigeons.

I had twin girlfriends who had an older sister named Frances. The twin girlfriends were poor so when they showed up one day with new dark red winter coats trimmed in fur I asked them how they got those beautiful coats. They replied they went into a department store, shopped around until they found these sharp looking coats, then took off the raggedy coats they came in with and put the old coats on the hangers and then walked out of the store with the new coats on. I was shocked to hear that they had stolen those coats!

When I read Marie's account of the layout of our house on 1763 Baldwin, she was accurate with one exception, we did have several closets in the upstairs on Baldwin, including one in the hallway. I remember that we had no heat upstairs on Baldwin. All us kids slept up there, Ma and Pa had their bedroom on the first floor. When we would get ready for school in the winter we would all dress in front of the register which was just an opening right above the big base burner in the downstairs. You had to stand at one side of the base burner as it was way too hot to stand right over it. The great big base burner stood in the dining room right next to the stairway leading to the upper floor.

We had a little stove that gave off heat in the kitchen. When we first moved in to Baldwin we had a huge old coal stove with warming ovens overhead in our kitchen. Later on Pa bought Ma a modern new gas stove with a chimney over it venting the fumes to the outside of the house. We also had an ice box in the kitchen on Baldwin. (An ice box was a precursor to the modern day refrigerator. It did not plug into the wall. Instead it was a big, varnished wooden box that had a bog door and a shorter door. It had a little ice door down below. We only had ice on the weekend. The ice man would come holding a 25 lb or a 50 lb chunk of ice in a big ice tong. I think we would order 2 25 lb chunks of ice from him. He would put the ice in a little ice door down below. Below that door their was pan which would catch the water as the ice would melt. Y9ou would have to pull that pan out and empty out the water on a regular basis. Our kitchen was a ni8ce big kitchen. It had lots of room for our nice big kitchen table which had claw legs and a big base in the middle to support the table. It was a big, substantial, heavy wooden table.

Upstairs and downstairs on Baldwin we had gas jets in the wall which you could turn on and light. We never used them. For light there was a light bulb in the hall and Pa rigged up wires coming out of this light and running into my bedroom. All I had was a bare light bulb for illumination. Later on I got a nice little bed side lamp. I was so proud of not only my new little lamp but also how I had fixed up my bedroom. In my bedroom I had nice lace curtains with tie backs on the 2 windows there. I remember proudly ironing them and hanging them up at my windows. I had a nice little vanity and a Morris chair in the corner. It had claw legs and it was upholstered on the seat and arms. It was upholstered in a dark green fabric. This chair originally sat in the living room and later on pa moved it upstairs to my bedroom. I was so happy to get this chair for my very own. I used to like to sit in this chair in my room. with my nice new little lamp on. I shared this room with my older sister Mildred and when she moved out I then shared this room with my baby sister Marie.

All our beds were double beds in those days. Mildred slept in my room and my little sister Marie slept in another bedroom with my 2 brothers Bill and Shorty. Ma used to put the boys and Marie to bed by 4:30 pm on school days and these kids were in no way ready to go to sleep so they would use their bed as a trampoline on many a day. The boys would also jump off the chest of drawers onto the bed. The rollers on the bed made grooves in the floor boards from moving back and forth as a result of all that jumping. The floor boards were not the best of wood, it was softer allowing the rollers to make grooves into the wood. I guess ma preferred the hullabaloo of those young kids to be at a distance from her. Other times the kids spent many an hour in the kitchen playing. We almost never got to go into the parlor at the front of the house unless we had company. After my sister Dorothy was killed by a car her teddy bear sat in the living room on a stool and no one was allowed to touch it. In the parlor we had a Queen of Sheba type chaise with no back on it. We also had two rockers. Earlier we had a sofa which was stuffed in horse hair in those days. There was a sliding door between the living room and the dining room which was kept closed in the winter months to keep the heat from the base burner in the dining room. The only time that sliding door was opened was when we had company. Our player piano stood in our living room. I loved listening to it. None of us was able to play the piano but we had player rolls, you wound up the player piano and then the roll would play until the piano ran down. Our player rolls

contained such songs as “Eena was the Queen of Palestina”, “Yes, we have no bananas” and “It was midnight on the ocean”.

Our bathroom was upstairs in those days. We had a high bath tub that sat on claw legs. I don’t remember if we had hot water from the tap or if we had to pour it in from the stove downstairs. We all took a bath every Saturday. We had no shade at the bathroom window. The bathroom was a big room. It had hooks on all the walls to hang your clothes on. Later on my sisiter Mildred painted all the walls in that bathroom. And Marie remembers that the younger kids had to take a physic every Saturday or Sunday and then pa would give them ice cream as a treat for taking the physic. I don’t remember us older kids having to do that.



**Marie Dahl Bender**

My sister Marie was always the quiet one, always one to do the dishes without complaining. One time I told Marie to do the dishes and then went upstairs to my bedroom. Dad must have heard me say that to Marie because he bounded right up those stairs and told me to get right down there and help Marie with the dishes, which I did. Another time Mildred was told to help Marie with the dishes. So Mildred scraped all the food scraps onto one plate with a fork, and then took the plate and fork out to the garbage container in the alley. Mildred then dumped the scraps, plate, fork and all, into the garbage and kept on going.



### **Mildred Dahl Stocker**

Another time Mildred was told she could not go out that night so she went up to her bedroom and we thought, stayed there. But we soon found out different when we found she had tied her bed sheets together and slid down them out the back window and was free for the evening.

I remember Jefferson Memorial Park which was a the foot of Baldwin on Jefferson Ave. It was a huge park, stretching from Baldwin to Belle Isle. One day, Frances, the twins older sister, talked me into going to the dance hall at Jefferson Memorial Park with her. I was very reluctant to go but she talked me into going. I was only 13 years old at the time and was dressed in black shoes and black heavy stockings, very inappropriate dress for a dance hall. Needless to say no boys asked me to dance with them that day. My sister Mildred's boyfriend, Anthony Funke, spotted me in the dance hall and knew I was Mildred's younger sister, so he came up to me and told me I had no business being there and insisted on walking me all the way home. I knew I was going to get into big trouble for being there, but I got into even more trouble than I thought as my father was furious at me and gave me a strapping. I thought that was excessive punishment for this misdeed.



**Mildred Dahl**

My sister Mildred eloped when she was 16 years old and married an Italian fellow by the name of Anthony Caruso. My pa found out the same afternoon and had the marriage annulled due to Mildred's young age and the fact that he never allowed us to date an Italian boy. I was not overly impressed with Anthony Caruso and felt that it was no big tragedy that my sister didn't remain married to him. She was not heartbroken over the annulment and may have been glad dad did it.

My sister Mildred was not allowed to go out on a date unless I went with her. Mildred was not at all pleased to have her little sister tagging along.

One day she was going out with her friend Antoinette and Ma told me to go with them, which I did. When they got to Vernor Hwy and Baldwin they ditched me by Mildred going one way and Antoinette going another. I didn't know which one to follow so I just sat down on a curb and started to cry, then went home alone.



**Bill Dahl Jr.**

My brother Bill was normally a good kid but one time they came and told Nellie that her Billy was down the alley dead drunk. Some neighborhood kid talked Bill into drinking with him and they must have done a pretty good job of it because they could hardly get Bill back home!



**Pauline Bruckner Rehfeltd**



**Louisa's grave on left, Pauline's on right**

On November 12, 1926 my Grandma Pauline Rehfeltd died in her home on Emily Street in Detroit, very near the Mt. Olivet cemetery. I remember visiting my Grandma Rehfeltd shortly before she died. She was very weak and confined to bed. She died of kidney failure. The undertaker said he drained over 100 lbs of fluid off Grandma Rehfeltd when he laid her out. She lies buried next to her sister Louise Brueckner Schoenau Herbertz in Elmwood cemetery in Detroit. It was from this sister that she inherited

\$33,000 in 1923 when Louise died. Grandma Rehfeldt's husband died in 1896 of gangrene of the leg. He stepped off the roof of a beer garden where he was conducting a band on a Sunday afternoon in May 13, 1896. His leg was shattered in the fall and he refused to let the doctor amputate it. It turned to gangrene and he passed away on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, 1896. He is buried in Trinity Lutheran's cemetery at Mt. Elliott by I 94 next to his oldest son John, a very artistic, very handsome lad who died at the young age of 25. Grandma Rehfeldt had his paintings hanging in her home on Antietam and on Emily street.



**Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt's house on Emily St in Detroit**



**Upper: Fred Meinke, Mr. Bapp Lower: Tillie Meinke, Guy Fontaine, Mrs. Bapp**

Nellie inherited \$3,000 from her mother Pauline Brueckner Rehfeldt when she died in November, 1926. Uncle Frank wanted Pa to use this money to go into business with Uncle Frank. Instead the money was used to build Pa a garage and to paint the entire house inside and out and to wallpaper the interior of the house. A very old man, Mr. Bapp, a good friend of Aunt Tillie Meinke, did all of this work on the house. Pa was never did any work or repairs around the house. The new wallpaper started peeling off from the ceiling and started hanging down. Pa didn't even seem to notice and it sure didn't seem to bother him any. I was ashamed of the appearance of the wallpaper when it started hanging down like that. Pa sure had not interest or talent for being a handy man.

Pa also used the money to sod the front and back yard on Baldwin. No one ever watered it, cut it, fertilized it or took care of it in any way and in a short time later it reverted back to mud. I was so ashamed of our front and back yard and wondered why pa would go to the trouble and expense of sodding the yards and then let it die.

Dad and I used to take a lot of long walks together which I thoroughly enjoyed. Typically we walked down Kercheval to Mt. Elliot, then around the cemetery and on to downtown Detroit. I remember how I enjoyed seeing the downtown lit up at night, especially the Kern clock. We would then usually walk down Lafayette Street home. One time as we were walking down Lafayette Street dad pointed to a home on that street and said one of his girlfriends used to live there.

One time Ma told me to follow dad so I did. He saw that I was following him so he asked me why I was following him and I told him that Ma told me to follow him. So dad and I walked together and when we got to the Delux theatre he paid the 25 cents each and we entered that expensive show together. We sat in the mezzanine and watched "Little Old New York" with Marian Davies.

Dad was the one who took me to get my first pair of glasses and to all my doctor appointments. He was also the one to take me to a movie and a stage show which immediately followed the movie. He showed me how to walk down the aisle as I had a hard time figuring how to walk down those steep aisles.

In fact that is where I saw Liberace for the first time in person playing the piano. Liberace was a real clown, he sat on a stool in front of the piano, spun around on it and said to us that he was going to play some high class music for you.

Dad loved classical music and took us to Belle Isle to the band shell there to listen to the classical music played on a Sunday afternoon. Afterwards dad would drive us home, turn on the radio and we would hear the music played all over again on the radio. Dad also took us to the Fisher theatre downtown Detroit and to the music hall there.

Dad took me to a lot of places. It was he, not mom who I went places with. Mom stayed home. And it was dad, not mom, who seemed to remember our

birthdays. On my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday I remember no one wished me Happy Birthday or gave me anything. Then after dad got home from work he went out to the local drug store and brought back an atomizer from the store as a birthday present for me. That atomizer sat on my dresser for years and years. Dad went a lot of places and did a lot of things with me. He even wrote me postcards and letters from New York. I always felt like I was his favorite.



**Esther Hintz, Elenore Dahl, Nellie Dahl, Minna Dahl Kaiser – 12/25/28**

My girlfriend, Esther Hintz had a brother named Harvey. Harvey really liked me and tried to gain my favor. My dad said to me, “That boy really likes you, be good to him”. The problem was I didn’t like Harvey, he was around me because his sister Esther was my good friend. They had two sisters, Ethyl and Emma. We used Harvey, sad to say, as he would walk with us to the dance, then wait on a milk crate until we came out of the dance, then walk us back home. That way we pretended to be with him, thus placating our parents.

I remember one time I was coming down Baldwin coming home from a date I was on with my girlfriend and one the way home I met up with my dad who was walking home down St. Paul. Dad asked me where I had been and I replied, “Where were you? Every night ma just cries and cries after you leave.” He gave me no answer.



**Mildred & Sonny**



**Mildred & Sonny**



**Elenore Dahl**



**Upper: Nellie, Mildred, Mae & Minna**

My sister Mildred lived with Dr George and Mae Stocker as a live in maid for several years and then on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, 1929 Mildred married Sonny (George) Stocker, their son. It was a grand affair, my sister was dressed in a white gown and veil and Sonny was dressed in tails. My mom and dad were dressed up for the occasion as was my Grandma Minna Dahl. We have pictures of all of us at that wedding. There is an especially beautiful picture of me in my bridesmaid dress at my sister's wedding. I remember being a bit of a brat then too, insisting that I be my sister's maid of honor. Mildred honored my request (demand?) and when I think back, I did have my nerves demanding that of my sister on her wedding day, but in retrospect, it was right for me to be maid of honor rather than some fleeting friend who would soon be out of her life forever. In this way, I was there with my sister and Sonny to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1979. None of her girlhood friends were anywhere to be seen by this time.

Guess who showed up at Mildred's wedding!?! Edna Giesregen! She said that Pa told her that his niece was the one getting married! Mildred said she met Edna's 6 year old son shortly after she got married. She said he was living in a boarding home and that he looked very pale and sickly. She does not know what happened to him after that.



**Nellie Dahl, Mae & Ken Stocker**



**Upper: Mildred, Bob, Nellie, Dr Stocker, Mae Lower: Bill, Shorty, Elenore, Marie, Sonny**



**Ken, Bob & Sonny; Wm Dahl Sr.**



**Top: Dr. Stocker, Marie, Elenore, Bill Jr, Sonny Lower: Kenny, Shorty 6/29**

Right after Mildred and Sonny were married they went on their honeymoon – with everyone from both sides of the family, believe it or not! Ma took me, Marie, Bill and Shorty. Sonny took Mae, Dr. Stocker and Kenny and Bobby. We stayed at Niagara Falls and then went on to visit my Pa in Syracuse, New York where he went as he lost his job in Detroit due to the depression and found an engineering job with Hudson Motor Car Company in Syracuse. He later went to work briefly for the Franklin Motor Car Company. Pa was staying in a boarding house in Syracuse on Onandaga Street with the Ellers.

Later on when my son John found the census records for the Onandaga street address where the Ellers lived it made me wonder if he really lived there or just pretended to live there while we were visiting him as in my memory I do not remember all those people living in that house as the census records showed.

We went on a picnic with Pa in the Adirondack mountains on that trip. It was such beautiful scenery and we all had a wonderful time that day. It was only a long weekend trip. We left home on Thursday and were back home again on Sunday night. All too soon it was time to leave Pa and return to

Detroit. Little did we guess that that was the last time we would ever see Pa again! What a shock that was when he disappeared!

When we got home to Baldwin on Sunday night Ma noticed as soon as she opened the front door that someone had broken into our house. We were too scared to stay in the house that night, so we went and spent the night with Grandma Henkel. After investigating the break in we discovered that someone had broken in through the attic window, and then had gone downstairs to Ma and Pa's bedroom, gone under their bed and stole two bolts of wool or flannel cloth that Pa had bought to have 2 new suits made for himself. I had \$35 sitting out in plain sight on my dresser and no one touched it. Nothing was stolen except the 2 bolts of cloth under Pa's bed. How would a strange burglar even know to go into the house and do nothing but to crawl under the bed to remove two bolts of cloth? Sure sounds like an inside job orchestrated by Pa to me!



**La Pointe home on Baldwin**

The neighbor next door, Mrs. Mabel La Pointe, said her 10 month old baby woke up around midnight and started crying. She said there was one or two men who climbed in through our attic window, ran through the house to Pa's bedroom, took the two bolts of cloth and then bolted out through Pa's bedroom window. Just before they bolted out the neighbor heard the man say, "Let's get the hell out of here!" They parked their car 4 houses down towards Kercheval on the other side of the street on Baldwin. The La Pointes called the police but the burglars were never caught, which is just as well I suppose, as it sure appears to have been an inside job which would have been an awful embarrassment to pa and his helpers, not that they didn't deserve to be caught!



**Minna Dahl, Bob Henkel Jr. , Celia Dahl, George Dahl & Anna Galvin**

Later on we saw dad's half brother Bobby Henkel standing in front of our house looking at the house and we wondered if he was the one who broke in to get Pa's material for him. Bobby was a much younger brother – he as just a few years older than Mildred, having been born in 1904. Bobby and Pa socialized a lot so we felt that maybe Pa put him up to getting the material. And Bobby was a heavy drinker and not a very dependable person so he might have done this for Pa.

Mabel and Johnny La Pointe were our next door neighbors, living just to the north of our house on Baldwin. Mabel moved to Detroit from Saskatchewan just before moving next to us on Baldwin. They had a 10 month old baby and a 2 year old girl named Lucille. I babysat for this family and had earned the \$35 that was sitting on my dresser undisturbed that June night by the burglars.

The La Pointes old father lived upstairs in the same house. Our houses were so close together you felt that you could reach out and touch the house next door. There was only a small patch of mud between the 2 houses. We used to watch the old man walk back and forth in his upstairs rooms. Watching him night after night used to give my sister Marie the willies. What made it even more bizarre feeling was the fact that the old man used to wear a long black overcoat all the time upstairs, even in the summer time. And there was a bridge that went from the second floor in the house into the second floor of the barn behind the house and he used to walk back and forth from the house to the barn. He would come out on the roof of the house on his way to the barn (garage). When Mabel would leave the house she would lock the house door that lead to the barn to keep the old man from leaving out of the house while she was gone. I used to lock the door leading to the upstairs when I babysat the kids downstairs to keep the old man from coming down.



After we got back home Pa wrote me 2 postcards and one letter at the end of July. The letter was dated July 29<sup>th</sup>. That was the last we every heard of Pa. We heard that he also briefly worked for the Franklin Motor Car Company, but due to the deepening depression, he soon lost that job as well. Where he went after that is one of life's greatest mysteries. We have had many guesses where Pa went to but we have no proof of any of our suppositions. He could have driven off one of the mountain passes and died in a car crash and never have been identified as none of his family was with him to miss him when he didn't come home. Or he could have gone to Florida and lived near his brother Frank who remarried after his first wife Celia Chapp Dahl died and moved to Florida with her. His sister Clara often visited Frank in Florida and we wonder if she didn't visit my dad too. Clara would never have told us if she knew where Pa was. Clara never liked my Mama. Clara's husband Ray Fredrick married Clara's best friend, Helen Martin, after Clara died. Clara's friend said she met one of Clara's brothers, she didn't remember the brother's name but she did remember that he had a facial disfiguration due to a mastoid operation (that was our Pa for sure as he was the only brother who had that done). She remembered this as she also had a mastoid operation. She said when she met this brother he was talking of getting married to his girlfriend who lived in Florida.



Clara, Minna, Bob Jr, Bob Sr, Anna



George Dahl Sr



Frank Dahl & wife



Clara & Ray Fredrick



Frank Dahl & Celia Chapp Dahl

Then Pa's brother George Dahl Sr. said that Pa called him all excited and talked about the possibility of going to Gorky, Russia to set up a car plant there. No one knows if he went or not, but the timing was right as that happened in the early 1930s, many men from the Detroit area went there and many did not return. Pa could speak fluent German, which he spoke regularly with his ma Minna Dahl, so he could have moved over into Germany, but we have not had any inkling that that could have happened. Also John Dahl Dale, my son, investigated whether or not Pa ever had a passport and found out that he never applied for one, so it is very doubtful that he ever left the United States.

When Ma lost her home on Baldwin, she only owed about \$1300 on it. It was such a shame that Pa didn't pay off the house with the \$3,000 inheritance that Ma received from her Mom Pauline Rehfeldt, instead of building himself a new garage and wall papering the house with that money. Ma had no place to go so one of Sonny's crippled relatives, Norry Day took Ma and the kids in. While Ma was staying there Edna showed up and asked her, actually, demanded of her to know where Pa was. Mild mannered Ma got so mad at Edna's boldness that she slugged Edna with the back of her arm and sent her flying over the couch! Boy, were we ever proud of Mama! So Edna didn't know where Pa was either. Edna had been romancing Pa before her first child was born in 1924. My brothers Shorty and Bill found letters she wrote to Pa addressed to William F. Hall and delivered to the post office in Centerline by Grandma Henkel's house.

After dad left and disappeared, we were all evicted from that house in August. That was really terrible, all of us kids, all of that furniture and no place to go and no place to put our furniture. Those were really hard times. Just before we were evicted from our house on Baldwin AAA forwarded a letter to Pa at our house. As Pa wasn't here and we didn't know where he was, Mildred opened it and read it. It was from an upstanding widowed woman in Syracuse with 4 children whom Pa had been dating when he lived

there. She was writing to him via AAA as he had disappeared and she liked him and wanted to keep dating him. He had presented himself to her as a single man. When Mildred wrote the woman back and told her Pa was a married man with 6 kids she wrote back apologizing, saying she never would have knowingly dated a married man. So the people in Syracuse also didn't know where Pa was either.



**Pa's car that disappeared from in front of the house**

One day as I went out on a date dad's car was sitting at the curb outside our house, and when I got back from the date the car was no longer there. Dad must have come and took it away during the time I was gone. When I think back it was very odd that dad would leave town and not put his car in the garage to protect it while he was gone. In fact he didn't even park it right in front of our house, but rather he parked it a few houses down the street. It certainly appears as though he parked it there as he intended to sneak back and take it and he didn't want it close enough to the house so we would hear him start it up and drive it away. Also our alley was pure mud and Pa wouldn't have wanted to walk down in all that mud in his good clothes to get the car.

Once before dad parked his car down the street to keep Nellie from detecting that he was driving away because once before she caught him sneaking into the garage and a big row followed. She hollered at him and even swung at him she was so mad. She hit him, but he never, ever hit Nellie. She was the one who did all the hollering and arguing, never Pa. Bill never argued. But his actions were the cause of all the dissention in our household. Pa was always stepping out, gone all evening and we were always left alone.

Nellie saw Pa sneaking into the garage to take his car because our kitchen faced the back yard. There was a wooden walk way between our garage (which was really more like a barn) and our house. She would see him walking along the wooden walk. So now Pa evidently learned not to park the car in the garage if he intended to sneak away. Another thought we had

about Pa parking his car down the street while he was gone to Syracuse – we wondered if he owed money on it and didn't make the payments if the loan company might try to go to his garage and confiscate the car, but then on second thought we were told that Pa paid cash for this car with Grandma Rehfeldt's inheritance. I believe that was Pa's first car. Before that he drove a company car during the day on business. One day a few years before Ma saw Pa driving down Baldwin in the company car with Edna Giesregen in the front seat. Boy, did that ever hurt poor ma. Ma got very hurt and very angry one time when my brother Bill found Edna's picture in our garage where Pa had hidden it. We never could see what Pa saw in Edna. Ma was much prettier than Edna, that's for sure. Edna was homely and very skinny. She had no sex appeal and was cleaning houses for a living. Pa met her at a bus stop. Later on Pa dumped Edna and she showed up at Norrie Day's house looking for him. She got no help from us that day as we couldn't find Pa either.

After Dad disappeared Ma went on welfare with the help of Norrie Day who knew one of the workers there, so mom got preferential treatment. But she still had to sit in the waiting room with all the other poor people. One time Nellie was sitting there waiting to be called by her worker when someone called out "Nellie Dahl". Ma started to get up, then was shocked as a black woman got up answering to Nellie Dahl and went with a worker. Ma was really shocked that a black woman had the same or similar name!



**Nellie Dahl**



**Fred & Tillie Meinke & Guy Fontaine**

Ma was never good at budgeting money. Especially when it came to food. Ma and the boys ate huge amounts of food when the welfare check first was received, and then toward the end of the 2 week period they would have no money and no food. Ma used to cook up a ½ peck of potatoes every supper for 3 people and they would split a whole cake 3 ways, eating the whole cake in a single sitting. Ma's wonderful sister Tillie Rehfeldt Doench Meinke Vandervoort used to come to Ma's rescue on many an occasion.

When Ma had no food and no money Nellie, Marie, Bill and Shorty would walk over 1 mile to Tillie's house. Tillie always fed them a real good meal and then would send them home with bags full of groceries and money for car fare home. Tillie's husband used to tell Tillie that she could give her sister Nellie as many groceries as they could carry home but she was never to give Nellie money as he asserted that Nellie did not know how to handle money properly. The welfare worker tended to agree with his assessment. The welfare stated that ma's handling of the kids constituted "benign neglect". Dad handled all the finances throughout their entire marriage so Ma had no experience with such matters when she was thrust into the position of sole support of the family.



**Elenore, Nellie, Minna Dahl**



**Clara & Elenore**



**Elenore, Eddie, Bill, Ruth, Marie**

When Dad disappeared I think my Grandma Henkel was toying with the idea of taking us kids in but my Aunt Clara told her in no uncertain terms that she was not to take us in or help us out, that she already was helping out her daughter Annie and her kids and was also raising Annie's son Eddie and helping out with Annie's daughter Ruth. So Grandma Henkel never really helped us. She might have loved us kids but she did not like my mom, Nellie, in fact I think she never did like Nellie from the time they were first married. My dad and his mom used to talk for hours to each other in German, a language my Mom did not understand at all, and from time to time Minna would say to Pa "die Nellie" and then Ma knew they were talking about her. Boy, did that every upset ma, make her mad and hurt her feelings.

After Dad left that was the end of school for Mildred, Marie and me. Mildred worked for the Stockers in their house. I lived with Ma at Norrie & Alice Day's house and got a job nearby at the 5 & 10 cent store. It was located on Gratiot near Harper. I took the cross town street car to get there. I was paid \$15 a week. Nellie always took all of my pay, except when I needed stockings or lipstick I would keep \$3 out. I also babysat and out of

those earnings I was able to save \$35.00. Poor Marie didn't live with us anymore. The Stocker's got her a live in babysitting job with Ray and Lorraine Schneider. She took care of the Schneider's kids. Marie was so terribly upset over losing our father, being forced out of school when she loved attending, and on top of it all being forced to live away from the rest of us. Marie cried herself to sleep every night she was so upset over this turn of events in her young life. She loved Pa dearly and missed him so.



**Nativity of Our Lord Church in Detroit**

After Pa disappeared we lost our home on Baldwin so after the move William Jr and Shorty attended the Nativity of Our Lord school in Detroit after we moved from Baldwin. Here is a picture of that Church.



**William Frederick Dahl Jr.**

My brother Bill was sent away to a new deal camp – the Civilian Conservation Corps. While there Bill's foot got crushed. They operated and put a metal plate in his foot which remained there for the rest of his life.

The Schneider job terminated abruptly when Ray got drunk, came home when Lorraine was out in Richmond gambling on the slot machines, and tried to get at little Marie. Marie locked herself in their bathroom and screamed at him to go away. When he tried to break the bathroom door down Marie jumped out the bathroom window and went to the neighbor's house for help. The League of Catholic women found Marie a new nanny job with an unrelated family. Marie, like me, gave all her money to Nellie.

Marie only earned \$5 per week. When Marie worked for Mrs. Maine, Mrs. Maine got tired of seeing Marie dressed in Ivy Hudson's cast offs, so she insisted on saving Marie's money instead of paying her weekly and when she had enough money saved up Mrs. Maine took Marie downtown and bought her a fashionable new dress and coat. Marie was very proud of her new wardrobe and later got married in her new stylish clothes.



**Herman McKinin**

I met Herman McKinin at a dance hall, where many of us met our future spouses in those days, in 1929. We fell in love and were married on February 22, 1930. My sister Marie was so scared when she got married that someday her husband might leave her like Pa left Ma. She prayed and prayed that she was marrying a good man who would always be good to her. Ed was always good to her and to his family, so her prayers were answered. I, however, never had such a fear. I knew right from the start just how much Herman loved me and that he would always feel a deep attachment to me, which he did. All the days of our married life Herman treated me like a queen. He was always so much in love with me and so good to me.

Right after I was married my girlfriend who worked with me begged ma and begged me to spend a weekend with my Grandma Henkel as she met her at my wedding and developed a real fondness for the old girl. That wasn't my idea of a fun way to spend a weekend, but I relented and agreed to go. So after work on Friday we had our little suitcases packed with our overnight clothes and we set off on the streetcar to visit my Grandma Minna Henkel on Helen Street in Detroit. There were no phones in those days so we just landed on her door step on that Friday afternoon. Grandma Henkel was surprised to see us, that was apparent from the look on her face, but she let us in, and then we sat down at the dinner table to eat with her. Grandma Henkel looked up from her plate directly at me and asked boldly and forthrightly, "Whose idea was it to come and visit me?! I know it wasn't

yours!” Boy, was I embarrassed as I knew in my heart that she had just hit the nail on the head! But I didn’t let on that it was all my friend’s idea!



**Elenore & Herman**

We were really poor in those days, which was in the middle of the depression, but we were happy. Ma moved in with us and Herman and I paid to get Ma’s furniture out of Ivory Moving and Storage so we had furniture. Ma had a huge player piano which was also in storage. She was given this piano by a Brueckner relative who was going to California, hoping to get a part in the fledgling movie industry. Ma paid to move that piano a number of times after that but it just got too expensive to keep moving it when she didn’t even have enough money to pay the rent, so in the end she had to abandon that fine piano. On Baldwin we had a lot of fun listening to that player piano playing such songs as “Yes, we have no bananas”, “Eena was the queen of Palastina” and “It was midnight on the ocean, not a street car was in sight, so I jumped into a taxi and rode all day that night”. We would put a roll on, wind it up and let it play.

We were very poor in those depression days. Ma had a coat that was 2 years old. My friend’s mother altered that coat to fit me. She did a wonderful job and I was so proud of my “new” coat.

Herman was born on November 11, 1904 in Erie, Pennsylvania, the son of Marko and Anna Ross McKinin. ( Herman’s Russian name was Ovrampie or Ovrarm, which means Abraham in English). Anna and Marko met and married in Pennsylvania but they were both born and raised in Russia.

Anna was married before to a German man and had a miscarriage on the ship coming to America. The baby was buried at sea. Anna first husband was cruel to her so somehow the marriage terminated and she later married Herman’s father. Herman had an older sister Annie (in Russian her name was Wischinke), younger brothers & sisters, Fred (Viagje in Russian),

Sammy (Samuel in Russian), Mary (Marusha in Russian), Lawrence (Levrin in Russian), Seder (Seder in Russian), Olga (Olga also in Russian), Alice (Nastia in Russia). When Herman was 4 years old his mother returned to Russian with the children for 1 ½ years, living half of the time with her parents, Mr and Mrs Ross and the other half of the time with her husband's parents, Mr & Mrs McKinin. On the way back to America she traveled through German in transit to the Atlantic Ocean and was arrested and put in jail by the Germans as she had very poor eyesight. Shortly afterwards she was released and traveled on to America. Herman learned the Russian language as a child but soon forgot it when he returned to America and spoke English again. Herman's father Marco McKinin worked in the coal mines of Pennsylvania in Russeltown, Pennsylvania. Herman and his brother Fred also worked in the coal mines for a time when they grew up. Herman had a touch of black lung in his older years due to exposure to coal dust in those mines.



**Ann Ross McKinin, Elenore Dahl McKinin & Marianne McKinin De Maria**

Herman left Pennsylvania about 1927 after Annie's husband Mike got a job in Detroit in a factory. Then Mr and Mrs McKinin came to Detroit with the whole family because Mike wrote and told them that Herman, Fred and Sammy could also get a job in the auto factory in Detroit, which they were able to do after moving here. They moved to Casper street in Detroit. Sammy had finished high school and they said he was smart enough to have gone to college but instead he got a job in the car factory in Detroit to support his family.

When I was first married Herman pointed out to me that I was walking somewhat pigeon toed. I was totally unaware that I was doing that until he told me. From that time on I was very conscious of straightening my feet out as I walked.

Prohibition ended right after Herman and I were married. I don't think Pa ever visited a speak easy, at least not on a regular basis. The Dahls of

Detroit and Canada did drink modestly on the farm at Woodslee when we went there to visit as there was no prohibition in Canada, but I never really saw a glass of liquor or beer in anyone's hands when I was a kid. Herman's father, on the other hand did like to drink so I wouldn't have been surprised if he visited a speak easy. My friend Mathilda's dad definitely was a regular customer of a speak easy.

My daughter Marianne was born in August, 1930. Before she was born I was musing over what I wanted to name her if she was a girl. At first I was going to name her Marilyn as I liked that name, but one day while I was on the bus going downtown I saw a bill board with name Marianne on it. I liked that name so much I decided to name my little girl Marianne. When she was born and I told all my husband's relatives what I had named her they were all pleased, saying that I had named my daughter after that side of the family. I was so aggravated that they thought I named her only because I was naming her after their side that for awhile I had wished that I had not called her Marianne. Later on, I chided myself on what a brat I was being thinking like that.



**Marianne McKinin**



**Marianne & Elenore McKinin**



**Herman, Marianne & Elenore**

I had my Marianne in the morning of August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1930 and my oldest sister Mildred had her first child, George Jr in the evening of the same day. Marianne was born at home on Casper Street in Detroit. Herman worked

midnights so when I went into labor Fred went down the street to the drug store and used their phone to call Herman at work to tell him to come back home, that I was in labor. Herman and I didn't have a car in those days so Fred drove Herman to the doctor's office to get him for the delivery. My doctor who had seen me all through my pregnancy was out of town, so somehow Herman managed to find another doctor to come to our home on Casper street. As the doctor walked in the door he said what was all the noise in the house all about. Boy was that front bedroom on Casper ever small – there was only room for a bed, a crate and a chair. Herman helped the doctor deliver Marianne. It was Herman's job to administer the ether so when Herman had to get on the other side of the bed to get out of the doctor's way, he had to crawl over the bed as there was no room to walk around it. There was also no room in this bedroom for a closet and no place to hang clothes. There were only a few hooks on the wall here and there to hang clothes on.



**Dr. George Stocker**



**Dr. George Stocker's home**

My mother Nellie was with my sister Mildred when her son was born, but it was obvious that the boy would soon die so ma did not come to see me and Marianne till 3 days later as she stayed until the baby died, 3 days after he was born. The baby was large and Dr. George Stocker, her father in law was delivering the baby. Dr Stocker used forceps and in doing so he crushed the boy's head, creating fatal brain damage. I was so sad to hear about Mildred's baby from ma.



**Marianne McKinin De Maria**

My daughter Marianne was a very beautiful child, so beautiful in fact that when she was little she had won a runner up prize in a baby photo contest. She was so cute in that picture with her hand on her hip, a scowl on her face and her cabbage roll dinner setting on the running board of Herman's car on a picnic. (We were poor in those days so we had no money to go out and buy special picnic food such as hot dogs and buns, but rather we ate what ever I had fixed for dinner that day.)

One time our little girl must have heard Herman swearing because she was outside on the porch, glaring at some little kid down the block, hollering at her "double bitch!" Boy, did I ever pull her in the house fast!



**Lila Ferrance & Marianne McKinin**

Marianne had a cousin Lila Ferrance that she was close to. The 2 girls often socialized as they were growing up together. We have a really cute picture of Marianne and Lila hugging one another on a picnic. We also have a picture of Marianne and Lila as schoolgirls wearing the outfits their aunt made for them. They were such lovely outfits so we decided to take a picture of the girls in those outfits and send the picture to the aunt who lived in Ohio Lila had an older sister who only lived 3 days after birth. Her name was Priscilla Ferrance. She was born on October 27, 1928 and died on October 31, 1928. She was a full term perfectly formed baby but her mother was unable to deliver her as her head was too big for her mother's pelvis so her brain was damaged, resulting in her death. She lies buried in the baby heaven section of Woodlawn cemetery not too far away from Sammy McKinin, her uncle and Marko and Ann McKinin, her grandparents. She has a little bronze marker on her grave. Her parents were very poor when she died but her mother vowed that her dear little daughter would have a marker on her grave if it was the last thing she did. She kept her promise to little Priscilla.



**Lila Ferrance and Marianne McKinin**



Herman and I had very little money in those early days, but we were happy together and made our own low cost fun. We went on many picnics in those days. I would bring what food I had cooked for a meal at home and we would eat in the outdoor picnic area. We have a real cute picture of Marianne eating a plate of her food on the running board of the car.



**Ann Ross McKinin & Elenore Dahl McKinin**

We took Herman's mother on picnics too. I have a picture of her on one of these picnics with us at the lake. Herman's mother was an intelligent woman. But being she came to America as an adult she was unable to read and write English as she never learned our language in school and Russian has a totally different alphabet, which would make it much harder to bridge from one language into another. Herman's father was also an intelligent man, even more so than his wife. They were both at a linguistic disadvantage, having come to America as adults.

Herman's mother even went back to Russia for awhile when Herman was about 4 years old, but then soon returned to America. Herman had fond

memories of sledding in winter while there. After Herman's mother died in 1941 we were surprised to learn that Herman's mother had been married before, but divorced the first husband as he had been cruel to her. Herman's father was her second husband.

Herman's mother was a wonderful cook. Most of her recipes were solid Russian dishes, which I had learned to cook equally well for my husband and his family. In later years when I came to visit Marie and her family we would go to a Jewish deli and I would always order the Jewish specialty dishes which were the same or similar as our Russian cooking.



**St. Charles Borromeo Church, Detroit**

Herman's family's faith was Russian Orthodox. I was raised Roman Catholic, having attended St. Charles Borromeo school at Baldwin and St. Paul in Detroit. All through the years I would celebrate two Easters – the earlier Catholic Easter and then the Russian Orthodox Easter which occurred a week or two later. We also had different methods of celebrating Christmas, and again we celebrated both sets of holidays.

When we were first married Herman and I moved on Casper in Detroit, where my daughter Marianne was born. I liked that upper flat and was comfortable there. One day Herman was coming home from work and heard the landlady complaining about our little daughter Marianne who was playing in the dirt with her little friend. Herman was very upset about the landlady complaining about our little Marianne and he said no one was going to talk against our little girl, so one day he came home and said we were moving to Tarnow the next day! What a surprise that was! Out of the blue I hear we are moving the next day! In the beginning I hated that house, but we lived there for 7 years and I ended up really liking that place later on. Every place I rented was very clean and free of bed bugs. I was nervous about living in a place where other people lived as I was afraid of what I might get from them if they were dirty. I was really lucky in that regard.

There is one thing I did in my young years that every time I think about what I did I get sick to my stomach. We lived in an upper flat which was really high up off the ground, much higher than most 2<sup>nd</sup> stories today. When I decided to wash the windows, naturally I wanted them clean inside and out, so I would sit on the sill, hang my whole body out of the window, push the window down and wash the outside, then push the one window up, the other down and this way wash both the upper and lower panes. When I think of myself hanging out that window with nothing much to hang onto I get sick. It would have been so easy to have fallen to my death! I recently briefly thought of having Herman do it, but quickly nixed that idea – it would have been every bit as dangerous for him to have done the same thing.

In 1931 my little Marianne learned to walk but she had no shoes as we were very poor in those days and struggling to make ends meet, so I hinted to my family that if they wanted to buy Marianne a Christmas present she sure could use a pair of shoes. Two of our relatives took the hint – Herman's brother Sammy bought Marianne a pair of white leather shoes and my Mama Nellie bought her a pair of black shoes. Ma had just cashed in a set of life insurance policies Pa had taken out on us kids and had used this money to buy Marianne her new shoes. It wasn't much money Ma got for those policies, but it was something. I think Ma got a total of about \$300 for those policies, but I'm not sure. I liked the white shoes better so I asked Ma to trade in the black shoes for some white ones which she did.



**Mae Stocker**

Mrs. Stocker was the one responsible for the fact that Ma took instruction and became Catholic. As a girl ma was Lutheran but Mrs. Stocker took ma to St. Mary's Church in downtown Detroit and introduced her to the priest who gave ma private instruction in the faith. Mrs. Stocker always had one of her boys pick ma up and drive her to St. Mary's and then drive her home again. Bobby and Sonny were Mrs. Stocker's drivers. They didn't work for

a living, they just drove their mom around, usually to Richmond, Michigan to play the slot machines.



**Nellie Dahl**

Ma was taking instruction at St. Mary's at about the same time that my son John was attending Catholic School there. I often wonder if the nuns and priest ever connected up the two Dahl names in their minds or if Ma and John ever passed one another in the hallways.



**Earl & Doris Stocker – 1936**

In 1931 my sister Mildred had her second son, Earl George Stocker. Then one year later she had a daughter, Doris Stocker. Those kids were very cute kids, but oh boy, were they ever full of the dickens! To say they were lively children was to put it mildly.



**Earl Stocker**



**Doris Stocker**

Here are pictures of Earl and Doris in their cowboy outfits, but looking at these pictures and thinking back on those adorable children they were more like a pair of wild Indians than cowboy and cowgirl!



**Sammy & Herman McKinin**

Herman's brother Sammy worked at Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan. Sammy lived with his parents on Casper Street in Detroit in 1933. Sammy was a real good son, he fully supported both his parents, giving them his whole paycheck as Mr. McKinin didn't work anymore as he was in his 70s and couldn't find work. He was a very old 70. When he went on welfare they put Mr. McKinin on WPA despite his age and poor physical condition. Then in 1934 Sammy started getting really tired. Herman and Mike and Fred took Sammy to the Receiving Hospital in Detroit. They couldn't find what was wrong with him and sent him home after a couple of days. Herman and I went down to the hospital to see him while he was there. He then went to Herman's mother's house in the downstairs flat (Herman and I lived in the same house in the upstairs flat). He just laid around on the sofa all the time for several weeks. We then went to Mildred's house and Ray Schneider was there when we told them how sick Sammy was. Ray Schneider came with the doctor, Ray put his overcoat on Sammy and they took him to the U of M hospital in Ann Arbor Michigan. They discovered that Sammy had leukemia. There was nothing they could do for him in those days and a few weeks later Sammy died in this hospital.



**Sammy McKinin**



**Herman McKinin's brother**



**Elenore**

Sammy is buried in Woodlawn cemetery in Royal Oak on Woodward south of 8 Mile Rd. Later on Sammy and Herman's parents were buried in the same cemetery just a few stones away from Sammy in section 17. Sammy is buried just to the east of his parents in the next section. And then just to the east of Sammy in the baby section, Lila's older sister Pricilla M. Ferrance is buried. Pricilla died 3 days after she was born as she was too large to fit through the birth canal so she suffered brain damage from the birth. When Lila was born 2 years later she also had a very rough birth and her arm and shoulder were damaged in the struggle to pull her through the birth canal. Annie and Mike had no more children after Lila.



**Lila Ferrance**

Lila was a very intelligent child. She graduated from college and went into teaching. She later became a school principal. Her parents had a much better standard of living due to Lila's generosity towards them. Later on Lila married.

One time Annie and Mike took their parents, Mr and Mrs McKinin, to Ohio to visit Mrs McKinin's brother Pete and his wife Agnes in Akron. Mr McKinin stayed home so I made my father in law a meat loaf cut up real tiny with carrots, and potatoes and canned peas and tomatoes mashed up. I made a big roaster full for the whole family as there were a lot of kids. My father in law just loved the dinner I made him.



**Herman, Marianne & Elenore McKinin - 1931**

One time Herman and I took Marianne to Pennsylvania and we decided to stop over a few days and visit Pete and Agnes. Marianne was potty trained at that time so I had her in a cute pair of silk panties. She WAS totally potty trained, that is, until she visited at Pete and Agnes' house. When we got there little Marianne threw up and shit all over creating a horrible mess! And in those days Agnes had to wash all her clothes by hand in the bath tub. In spite of Marianne's faux faux we had a good time visiting with them. We especially enjoyed our dinners there as Agnes was a real good cook.



**Marie, Ed, Elsie Daniels**



**Marie Dahl Bender**



**Norman, Edward, Marie**



**Townsend house now this vacant lot**

In 1934 my sister Marie met her husband to be, Edward Bender at Nellie's upstairs flat on Townsend. Ed and his parents and brothers lived downstairs and Ma and the boys lived upstairs. Ed saw me before he met Marie and he said to Nellie what a beautiful woman I was and he'd like to meet me. Nellie told him he was too late, that I was already married to Herman. Ed then asked Nellie if she had any more single daughters and she replied yes, that Marie was a live in nanny but she came home to Nellie one day per week. Well, one day Ed bought a new (used) car and ran in to his mom's house to show his brother Norman his new car. His mother told him Norman was upstairs playing cards with Nellie's sons, Bill and Shorty. Ed ran upstairs to talk to Norman. Marie was on her day off and Ed met her as he ran upstairs. He was so taken by Marie that he forgot all about his new car! He asked Marie for a date and she was too shy and afraid to say yes, but Nellie, kept encouraging Marie to say yes, that he was a fine fellow.

Marie said yes and one week later on February 14, 1934 they went out on their first date together.

One funny incident when Ed was dating Marie. Ed took Marie to see a movie and it turned out that my brothers Bill and Shorty were sitting right behind them in the movie and they razzed Ed and Marie throughout the whole movie.



**Edward Bender**



**Marie Dahl Bender**

Ed asked Marie to marry him 6 weeks later, but Marie held off for 6 months. She was really afraid to get married, thinking that her husband might take off and leave her like Pa did to Ma. Marie prayed really hard that she was marrying the right man, and on 25<sup>th</sup> of August, 1934 they eloped and were married in Our Lady of Sorrows Belgian Catholic Church on the east side of Detroit. The banns of marriage were never posted in Ma's church as the Belgian Catholic was not affiliated with the Roman Catholic. None of Marie's family was at the wedding as were none of Ed's family. They said they were too poor to have a reception, and they both hated telling their parents they were getting married as both of them had been giving their parents part of their wages to help out as this was in the heart of the depression.



**Nancy Bender**



**Marie & Nancy Bender**



**Elizabeth & Henry Bender**

Marie's first child, Nancy Marie Bender was born the following year on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, 1935. She was a cute kid and also smart and lively. Once Marie found out she was pregnant with her first child they let the cat out of the bag, so to speak. At this point they told both families they had married and then went to live with Ed's parents, Elizabeth and Henry Charles Bender. Nancy was born in the Bender's house and they lived there for a short time longer until Marie had enough of living with others and decided that she wanted a place of her own. One fine day Marie put Nancy in the buggy and went looking for a flat to rent. She found one on Crane and shortly afterwards they were living by themselves.

That first Christmas when Marie and Ed were still living with Lizzie and Hank Bender was a disaster of sorts. Herman and I went to visit Ed and Marie and brought them a Christmas present. Ed stayed in the bedroom and never came out during that visit. That was so awkward for Herman, Marie and me. We later found out the problem was that we brought a present along and Ed was so embarrassed that we brought a present and he had nothing to give us that he couldn't face us and stayed hidden. What a shame! After that awkward Christmas that never happened again. The Great Depression was such a hard time that money was so tight that even a cheap gift was hard to come by. Rent was about \$25 a month in 1934 and you could feed a family of 4 for a whole week for \$7. So every penny was worth so much more in those days than it does today. And work was so uncertain and lay offs so frequent. Finding a job was hard enough but so often right after you started the company would cut back and lay you off for months at a time.

Herman got a job at Ford Motor Car company in Dearborn and worked there for seven years. Herman's brother Fred was so jealous of Herman that he kept saying that he would never be able to get ahead in that company as long as Herman was there. Herman got tired of hearing this woeful tale so one day he quit Ford and got a transfer to Chrysler corporation where he worked

until his retirement in 1968. Herman lost 7 years of seniority and resultant benefits by changing car companies due to his brother, but he felt that to get away from all that belly aching it was worth the move. And other than the frequent and long lay offs Herman was content being at Chrysler corporation. Herman was a very respected union Steward and functioned in this position very successfully for many years.



**Michael Bender**



**Marie & Mike**



**Marie, Edward, Mickey & Nancy**

In May, on the 16<sup>th</sup> in 1938 Marie's second child, Michael Edward Bender was born. He was always a quiet, shy kid. He was never any trouble and several times we took him on vacation with us and over to our house for a few days.



**Harold Dahl**



**Jean Lippert Dahl**



**Shorty, Tommy, Patty, Jean Dahl**

In 1940 my youngest brother Shorty met and married his wife Jean. Nellie had a hard time accepting this marriage as Bill and Shorty were living with her and helping support her and now she was about to lose Shorty. And she

decided she didn't like Jean and made some disparaging remarks about her that got back to her.



**Patty Dahl**



**Patty**



**Micky, Pat, Nancy**



**Patricia Dahl & Sandy Bender**

In 1941 Shorty and Jean had their daughter Patricia Dahl on March 11th.

Then on December 7, 1941 Herman and I were visiting my sister, Marie Bender when we heard over her radio that Pearl Harbor had been bombed! What a shock that was! Marie's husband was exempt from the draft because they had 2 children. and Ed was 33 years old. My Herman was exempt from the draft because he was a union steward.

We were also one of the few people who had a telephone in 1941 as telephones were very hard to get during the war, but Herman was given one through the efforts of the union so he could keep in touch. My sister Marie didn't get a phone until at the end of the war when she had a new baby and she suddenly got so ill she fainted. That scared her and Ed so bad with the thought that she could be all alone in the house all day and not be able to reach him should she have a crisis. Before she had a phone she used to have to go next door to her neighbor, Elodie Meeseman at 4657 Alter to make a call. Mrs. Meeseman was a very fine woman and she readily shared her phone with my sister. Later on my daughter Marianne became very fast friends with Mrs. Meeseman's youngest daughter Juliette.



**Marianne McKinin**

Herman's family was a union family. One of his relatives was one of the original unionizers at the Ford plant. He got pretty badly beat up while organizing a protest at the plant.



**Bill & Dorothy in front of our house on Coyle, taken August 24, 1944**

We built our first home on Coyle in 1941. Herman and I were at Marie and Ed's house the day Pearl Harbor was bombed as we were buying a refrigerator from Ed as we were moving into our new house on Coyle the very next day. Herman was very proud of our first home and took pains to see that all went according to plan in the construction of our first home. He supervised the construction very frequently, going there before or after work and on weekends. Herman had a number of run ins with the builder as he was making sure our home was being built properly. One of the problems which Herman had to insist on being corrected was when the bricks were delivered way too early and the kids in the neighborhood started jumping, running, etc all over the bricks and many of the bricks were chipped as a result. Herman told the builder that he was not going to put all those chipped bricks on his new house. He felt sorry for the builder having to pay for bricks twice, but he wasn't going to have the appearance of his brand new home marred. That builder ended up going bankrupt. He started 23 homes but only finished 4 of them.



**Elenore McKinin**

I handled money very well all through the years and figured out many ways to stretch a dollar to make my money last. One thing Herman and I did to save money was to grow and then can our own fruits and vegetables. Herman always had a gorgeous garden and half or better of every one of his gardens was given over to fruits and vegetables. We grew many vines of tomatoes and every year would can 50 quarts of tomatoes and then quit. If I had left over tomatoes sometimes I would make chili sauce. I would make 10 or 12 pints of chili sauce at a time. I also canned several bushels of beets. And also I would can about 50 quarts of peaches and pears. Herman planted 4 peach trees for me to can the fruit but when I got 50 quarts (7 bushels) out of one peach tree Herman dug up 3 peach trees and gave it to his sister Alice. She had just gotten married that year so Herman helped her out getting a new garden established for her, halping her plant flowers, bulbs and trees. I made many jars of grape jelly from our grape arbor. I also canned or froze carrots, peppers, kohlrabi and swiss char. I also made vegetable soup out of my canned and frozen vegetables. Marianne's neighbor friend went hom and told her mother how impressed she was with me as I canned all of the above mentioned fruits and vegetables and she wondered why her mother didn't do the same thing. I told Marianne she had to tell her friend not to throw that up to her mother how much more I did at home than her friend's mother did as her mother worked in a factory while I was at home all day. Her mother being out of the house for 9 or more hours a day, had no time to do what I had done.



**Marianne McKinin De Maria**

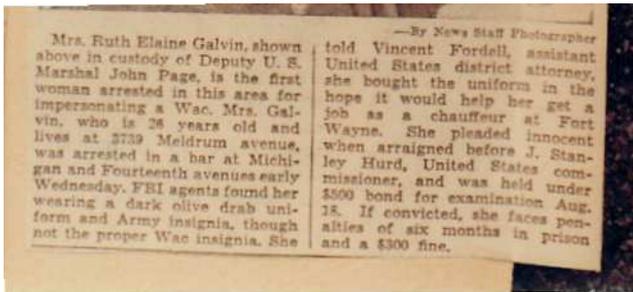
I remember how Marianne would help me when I canned peaches 3 days in a row that one year. That sure was a lot of work for both Marianne and me but when the work was over we had peaches for the entire year, so it was well worth the effort.



**Upper: Elenore, Laurie, Patti & Marianne Lower: Judy, Herman & Heidi**

One year, 3 years after Herman retired, the year before we moved to Florida I had Herman help me can beets. What a back breaking, messy, tedious job that was! We had to boil the beets, skin them, cut them up, make a vinegar solution to pickle the beets with and then can them. Then we would eat them all winter instead of a salad. That was the only year Herman canned beets! His answer to the thought of canning beets again the next year? Let's bury the beets, plow them under!

I also canned corn, knocking the kernels off the ears, blanching and canning the corn. I also made sauerkraut in a big crock, skimming off the scum. One year our cabbages were so big that Herman talked of taking them to the State Fair and putting them on display.



**Ruthie Galvin Ruthie Galvin**

We had some excitement in the Dahl family in the middle of World War II, in fact one of the Dahls made the newspaper! My cousin Ruthie Dahl Galvin dressed up as a WAC (Women's Army Corps) and went into a bar dressed in this uniform as a lark. Well, this being war time someone knew

she wasn't a WAC and didn't think it was funny and called the authorities. She was arrested and her picture and story appeared in the Detroit newspaper. My cousin Ruthie was a wild one. She married Johnnie and had one son, whom she professed to love dearly. However she was running around with all the sailor and soldier boys stationed in Detroit and having a great old time. When my sister Marie was first married Ruthie ran upstairs early one morning and told Marie to come on down with her – she had a couple of boys in the car downstairs. Marie was shocked at the very suggestion and said no, she was married, she didn't want to go running around with a car full of soldier boys. Ed left for work while Ruthie was leaving and when Ed looked into the car waiting for Ruthie he later told Marie, "If those were boys, then I'm an infant".

Awhile later Ruthie just up and disappeared, leaving her little son with her husband Johnnie who raised the boy. Aunt Anna Galvin, her mother, prayed for years and years that she would once again find her daughter Ruthie. Aunt Anna put that prayer in writing and pasted in on the back of a Blessed Mother picture she kept in her home. Years and years later Aunt Anna got her wish. Ruthie found out she was dying of cancer so she came home and made peace with Aunt Anna before passing away. And where do you think this way ward child was hanging out when she finally decided to come back to her mother? She was a receptionist in a priest house!



**Shorty Dahl**

Two other member of the Dahl family got into the newspaper. In the latter half of the 1940s my brother Shorty was in the Detroit News for building his own house on Studebaker St in Warren. My mother Nellie saw the article and cut it out of the newspaper. She looked at her son's picture over and over again and kept that in her purse. She felt so bad that she couldn't go and visit with her son Shorty.

The other newspaper article was about a tragedy that befell a grand child of Eddie Dahl, the boy Grandma Henkel raised. Eddie was a year younger than

me and we used to play together when I was at Grandma Henkel's house. Eddie and his family in the later years moved to Falls Church, Virginia and there was a newspaper article about a major plane crash and listing the victims of that crash. One of Eddie's grand daughters was one of the victims.



**Frank & Celia Chapp Dahl**



**Frank Dahl & his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife**

My Uncle Frank was always bellyaching about how sick he was and how he thought he wasn't long for this world. While everyone was paying attention to him and his catalogue of illnesses, his wife Celia Chapp Dahl suddenly passed away of heart failure in 1943. Frank buried her in Grandma Minna Dahl's plot at Mt. Olivet cemetery in Detroit. Minna Dahl had given Frank 2 plots, one for Celia and one for himself. When Frank decided to move to Florida after Celia's death he gave his plot to my mother Nellie, saying she could have it as he would never be back here after he moved to Florida. We were all so grateful that Ma got that plot as she could now be buried next to Pa's family. We buried Ma in that plot, and then 3 years later when Uncle Frank was desperately ill with heart, kidney and lung failure he called his sister Clara Fredrick and told her he wanted her to fly him back home to Michigan to die. Clara did that, renting 3 spaces on the plane so Frank could lay down all the way back home. She put him in a hospital in Michigan where he passed away shortly afterwards. He decided he wanted to be buried with his mom and dad and first wife Celia so Clara had him placed at the feet of his wife Celia. Clara told the rest of the family that she paid for her brother's plane ticket and also buried him with her own money and that Frank left no money behind. Clara and Ray were always known for being real tight with money so many members of the family doubt this. But no one was entitled to inherit from Frank as he had no kids and no wife, so this conjecture simply raises a moot point.



**Clara Dahl Fredrick**



**Marianne McKinin De Maria**

I have a funny story to tell about when I visited Aunt Clara with my daughter Marianne in the 1960s. Herman was getting ready to retire and I needed a birth certificate in order to apply for Herman's pension as his wife and also to apply for social security so I sent away for my birth certificate from the State. When the birth certificate came I got a shock – on the certificate I was not listed as Elenore which I had always been called by my parents from birth, rather I was listed as Wilhelmina. Where did the name Wilhelmina come from? A real good guess is that Grandma Henkel pulled that one off when the doctor was filling out my birth certificate as her full given first name is Wilhelmina. (My sister Marie also got a shock when she sent for her birth certificate to get her social security. She was always known from birth as Marie Anna and had used that name on a number of legal documents through the years as she was named after Aunt Anna Rehfeldt, ma's sister in law, who was Marie's and my Godmother at baptism. When she got her birth certificate she was shocked to find it named her Marie Henrietta. Being as Grandma Henkel's middle name is Henrietta who do you suppose might have done these two quickie name changes?)

Anyway, getting back to the Aunt Clara story, I contacted the state and told them my birth certificate named me Wilhelmina in error, that I was Elenore. They told me in order to correct the error I needed an older relative to go to the bank and write out a sworn, notarized statement that the birth certificate name is in error, that I have always been known from birth as Elenore. SO I decided to approach Aunt Clara to do this for me. So Marianne drove me over to Aunt Clara's house at 222 Savannah in Detroit so that we could go to the bank and prepare the sworn affidavit so I could get my proper name on my birth certificate. Aunt Clara was amenable to doing this for me, but this is where the fun began. Marianne said she would drive us to the bank, but Aunt Clara said no, that her chauffeur would bring her Cadillac around and she would drive us in the Cadillac. So we drove in her Cadillac. When we got to the bank I could have died the way Aunt Clara treated the assistant

manager at the bank. She stormed right up to that woman and said in an authoritative and somewhat sassy tone of voice, “You’re new here, aren’t you?” I thought to myself at the time, that’s no way to talk to someone you want a favor from!

Anyway, despite the rude introduction Clara performed, the bank woman graciously notarized the statement, I put it in my purse, thanked Aunt Clara and we were on our way home. A little while later Marianne and I had Sandy, Marie and Nancy over for lunch at our house and during the course of conversation after lunch was finished Marianne came up with this story of our encounter with Aunt Clara. Marianne was still non plussed over Aunt Clara’s behavior and had to share this story with Marie and her daughters. Marianne then added that her Cougar was an expensive car and was brand new whereas Aunt Clara’s Cadillac was over 10 years old. And when she said she would have her chauffeur bring the car around, Marianne added, “Chauffeur my eye! He was Ray’s garage mechanic! Chauffeur! Cadillac! You know, I have always been taught to respect my elders and most of the time I do, but the elder has to earn my respect too. And as far as I’m concerned, Aunt Clara is the biggest bullshooter this family has ever seen!”



**Marie Bender**



**Nancy Bender Stephens**



**Michael Edward Bender**



**Mike Nellie Pat Nancy Sandy, Marie & Elenore on Coyle**

One day my sister Marie decided to surprise me and visit me on Coyle before Sandy was born as Mickey and Nancy were in school full time. So she took the street cars and came to my house in the afternoon. She was very disappointed to see that I wasn’t home when she came but she figured I

might not have gone far so she would sit on my front steps and wait for me to return. When I didn't come back in over a half an hour Marie decided to get up and leave. Marie stood up and when she started down the steps she fell down the steps. So she decided to sit back down on the steps till the pain subsided. Later I still wasn't home so she got up again and believe it or not, she fell down my stairs once again! As she was recovering from the second fall I came home and we ended up having a nice visit. But when she told me about falling twice I said, "Oh, Marie! What will my neighbors think!?" When Marie would be ready to go home Herman would often drive her to a main bus line as several times when she tried to take the bus closest to our home, the darn thing never came.



**Sonny Stocker   Mildred Stocker   William Dahl Jr.**

My brother Bill and sister Mildred were both a lot of fun and when we all got together they could produce a barrel of laughs between the two of them. One time before Bill was married he was painting Mildred's house for her. When Sonny came home from work Mildred told him to go to the fish market on Gratiot and bring home some fish for supper. She said while he was going to get the fish she would start fixing the potatoes and vegetable. Bill just finished up painting and said he would go with Sonny. Well they went up to the fish store and never came back. The potatoes and vegetables were getting ruined and no Sonny and no fish. So Mildred turned off the stove and walked up to Gratiot looking for them. She found Sonny's car parked in front of the fish store with the fish wrapped in white paper melting the hot sun on the dash board, but no Sonny. She saw there was a bar next door and walked right in looking for Sonny. There sat Sonny and Bill at the bar, each with a woman in their laps. Mildred took the limp, soggy, melting fish in the white wrapper and started beating Sonny over the head with it, with flakes of fish flying everywhere!



**Bill & Dorothy Dahl**



**Bill, Dorothy & Shorty**



**Bill & Dorothy Dahl**

Then in 1944, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August my brother Bill married Dorothy Dolato. Now the crisis erupted as Nellie now lost both of her means of support and something had to be done. For the first couple of months Nellie continued to live with Bill and Dorothy in their upstairs flat in Mildred and Sonny Stocker's house. Dorothy felt that she was treated very poorly by the family in the beginning of her marriage. She said that when she did her wash she had to walk through Mildred's house to get to the basement. She said all of the Stockers were sitting around playing cards and when she came through with a wash basket full of dirty clothes no one would open the door for her until Marvin noticed her predicament and jumped up to open the door for her.

Then Marie was expecting Sandy in 1944 so Nellie went to live with Marie for about 6 months during and after the birth of Marie's 3<sup>rd</sup> child. And when Sandy was born in December of 1944 Marie had a lot of trouble with her back so every Monday I went over to Marie's house riding the cross town streetcar and did her wash for her. That lasted for over a month. After Nellie left Marie's house she went and stayed for a few months with Mildred and Sonny on Crane. Bill and Dorothy moved out of Mildred's upstairs flat on Crane and moved into the upstairs flat at Mrs. Dolato's house, probably in part because Dorothy was quite sensitive about how she felt she was being treated by Mildred and Sonny. So Mildred and Sonny rented their upstairs flat out to a stranger. A few months after the stranger moved in she called us to tell us that the Stockers were treating Nellie really mean. We all got together for a meeting and we all decided to take turns having Nellie live with us, she could live for 3 months at each kids house, thus rotating around over the course of a year. Everyone agreed to this arrangement except Jean. She was newly married and didn't want Nellie living with her and Shorty months at a time every year. Some very hard feelings developed between Jean and Shorty and I as well as between Marie and Ed and Shorty and for

over the next 20 years we did not talk to Shorty and Jean or visit with them until into the 1960s when we let bygones be bygones and made up.



**Coral Lippert Wilson, Tommy, Patty, Shorty & Jean Dahl**

Marie ended up with hard feelings over Jean and her mother's treatment of Nellie and she also ended up being estranged from her brother Shorty and his wife until around 1967 when they reconciled. Jean always took her mother grocery shopping and also picked up Marie to go grocery shopping with them every week. When this whole mess over taking Nellie in erupted and Marie heard how Mrs. Lippert, Jean's mother, was talking against Nellie and fanning the flames of discontent with her daughter Jean when Jean came to pick Marie up to go grocery shopping Marie stood at the curb talking into Jean's car. Marie said to Jean that if Mrs Lippert and Jean couldn't respect Nellie then she couldn't go shopping with them anymore. Jean just put her head down on the steering wheel and started to cry. Mrs. Lippert made matters even more tense when she said she wanted no cramming up of her front porch so Nellie was not allowed to sit out there. We were all sensitive about how insensitive many family members were to mama – at a family party they were passing all the food around while ignoring poor Nellie. How upset and self conscious Ma must have felt having to endure such indignities.



**Sharon, Bill, Debbie and Kathryn Dolato**



**Nellie Dahl**

Mrs. Dolato wasn't overly fond of having Nellie in her daughter's house for 3 months out of the year, but they all settled in in time, especially

considering that Dorothy had to go out to work and they used Nellie as a free babysitter. Nellie kind of helped pay her way in that she got an old age pension check beginning in November of 1947 and Nellie would turn over this check to whoever she was living with to help with expenses.



**Nellie Dahl**

Once Ma made the rounds every 3 months and it became routine everyone treated Ma fairly well and all of us kids started enjoying having her company for 3 months out of the year. She became like a guest in our homes.



**Nellie Dahl**

So from August of 1944 until she died in March of 1955 Ma lived with Mildred, Marie, Bill and me 3 months of the year. Her clothes were transported from one house to the next in a wardrobe which we tied to the top of our cars. Boy, did that ever make Ma nervous – her wardrobe tied on top of a car! She was so afraid it would come lose, fall off the car and smash to smithereens – but fortunately it always made it safe and sound from house to house. And Ma was so funny when she first got to each new house. For the first 2 or 3 weeks Ma was full of gossip about what went on at the other kids' houses, and then when she ran out of news, she would settle in and mostly sit quietly at each of our houses until she went to the next house and the information swapping would begin anew.



**Minna & Bob Galvin**



**Marie at Minna's grave**



**Elenore, Marie, Marianne & Edward**

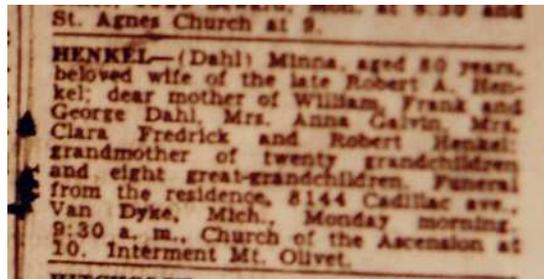
The day after my brother Bill got married my Grandma Minna Dahl died in her daughter's home at 8144 Cadillac in Warren. She was 80 years old when she died, having been born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, 1864 and died on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August, 1944. She died of heart failure. I remember seeing my Grandma Dahl shortly before she died. She was sitting on a foot stool in her bedroom and was congested from a very bad cold. In her last months she laid in a hospital bed in her daughter Anna's living room. One story which makes all of our blood boil was when her other daughter Clara Fredrick came to visit her near the end. Clara was all dressed up to kill on that visit while her sister Annie was doing all the work for Grandma in her house dress. Clara sat at Grandma Dahl's side and together they were making disparaging remarks about Annie, who was doing all of the work while Clara never lifted a finger, just sat there and played lady!



**Clara & Ray Fredrick, Minna Dahl, Bob Henkel, Celia, George Dahl, Anna Galvin**

Just before Minna Henkel died she sent for Ma to visit her on her death bed. Nellie didn't want go due to the poor treatment she had received from Minna

all through the years. Nellie was aware that there was no love lost between her and her mother in law. But some of us kids urged Ma to go see Minna, that she might tell Nellie where Bill was. That got Ma off her feet in a hurry! She loved her Bill to the day she died and always hoped that he would come back to her. So she went to see Minna on Cadillac St in Warren. But alas, there was no word of Bill. Instead Minna pressed \$100 bill in Nellie's hand as he total inheritance. Truthfully that really was an insult to poor Nellie. We are fairly certain that Annie and her family inherited far more. One thing that Minna supposedly did at this time was to set aside \$400 for Nellie's funeral expenses, although we were not told of this until after Nellie died Aunt Clara came forth with the money, minus any interest it should have earned in the ensuing 11 years since Minna's death. I always wondered, was it true that this money was truly set aside by Minna, or was it conscious money from my dad who refused to come forward and face us after all these years of having been lost. I guess we'll never know the answer to that one.



When Minna died the first day her obituary appeared in the newspaper my dad's name was never mentioned. However on the second day it appeared his name was mentioned. We always wondered about that, why it was put in the second day, who put it in and what was the purpose for this sudden addition of Pa. Some people asked was he there but out of our sight at the funeral? Was he in contact with his mother secretly after he disappeared? I think not. But I wonder why Grandma Dahl didn't make a greater attempt to locate him after his disappearance. I heard 3<sup>rd</sup> hand that Grandma contacted selective service during World War II to see if pa enlisted and she also checked social security to see if he could be located that way. Supposedly he had no record. I am not sure if this was true or not.

Grandma Minna Dahl was laid out in Annie's front room on Cadillac and then was buried with full military honors at Mt. Olivet cemetery next to her husband Fred Dahl who died at the age of 49 in 1900 of an intestinal

obstruction. Poor grandma had been a widow for 49 years and was left with all those kids to finish raising by herself. Pa was only 15 when he lost his dad. They say it was such a shock to our Pa to lose his dad so suddenly like that that Pa's hair turned from blonde to dark brown overnight.

Grandma Minna Dahl died during the height of World War II and was honored as a Gold Star mother as she had lost 2 sons in World War I, Tony and Fritz. Tony died in France on October 12, 1918 less than one month before the end of World War I. Fritz died while hitching a ride to go to war. He was hanging on the side of a box car in New York when the train went around the corner and Tony was crushed by a fence hanging over which brushed up against the side of the train as it passed by. Grandma Dahl got \$10,000 each for her 2 sons deaths. She used this money to buy the Dahl family plot in Mt. Olivet cemetery in 1921. She had her husband Fred dug up from his single grave and moved to the center of this new plot. She then demanded that the government send back to her the body of her son Fritz who was buried in France. At her repeated urging they sent back his coffin, a plain wooden box. Pa and his brother went to New York and picked up the casket from the boat dock and put it in the back seat of their car and drove it back to Michigan. When they were on a deserted stretch of the highway they pulled over, and using a crow bar, pried open the wood casket. What they found were far too many arms and legs. It wasn't their brother. But they never told their mother this. Thus this box full of stranger's body parts was buried at the feet of Fred and Minna. And now, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, 1944 my Grandma Dahl was laid to rest with her husband, Fred. Her body was placed on a caisson and was pulled by a team of horses. Her body was draped with a flag and at her grave military music was played and a gun salute to a Gold Star mother was carried out. I tried to get to her funeral as best I could but Herman had to go to work and I didn't drive and besides I had no car, so I took streetcars to Gratiot and 6 Mile, but I lived on the west side of Detroit and to get to the east side required so many changes of street cars that by the time I got there the funeral was over.

1944 was a year of quite a few major events in our extended family. In November my sister Marie informed me that she lost her father in law Henry Bender on November 9<sup>th</sup>. He died of congestive heart failure in his home on Frankfurt on the east side of Detroit.



**Tommy Dahl**



**Sandy & Tommy**



**Sandy Bender & Tommy**



**Tommy Dahl & Sandy**

Then on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November my brother Shorty had his son Thomas Joseph Dahl. Then one week later my sister Marie had her daughter, Sandy. When we asked my mother Nellie what Marie had named her new baby Nellie replied, “some damn name I can’t pronounce, but they are going to call her Sandy”. My sister Mildred also was pregnant in 1944 but miscarried a little girl.



**Sandy Bender**



**Sandy**



**Sandy**



**Marie & Sandy**

When my brother Bill and his new bride Dorothy came to visit Marie’s new baby Marie said to Bill & Dorothy, “Maybe next year you’ll have new baby”.



**Sharon & Bill**



**Dorothy & Sharon**



**Sharon, Dorothy Marie**



**Nellie, Sharon, Pepper**



**Sharon & Bill**

Which they did. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of December, 1945 my brother Bill had his first daughter, Sharon. Sharon was a beautiful little blue eyed blonde. She was a sweet and obedient child, a joy to have around.



**Sandy Bender, Nellie Dahl & Sharon Dahl Nov 1947**

Bill and Dorothy were living upstairs from Mildred and Sonny on Crane when Sharon was born. Dorothy was so hurt because when Sharon was now 2 ½ weeks old no one came to see the new baby, not even Mildred and Sonny and Doris who lived right downstairs. Nellie was there with them at the time, however.



**Marianne McKinin & our dog**

In 1947 we got our first Schnauzer dog, Pepper. We got her from the dog pound. She was a wonderful dog and we had her for over 10 years. She was about 2 years old when we got her and for about 1 ½ weeks she was very ill with distemper. We weren't sure whether she would live or not. She was so ill that she flopped down the basement steps and that made Marianne and

me hysterical. Herman told us if we continued to carry on like that he was going to take her back to the pound. So we restrained ourselves a bit and to our great relief she pulled through and remained a healthy little doggy from then on. She was housebroken early on and was a really smart little thing. We just loved her. Then 10 years after we got her when she was about 12 years old she came to a sad end. Earlier that last day I saw 2 police cars in front of our house and we wondered what that was all about. Then later in the day we let Pepper out and that was the last we ever saw of her. We looked all over for her, walking all around and calling and calling for her, but no response. Herman went looking in the alley in garbage cans thinking someone might have shot her and threw her in a trash can. We went to the dog pound every day for over 1 ½ weeks looking for her but she never showed up. We never knew what happened to her.

Our next dog was Deeda, a standard size Schnauzer. She was also a very good dog and we loved her dearly but she was truly a handful in the beginning until we got her trained. She kept jumping up on the curtains on the side door leading to the back yard and one day Herman decided to break her of that so he took a bunch of kids play metal pots and pans and strung them along a string and tied them to the curtain rod. Deeda jumped up on the curtains as usual and bang! crash! whamo! all those metal dishes came crashing down on Deeda. That cured her once and for all from jumping on the curtains!

After Deeda Herman came home one day with a 2 year old champion standard Schnauzer. This was a really fine show dog and she had beautiful lines to her. But that darn dog walked right up to my cook pots on the stove and stuck her nose in them! Oh, no! I wasn't going to tolerate some dog sticking his nose in my cook pots every day! That dog has got to go! I told Herman in no uncertain terms. Herman said part of the deal when he bought the dog was that he couldn't take it back. That dog is going back, I insisted. Well we were in luck. The guy Herman got the dog from wanted to show her in 2 days so he knew if he wanted to show that dog he was going to have to take it back, so take it back he did and gave Herman his money back.



**Upper: Patti, Mildred, Cindi & Laurie Lower: Marie, Marianne & Judy**

After that we got a miniature Schnauzer which we named Heidi. Marianne loved our dog so she got a Schnauzer too, which she named Cindi. Heidi was darker in color and Cindi was lighter. We ended up taking Heidi to Florida with us when we moved in 1968.



**Our dog Heidi**

Florida was not a good climate for dogs and there were a number of perils there we did not face in Michigan. Heidi succumbed to one of those perils, much to our shock and grief. Heidi and I were walking through our yard on Keene Park Drive in Largo. I was barefooted and only a short distance away from Heidi as we walked together across that lawn. Suddenly a rattle snake jumped up from out of the grass and sunk its fangs into Heidi. Herman and I rushed Heidi to the vet but it was no use. Heidi died from the venom.

We later took Cindi from Marianne and Frank. She was also a very good dog with a very good nature. Cindi later got a brain tumor and died from it after suffering a number of convulsions.



**Elenore, Dorothy, Mildred, Nellie, Marie**



**Sandy, Nancy, Nellie, Mike, Sharon, Marianne**



**Sharon, Dorothy, Sonny, Mildred, Nellie, Marie, Elenore, Herman, Bill**

I'll never forget my mother's birthday on November 3, 1947. That was the day I came for ma early in the morning and took her to sign up for her old age pension as she was turning 62 years old. After we got done with that Ma begged me to stay with her for the day to spend her birthday with her. I told her I couldn't, but I couldn't really tell Ma the truth why I couldn't do it – Marie was giving her a surprise birthday party that night at her house and I had to get back home to do my share of baking for the party that night. Ma was so disappointed after her repeated begging still did not persuade me to spend the day with her. I had such a guilty conscience leaving ma like that on her birthday after she begged me to spend the day with her. Then later in the day Marie and Ed had to perpetrate another ruse on poor Ma – Marie needed Ma out of the house in order to finish cooking the dinner and setting the table and decorating the dining room with balloons and streamers. So Ed asked Ma if she would like Ed to take her to Bill's house to visit with Bill for her birthday. Ma brightened right up and said, "Oh, Ed, would you!?" Come on, Ma, Ed said, let's get in the car and drive over there to Parkwood. Well, naturally Bill and Dorothy don't want her there at their house as they were about to leave their house to come to Marie's house! So Ed drove all around Bill's neighborhood on the west side of Detroit and finally very sadly told Ma that they would have to go back home to Alter Rd as Ed was lost and couldn't find Bill's house. Oh, how crestfallen poor Nellie was! One disappointment after another and on her birthday, no less! Well Ed drove her back home to Alter Rd, helped her up the stairs, on to the porch and then into the house where to her utter astonishment stood her whole family

hollering “SURPRISE!!” It was almost too much for poor old Nellie’s heart to take! Nellie then made the remark to Marie that she was wondering why Marie was doing all that baking the last two days. Nellie had a wonderful birthday party that night and had lots of wonderful pictures taken with her children and grandchildren, but that niggling guilt feeling over not staying with Nellie that day remains in my heart to this very day.



**Edward Bender**



**Nellie Dahl & Sandy Bender**



**Bill Dahl Jr.**



Herman and I went to visit his relatives in the coal mining areas of Pennsylvania and then in July of 1948 we went on to New York to sightsee on the rest of our vacation. We stopped for the day at the Franklin D. Roosevelt library and his house in Hyde Park, New York. We really enjoyed ourselves that trip out east so on July 20<sup>th</sup> I wrote my ma Nellie a postcard showing her where we were and what we were doing. Ma was living with Marie at the time so we sent that postcard to Marie’s house. Nellie was so happy to receive that postcard from us.



**Nellie Dahl**

Ma always had trouble controlling her bowels and had to go often. It was also a psychological thing with Ma – whenever someone was in the bathroom, and there was only one bathroom in those days in our houses, Nellie had to go, and I do mean GO NOW!! The most hilariously exasperating example of this occurred when Ma was living with us and Herman decided to retile the bathroom floor. It seemed like almost every half hour or less Ma would say, “Oh Herman, I gotta go!” Herman was very patient with Ma that day, I have to say. I can’t count how many times Herman would leave that partially tiled bathroom floor so Ma could use the commode. Marie told me that at her house whenever Ed was in the bathroom Nellie would sit on the chair in the dining room facing closest to the bathroom door, would rock back and forth on that chair, saying, “OH! OH! OH!” Ed would often have to leave the bathroom so Nellie could have her turn.

Nellie would often turn down a chance to go for a long car ride for fear she would have to go to the bathroom and there wouldn’t be one handy. Marie and Ed begged Nellie to go to the Lion’s Head Cedar Grove cottage with them but Nellie kept bringing up the bathroom problem as the reason she couldn’t go. Ed promised to stop as many times as she needed to go so in the end she agreed to go. Surprisingly she never needed to stop that trip, going or coming home.



**Lion’s Head Cottage where Nellie stayed**



**Nellie Dahl & Bill Bender**



**Bill & Nellie sitting in her favorite rocker at Marie’s house**

Ma had the shakes really bad. When she wanted to read a newspaper she would set it in her lap as when she held it her hand shook so bad it was almost impossible to read the print. She also needed glasses I think but unfortunately none of us kids ever bought her a pair. Ma's needs were simple and she seldom asked for much. She also had only bottom teeth and never got a pair of false teeth for the top. She never asked for any and devised ways to eat with just the bottoms. She would gum the orange she ate every morning and she used to kind of grate nuts with her bottom teeth holding the nut against her teeth with her hand.



**Elenore McKinin, Nellie Dahl & Marie Bender**

Ma was stoop shouldered and very pigeon toed. She walked stooped forward with very fast short steps. It was scary watching her walk for fear she was going to fall, which I believe she never did. She slept upstairs with us and was very afraid of coming down stairs for fear of falling so she would sit down on the top stair and bump her way down the stairs on her fanny.



**Herman & Elenore**



**Nancy, Marianne & Sandy**



**Sandy Bender**

In 1949 Marie asked me to watch little 4 year old Sandy while her and Ed went on vacation. So they brought her over to our house on Coyle where I watched her for a week. Boy, what a week that was! First Sandy goes next door to our neighbors who lived on the corner and made friends with their son, little 5 year old David. Then while David was in kindergarten I see Sandy peddling down the street on David's tricycle. I reprimanded her for

taking his tricycle while he was in school and told her to return it to his yard. Later on she told me that David's mother had given her permission to ride that trike. Then I was keeping my eye on her when she and David were playing with a bunch of other neighborhood kids in the alley. They were looking at something in the alley so I paid closer attention to what was going on. To my horror what they were looking at was a dead rat laying in the alley. And then to my greater horror I hear a kid say, "Boy what a big rat!" , and then right on the heels of that statement Sandy says to the kids, "OH, that's nothing! You should see how big the rats are in our neighborhood!" I could have died! What would the neighbors think of where my sister Marie lived? A very sad sequel to this story is that David died as a teenager in a boating accident. He was water skiing when he went under and they couldn't find him, so they rushed the boat to shore and then found to their horror that he was tangled up in the ski rope and they had dragged him under water all the way to shore. Had they checked the rope right away they could have saved his life. His mother was very bitter over the other kids in the boat not using better judgment in looking for him right away instead of speeding to shore.



**Bill Bender**

Then on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, 1948 my sister Marie had her second son, William Henry. Bill came 2 weeks early and was by far the smallest of the children born into our family.



**Bill & Debbie**



**Dorothy & Debbie**



**Debbie**



**Sharon, Marie, Doris, Debbie, Sandy, Mrs. Dolato and Mildred**

Then in May of 1951, on Mother's day my brother Bill had his second daughter, Debbie. She was also a beautiful blue eyed blonde but she was a more lively child than Sharon and a bit of a tom boy where as Sharon was always a delicate, feminine little girl. My brother Bill was disappointed that he didn't have a son, but he couldn't afford more than 2 children so he had to be content with his 2 daughters.



**Nancy & Don**



**Edward, Don, Nancy & Marie**

Then in October of 1951 my sister Marie got a big shock. Her daughter Nancy just got back from Angola Indiana where she and Don were trying to elope but weren't successful as Nancy was only 16 and needed her parent's consent. They had brought Don's mother and father along but Marie had no inkling that that was about to occur as she didn't even think Nancy and Don were that serious about their relationship yet. The Justice of the Peace refused to marry them, telling them Nancy needed a parent along to sign for the marriage. So Nancy went back home, trailing Don and his parents with her as well as Don's friend Red who was going to be the best man and Nancy's girlfriend Josephine. Marie was shocked. She called Ed home. Ed was shocked. They sat down and told Nancy that the best course of action was to plan a proper wedding here in Detroit area and get married in a normal ceremony and have a proper reception. Don said that was okay by him. Nancy piped right up and said no, she had to get married right now in Angola, Indiana. Marie asked Nancy if she was pregnant. Nancy said no but she would see that she did get pregnant if they refused to let her get married. Ed was opposed to running off to Angola, but not opposed to them

getting married in a proper ceremony. But when Nancy flung this in his face, he gave up, and said there was no fighting it. So Marie went back to Angola with Nancy, Don, Don's parents and Red and Josephine. Marie was horrified by the ceremony. The Justice of the Peace was a very crude man. He swore through the entire ceremony and then at the end gave Nancy his card saying he could help her get a divorce when things didn't work out. And then on the way home the wheel flew off Red's car and the car went clear across the highway. Marie was so upset about this wedding that she gave Nancy and Don a proper reception December 1, 1951 and then Nancy and Don had a proper wedding in St John Berchman's Church the following year.

At Nancy's reception Clara and Ray Fredrick showed up unexpectedly. Clara said she wasn't invited but she didn't take hints so she came anyway. Marie said she didn't invite her because she thought Clara wouldn't be interested in coming. Then Ray asked how old Nancy was and when he heard 16 he replied that the marriage wouldn't last, that she would be married 3 or 4 times. Marie was furious with Ray and his sharp tongue. A lot of the family didn't like Don at first but Herman had a different opinion right from the beginning when he met Don. He said that that boy was a go getter, that he was ambitious and would do well financially. Herman was totally right. By the end of his life Don was very well to do. It was such a shame that he treated Nancy and their children so shabbily that he was cut off entirely from all of them.



**Marie & Douglas**



**Douglas**



**Douglas**



**Sandy & Douglas**

Then on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 1952 Marie had her last child, Douglas Paul. He was more than a handful. He screamed day and night every hour for the first two years of his life. Marie was beyond exhaustion by the time Doug grew out of this stage. This screaming through the first year or more of life seems to be a Dahl trait as a number of different Dahl children from widely different families have done this, including my grand daughter Laurie who now has the most mellow of temperaments. Doug is also now a quiet, well

mannered person. Tommy Dahl, Shorty's son was also a fireball in his first year and is now a very quiet, reticent type of individual. And in this generation Marie's great great grand daughter Kaitlyn Marie screams so loud, often and incessantly that she has her mother Nicole walking into walls from lack of sleep. "What is wrong with this kid! I've done everything for him (her) and he (she) just keeps screaming!" is a sentence many of us have uttered when caring for one of these children. My only advice is, be patient, this phase doesn't last forever.



**Billy Bender, Nellie Dahl & Douglas Bender**



**Marie & Douglas Bender Sr.**

Marie had a very bad eczema right after Doug was born. She had this condition originally right after dad left us. Now with the stress of Doug screaming day and night the eczema came back. All that summer of 1952 Marie went first to a dermatologist and when he only mad the condition worse, Marie then went to a chiropractor. Nellie would watch the kids those afternoons when Marie had to take the bus to see those doctors. Nellie had no real problems with Sandy and Bill, but oh, was Douggie ever a different story! Nellie would sit on the dining room chair on Alter Rd and rock and rock and rock Doug until he fell asleep and just for good measure she would rock the sleeping baby another 5 or 10 minutes to make sure he was really asleep. Then she would get up and shaking all the way would walk pigeon toed into the downstairs front bedroom and lay Douggie gently in his crib. As soon as Doug's body would hit the crib he would wake up screaming! Poor Nellie would pick him up and again rock him for what seemed like hours and then once again try to put him down in his crib. She would usually still have him in her arms when Marie got home from the doctor.



**Marie, Warren & Edward**



**Warren & Marie**



**Warren Stephens**



**Don & Nancy Warren, Donna and Linda**

Doug was the end of the births of our children, then the very next year our grandchildren started coming one after the other. The first born of the next generation was Warren Donald Stephens, Marie's daughter Nancy's first born child. He was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1953. He was the first great grandchild for my mother Nellie.



**Laurie De Maria**



**Laurie**



**Laurie & Kristen**



**Dave, Laurie, Elenore, ?, Herman**

The second of Nellie's great grandchildren to be born was my grand daughter, Marianne's first born, Laurie Carol De Maria, born on the 24<sup>th</sup> of

December, 1953. Today Laurie is the sweetest, most soft spoken person, but boy, that sure wasn't the case when she was born. For the first year after she was born that kid cried so often and insistent throughout the night that during the week Marianne and I would take turns getting up with her and then on weekends my husband Herman would get up with her nights to give Marianne and I a few good night's sleep. Were we ever glad when she outgrew that!



**Marie, Nellie, Warren and Nancy**

Warren and Laurie were the only great grandchildren born while Nellie was alive. All the other great grandchildren were born after she died. Marie has a most precious 4 generation picture of Nellie, Marie, Nancy and Warren on Warren's first birthday, August 1, 1954. Laurie says she also has a 4 generation picture of herself with Marianne, Elenore and Nellie Dahl.



**Nellie Dahl**



**Elenore**



**Herman**



**Mildred**



**Bill Dahl Jr.**

In 1954 I went to Marie's house to visit her and my mom Nellie in the summertime. The main purpose of my visit other than to visit was to cut Ma's hair. I always cut Ma's hair for her and she really liked how I cut her hair. She used to have a natural wave and when I would give her a fresh haircut that wave would just fall right into place. So that day I sat Ma at Marie's kitchen table and cut her hair, then swept up the clippings. Marie ran down to the basement to change a load of wash from the washer to the dryer. Sandy was standing there next to Nellie admiring her haircut. I asked Sandy if she'd like a hair cut like Ma's. Without hesitation Sandy said "Oh,

yes!” with great joy in her voice. So I cut her hair short like Ma’s and Sandy was in seventh heaven over her new hair cut. When Marie came upstairs she was less than ecstatic over the “new look”. Sandy had no waves in her hair and Marie thought she was enough of a tomboy without having hair that was “unisex” before that look became popular. But Sandy is grateful to me for that haircut to this very day. It brought great joy to that 9 year old kid. Marie’s younger daughter was a real tom boy. When I asked Marie what Sandy would like for Christmas she replied “sports equipment – like a football or the paraphernalia that goes with playing football.”



**Sandy Bender – 1954**

In March, 1955 I got a very worried call from my sister Mildred. Ma was staying with her at the time and Ma got very sick and weak and was sleeping all the time at Mildred’s house and Mildred was very worried and didn’t know what to do for Ma. Mildred said to Marie that she took Ma to her doctor, Dr. Baumgartner who said Nellie had the flu. Just take her back home and let her sleep, that she was a very tired old lady and with this flu it was natural that she wanted to sleep all the time. But I know for a fact that she didn’t take Ma to a doctor as she told me at the time that she couldn’t get Ma there. Herman and I went over to Mildred’s house, and when we looked at Ma we weren’t sure it was just the flu. She was just so sleepy and had been complaining about feeling sick for several weeks now since she was at my brother Bill’s house. Mildred had gone over to Bill’s house for a visit and found Ma feeling quite sick there. Ma begged Mildred to take her home with them as she was no longer able to take care of Dorothy’s children, especially Debbie who was only 3 years old at the time. I had watched Ma put Debbie up on the dining room table to dress her and I could see how hard it was on Ma. And Dorothy agreed to let Mildred and Sonny to take Ma as Ma was so sick she was of no use to Dorothy as a babysitter and Dorothy had to go to work every day and she didn’t want a sick mother in

law to be left alone in her home while she was gone. And poor Debbie seemed to sense that Ma was too old and sick to take care of her; she sobbed uncontrollably when Dorothy left the house to go to work.



**Mildred & Sandy**

Mildred and Sonny took Ma home with them, then called me to tell me how sick Ma was. Mildred kept feeding Ma eggnog to help make her better. Boy, that wasn't a very good idea – all that sugar and no insulin to counteract it. Herman and I went to Mildred's house on Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup> to visit Ma and decide what should be done for her. Ma was definitely sick. She could hardly stay awake at all, sleeping most of the time.

The next day after we left Mildred and Sonny's house they drove up to our house with Ma in the car with them. They then grasped Ma by the arms and led her into our house. Ma was mostly asleep on her feet she was so sick. Herman was so considerate, helping to take care of Ma when we had her in house. When Ma had to go to the bathroom she was too weak to walk there by herself so Herman helped to and from the bathroom, helping to support her weight while walking with her.

I then called our family doctor and he agreed to come to my house and visit Ma to see what was wrong with her. When he got there on Monday and examined Ma he asked me to have her urinate in a bedpan, which I got her to do. He then checked the urine and said she was a diabetic and that she was in a diabetic coma. He said he could bring her out of the coma but not at my house; she would have to go to a hospital. (The doctor later said that he felt that Nellie had untreated diabetes for at least 10 to 15 years. She probably got away with it for that long as she ate very little in the last years of her life.) So I called an ambulance and about an hour later they came and took Ma to Plymouth General hospital in Detroit, about 3 blocks before Inkster. It was only about 3 blocks from Coyle, where I lived at the time. I was able to visit Ma every day while she was there due to it being so close to home.



**Nellie Dahl**

**(This picture shows that Ma had a bad heart before she even went into a diabetic coma. You can see by the swollen left ankle that Ma was into congestive heart failure in her later 60s.)**

Before Ma went to the hospital I spruced her up, cutting her hair and the hairs that grew on the mole on her chin. The doctor told me that he would have no problem bringing her out of the coma by the use of insulin, but he felt that due to the fact that her heart was so weak and the coma was so hard on her heart that he felt she might die of heart failure. We were scared but we just waited to see how Ma would fare. We all went to see her in the hospital and we were all gladdened but what a remarkable recovery Ma made in such a short time. In no time at all it seemed, she was out of her coma and full of life! She was her old self and more! She laughed with us and shook her arms at us, telling us she wanted those damn needles out of her arms. But she also told us something that shocked us knowing how frightened Ma was to speak of anything that had to do with death – she said she had seen Earl the night before and that he told her he would come for her. She seemed pleased with this – something all out of character for Ma. That last night we were all together visiting Ma in her hospital room. We all commented on how good she looked, how well she was doing. But Marie was really upset, saying she smelled death on Ma, that she had smelled that same smell on other relatives close to death and she knew that smell. But that seemed ridiculous – Ma was doing so well. Then when Herman was shaving around 5:30 am on Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> my phone rang. It was the hospital calling, I answered the phone – the nurse on duty told me that Ma had just passed away. I couldn't believe it! She had been doing so well, had looked so good the night before, so full of health, and so full of life. And now suddenly she was gone. Our big worry and discussion among us kids in the past few days was how were we going to give Ma insulin shots. We all feared shooting Ma with a needle, and now that was a moot issue. Now the discussion at hand was how to bury Ma. What a fast turn in events in a few short hours.



**Jean Lippert Dahl**



**Shorty Dahl**

While Ma was in the hospital I had my first visit from my brother Shorty since he married Jean. He wanted to know if it was okay with us to bring Jean to the hospital. I told him it was okay. However when Jean's mother showed up at the funeral I was really upset as she never liked Ma at all and in fact I felt that she may have instigated some of the hard feelings in the beginning that escalated into the separation. Shorty also came to Marie's house after the funeral to discuss paying for the funeral and the final hospital and ambulance and medical expenses Ma incurred. Shorty stuttered a great deal and tried to get back into the family's good graces but that was not to be yet until another 13 years had passed. As one ages one begins to realize the importance of family and one regrets any hard feelings and splits that occur in one's younger years.

I called my brother Bill that Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> to tell him Ma had died. Bill then told me he would call Shorty to tell him Ma died. I told Bill that he and Shorty were to go over to the hospital and settle up the bill as I had to bring \$100 to the hospital billing office every day Ma was in there and there was still a balance owing. We never had any arguments over Ma's final expenses. Everything was settled up most amicably.



**Edward & Marie Bender**

I called my sister Marie about 5:40 am to tell her that Ma had passed away. When she heard the phone ringing at that hour a sense of deep dread filled her soul – she just knew it had to be someone calling to tell her that her mom was gone. When she answered the phone I gave her the bad news – Ma's heart had stopped in her sleep about an hour ago. She slipped away without

even knowing it. Marie went back upstairs and told Ed her mom was gone. Sandy heard that conversation and was shocked. Just last night everyone was saying how good Ma looked and how well she was doing and how feisty she was, shaking those IVs and saying she wanted them out. Marie and Sandy cried all day that very sad March 25. When Ed got home for supper he told Marie that she should stop crying, that that is not what Nellie would have wanted. Ed told her that Nellie had lead a good life and was now in heaven with God and her loved ones and she should rejoice with Nellie that all her earthly infirmities were over.

Ma was laid out at Van Lerbergh's funeral home at Warren and Lakeview on the east side of Detroit. We were all shocked when we saw Ma laid out – she looked just like she did as a young woman in 1906 – what a change from her grandmotherly look all through the years that we were all so familiar with! Her hair was curled and there was make up on her face. Boy, would Nellie ever have been upset to see her hair curled and make up on! She loved the hair cuts I always gave her all through the years and she hated curls. (They crimped her hair for Mildred's wedding – the style in those days – and when she saw what they had done to her hair she replied that she looked just like a kinky haired Jew.) So this hairstyle would not have pleased her in the least. But she looked so attractive and so young, albeit not the Nellie we were used to all through the years. Nellie's old boyfriend came to see her when he read her obituary and he was taken with how much she looked like the young Nellie he knew. But he told us never to tell his wife he came here or she'd be upset.

Ma had such a lovely funeral. 25 vases of flowers all over the room. Nellie would have been so pleased with her funeral – she always said she wanted to have lots of flowers at the funeral. All us kids went into a room in the funeral parlor and picked out Ma's casket. We were very pleased with our selection. We also picked out a set of underwear in plastic. Ma had over 17 pair of underwear at home and over 20 pair of stockings, but we bought brand new in the plastic package for Ma. We also picked out a lovely light pink dress for Ma. She looked so good in it.



**Hattie Rehfeldt Forkel**



**Marge Rehfeldt Moran, Eleanor Forkel**



**Clara&Ray Fredrick Minna Bob Celia George Anna**

Her sister Tillie was not able to come as she had just had her 4<sup>th</sup> stroke and was no longer mobile, but Tillie sent her friend to the funeral so her friend could come back to Tillie and tell her all about it. Nellie's sister in laws, Clara Fredrick and Anna Galvin were there. Clara's brother George Dahl Sr was there too. Uncle Frank Dahl was not at Ma's funeral because he was living in Florida at the time. Nellie's brothers, Charles (Bud) and Bill Rehfeldt came. Bud's daughter Marge Rehfeldt Moran came. (My sister Marie was close with our cousin Margie all through the years and they often visited back and forth with their families.) Aunt Hattie Forkel and her 2 daughters Ruth and Eleanor were there. My Canadian cousins, Bertha, Isabelle, Ida and their dad Uncle Bill Dahl of Woodslee were there. (Aunt Jennie, Bill's wife was already dead. Isabelle, the oldest daughter, had a sad story to tell about Uncle Bill, her dad. He got Alzheimer's in his later years and had to live with her. She said he did some really crazy things at night in her house, like rolling up the rugs after they were in bed. )



**Betty Roehm, neighbor**



**Ruth & Eleanor Forkel**



**Nellie, Fred & Tillie Meinke on Baldwin – 1922**

Our next door neighbor on Baldwin, Mrs. Roehm and her daughter Catherine were there.



**Marianne, Elenore & Herman on Coyle**

My daughter Marianne tried to come to Nellie's funeral but didn't make it as she missed the plane. She was trying to fly in to Detroit with her infant daughter Laurie. Marianne's in laws, Mr & Mrs De Maria and their daughter Jeanie were there. Herman's sister Ann also made it to the funeral. And naturally all my brothers and sisters and their families made it to the wake. Mildred and Sonny were there with their daughter Doris. (Doris loved her Grandma Nellie and had many a good time with her when Nellie lived at the Stocker residence. Doris tells of how Nellie when she got her pension check at the beginning of the month would have Doris go to the Deli and buy a feast for her and Doris for lunch. One time Doris said Nellie ate everything in the sack with Doris' help and then asked Doris to go back to the Deli and buy a second helping. Doris said to Nellie, "Oh no! Grandma, you'll get sick if you eat all that stuff! ")



**Doris Stocker**

Marie was there with her daughter Sandy on the first day Ma was laid out. They came right after lunch and were the first ones to view Ma. They were both shocked at how young Ma looked. Sandy couldn't believe it was her grandmother and looked around to see if there was another room, but her mother Marie recognized right away that it was her mother but that she looked like a young woman again. It took Sandy years to accept that the woman in that casket was really her Grandma Nellie because never have seen her Grandmother as a young woman nor had she seen pictures of Nellie as young until years later. Marie's husband Edward was there after work and Marie's oldest 2 children, Michael and Nancy and her husband Don were also there.



**Dorothy & Bill Dahl**



**Nancy & Don Stephens**



**Mickey Bender**



**Sharon Dahl**

My brother Bill and his wife Dorothy and their daughter Sharon came. Sharon put her head together with Sandy and wondered if she dared to touch Nellie. Sandy didn't have the nerve to do it but Sharon did. Boy did she ever feel cold and stiff was Sharon's reply.



**Cora Lippert Wilson**

Shorty and Jean and Jean's mother Mrs. Lippert came. I was upset that Mrs. Lippert came to Ma's funeral as I felt she was the cause or partial cause of a lot of the rift that occurred between us and so I felt her presence at Ma's funeral after Ma suffered so much heart ache at not seeing her son Harold for so many years was uncalled for.

Nellie had such a nice big funeral because she was the first of her brothers and sisters to die so the rest were all at her funeral. (Nellie's oldest sister Tillie was the last to die so she had a very small funeral as everyone else was either dead or Tillie's daughter Helen Doench lived in New York and was thus out of touch with the nieces and nephews and didn't know how to contact them to inform them of her mother's death.)



**Aunt Clara Dahl Fredrick**

At that family meeting all expenses were laid out and everyone immediately paid their fair share for everything. I was so glad as I had put out the lion's share of the expenses and no way could Herman and I have afforded that big outlay of cash. Then at Nellie's funeral I got a big surprise from Aunt Clara – she handed me \$400 and told me that Minna, Pa's mother had set this money aside just before she died in order to pay Nellie's funeral expenses. I then asked Clara where the interest was on that money from 1944 to 1955. Clara responded that she and Anna needed the money so they took it out of the bank account and used it and were just now giving it back to us for the funeral so there was no accumulated interest. That really peeked my interest

– did that money come from Grandma Minna Dahl or did it come from Pa who sent Clara as he didn't intend to come out of hiding?! I guess we'll never know the answer to that one as Clara died with this secret in tact in 1968 and no one else in the family ever professed to know Pa's whereabouts from 1929 to the present day.

At Ma's funeral one of the Dahl cousin's from Canada said something to me that upset me – she said "I hope you were good to your mother". We were very good to Ma, of course, but what good would such a statement be if we weren't good to ma!? It sure would have been too late to do something about it at that point!



**The Dahl sisters of Canada**



**St John Berchman's Church, it was through this door that Nellie's casket was carried.**

Ma was buried on March 28, 1955. Her funeral mass was said at St. John Berchman's Church in Detroit, Marie and Edward's parish. One of the pall bearer's was Marie's 17 year old son Michael. He said that that casket was so heavy, with Ma's weight plus the fact that we had purchased a very fine, very heavy metal bronze colored casket for Ma. Carrying it up all those stairs to the Church was a really heavy burden. Mike was afraid they were going to buckle under all that weight. Ma had a really nice funeral mass and a nice sermon. I remember crying and crying and crying all through her service I was so upset over losing Ma. A funny memory just came to mind. In those days you wore a hat in church to cover your head. My winter hat

was inappropriate as I didn't want to wear a light color to the funeral so I wore my navy blue straw hat. I felt funny about wearing a summer straw hat to Ma's funeral but I had to as the dark color was the appropriate one for a funeral. Father Verweil of the Order of the Servants of Mary said the funeral mass for Ma.



**Michael Bender**

After the mass the casket was then carried down the steep steps of the Church and the long funeral procession to Mt. Olivet cemetery began. Our cars followed the hearse carrying my Ma's body. Oh, how I cried that day! It was such a shock to lose Ma suddenly like that! Mildred and Sonny's car was first to follow the hearse, then Herman and I followed in our car, then Edward and Marie and their family, then Bill and Dorothy and then Shorty and Jean. After that there were many other cars carrying friends and relatives of Nellie and our family. It was a bit of a long drive. We took Warren Ave west to Conner Ave. Marie said as we were driving down Conner Ave we saw a big sign advertising Objibwa herbs. Marie remembered that her next door neighbor, Mrs. Meeseman was taking a lot of these herbs on a regular basis. Mrs. Meeseman was the same age as Ma but much much healthier. Marie said she couldn't help but wonder if Ma would have remained healthier longer if she had taken the same stuff.

We then continued down Conner to 6 Mile Rd, then into the front entrance to Mt. Olivet where we watched the undertaker hand over the burial permit, then onward we went to section 46 to the Dahl family plot where the open grave awaited Ma's remains. We all got out of our cars after the casket was placed on the ropes stretched over the open grave and filed around the casket. Father Verweil said the final commendation and farewell prayers for Ma's soul and then the undertaker had each one of us take a flower and place it on Ma's casket. Nancy, Marie's daughter was 7 ½ months pregnant at the time and as she walked up to the casket to place the flower on it her foot slipped and her family grabbed her and steadied her, otherwise she could

have slipped under the casket and into the hole! That gave Nancy nightmares for years to come, she was so frightened by that experience.



**Nellie's grave**



**Nellie Dahl**



**Marie Bender**

After we finished our final farewells we all got back into our cars and began our lonely treks back home to a world now devoid of our beloved Mama. All we had left of Mama from this point forward was our cherished memories.

It was a cold but clear day up until the time we buried Ma but a few hours later after we got back home we had considerable snow, enough for Sandy to make a snow horse,. Which I saw shortly afterwards when I went to visit Marie and finish up our financial business. When I went to Marie's house I gave her 10 year old daughter Sandy 2 mementos to remember Nellie by – I gave her an inexpensive little colorful bird pin and a green emerald cut ring. Doris got upset that Sandy got the ring as she said that a Stocker uncle of hers gave Nellie the ring so it should have gone back to Doris or Mildred. Later Marie had a family get together and when the company left the ring could no longer be found. Sandy was very sad about the loss of that ring as she remembered Nellie wearing it and it had sentimental value.



**Linda Stephens White**



**Linda, Nancy, Don, Warren**



**Linda & Nancy**

Marie's first grand daughter Linda Marie Stephens was born 7 weeks later, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 1955, one day after Marie's son Michael's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was born with jet black hair and lots of it, but it soon fell out and was replaced with blonde hair. But what startled the family most was Linda was born with a distinct crease at the base of her nose, just like Nellie had. That was quite startling to all of us given that Linda was born so close after Nellie's death. Herman and I babysat her for about a week as an infant while Don and Nancy went on vacation to Puerto Rico.



**Patti De Maria**



**Elenore McKinin & Patti Bartos**

My grand daughter Patricia (Patti) De Maria was born on March 15, 1956, my daughter Marianne's second child. She was a much quieter, more content child. What a relief that was after what we went through with Laurie for a whole year!



**Linda, Warren & Donna**



**Donna, Linda & Warren**



**Donna Stephens**



**Don, Nancy, Warren, Donna & Linda Stephens**

Marie's third grandchild, Donna Christine Stephens was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 1958 in Berkley, Michigan.



**Elenore and Herman on vacation**

Herman and I loved to go on vacation. Most of our lives we went camping and fishing. One of our favorite places was in the upper peninsula at the St. Mary's River, also known as the Neebish channel. We were able to sit at our campsite and watch the big ocean going freighters go by. We ate fish every night – that day's fresh catch.



**Elenore & Herman**



**Herman McKinin**

Herman and I loved to fish. We had an 18 foot fishing boat that we spent many a happy hour fishing in. Herman paid special attention to the draw of the boat when he bought it, making sure he bought the one that would stand the highest out of the water. Whenever we encountered high waves we were very glad that Herman chose a deep boat.



**Woodslee, Ontario, Canada**



**Dahl farm in Woodslee**



**Woodslee Dahl reunion**

Sometimes we went fishing near Woodslee, Canada, the hometown of our Canadian Dahl cousins. One time when Herman and I pulled our boat into the dock at the weigh station in Woodslee we asked the people who ran the

marina if they knew the Dahls of Woodslee. Of course, they answered us, we store our boats over the winter in their barn.

Other times we would go fishing near Algonac, launching our boat at a boat launch on Lake St. Clair. Sometimes we would even go near Harsen's Island in our fishing boat. When we moved to Florida we had to sell our fishing boat. We were unable to purchase a fishing boat in Florida as we were retired on a tight budget so we couldn't afford a fishing boat and related expenses. But that didn't stop us from fishing, through. In Florida Herman and I spent many an hour fishing off the docks.

We had a scary fishing story that was a miracle it didn't turn in to a full blown tragedy. I went fishing with Frank on his boat and as he started pulling away from the dock neither he nor I noticed that the electrical cord for the refrigerator was wrapped around my ankle. So when the boat started out to sea the cord wound itself around my leg and then it started strangulating my leg. The cord was stopping the boat from going forward and my leg was being strangulated. I was in unbelievable agony. Finally Frank realized what was happening and reversed the boat and got the cord off my leg. They immediately rushed me to the hospital where I was treated for a strangulation wound to my leg. I was very lucky that I didn't lose my leg that day. To this very day I still have the indentation around my leg, but not as deep as when it first occurred.

I also had another less serious fishing accident while fishing with my grand son in law Steve in Florida. I hooked a fish on my fishing line and then was unable to bring the fish in by myself. Steve jumped in to help me reel in the fish and in the excitement of bringing the fish in the fishing line cut my hand and I had to be rushed to the emergency room once again. I needed 9 stitches in my hand to close the wound.



**Elenore**



**Doug Jr, Doug & Elenore in back**



**Elenore**

My latest fishing trip was a big surprise. While visiting Marie and Sandy in June of 2002 Marie's son Doug and his son Doug Jr. took me and Sandy out fishing in his new 28 foot Bayliner boat. We spent 6 hours trolling for Pickerel. I was really lucky that day. I caught 11 pickerel, 12 silver bass and one Sheephead. I reeled them in and Douggie caught them with the net and took the hook out of their mouth and put them in the cooler. He later cleaned the fish. They offered to let me take them home but being 90 years old, and all the luggage I already have to handle, what with our big shopping trips and all, I just couldn't handle a cooler full of fish too.

Grandma Henkel and Aunt Anna Dahl Galvin owned a cottage at Harsen's Island. One time I went to visit Grandma Henkel at her home at 9144 Cadillac in Warren but was disappointed to find her not at home. The neighbor said she was at her cottage at Harsen's Island. I looked in all of her living room windows and was so pleased to see her home made afghans laying over the backs of her chairs. Grandma Henkel died not too long after that.



**Herman McKinin**

Herman was always an honest, upright man. He never could tolerate cheating or dishonesty. One time he and his sister Annie and her husband Mike went to buy some lots on lower straight lake in Oakland County. They were being sold from an estate and were only \$5 per lot. Herman, Annie and Fred decided to buy a number of lots for investment purposes and maybe to build a cottage on them at a later date. On the day of the sale Fred had to work so he gave Annie his money and told her to buy several of the lots for him. Herman, Annie and Mike went to the sale. Annie found that there were lots for sale on both sides of the street. On one side the lots were deeper and the other side the lots were much shallower. All were the same price that day. Annie decided to buy all the deeper lots for herself and buy the shallower ones for Fred. Herman repeatedly told Annie that was not right, that she should share the longer lots with Fred as he was the one who

gave her the money for this transaction. Annie wouldn't listen to Herman and went ahead and gave herself the best lots. Fred was mighty upset with her when he found out what she had done.



**Mildred Stocker**



**Sonny Stocker**



**Elenore & Herman McKinin**

Boy, did my sister Mildred ever almost get Herman and I into a barrel of trouble one time! Mildred called me and asked if Herman would drive her to a bar to meet up with Sonny because Sonny bought a new car and traded in his old one and then changed his mind so the owner of the car lot told Sonny to meet him in the bar and he would give him the title back to his old car. So Sonny went alone to the bar and when Mildred thought about it for awhile she was a nervous wreck worrying that the car dealer was going to cheat Sonny and she wasn't there to fight for him, so she called us to drive her to the bar. So Herman agreed and Herman and I drove over to Mildred's house and she got into our car and we drove her to the bar. As she was getting out of the car she opened her purse and showed us that she had Sonny's gun in case she needed to use it! Were Herman and I ever beside ourselves with fright! Mildred might shoot the guy in the bar and Herman and I were driving the get away car! Fortunately Sonny got his title back and Mildred didn't have to shoot anybody and a very shaken up Herman and I got to go home without being an accessory to murder!



**Ann Ross McKinin**

I took care of both my mother in law and father in law in their last days. My mother in law, Ann Ross McKinin died of cancer when she was only 58 years old. It was a long, lingering death. I remember going to the doctor's

office to get the morphine for her to ease her suffering. The doctor told me not to tell a soul that I was carrying all this morphine as someone was very liable to conk me over the head and take the stuff.

My father in law lived with Herman, Marianne and me up until his death in about 1947. When he first needed to come to us it was a real juggling feat as Nellie also needed to stay with us for the first time all about the same time. I told Herman his father coming could present a problem as I needed the bedroom for my mother 3 months out of the year. It turned out to work out okay as my father in law also started doing what Nellie did – he stayed several months with several of his children. He stayed 3 months each with Herman, Fred, Mary and Annie. Annie complained a lot that she didn't want to take her father, but Elenore and the family told her to either take her turn or hire a housekeeper.

One day when Mary came to visit Mr. McKinin he gave her \$400 he had been saving up to keep for him. Mary told Annie and the family as she figured the family would have a fit if they found out Mary had the \$400. So the family decided to save that money for his burial costs.

I remember the day his Federoff cousins from Pennsylvania came to visit him at our house. His cousin George told him during that visit that the McKinin name was originally spelled Mekinin and was changed in America. While George was visiting Herman's father, the father asked George to buy him some ice cream. Herman and I felt so bad as we would have gladly bought him ice cream if he had asked us for it. He made us feel as though we wouldn't buy him any.

When I went to do the wash for my sister Marie after Sandy was born I would leave my father in law a boiled egg and a tea bag for his lunch. When I came back he hadn't even touched it so I asked him what he wanted me to get him to eat. He replied he wanted a glass of water, then as I started to leave the bedroom he said could I squeeze an orange in it and then as I started down the stairs he asked me to put some sugar in it. I mused to myself why couldn't he have just asked me for all of that while I was still standing in the room!?

He had worked in the coal mines in Pennsylvania and therefore most likely had black lung which is very likely what he died of. I remember the day he died. He slept upstairs. He came downstairs that morning and went into the

bathroom while we were all still in bed. While I was in bed I heard what sounded like something falling in the bath tub. Some time later I told Herman he'd better check on his father as he had been in the bath room for a rather long time. Herman got up and checked and found his father laying on the floor in his bathroom. So Herman picked his father up and carried him to his bedroom. He died shortly after that.



**Herman & Elenore McKinin**

We always had to be very careful with our expenditures as Herman worked for Chrysler's and like all the car companies in those days you'd work for 6 months and then get laid off for 6 months, so when you worked you had to save your money to tide you over the lay offs. One lay off was so long that Herman was within a week or two of losing all his seniority and having to start over as a new hire when thankfully just before the cut off date he was called back to work. That was a big scare! During one of those long lay offs we had to borrow money from our teenage daughter Marianne and then pay her back when Herman was back to work.



**Elenore, Marianne & Herman McKinin**

Our daughter would go to school mornings and then take the bus to work after school to her part time job. Marianne was such a cheerful child, she never complained about anything. She also could take teasing and ribbing very good naturally too. One time for April Fool's day we put salt in the sugar bowl, then warned Nellie and Herman not to take any sugar. Marianne put the salt in her coffee, took a drink and spit that horribly salty tasting stuff

right out of her mouth. We all laughed and Marianne laughed right along with us. Another time when she came in from a date quite late I tied the bottoms of her pajama legs together and when she tried to put them on in the dark her feet wouldn't get through. She was really good natured about that one too.



**Marianne McKinin**



**Marianne**



**Sandy & Marianne**



**Marianne & Sandy**

She graduated from high school in 1948. We had a big party for her in our backyard on Coyle in Detroit and invited both sides of the family.

Marianne had a boyfriend she really liked named Joe. We were not too thrilled with him but we just stood by while she dated him. Soon there was trouble in paradise. She found out he was dating another as well. Marianne wanted a commitment and Joe was not about to get married. Marianne broke up with him and was then so despondent that Herman and I felt bad for her and told her we would take her to his place so she could talk things over with him. When we got there he was not at home so Herman talked to a neighbor who told him Joe had a girl there for the weekend. Herman heard enough at that point and told Marianne we were driving back home.

It was not too long after that that Marianne met Frank De Maria. Marianne had a best friend Betty who lived with her aunt on a farm. She was such a good friend that we took her with us to Florida and to California. Later on Betty ended up working in the same insurance office as Frank's sister Jeannie. A girl in the insurance office got married and invited Betty and Jeannie. Betty took Marianne to the wedding and Jeannie took her whole family including Frank to the same wedding. Frank and Marianne met at that wedding. Frank was immediately taken with Marianne. He and Marianne talked outside the hall that evening and Frank knew in his heart she was the type of girl that he wanted to get to know better. One week later Frank came to the bowling alley to watch Marianne bowl. And after that he would call her every night and talk to her for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Marianne

came home from that wedding that night and told Herman and I that she had met a very nice fellow there. She said he was in college and had one more year to finish. My reaction was, "Not another one of those!". At the time Frank worked for WJR in the Fisher Bldg. He started work every night at 10 pm so he would call Marianne about 7 to 7:30 pm. He was an audio engineer at WJR, working while putting himself through college. After Frank graduated from college people were telling him that WJR was a no where job, that he would never get any significant advancement there, so that's why he left WJR and started working for Burroughs, a job he remained at until his retirement. Burroughs transferred Frank to Florida toward the end of his career which is what brought Marianne close to us again for a number of years.



**Marianne McKinin & Frank De Maria**

About a year later Marianne married Frank while he was in service. Shortly after she was married she moved with Frank to the base in Mississippi. Boy, did Marianne ever get a deep tan while stationed down there! That's where she also started her little family. Marianne came home to us about 6 weeks before Laurie was born because if she had the baby in Mississippi she would not be able to travel to Michigan for Christmas and she and Frank wanted to spend the Christmas holidays in Michigan with family. So little Laurie was born on Christmas Eve of 1953 in Michigan and Frank flew up here to spend the holidays with his family, wife and new little daughter. Frank flew back a few weeks later and Laurie and Marianne joined them as soon as Marianne could travel with the new baby.



**Laurie De Maria**



**Laurie**



**Laurie**



**Elenore & Laurie**



**Mr & Mrs De Maria and Patti**

We were very pleased to have Mr & Mrs De Maria as our daughter's father and mother in law. They were very fine people and Herman and I liked and respected both of them. They were warm friendly people and they had a real flair for entertaining. They turned their living room into a formal dining room when entertaining and they had the finest in china and a wonderful spread in food and drink. It was always a pleasant experience to entertain or be entertained by them. Frank also had a lovely sister Jeannie. She is a lovely, gentle, friendly, honest person.



**Elenore & Herman**



**Mike, Nellie, Marianne Elenore Herman**



**Patti, Nancy, Sandy Marie, Elenore**

We had such a beautiful garden on Coyle. We had the lot our home sat on and also the lot next door. Herman and I spent many a happy hour together in that garden, planting, pruning, weeding and sitting there in our white wooden lawn chairs just enjoying the fruits of our labor. It was such a gorgeous garden! Our roses were superb as were all our other flowers. It was such a sad day when we sold that property and lost that nice extra flower filled lot. It was an even sadder day when the doctor told Herman that due to his health he would no longer be able to spend hour upon hour gardening.

One day Herman decided to build a new home from the ground up in Redford. A new house was a thrill but it was also very hard to leave our beautiful home on Coyle and all our nice neighbors there. Herman picked a lot on San Jose for our future house. He said he picked that lot because it was the highest one on the block. That later proved to be a wise decision as one time all the houses on the lower lots on both sides of us had basement floods after a heavy rain, but our home remained high and dry.

Herman contacted a real estate 3 times in order to sell our home on Coyle. The first 2 times I became really upset, telling Herman that I did not want to move, that I intended to retire in our home on Coyle as I was very comfortable there and it was a very reasonable home to maintain. I knew that our bills would be much less on Coyle than in a new home. Herman made a hobby of touring new homes, looking for the perfect home to move to. Finally one day I saw the model of what would later be our home on San Jose in Redford. I told Herman I really liked that home and that I would be willing to move if I could have that home. But I needed a few changes in order to have it to my liking. As the model stood it had 3 bedrooms and 2 baths upstairs. I needed a formal dining room which that model did not have. The builder agreed that if I gave up the 3<sup>rd</sup> bedroom and bath I could have a formal dining room instead. To make up for the loss of the second bath on the main floor Herman had a toilet put in the basement and an

enclosure built around it. So Herman put our home up for sale on Coyle and paid to have our new home built on San Jose. We moved away from Coyle in 1955, the same year Mama died.



My daughter Marianne and her husband Frank liked our home on San Jose so they bought a new home a short distance away from us on Rockland Drive in Dearborn Heights. So for a number of years we lived only a short distance away from one another, allowing us to visit back and forth very frequently. That allowed me to be at Marianne's house very often, and I helped her raise her 3 daughters. The 3 girls have mentioned to me that we were so close during their formative years that I seemed as much or more like a mother as a grandmother. It was like they had 2 mothers those years. I really enjoyed being so close to my daughter and her children. We all got along so wonderfully in those days. We were truly a happy family.



**Patti, Marie, Mildred & Heidi, Marianne, Laurie and Judy – May, 1969**



**Sandy, Patti, Marie, Mildred, Judy & Laurie**

We had many wonderful get togethers with both sides of the family through the years. We always had a wonderful time together, but looking back those

big family parties always cost \$50. which was a lot of money in those days when the average wage was \$1.25 an hour. Sometimes we had the party at my house, sometimes at Marianne's. Either way I did a major part of the cooking and baking, helping Marianne every step of the way. We had some wonderful spreads through the years. Every one was always very impressed with our meals, desserts, etc.



**Elenore, Marianne, Mildred, Doris, Sandy & Marie – June, 1971**



**Marie Bender, Elenore McKinin, Sandy Bender**

My sister Marie and her daughter Nancy also had us over their house for the same kind of gala meals, with lots of laughs and fun afterwards. We always really enjoyed each others' company. We played card games, talked, laughed, and at Marie's house we even had a big laugh over trying to throw a basketball through the hoop. I was more successful at that than Marianne and Marie – they never even got the basketball half way up to the hoop! Boy, as usual, did we ever have fun that day! Sandy took a lot of pictures that day, and the pictures of my Marianne being so genuinely happy that day are among some of my favorites of my daughter.



**Herman & Elenore McKinin**

Herman was always very skilful and artistic at decorating the Christmas tree. It was truly a work of art to view his tree. He would place every strand of tinsel separately on the tree and it was so beautiful seeing that tinsel hang so precisely. Herman and I would give each other a well thought out gift and would wrap it in beautiful paper and bows. When my sister Marie looked at the beautiful way we had wrapped each other's gifts, she made the comment, "Boy, I bet that wrapping paper and bows cost more than the present!" "Not the kind of presents we buy!" Was my reply.



**Judy De Maria**



**Heidi & Judy**



**Judy**



**Elenore & Judy Wilds**

Our last grand daughter Judy De Maria was born on October 6, 1962. She is the child who looks the most like me. She is the only daughter who traveled with Frank and Marianne and lived in Florida with them. The older two girls were married before Frank moved to Florida. I grew especially close to Judy as she was there with us in Florida while we were all living close by in Florida. Judy had one cute little thing she liked to do in Florida while visiting me – she loved to count the new brown spots on my arms!



**Craig Stephens**



**Donna, Warren, Craig, Linda Stephens**

Then on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January, 1965 Marie's daughter Nancy had her last grandchild, Craig Michael Stephens. He was a surprise baby as the doctors had been telling Nancy for the last 7 years that she was incapable of having more children. He also gave Marie's family another nasty surprise – he almost died due to the Rh factor which was just being understood around the time Craig was born. Ed had Rh negative blood which is the reason he survived as his mother lost 5 new borns before Ed as she had the Rh factor which destroyed her younger children's blood before they were even born. Ed then passed on this to Nancy. The first 2 or 3 children in the family typically survive and then all the Rh positive children born after that die. Nancy's blood attacked Craig's and he was dying. They just recently learned that they could save some of the babies by replacing their blood with negative blood that does not contain antibodies against Rh positive blood. Craig had several transfusions and for awhile it was touch and go but after dropping to 4 lbs he turned around and survived.



**Elenore & Herman McKinin**

In the latter half of the 1960s Herman and I were planning our retirement and we realized that we would be on a tight budget so we had to plan ahead to make our money stretch as far as it could to provide us with a comfortable retirement in our last years. We decided the taxes on our present home on San Jose were too prohibitive so we looked around for less expensive living arrangements. Among other things we checked out the Chateau Estates in Sterling Heights 1 mile away from my sister Marie. But we decided against living in a trailer park and soon Herman was drawn to living in Florida. He really liked the idea of no more winters. He felt he could be outdoors fishing and doing gardening year around which really appealed to him. We went to Florida and found a new complex being built on Keene Park Drive in Largo. We really liked those houses and the price \$12,000 was very reasonable and the taxes were much less than on San Jose. So we put our house on San Jose up for sale, sold it and moved to Florida to our new home on Keene Park Drive. We loved both our home and our neighbors and our neighborhood. And for Herman it was a fishing paradise. He had to give up his boat when we moved from Michigan as he could no longer afford to keep it but we were happy fishing off the docks in Florida and we caught some good sized fish. The really big ones Herman caught tickled him to no end. We have pictures of those fish as we decided to get out the camera and record this catch for posterity.



**Herman McKinin**

Herman said that fishing with one of the real old duffers taught him something in his elder years. The old guy had a birthday so Herman bought the guy a real nice minnow bucket with rope attached and gave it to him on his birthday and offered to go fishing with him, which they did. Herman filled the bucket full of minnows at the dock and gave it to the old guy. The old guy takes the minnow bucket and throws it in forgetting to tie the rope first. There went Herman's new minnow bucket, minnows and all. Herman said he was ready to just explode with anger over the idiocy of the whole

thing, when as a sudden Herman said he realized that in the grand scheme of things how important was the loss of a new minnow bucket.

We were the youngsters in this retirement community when we moved in in 1968. All the other neighbors were older than us as we were newly retired in those days. As the years went by it was so sad to see our card playing buddies get older and older and then one by one die off. It was certainly a sobering experience.

One exciting thing happened while we were in our home in Florida. I was at the kitchen sink preparing dinner when I looked out the window and saw a guy running real fast between our house and the next one. I was curious so I kept watching and right after him the police came running, threw him to the ground and tackled and handcuffed him right in our yard! I was so upset I started shaking all over really bad! Herman put me in his arms till I calmed down. Whew! What an experience that was!



**David Rotary & Laurie De Maria**

Laurie Carol De Maria and David George Rotary were married on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 1975. Shortly afterwards they moved to the St. John Michigan area and David started working with his father in the glass business. Later on Dave's father retired and moved to Florida. There was a falling out as David was not being properly compensated for his efforts so Dave and Laurie went on their own in the glass business.



**Patti De Maria and Edward Bartos**

The next year Patricia Anne De Maria met Edward Joseph Bartos, courted and on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, 1976 they married in the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak.



**Frank De Maria**

Marianne's husband Frank was transferred to Florida by his corporation, Burroughs, but they moved to the east coast and settled in near Pampano Beach, Florida. As Herman became older and had health problems we both felt it was wiser to sell our home in Largo and buy one in Pampano Beach near Frank and Marianne so I would have support should I find myself in need of help and eventually alone without my beloved Herman. So that's what we did. It was sad leaving our home in Largo, but family was of outmost importance now that we were getting older and might need help. We bought a home in Deerfield Beach just down the street from Marianne and Frank. It cost a lot more and we didn't get as good a home as we had in Largo, but everything was more expensive on the east coast. And it was a different ethnic mix on this coast. Eighty percent of our neighbors were Jewish.



**Harold (Shorty) & Jean Dahl**

I had heard from my sister Marie that they had reconciled with our brother Shorty at the end of 1960s. They were now visiting back and forth and getting along well together. So I wasn't as shocked as I other wise might have been when Jean and Shorty ended up on our door step in Florida shortly afterwards. I had an eye patch on my eye for 3 days at this point as I

had just scratched my eye, so I felt kind of awkward with a patch over one of my eyes. But I welcomed them warmly and had them come in our house for a nice friendly visit. That melted the ice and we were once again reconciled. We met often after that every time we came to Michigan. I was so glad I got to see my brother Shorty again before he died at the rather young age of 67.



**Sandy Bender**

Sandy told me a funny story about our visit to her apartment around 1976. We called her and told her we'd be at her apartment in less than an hour. She panicked big time! She had been working over time and the house was cluttered and she had 5 days dishes sitting in the sink. She told her 88 year old next door neighbor she didn't know what to do! She had enough time to straighten the house or do the dishes, but not both. Marie said there was a simple solution she used a lot of times in her life. Just stuff all the dirty dishes under the sink and then clean up the house and everything will look spic and span. So Sandy did that and we arrived just afterwards and the place looked just fine but Sandy was a nervous wreck over all those dirty dishes waiting to bust out from under the sink. That was the first and last time she pulled that one.



**Elenore & Judy in Pampano Beach**

It wasn't too long after we moved into our home in Deerfield Beach that Herman began to have increasing health problems. He was now over 70 and he comes from a family who has a lot of cancer in their line, and Herman unfortunately was unable to escape succumbing to it. The fortunate thing

was that Herman did not acquire the cancer in his earlier years so we were able to enjoy almost 50 years of married life together.



**Marie, Craig Stephens, Karen Otter, Bill, Doug, Mike, Edward & Sandy Bender**



**Karen Otter & Doug Bender**

Marie's youngest son got married on June 19, 1976 and that began Marie's second set of grandchildren. Karen and Doug had a surprise announcement to make when they visited Ed and Marie on Christmas, 1976 – they were expecting their first child which would be born in July, 1977. Michelle Marie Bender was born on July 28, 1977. It was a very difficult birth. Karen was in labor for over 30 hours before her elderly doctor figured out that Shelley's head was too large to fit through the pelvis. A caesarean was performed and little Shelley made her entrance into the world in the evening of July 28<sup>th</sup>.



**Michelle(Shelley) Bender**



**Shelley**



**Shelley & Douggie Bender**

My brother Bill's wife Dorothy Dolato Dahl had been complaining of being ill for years and years. She said she had pain in all of her bones. Finally in April of 1977 Dorothy couldn't take the pain anymore and had her doctor

check her into a hospital for tests. At first the doctor said the test showed there was nothing wrong with her; that all her pain was psychological and that they would let her see a psychiatrist. Well the entire family knew that the doctor was way off the beam, that Dorothy was in awful pain and was now down to 70 lbs in weight. When the family raised Cain over that diagnosis more tests were run and they found that Dorothy had bone cancer throughout her entire body. She passed away a few weeks later on the 20th of May of 1977. She was buried in St. Hedwig cemetery in the Dearborn area. Her mother, Mrs. Kathryn Dolato and her brother Bob Dolato had passed away just a few months before her. Both of them had died of an aneurism. They are also buried in St. Hedwig cemetery. My brother Bill inherited money from his wife Dorothy who had inherited from her mother just 5 months before she died. Bill's two daughters, Sharon and Debbie also inherited from Mrs. Dolato at the time of her death. Both girls were able to purchase homes with the \$10,000 Mrs. Dolato had left to each of them.



**Dorothy & Bill Dahl**



**Kathryn Dolato**



**Sharon Dahl Smith**



**Debra Dahl Tymczak**



**Bill Dahl Jr.**

My brother Bill worked for Cadillac Motor car company on the west side of Detroit for most of his adult life. He retired from Cadillac somewhere around the early 1970s. Bill got lucky at work for one day one of the officials heard Bill's happy personality and infectious laughter and asked Bill if he wanted to become his driver. Bill liked the idea and so for a

number of years he got to drive an official around town. It sure beat working on the line!



**Bill Dahl Jr.**

Bill was a happy, fun loving sort of fellow. Usually very easy going, but at times if you riled him you could get him going. He lived in his mother in law's house in the upstairs flat almost all of his married life. He did not move out until years and years after his wife Dorothy died. Bill was laid off often just like Herman was so he was afraid of taking on any financial responsibility for fear if he was laid off he couldn't meet his bills. His mother in law offered to give him a lot to build a house but Bill declined. After Dorothy's death the neighbor across the street, Ann, started visiting Bill regularly and they started going places together. But Bill was only interested in her as a friend and about 5 years later he met Agnes, a woman quite a bit like Dorothy. Agnes was much more suited to Bill's liking so about 7 years after Dorothy's death Bill married Agnes in a simple ceremony in their local Catholic Church and they had a luncheon for close family members in the basement of the church social hall. Bill and Agnes were very happy together for a number of years until the strokes started taking Bill's memory. As Bill's memory got worse he and Agnes sold the home on 6920 Parkwood in Detroit and moved to a trailer park in Algonac to be near Debbie. Later on our family heard some 3<sup>rd</sup> hand information about money problems between Bill's wife and his daughters. A lawsuit ensued. Poor Bill was now in a nursing home and his cognitive functioning was totally gone, so he was really not any part of this trouble.

Then one day when I was visiting Marie and Sandy we found Agnes had died. We saw her death notice in the Detroit News so we decided to go to the funeral parlor in Bill's old neighborhood on the west side of Detroit and pay our respects. Agnes' family were most gracious to us and treated us very nicely, but in the middle of the visit Agnes's attorney came into the funeral parlor and started discussing the lawsuit in our presence. Someone clued her in to the fact that Marie and I were Bill's sisters so she quickly

moved to another room to continue the discussion. Poor Bill never knew his wife passed away.

Bill was happy in the nursing home he was in and we felt that the staff was taking good care of him while we were there visiting. I'm not sure if he recognized any of us or not, but at times I thought maybe he did as he seemed to get a look on his face that I felt was one of recognition. He seemed to react to the names Wee Wee and LuLu, which he and Marie called one another when they were little kids. Debbie and her girls were satisfied with his care and went nightly to feed him towards the end when he didn't want to eat anymore.

About 7 months before Bill died he got gangrene in his foot so he suffered an amputation of that foot. They were about to do another amputation of the other foot when he passed away. Bill and Shorty died hard. They suffered a lot of pain in the end. They both smoked a lot in their earlier years and the doctors attributed their loss of circulation in their extremities to the tobacco use.



**Michael Douglas Bender**



**Marie & Mike**



**Michael**



**Mike, Karen, Shelley & Doug Jr.**

At Christmas of 1977 Karen and Doug had another surprise announcement to make – their second child was on its way and would also be born in July of 1978. They chose July 20<sup>th</sup> as the birth date for this child as he was to be born by caesarean section. Michael Douglas Bender was born on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July in Seagate hospital in Trenton.



**Elenore & Herman McKinin**

Herman was always a really sharp dresser. And all on his own he always coordinated his clothing to whatever I was wearing and we always looked so well coordinated no matter what we wore.



**Brandon Scott Rotary**

The same year my first great grandchild was born. My granddaughter Laurie had married David Rotary, who was born on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, 1954 several years before and now on November 30, 1978 Brandon Rotary was born in St. John, Michigan.

Herman only got to see his first grand son Brandon as he died shortly after he was born. Laurie said she was just less than 2 months pregnant with Kristen when Herman passed away. At that time Laurie thought she had food poisoning or the stomach flu. It wasn't until a little while later that she realized that her "food poisoning" was Kristen on the way.



**Herman McKinin**

Back in 1979 Herman hadn't been feeling too well lately. He was just plain tired a lot of the time. Then in the first half of the year he found a lump in his neck-shoulder area. The doctor hospitalized Herman and took some tests. While I was there in the room with Herman the doctor came in and told Herman that the lump was a lymph node greatly enlarged because Herman had cancer. Herman turned as white as a sheet when he heard the word cancer. The doctor felt that the cancer had started in Herman's colon and had spread from there. Herman was in and out of the hospital the remainder of that year. In June of 1979 my sister Mildred and her husband Sonny were going to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, so Herman said we should go to Michigan for the celebration and to visit our relatives there for one last time even though Herman was really feeling lousy.

We went to Michigan and stayed with my sister Mildred, Sonny and their daughter Doris. I had a bad cold at that time and boy, were they ever afraid of catching it from me! But we had a nice visit and on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June we all celebrated Sonny and Mildred's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at a fancy restaurant on the water. Poor Mildred had such a horrible sinus headache that day and it showed in the pictures. We had lots of wonderful pictures taken that day. I used to laugh because every time we came to Michigan for a visit Sandy would line up us 5 kids for a picture. Another picture with the 5 Dahl kids! I used to tease Sandy. But now we are so glad we have those precious pictures!



**Marie, Mildred & Elenore at Shorty's**

Shortly after the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary Jean and Shorty invited us over to their house for a big family get together. We had another bunch of lovely pictures taken that day. When Herman saw Sandy taking all those pictures, he said to her that he wanted to take a picture of her as she was seldom in the pictures, being the main photographer of the family. Herman took some of the nicest shots of Sandy that day. She is very pleased with those pictures

and thinks of Herman whenever she sees these pictures. They are one of her favorites.

We played 31 that day and had a really good time playing cards and just generally enjoying one another's company. Jean put out a fine spread of food that day, as she always does at family get togethers.

But poor Herman got so sick he had to go to the emergency room in the middle of his visit in Michigan. The emergency room doctor told him he was very sick and that he should go home to his doctor in Florida. But Herman thought it over and said no, he wanted to visit the relatives and he would be no better home in Florida. Herman told Sandy that all through the years he was a reticent sort of a fellow and never told people when he really liked them, but now that time is short he was doing just that on this trip. Sandy was so very touched that Herman told her that he had enjoyed visiting with her through the years.

When we went back home to Florida life was a nightmare. Herman was in and out of the doctors' offices and the hospital. There was so little they could do for him. And now at my advanced age I had to learn to drive a car as Herman was fast becoming unable to do so. All our married life Herman did all the driving, but now I had to learn in order to drive him and after he died to get around on my own using his car.



**Elenore with the new wedding ring on her finger**

Herman did a very touching thing that year. He had planned to give me a new wedding ring for our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary which was to have been on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1980. But Herman had a real good inkling that he wasn't going to be around to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> so he bought and gave me the new wedding ring set early, saying he didn't want some other man to give me this set after he was gone. That was so touching of him.

The last time Herman was in the hospital he was so very exhausted. While I was visiting him he got uncomfortable and had to change positions in the bed. As he turned away from me he said, Elenore, please excuse my back.

In that terribly weakened condition they decided to send him home by ambulance. A hospice nurse came home with us. Herman was beyond exhaustion. The nurse sent me to the pharmacy to fill Herman's prescriptions. When I got back Herman was in extreme distress. He told me to call 911. I started to do what he told me when the nurse said no, don't. Herman repeated that I should call 911. While in shock and unable to decide what to do Herman passed away in the doorway. I miss him dearly, but now his suffering and utter exhaustion are over.



**Frank & Marianne De Maria**

Relatives came from all over for the funeral. Marie and Shorty flew in from Michigan. Frank and Marianne and all my grandchildren came. Boy, did I ever have a house full of people that week! Herman had a very nice funeral. I was heartened at how well everything went. We buried Herman in the local cemetery in Florida where he wanted to be. He loved Florida and wanted to stay there, so I respected his wishes.



**Elenore McKinin**

Gradually all the relatives dispersed to their homes and I was left alone, a new widow who would soon have to learn how to manage her affairs on her own without the help and support of a husband. I have to admit I did quite

well by myself. I used Herman's car to grocery shop and get around town for visits and business matters. I learned to write checks out of our checking account and to budget and manage money. It was real tough at first learning to get along financially without Herman's social security and pension check, but I was very fortunate in that Herman took a reduced amount in order that I could get a reduced pension after Herman's death. At first my check was only \$89, but through the years it continued to grow in value and now it is over \$500. The union was very good to me so I voluntarily give up union dues out of my check because I feel they deserve it after what they have done for me.



**Kristen Michelle Rotary**

A year and a half later my second grandchild was born. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, 1980 Laurie and David had their second child, Kristen Rotary.



**Marie Bender & Douggie Jr**



**Marie with Shelley, Mikey & Douggie**

That same year, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, 1980 Marie's last grandchild, Douglas Paul Bender Jr. was born in Huron Township, Michigan. He is the son of Douglas Bender Sr and Karen Otter Bender. While Karen was in Seaway hospital in Trenton giving birth to Douggie, her parents, Louise and Clarence Otter took care of her 2 older children, Michelle and Michael. Michael, who was 2 years old was restless so Mr. Otter often carried him out to the barn and showed him all the cows. Michael contracted the distemper virus from the cow which manifested itself as leukemia in children. Karen had no idea he was sick. She merely took him with her to the well baby clinic for a check up when she took Douggie for his baby shots. They took a

blood test on Mikey and found he was anemic. One week later they took another blood test and discovered it was leukemia. He was admitted to the children's hospital in Ann Arbor for chemotherapy. They told Karen he would have died within another week if left untreated. What a stroke of luck she took what she thought was a well child to the doctor! Our family has to be vigilant about leukemia as Nellie's 1<sup>st</sup> cousin died of leukemia and Herman's younger brother also died of it. Today most forms of leukemia can be cured if caught early.



**Jennifer Elizabeth Bartos**

Just short of a year later my second grand daughter, Patti De Maria Bartos, gave birth to her daughter Jenny Bartos. Patti had married Ed Bartos who was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 1949 several years earlier in a ceremony at the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak. Ed and Patti later moved to the Chicago, Illinois area where they presently reside.



**Emily Rotary**

That same year Dave and Laurie had their last child, Emily Rotary on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 1981. We were all struck with how closely little Emily resembled my daughter Marianne.



**Mildred & George Stocker**



**Bill, Elenore, Mildred, Marie and Shorty**

When we came up to Michigan in June of 1979 to visit my sister Mildred for her 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary I knew in my heart she was not really well. She had a lot of intestinal problems by that time, lots of diarrhea which my sister playfully called “the blowouts”. She told Sandy several years before she died that she was passing a lot of blood and feared that she had colon cancer. The colon problem got progressively worse and when Mildred suffered an intestinal blockage her worst fears were confirmed – the blockage was cancer. There wasn’t much they could do as it was now in an advanced stage. They did surgery to open the blockage and create a colostomy. They did chemotherapy to try unsuccessfully to shrink the tumor. But nothing helped and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, 1984 she succumbed to her colon cancer. Her daughter Doris was a real angel the way she cared for her mother. She did all the hard physical stuff like changing the colostomy, washing and bathing her mother. She went on half days at work so she could be home by 1 pm to care for her mother and prepare lunch for her. On March 7<sup>th</sup> Mildred started throwing blood clots to her chest so the doctor put her in the hospital and started an IV of morphine to keep her comfortable. The family called me to tell me that the end was near for my dear sister so I immediately hopped a plane and flew to Michigan to be with my beloved sister in her last hours. Sandy picked me up at the airport and I stayed with Marie in her house for the duration of the visit. Each day we went to the hospital and stayed with Mildred all day every day. Mildred had slipped into a coma by the time I got there. My brother Bill decided to tell funny stories about his and Mildred’s life to try to cheer up Mildred, and even though she was in a coma we knew that Bill succeeded in tickling her funny bone for despite being in a coma Mildred smiled at Bill’s outrageously funny stories.



**Mildred & Doris Stocker**



**Elenore & Marianne**

Unfortunately I ended up having to fly out early in the morning of the day Mildred died as I had to be back in Florida that same day as Marianne was undergoing pancreas surgery and I felt I had to be with my daughter to give her support in this most dangerous operation. While I was in the air flying back to Florida my sister Mildred quietly slipped away as Marie and Doris sat by her side, watching her every breath. Mildred would breathe noisily and then for a long time no breathing, then loud noise again. Marie suddenly said to Doris, "I think it's over. I think she's gone. Doris said she saw a little like a dove leave Mildred's nose and that she felt the presence of Jesus in the room with her mother as she passed on. I missed all that as I had to be with my daughter. I was not at the funeral but I was so glad that I was able to be with my sister in her last hours. That meant a lot to me.

Marianne came through the pancreas surgery very well and was soon as good as new. But from the time Marianne was in her mid 30s Marianne was gradually going down hill from multiple sclerosis. With every passing year she took on more and more disabilities. It affected her eyesight and her gait. It later affected her memory and in the end she was no longer able to walk and she had problems with bowel and bladder function. As she got progressively worse she no longer wanted to remain in Florida, she wanted to go to her daughter Laurie in Lansing, Michigan. Laurie graciously invited her mother to come up and for the next 7 years Laurie nursed her mother in their home.

Mr. De Maria became very weak and debilitated around this time. Jeannie and Hank came over and helped Mrs. De Maria take care of him. By the end of his life he was as helpless as a newborn baby. Jeannie and Hank and Mrs. De Maria had to do everything for him, including bathing and dressing him. Jeannie and Hank were absolute angels throughout this most difficult period. They stayed by Mrs. De Maria's side and helped her every step of the way until the day he died. Jeannie and Hank will never have any regrets in life for how they treated Mr. De Maria. Likewise they took care of Jeannie's mother in her last days in like manner.



**Jeannie, Frank, Elenore and Judy**



**Mr. De Maria, Patti, Mrs. De Maria**

Jeannie was so lucky to have found and married Hank. He is a wonderful guy. Her first husband treated her very poorly and she had a most difficult life for years and years with him. Jeannie is a wonderful person and she never deserved such treatment so it was a real blessing when that marriage ended. And God must have helped Hank and Jeannie find each other for they are both wonderful people and deserve each other.

We had a 6 year wait for my next great grandchild. My youngest grand child, Judy Marianne De Maria married Steve Wilds, who was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, 1948, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 1980, but they did not have their first child until 1987.



**Jessica Wilds**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 1987 my great grand daughter Jessica Wilds was born in Florida. I got to see more of this grandchild and her brothers as they lived close by me in Florida. My other grandchildren I only got to see when I came up to Michigan to visit or when they came and visited me in Florida.



**Chad Wilds**

My grand daughter Judy gave birth to my great grandson Chad on the 31 of July, 1991.

In 1997 my daughter Marianne became so disabled that Laurie and her family were no longer able to care for her at home and they were forced to place her in a nursing home in Ionia. The nursing home right down the road in St. John had no vacancies. Marianne was content there and called it home. She thought she was in a hospital and that was okay with her. I would visit Marianne every time I was in Michigan and was so sad when I had to go back home and could no longer visit her and have her near me.



**Wesley Wilds**

My last great grandchild Wes, the son of Judy and Steve Wilds, was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 1995 also in Florida. Wes looks a lot like Judy in my estimation.

There was a real cute story surrounding my birthday last year. My great grand daughter Jessica spent a lot of time and effort making me a really nice cake for my birthday. After she finished the cake she put it in the refrigerator and then went to school for the day. When Judy came into the

kitchen she saw that Wesley had the refrigerator door open and he had gotten into one side of the cake and taste tested it, she knew that Jessica would be upset if the cake was not perfect for my birthday, so she was upset. She looked the cake over and felt that she could repair the damage with more icing and make the cake look almost as good as new. So she took the cake out of the refrigerator, put it on the edge of the counter and was about to ice it when she looked at the clock and realized that she was going to be late picking up Chad, so she left the cake where it was without thinking about it, put Wes in the car seat and off she went. She picked up Chad and as she started back home all of a sudden a horrible thought came over her – she left the cake on the edge of the counter and her black lab Simon was wandering free through the house. “Oh no! I left the cake on the counter where Simon can get it!” Judy said aloud. “Oh, shit”! was little 3 year old Wesley’s response from the back seat. When they got back to the house half the cake was gone – the part that Simon could reach. There was no repairing a half eaten cake, so when I got there and saw the cake it tickled my funny bone. But it didn’t amuse poor Jessica who put so much effort into making a birthday cake to please me. Poor Jessica was in tears. So we all tried to make her feel better by eating the half of the cake that Simon didn’t get to yet.



One trip I made often and very faithfully in Herman’s car was the drive to the cemetery to visit his grave. I would talk to him, pray for him and regularly polish his gravestone. I visited very frequently right up to the time I moved from Florida to live in Minnesota to be near Judy and her family. Now my grandchildren have the job of visiting the cemetery and polishing Herman’s stone when they visit on vacation. The relatives have asked me if I intend to leave Herman in Florida and be buried there myself one day or if I intend to bring him up here. I have thought that over and have come to the realization that I should leave Herman buried in Florida because he loved that state so very much. So one day I too will be buried at his side as I have always been a good and faithful wife to him.



**Virginia & John Dahl Dale**

A few years after Herman died my life was about to take a big change for the better but until it actually happened I had no inkling that it was about to occur. My son John decided that it was time to find his mother if possible. John had a lot of experience skip tracing while in the service so he used his talent in that area to try to discover who his mother is. He went to the adoption agency who handled his care to try to peruse their records. They would not let him read the record for himself but they had the file open in his presence while talking to him and John read like mad the upside down information and when he left there he wrote down as fast and furious as he could all the information he had just read. When he found out through the record that he was a product of rape of a 12 year old little girl, it made him overwhelmingly physically ill. He flew straight home and for several weeks he was overwhelmed with the enormity of this new information. But then he suddenly realized that what happened wasn't his fault, it wasn't his mother's fault. They were both innocent victims in this whole episode. So he renewed his determination to find his mother and once again began his search.

He then began a systematic search based on the information obtained in the file. He found out he was born in Women's Hospital in Detroit. In checking their records he found out he was left in the nursery there for an entire year before being fostered out. He also saw he was never adopted, a fact he always knew.

He then went to Herman Kiefer Hospital in Detroit and asked for his own birth certificate. As the clerk handed the certificate over to him he realized that it was a restricted certificate and said "I'm not supposed to give this out". John grabbed the certificate and took off, saying, "Too late now!". John also pulled Nellie Dahl's death certificate there at Herman Kiefer. He saw that Mrs. Elenore McKinin gave the information but at the time he did not realize that that was his mother. At first John thought Marie was his mother, only later after reading the birth certificate did he realize Elenore

was his mother. John then examined the property records and discovered that Elenore and Herman owned a home on San Jose in Redford. He went to that house and discovered a stranger now owned the home. He asked where Elenore and Herman had moved to. She replied they went to Florida. He asked where in Florida, she did not know. John then began a systematic search of Florida to discover where Elenore now lived. John began in the Keys and worked his way up the coast. In Pampano Beach he struck pay dirt. He found where Elenore now lived. He pondered for a bit on how to handle this very sensitive first meeting. He was determined to meet his mother and to hear her voice. He fervently hoped that she would agree to meet with him, but if she refused he was still determined to meet with her by means of a contrived "accident".

John decided that his best course of action was to send his mother a bouquet of flowers and to sign the card with his birth date. When the flowers were delivered he would then call her on the phone and attempt to set up a face to face meeting. So John called a florist near Elenore's home and set up the delivery with the birth date card. He told the florist to call him back as soon as he delivered the flowers. The florist delivered the flowers to Elenore on November 10<sup>th</sup>. I was scrubbing the floor at the time of the delivery. And as luck would have it, I was expecting that their would be delivery or deliveries of flowers as Herman's birthday was the next day, November 11<sup>th</sup> and the grandchildren often sent flowers to me to put on Herman's grave. So the door bell rang, flowers were handed to me, and I took the bouquet and put it on the table and proceeded to finish scrubbing the floor. The florist called John and told him the flowers were just delivered to me. Then my phone rang. I quit scrubbing the floor to answer the phone. I couldn't make out what this cryptic phone call was all about. John was confused for a minute, wondering if the flowers had really been delivered. Then he asked me if I got flowers a few minutes ago. I said yes. He asked me if I had read the card yet. I said no. He said to put the phone down and read the card and then come back to the phone. I read the card. I started shaking all over with fear and shock. I came back on the phone. I was one very shaken up widow. John said he wanted to meet me. I was numb with shock, hardly able to think what to do. John sensed my fright and shock and said if I would feel more comfortable we could meet in the rectory with my parish priest present. I thought about this suggestion for a few minutes and then said, no, I didn't want a stranger to be a part of the first meeting with my son. I had thought about John and prayed for him all these years and now the meeting should be just between him and me. So I told him he could

come to my house. John jumped the next plane to Florida and soon my door bell was ringing. I was so frightened. What if he was like his father? But he sounded so kind. I had to take that chance that he was a good man. I opened my door and stared right into a face that was so much like my own. And such a kind and good face. I was immediately aware of the goodness of this man who stood before me.



**(Harold) Shorty Dahl**

We had a wonderful meeting together that day and we both felt an immediate loving bond to one another. From that time on John and I have kept in frequent touch with one another through visits and phone calls. And then I had the delightful fun of telling my family that I had found my son John after all these years. The incredulous shock of many members of my family was precious. I think the biggest fun was seeing the shock on my brother Shorty's face when he met John in Marie's living room. Shorty was the only one of my brothers and sisters who never knew of John's existence as he was only 6 years old when John was born and never consciously realized that I had a son way back then. Shorty had lost his foot and his other leg up to his knee by that time and was wheelchair bound when I informed him about John. Boy, Shorty had to meet John at all costs, despite the fact that Shorty was in a lot of pain and was homebound. The men in our family carried Shorty's wheelchair up Marie's 3 stairs and into her living room. Shorty spent the entire visit that day with a most incredulous look on his face as he stared at John and wondered how something of that great import could have been kept from him until now. My whole family were so happy and excited to meet John. I introduced him to every body in our families and all were stunned and then so happy for me and John.



**Sonny**



**Mildred**

I received a very sad phone call from my sister Mildred on January 4, 1980. She said her husband Sonny was out shoveling snow, then came in stating he didn't feel very well so he sat down on the couch to rest. A few minutes later Sonny threw a heart attack or a stroke while sitting on the sofa. He turned blue and was breathing funny. Doris called an ambulance and they immediately transported him to a hospital but I was too late. Sonny expired the same day. Now all of us sisters were widows. That was a sobering thought for all of us. Now everything that needed to be done, everything that needed to be fixed was now on our shoulders.



**Laurie Rotary**



**Elenore & Marianne**



**Edward & Marie Bender**

I came up to visit my granddaughter Laurie with my daughter Marianne in St John, Michigan in June of 1982. After a nice visit with them I decided to visit my sister Marie and her family for a weekend and then they would drive Marianne and me to the De Maria's house. We would spend a few days with the De Maria's and then fly back home. So come Friday afternoon Edward drove to Pontiac to pick up Sandy from the Greyhound bus station. She took the bus from St Ignace in order to get back from vacation early to visit with Marianne and me. So then Sandy drove Ed's car to Laurie's house to pick up Marianne and me for our weekend visit. Boy, did we ever have fun on our trip to Utica. Marie and I and Marianne were having a ball "mock insulting" one another before we even got off Laurie's street! We had so many laughs that weekend. We drove to the Big Boy's in Utica for dinner that night and then settled in to Marie's house for the weekend.



**Elenore, Marie, Marianne & Edward at the Dahl family graves**

On Sunday we had a real nice car ride to Detroit to see Ma's grave as well as Grandma Henkel's. Ed drove us down there and when we got into the cemetery we were kind of unsure just where section 48 was. I said turn left, Sandy said go straight. Ed stopped the car right in the middle of the main road in the cemetery and said, "Make up your mind!" I was right, as usual, with my directions and we soon found the Dahl family plot. Sandy took some real nice pictures of us visiting those graves. Looking at those pictures gives Sandy and me bitter sweet memories of that day. We were happy to be all together but I can see that Marianne was on a walker and Sandy is sad looking at it was that was the very last picture taken of her dad.



**Sandy Bender & Marie Bender**



**Doug Bender with "Taffy"**

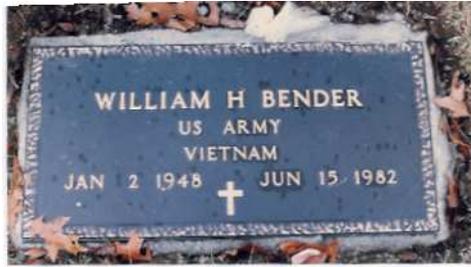
Then on Monday afternoon Ed stayed home and walked his little cockapoo dog 3 miles and Sandy drove Marianne, me and Marie to the De Maria's for our visit there. We had a very nice visit with the De Marias with Sandy and Marie there. The De Marias invited Sandy and Marie for dinner but they had to decline, saying that Ed had not been feeling well for the past 5 days so they felt they had to get back to him. So we all said our goodbyes and then Sandy and Marie were on their way back to Ed in Utica. The next morning we got as shocking phone call from my sister Marie. Ed was dead! He had a heart attack the night before within 10 minutes of the time they got back home and then at 6:30 am Ed went into cardiac arrest in the intensive care unit and expired.



**Bill Bender**



**Doug, Marie & Bill Bender**



Marianne and I had plane tickets to go back home that same Tuesday so I put Marianne on the plane back home and then went back to Marie's house to be with Marie and Sandy for this most sad funeral. It was doubly sad considering that when I first came to Michigan I went right away to the same funeral parlor as my sister Marie had just lost her son Bill and he was being buried that day, June 18<sup>th</sup>. I had gotten to the funeral parlor just in time to see Bill laid out just before they closed the casket. That was such a tragedy, Bill was only 34 years old when he died. He enlisted in the army right after he graduated from high school and after helicopter training at Fort Rucker in Alabama he was sent to Vietnam. Bill was sprayed with Agent Orange while there and was badly poisoned by it. He was sent to a hospital in Saigon for a few weeks and then to a hospital in Japan for a month and then to Walter Reed Army hospital in Bethesda Maryland. Bill suffered horribly from that Agent Orange. It destroyed his nervous system and left him with severe diabetes. He succumbed from the diabetic & nervous related problems on June 15, 1982. I remember being impressed by Bill's intelligence. One time when Herman and I came to Marie's house for a visit Bill had a Russian dictionary and language book and was studying the Russian language. Dying so young from service to our country was such a tragedy, but Bill was fortunate to have passed away when he did as his body was aging rapidly and already had cataracts and venous insufficiency in his lower extremities and had problems walking.



**Edward Paul Bender**



**Marie Dahl Bender**

And now I was returning to Marie's house to help her and Sandy get through the second funeral in 2 weeks. These funerals were exactly two weeks apart – Bill died on Tuesday, June 15th and Ed died on Tuesday, June 29th. At Ed's funeral Marie kept saying it was unbelievable, that Ed's funeral was a rerun of Bill's. Same month, same funeral parlor, same mourners. My son John and his wife Virginia came to the funeral and also my grand daughter Laurie, Dave and their 3 children were all there. We took a lovely picture of all of us in and around the swing that day.



That day was a foreboding of a future family tragedy. My brother Shorty had to be rushed by Jean to the hospital during the funeral luncheon as that was the first time that Shorty's heart stopped. Shorty's heart stopped a number of times after that. Jean had less than 5 minutes to get Shorty to the hospital every time his heart stopped after that. Shorty was not in agreement with them keeping him alive to the bitter end. He said to Sandy "when my heart stopped that was so easy. I didn't even know it happened".

In the last year of his life my brother Shorty got gangrene in both feet. First he had his foot amputated then the other leg up to his knee taken off. I remember visiting him when he was like that. I felt so bad for him. He told me that being in that condition and having to be totally taken care of he didn't feel like a man anymore. From that time on I couldn't bear to call him Shorty anymore due to the double amputation. From that time on I started calling him Harold.



**Harold(Shorty) & Jean Dahl**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of August, 1984 Shorty's only grandson David was due to have Shorty's first great grandson any day, and on that date they found out that the baby was going to be a boy so they went to Shorty's hospital room and gave him the good news. Then that night David's wife Sue had a baby shower. I was in Florida so I couldn't attend. At the end of the baby shower Jean and Pat told Marie that Shorty had talked to the priest and found out that he didn't have to endure dialysis anymore so he had ordered it taken off and now they felt that Shorty would pass away within the next couple of days. Sandy took Marie to Niagara Falls for the 25<sup>th</sup> of August for the weekend because that would have been Marie and Ed's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary so Sandy wanted to have something special to remember the day by. When they got back on August 26<sup>th</sup> they found that Shorty had just passed away. He was only 67 years old. Sandy made up one of those nice funeral booklets with the Catholic mass in it for Shorty's funeral. Shorty was laid out at Sullivan Funeral home in the same room that Bill was laid out in 2 years earlier.

We all had a rough start and a disastrous falling out when Shorty married Jean, but in retrospect we all have to heartily agree that Shorty could never have found a better wife and life's helpmate than Jean. She was so very good for him and stuck by him through thick and thin. She kept him happy, content and on an even keel throughout their lives together. When we got back together again around 1970, I and our whole family was very

impressed with what a fine, intelligent, compassionate, sensible person Jean is. I hope that future family members can keep this in mind when they are thinking of creating a big brouhaha and family split. We all should have been much more understanding in this most difficult situation when Ma needed a place to live and people to help. Had we been more flexible and more patient we all could have worked this out in time, although I still feel it could have been worked out a lot easier if Mrs. Lippert had kept her nose out of it. My advice to those of you who come after me – don't go creating a family split. They can be created in a split second and can take years to undo, years of lost companionship and love. Years lost not only to the parties involved but to many other family members such as children, grandchildren, etc. Marianne and Marie's 5 children grew up not knowing Shorty, Jean or their children, Patty and Tommy.



**Patty & Tommy Dahl**

This is what Jean and Shorty's children looked like the last time we saw them before the split. The next time we saw these children they were grown, married and had children of their own. We came back together as strangers, except like in John's case, the ice quickly melted and we formed a warm emotional bond as the physical resemblance to Nellie and my dad Bill was a strong pull to bring us together.



**Elenore & Herman**

After Herman died I continued going to the senior center and going on trips with my senior friends. (I chose this picture to be put in this place in the story even though Herman was now passed away because I feel that even

though he is no longer here in flesh and blood I do feel that Herman still remains at my side in spirit, watching over me and helping me out in times of need. When I really need him in times of trouble, I feel he is there with me. The bonds of love I feel is one thing that death cannot destroy.)

One such trip turned into a very painful near tragedy. I went to see a show in Miami with the seniors and after the show I stepped off the curb to get into the bus, lost my balance, turned around, fell on the ground and fractured my pelvic bone. I was taken by ambulance to a local hospital where I had to stay for several weeks. I wanted to be in a hospital closer to home, but wasn't able to be transferred. Frank did come to see me while I was there but mostly I was all alone with no visitors. I was so glad to finally get back home, but I was still in a lot of pain and not able to do much for quite a while.



**Judy Wilds**

One day in Florida my grand daughter Judy came with disturbing news – her husband Steve was being transferred to Minnesota. I knew there was no way I could remain in Florida by myself, so I knew I would have to move either to Minnesota with Judy or to Laurie in St. John, Michigan. After much thought and discussion I decided to go to Minnesota with Judy and her family. I had to put my house up for sale and then prepare all my possessions to be moved. I had to have my house fumigated for termites as there were a few of them in the wood on the outside trim of the house. My house finally sold, but not for as much money as I would have gotten a short time ago and prices fell in the past year. I spent \$3000 for a moving van and to this day I still wonder if this was a wise move or not, for that kind of money I probably could have bought all new stuff. But I did it because some of the stuff I moved had a lot of sentimental value to me. I wonder what Herman would have thought of this decision??



**Elenore & Herman McKinin**

I think of my dear Herman a lot and in times of indecision or trouble I often feel he is near me, helping me out. He loved me very dearly all of our married life and I feel he would not abandon me now in my later years. There are times that I can see him smiling at me in my mind's eye or hear what he would have to say about some things.

Judy and her family and I moved to Minnesota and for a number of years we all lived together in their home. I had my own little quarters down below to myself. Then later they were seriously thinking of moving so at the same time I started looking for senior citizen housing where I could have a club house and friends my own age again like I had in Pampano Beach and in Largo. I found a most charming little cottage in Spring Lake Park, Minnesota. And I was in luck too for there was only a short wait to get in. I got just the cottage I wanted, the right floor plan and in the right location. I moved in right after the builder finished it. It is two bedroom, one bath and is very comfortable for my needs. The extra bedroom allows me to have my great grandchildren over for a visit.

I've made a lot of good friends here, just like I always have in every senior citizen housing I've lived in. I'm a regular at the community center where we all play cards and other games. I go on short trips with the gang, but I'm avoiding longer trips like I used to take in Florida. I gave up my car to Steve while we were all still living together. I was getting a bit old to drive, although I feel I still could, and the car is a big expense and now that I live in the cottage complex a garage for my car would be a heavy additional expense for me, one I can hardly afford as the cottage rents have gone from \$500 to \$675 in a few short years. Judy takes me shopping and to doctor appointment, to get medicine, etc. and I go with the other ladies in their cars or with the senior citizen bus, so I get where I need to go okay.



**Marie & Elenore**



**Mike, Marilyn, Elenore, Marie & Sandy**

I went on a very special trip to Michigan to visit with Marie, Sandy and Nancy one year. I flew into Michigan, visited with Marie, Sandy and Nancy and then on Tuesday we were going to drive to Maryland in Sandy's car and I was going to spend my first mother's day ever with John and Virginia and Nancy was going to spend the first mother's day in over 20 years with her son Warren and his family. But the night before we were to leave I was walking up Marie's 3 steps into her house when on the top step I faltered, then lost my balance and then fell. I hung on to the rail most of the way off the steps, thus greatly breaking my fall but then on the bottom step I let go of the rail and hit my head hard on the pavement. Was I ever in pain! We were all scared that I might die of this head injury! Sandy called the Utica Ambulance and they took me to St Joseph's hospital in Mt Clemens where I remained till Thursday afternoon. I had a bad concussion, it gave me a severe headache and I kept vomiting from it. Sandy stayed with me until they admitted me that night and then Sandy, Marie, Mike and Nancy visited me every day. Then on Thursday they discharged me at lunch time. We all went to the Uptown restaurant and then when we were done eating I told them we were all fed, dressed, and neat and pretty so why not head for Maryland now!? Sandy was surprised at my spunk, but when I assured her I was up to the trip and really wanted to be with John for Mother's day, we loaded all of our luggage in the back and we were off to Maryland! We spent the night in a hotel in Pennsylvania and the next afternoon I was sitting in John's house visiting with him and Virginia. When our visit was over and Elenore's bags were in his house Nancy, Marie and Sandy continued on to Warren's house. We all spent a wonderful Mother's day having dinner at a nice diner John recommended. I was shocked at how well behaved Warren's two children were. They sat still and quiet the entire time.



**Marie, Nancy & Elenore at Niagara Falls**

After our visits were over Sandy drove us to Niagara Falls for a 2 day stop there in a beautiful room overlooking the Falls. As soon as I unloaded my luggage in the room I shared with Nancy I told Sandy let's go! There was a casino right next door and I wanted to try my luck three! And good luck I had that day. I left that casino \$218 richer. We enjoyed going around the falls, both on the Canadian and American side, but Sandy was a nervous wreck most of the time we were out walking around as Marie was in a wheelchair, Nancy was on a walker and I just got out of the hospital and was not 100% yet. But the wheelchair did not slip under the bars and go over the falls, Nancy did stagger on her walker but did not fall over any rails and I must say I did quite well all by myself that trip. (But Nancy did leave her walker behind at the Horse shoe falls and Sandy had to get her another one when we got back home.) I thought Nancy's walker with the seat you can put stuff on was a nifty idea so when I got back home I got me one of those too. I use it to take heavy stuff to the garbage garage. It's a much safer way of handling the trash.



**Elenore**



**Marie & Elenore**



**Marie & Elenore**



**Elenore**



**Elenore & Marie – Tobermory**



**Marie**



**Marie & Elenore - Lions Head**

After the Falls trip ended we went straight to Sandy's Lion's Head cottage for a 2 week visit. We had a lot of fun there too, going shopping and sightseeing by day and card playing in her card and game room by night. Mom's restaurant, where we go for almost every meal, had break open tickets which I was buying by the handful. I soon got real lucky. On my third day I pulled the top prize - \$200! So at the beginning of my trip I had \$418 Canadian to spend – I was rich!



**Marianne De Maria**



**Marianne De Maria**



**Kristen, Laurie, Sandy & Elenore**

In 1999 I received a very disturbing phone call from my grand daughter Laurie. She said Marianne was in the hospital with heart failure. They gave her new medications and then sent her back to the nursing home. Then a week later she got much worse and they had to rush her to the hospital once more. Laurie had the awful dilemma to try all heroic measures or to let her mom go peacefully. We all talked it over together and we all agreed to let her go peacefully. I packed and got ready to fly from Minnesota to

Michigan. My grand daughter Judy was in Florida on vacation at the time. She told me to wait and fly with her, that she was hurrying back to Minnesota to go with me. As soon as Judy got there she flew out with me and I got to the hospital just a short time before my only daughter passed away. The nurse showed me her feet and ankles and said that they were blue, showing that they had already died. On March 7, 1999 my Marianne quietly passed away. She was only 68 years old. She had a lovely funeral in which all our relatives came to the wake. Then on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March we buried her in the cemetery in St. Johns, Michigan, a short distance away from Laurie's house. I visit her grave every time I come to Michigan. Laurie and her family visit the grave very often. In fact Laurie and her husband Dave often bring their lunch to the grave and eat right next to Marianne's grave in the shade of a large old tree.



**Elenore & Marie**



**Elenore & Marie**



**Marie, Rochelle & Elenore**

My sister Marie was still walking on her own and taking care of herself at that point but now she was becoming very unsteady on her feet. Sandy was getting very concerned about leaving her alone. I visited Marie in May of 1999 but I was very concerned about her well being as she seemed so unresponsive for most of those 2 weeks. It turned out that Marie was suffering from a new stroke the 2 weeks I was there and got better later after I left. Then in June of 1999 Sandy gave me a call and said Marie had broken her hip while at the cottage in Lion's Head and had to be taken by ambulance from Lion's Head to a surgeon in a hospital in Crittendon Hospital in Rochester, Michigan. On Friday June 18<sup>th</sup> Marie underwent a hip replacement operation. It was very rough for Marie to get back walking again but she re learned to walk within a month as Sandy told her she couldn't go home unless she could walk by herself. From that time on my sister needed 24 hour around the clock care from a care giver.

I went to a fish fry to another location with my senior friends. We all went together in someone else's car. After dinner I was the last one to pay for my meal so all of my friends left the hall and left me all alone. After I paid my

bill I tried to go out of the door they went out but it was locked. So I went out the front door and was stepping off the curb when I lost my balance, grabbed for a nearby car, kind of broke my fall and then fell to the pavement. I couldn't get up by myself. Some men came along and asked me if I needed help getting up. I said yes. They helped me up and immediately left me all alone. I was dying of pain and no friends in sight to drive me home. They finally came around to the front and find me and realized I was hurt. I had to get medical treatment and was laid up in great pain for many weeks. I have told my friends now that I don't do too well with curbs and that they shouldn't leave me all alone like that again.



**Marie, Rochelle, Elenore**



**Marie & Elenore**



**Elenore, Laurie, Kristen**

I have visited my sister Marie almost every year for the past 6 years. I fly to Michigan and then we all go up to the cottage in Lion's Head together for 2 weeks, then come back down to Marie's house in Utica and visit with all our relatives before flying back to Minnesota to Judy and Steve and their family. Sometimes I also go to Laurie and her family in St, John the same trip but it's getting harder and harder to go more than one place in a visit due to my age.

In November of 1999 I got a call from Sandy. Marie was very ill and very weak and the doctor felt she would be gone before Thanksgiving. Sandy and the caregivers cried a lot those nights feeling every night Marie would not make morning. But she managed to make every morning, probably due to the new heart pill the doctor prescribed after he heard that Marie was not

on a HMO and paid for the pills herself. He said that he was not allowed to prescribe this most expensive heart medication if an HMO had to pay for it. But Marie started taking it and soon she started snapping back. Sandy feels it's not only the pills but also Marie's sheer force of will as Marie always told Sandy that ever since she was a real small girl she always wanted to live to see the year 2000, which was now just around the corner. And she had another reason for living – her first great great grandchild was due January 11, 2000. So despite her frail condition Sandy and Marie's care giver put Marie on an airplane and flew her out to California where she got to see her first great great grandchild, Devon Blais and got to have professional 5 generation pictures taken with her entire family. Several times in the next 2 years Marie almost left us, but was able to pull herself up by the boot straps and in November of 2001 she flew back to California to meet her new great great grand daughter Kaitlyn Marie Blais and have more professional pictures taken. With this birth Marie got her picture in the local newspaper as this time it was 5 generations of Marie – Marie, Nancy Marie, Linda Marie, Nicole Marie and now Kaitlyn Marie. (And our grandfather Fred Dahl's mother and grandmother were named Marie Anna so that made 7 generations of Marie on the Dahl side of the family.)



**Devon Blais**



**Marie & Devon**



**Nancy, Marie, Devon Linda, Nicole – 5 Generations**



**Mark, Nancy, Marie, Devon, Sandy, Nicole, Linda, & MGreg**

On January 5, 2000 Marie, Rochelle and Sandy boarded a plane for California so that Marie could be present the day her first great great grandson was born. Devon was late. He was due January 4 – 11 but didn't arrive until January 17<sup>th</sup>. Marie was at a birthday party for Donna and Craig when Nicole suddenly felt uncomfortable and then her water broke. She went to the hospital in Irvine and at about 3:320 am on January 17<sup>th</sup> Devon John Blais was born. Sandy hired a professional photographer so on the day the baby was born Marie, Sandy and Nancy went into the hospital room and met little Devon, held him and then had pictures taken for posterity. Marie was so afraid that they wouldn't let her hold the baby due to the weakness in her arms from her strokes, but Nicole made sure that Marie was able to hold Devon a number of times during her visit. Marie was thrilled to be able to hold the little guy. The family was thrilled and honored that Grandma made the trip at her age and infirmity.



**Bill Dahl Jr.**

In October of 2000 I got a telephone call from Sandy that my brother Bill had just passed away in the nursing home in Port Huron. He was 80 years old. He had had a number of strokes in the past 10 years which more and more affected his memory. The last 3 or 4 years of his life the strokes had removed so much of his memory that he had no idea who I was when I had visited him about 2 years before he died on one of my visits to Michigan. Sandy had just been told at 8:50 pm on the last day Bill was laid out so she was unable to go to the funeral parlor and went instead the next day to the

chapel of the St Hedwig cemetery with Marie and her caregiver Rochelle. The casket remained closed at the cemetery chapel so Marie was not able to see her brother one last time. I was unable to go as the notice was so short that there was no way I could have flown out between 9 pm and 9 am the next day, so the best I could do was sit in my own home and pray for my brother.



**Kaitlyn Marie Blais**



**Marie Bender & Kaitlyn Blais**



**Linda, Kaitlyn, Nancy, Marie & Nicole**



**U:Greg, Linda, Mark, Kaitlyn, Sandy, “Natasha” L: Nancy, Nicole, Devon, Marie**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2001 Marie’s 1<sup>st</sup> great great grand daughter, Kaitlyn Marie Blais was born in California. This time Marie did not go out before the birth because Mark and Nicole were moving out of their 2<sup>nd</sup> story condo and into a ground level home so Marie could visit the babies more often and in greater comfort and safety as she had to be carried up 20 stairs by Mark who is a Navy Seal. That greatly frightened her to be carried up the stairs and then wheeled down afterwards. So with the new house she could just wheel straight in. So we went out to California the 1<sup>st</sup> week of November. Kaitlyn was just a few weeks old and an adorable little girl. Nancy came by car from Las Vegas for the 5 generation picture and to visit with Marie. Once again we engaged the professional photographer and had the pictures taken at Linda’s house. And once again Marie got to hold the baby several times. She loved that. Her family all celebrated her 88<sup>th</sup> birthday in California on November 13<sup>th</sup>. She was especially happy because Kaitlyn is the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of Marie – Marie, Nancy Marie, Linda Marie, Nicole Marie and Kaitlyn Marie. Marie had the professional picture published in the Macomb Daily, her hometown newspaper on Wed January 2, 2002. This visit Marie went home after only 2 weeks because she was weak and exhausted and all that traveling was too hard on her.



**Elenore & Laurie**



**Elenore & Patti**



**Elenore & Judy**



**Jessica, Jennie, Elenore, Emily**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, 2002 I turned 90 years old. I doubt very much that when I was a child I would have ever thought that I would live this long and in such good health and stamina. My family decided to throw a gala party in my honor. Almost everybody came, including family and close friends. The only problem we faced that day was that I was born in February and February in Minnesota is a very bad month for driving or even leaving the warmth of one's own hearth. But thanks to the men in our family that formidable obstacle was removed in that the men went around and picked up all my elderly friends who were too afraid to drive by themselves in a snowstorm. So my birthday party was wonderful beyond my wildest expectations. Frank flew up from Florida and helped with the food preparation. Laurie and Dave and their daughters came from St John, Michigan. Brandon was unable to get away at that time so he was unable to make it. Dave had an exam right after he got back home so he spent part of the weekend off by himself studying for the exam. Patti, Ed and Jennifer came from Chicago area. Boy, the food we prepared for that weekend! Judy did non stop cooking. Many of the family contributed to the food and Judy provided the meat. Frank and the kids provided the drinks. I had many precious pictures taken with my family that weekend that I treasure. In fact that wonderful 90<sup>th</sup> party stored up many happy memories in my mind. I am reliving all these happy memories on almost a daily basis. That party lives on and on in my heart!



**Marie**



**Marie, Sandy & Elenore**



**Elenore at the cottage**

I just visited my sister Marie for a month again this May and June, 2002. She is very weak and reminds me a lot of my daughter Marianne. In fact I often slip and call her Marianne. Marie can not do much of anything for herself which just breaks my heart to watch. And watching Marie I am so very grateful that I still have my strength and can do most everything for myself. I wish Marie could do the same as me. When she watched me get up and do everything she felt she should be able to too. One time she told her caregiver Judy not to help her at all, that she was going to the bathroom

all by herself, and unbelievably, she was able to do it all by herself, but then afterwards she had no strength left to perform even simple tasks, she blew all her strength on the walk to the bathroom. It made me sad that due to the strokes Marie cannot most of the time remember my name. She calls her daughter Sandy, Elenore most of the time. I feel honored that she thinks so much of me that she calls her daughter by my name. She did seem to remember that I was the one the little kids in our family called “Ah-day”. Her long ago memories are more intact than her recent ones. (Before you laugh at them calling me “Ah-day, you have to know that they called my sister Mildred “Blub-blah” Now don’t you have to admit that Ah-day has a much nicer ring to it than “Blub-blah”?)



**Elenore & Laurie**



**Marie & Elenore**



**Brandon, Laurie, Marie, Elenore, Emily**

I also got a chance to visit Laurie and her family from Thursday afternoon until Saturday afternoon. It is quite strenuous for me to visit in more than one place at my age, but I was so happy to see my grandchild Laurie and her children and husband that it was well worth the effort. Thursday afternoon I got to visit my daughter Marianne’s grave and to get pictures taken so that when I am back home I can open my album and relive that visit to the cemetery and her grave.



**Kristen, Laurie, Sandy & Elenore**

Then on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June I headed back to Minnesota to once again relax in my nice, cozy little cottage in Spring Lake, Minnesota. You know the old saying, “it’s so nice to travel, but it’s even nicer to be back home!” I was met by Judy, Chad and Wesley who took me to lunch and the boys napped with me as Judy went and did my grocery shopping.



**Elenore & Judy**



**My cozy little “cottage”**

Well, that’s my life story through mid June, 2002. After I’ve rested up some and have some new adventures we’ll continue my life’s story.