

**THE LIFE OF  
EDWARD PAUL BENDER**



**Biography written by his daughter, Sandy Bender Wilhelm**

**In August of 1982**

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

Edward is gone from our midst now, having left us on 29 June, 1982. However, for all of us who knew and loved him, he will never be gone from our hearts and from our memories. This biography is not written so much for those of us who knew and loved him as it is for those children who come after us and who will someday ask the question, "I wonder what grandpa Bender's life was like way back in the olden days"? This biography will in part answer that question. Most of Edward's life was like all of our lives, routine and uneventful. But this biography covers the times in Edward's life that were highlighted in his memory as the most memorable, as the moments that he wanted to retell to us either for their happy content or when Dad wanted to share with us some of his painful moments or some of the very sad or embarrassing moments in his life.

## ***BEGINNINGS***

Edward Bender was born on 937 Sylvester St. in Detroit on the 23 of June, 1908, the 5th living child of Henry and Elizabeth Bender. The house was a small frame house and had red shingles on the side of it. There is a cute story told about the doctor's horse the night Dad was born.

Ed had to amend his birth certificate when he was about to apply to social security as his name was erroneously listed as Henry Paul instead of Edward Paul and his birth date was listed as June 22. This was no doubt due to the fact that the doctor was called shortly before midnight to deliver Ed and Ed was born after midnight, thus the change in the date. Due to the fact that the doctor was called in the middle of the night and he was so upset that his horse got so sick that he used Ed's dad's first name by mistake.

PLACE OF BIRTH

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Department of State--Division of Vital Statistics

1607

County of Wayne

*app. filed* CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH  
6-27-62

Township of \_\_\_\_\_  
or

Village of \_\_\_\_\_  
or

City of Detroit

(No. 937, Sylvester)

Registered No. 41786

St.; 17 Ward)

FULL NAME OF CHILD Edward Henry Paul Belcher

{ If child is not yet named, make supplemental report, as directed.

Sex of child male Twin, triplet, or other? \_\_\_\_\_ } and { Number in order of birth 5 Legitimate? yes Date of Birth June 22, 1962  
(Month) (Day) (Year)

FULL NAME FATHER CHARLES Henry E. Belcher

FULL MAIDEN NAME MOTHER MARY Elizabeth Ott

RESIDENCE 937 Sylvester

RESIDENCE same

COLOR OR RACE white AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY 33 (Years)

COLOR OR RACE white AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY 29 (Years)

BIRTHPLACE Ohio

BIRTHPLACE Detroit Mich

OCCUPATION laborer

OCCUPATION housewife

Number of child of this mother 5

Number of children, of this mother, now living 5

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE\*

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of above child, and that it occurred on June 22, 1962, at 1305M.

\* When there was no attending physician or midwife, then the father, householder, etc., should make this return. See instructions on back.

(Signature) William E. Rogers M.D.

Dated 190 attending physician  
(Attending physician, midwife, father, etc.)\*

Given or christian name added from a supplemental report 190

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Filed JUN 26, 1962

REGISTRAR.

REGISTRAR.

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct reproduction of the certificate on file in the Michigan Department of Health, Lansing, Michigan.

JUN 28 1962  
Albert E. Heustis M.D.

Albert E. Heustis, M. D.  
State Health Commissioner

## **GREEN OATS**

Dad was born just after midnight on 23 June, 1908. The doctor came to Henry and Elizabeth's house on Sylvester on the 22 June, 1908 to deliver the infant. The doctor tethered his horse in an empty field across the street from Dad's house then went into the house to deliver the infant. Dad came about 1 1/2 hours later, his mother having had an uneventful delivery. The doctor, being very tired by now, filled out the birth certificate for the 22 June, 1908, the day he went to the home to deliver the infant and not being able to remember what name his parents had told him they had given the infant he merely looked up the name of the infant's father and that was the name the doctor bestowed upon the new born infant on the birth certificate which he registered with the state of Michigan. (Edward was in his 60's before he discovered that this error had been made and corrected his birth certificate.) However, the last laugh was on the doctor for it seems that the field across the street from Dad's house was full of green oats and the doctor's horse filled his belly full of the green oats waiting for the doctor to untether him and take him home. The horse got so sick from the green oats that he nearly died and hovered on the brink of life and death for over a week. Meanwhile the doctor was reduced to making his house calls on foot.

## **SANDBAGS**

When Edward was a week old, his father Henry had this dream. He dreamed that someone had cut a hole in the roof of the bedroom and was dropping sandbags through the hole in the roof onto the bed where little Edward was sleeping next to his mother Elizabeth. Henry was afraid that the sandbags were going to hit either little Edward or his mother Elizabeth. (Edward's father Henry had many nightmares in his lifetime and the family would often find Henry walking in his sleep. Henry would even sleep walk out of the house and down on Gratiot Avenue)

## ***THE CANINE BABYSITTER***



Edward Bender 1909

When Dad was an infant, grandma Bender would put him in his buggy and wheel him down to the market on Gratiot Avenue. She would also take their family dog, black Sport, with her. When she got to the grocery store she would park the buggy with Ed in it outside the grocery store and would tell black Sport to watch Edward for her and don't let anyone harm the baby. Black Sport would faithfully stand beside the buggy and watch over little Edward. One day as grandma Bender was coming out of the grocery store, she saw a middle aged woman leaning over the buggy admiring little Edward. However, in between the woman and Edward was black Sport showing his teeth and forcing the woman to keep a respectable distance from the infant.

## ***EDWARD KNOWS BEST***



Beatrice & Mildred Bender

Mildred Bender Neff and Beatrice Bender Gamache, Edward's sisters, would often take him for a walk to get him out of his mother's way as

Elizabeth worked very hard all her life taking in wash for others and doing these washes by hand over a scrub board. Mildred and Bea enjoyed getting a little air, but taking Ed for a walk was a tricky situation. Edward was a very fussy, colicky baby. He would cry by the hour with severe intestinal cramps and drive his family half-mad. The girls soon found that you could calm Edward down by taking him for a walk as the scenery distracted his attention, and the fresh air invariable knocked him out, making most of the walk a very quiet, pleasant one for the girls. But there was one secret that you just had to know to accomplish a quiet walk with little Eddie-- you never lowered the head of his buggy. He liked it just the way it was and you dared not alter his position or all hell broke loose. One day the girls took Edward for a walk on a crisp fall day and on the way to the grocery store, true to fashion, Eddie fell asleep. The girls then continued on in tranquility. They parked the buggy outside the grocery store, went in and bought their goods, and then as they were coming out of the grocery store they spotted an older woman about to lower the head of Ed's stroller to make the sleeping baby more comfortable. The girls were horrified. They whispered in urgent hushed tone, "No, don't touch that, he likes it just the way it is!" The woman replied, "I have had many children of my own and I have a way with children. I'll lower it so gently that he will never even notice it." As the woman proceeded to lower the head of the buggy, ever so gently, the Bender girls said to one another, "Here we go!" The woman didn't get the head of the buggy down two inches when Edward let out a very angry, bellowing cry. He was not only disturbed, he was very angry about someone altering his favorite sleeping position. The woman put the stroller head back into place with a startle, and said to the girls, "I guess you know what you were talking about, he sure doesn't like his head rest disturbed." Mildred said it was many blocks later before Edward stopped bellowing.

### ***SKINNED KNEES***



Beatrice Bender



Beatrice Bender

Another story Aunt Mildred was fond of telling is how She and Bea would take Edward in the stroller and Mildred, in a hurry to get somewhere, would tell Aunt Betty to run with her. Aunt Mildred said that Aunt Betty

was very clumsy and would invariably fall down and skin both knees every time she would run. Aunt Mildred said Aunt Betty always had a very funny knock-kneed kind of run.

### ***FLOATING BLOOMERS***



Mildred Bender

Aunt Mildred was very fond of telling the following story about her little brother Eddie. Aunt Mildred took Edward for walk on a cold November day when Edward was 3 years old. When Mildred and Ed got about 6 blocks away from home, little Edward suddenly let go of Mildred's hand and ran straight-away into a field full of water about 2 to 4 feet deep. Mildred said that Eddie got away from her in the first place as she suddenly starting feeling violently ill about 4 minutes beforehand. When Eddie ran into the field full of water Mildred fell down on the pavement and started to cry as she was far to sick to even consider wading into the cold, cold water to retrieve her little brother Eddie who was having a delightful time splashing in the water. As she lay on the pavement feeling like she was dying (she was coming down with scarlet fever) she looked into the water and saw little Eddie standing still in the deepest part of the water, his wide bloomers floating on top of the water. Many years later she thought that sight very funny, but at the time it was anything but funny to her. A middle aged man came along, and seeing the little 9 year old girl lying on the pavement crying, he inquired as to what was the matter. Mildred replied to him that she was so terribly sick and that her brother was wading in the middle of the pond, with his bloomers floating all around him. The kind man waded into the water, shoes, pants and all, and retrieved little Eddie from the middle of the pond and returned him to his sister. Mildred has been grateful to that good man to the very end of her life.

## **ORANGES**



Elisabeth Ott Bender



Mildred Bender Neff

Mildred stated that the Bender family, along with every other family of that time, was often quarantined in their home by the Detroit Board of Health for very serious contagious diseases. When the Board of Health quarantined a family no one was allowed to enter that house, and no one in the house was allowed to leave. This practice helped to cut down on the severity of the epidemics and lessened the death toll. The health department would send a person every day to the quarantined house with a basket of food for the day. The man would put the basket on the porch then run away. After he was gone, the family would come out and get the basket of food. Only after everyone had the contagious disease and was better, would the Health department lift the quarantine and allow the family to leave the house.



Elmer (Al) Bender

The worst contagious disease to hit Edward's house was typhoid fever. Edward's brother Elmer was 4 years old when he caught typhoid. Elmer became desperately ill and grandma Bender was going out of-her mind with the fear that Elmer was not going to survive this bout of typhoid, as the death toll from this disease was quite high. It was the middle of the winter, but grandma Bender decided that Elmer's only hope of survival was if she could get some fresh oranges so that Elmer could get some vitamin C into his body. Grandma and grandpa Bender slipped out of their house in spite of the quarantine in order to save Elmer's young life. Finding fresh oranges in the middle of Detroit in the middle of winter in 1905 was no easy task. Grandma and grandpa walked through, the whole city of Detroit and finally they found some oranges at the Eastern

Market on Gratiot by downtown Detroit. Grandma brought the fresh oranges back home in a sack and when she came into the house she ran to look in on Elmer. One look at his lips and fingers told Elizabeth that her son was dead.



Mildred, Beatrice & Arthur Bender

Art, the oldest boy who was left to baby sit said that Elmer had just stopped breathing. Grandma Elizabeth got totally hysterical, screaming and shaking Elmer. He suddenly started breathing again. But mentally he was never again the same. He spent the rest of his life as rather simple, the mental age of about a 10 year old. The same year Elmer got hit in the head with a swing so Grandma Bender said she was never sure whether the simple mindedness was due to the typhoid or the head injury.

### ***DEJAVU***



Edward Paul Bender

When Edward was 5 years old, he decided to take a stroll into a new neighborhood to see some Of the big wide world on his own. He ventured about a mile from home, when suddenly a strange feeling came over little Edward. This young boy suddenly said to himself, "I've been here before!" I remember these houses, these garages, those rose bushes, those climbers, and yes, even that old man sitting on the porch over there. Suddenly little Eddie walked up to the man; on the porch and

started asking him about all the people who lived on that block, calling every one of the neighbors by name. The man looked at the 4 year old boy with a very odd look on his face, as he had never seen this child before, so how could this child possibly know him and his neighbors by name? Then when Edward asked about his dearest friend who lived across the street from him, the man could contain himself no longer. He said to the child in utter astonishment, "How could you possibly know anything about my friend? Those facts you mentioned only I and a few other people knew that about him. And yet, there is no way you could have known that man as he died before you were even born!" Edward simply replied to the man, being as thoroughly confused by the whole experience as the man was, "I've lived here before."

### ***LOG CABIN DAYS***



Mildred Bender Neff

Aunt Mildred fondly recalls the following story. When Dad was about 4 years old the Bender family moved into a very old house. It had no electricity and no indoor plumbing. The home was very cold and damp in the winter. One day the landlord came over to make a few minor repairs to the house. The landlord peeled off a few shingles from the side of the house to ascertain the condition of the original siding. Much to the surprise of everyone, the landlord discovered that this house was one of the few log cabins that were built in the very first days of the city of Detroit. So like Abe Lincoln, Dad could also brag that he had his beginnings in a log cabin!

### ***WOOD & COAL FROM GRANDMA BENDER'S***



Dad said that when he was about 5 years old his family had been without any source of heat for over a week and they were so cold that they couldn't stand it any longer and they didn't have any Money as grandpa Bender was unable to find any work in the winter. So grandma Bender swallowed her pride and told little Eddie to get the sled and they were going over to visit his grandma Katherine Klein Bender to ask for some wood or coal to heat the stove with.

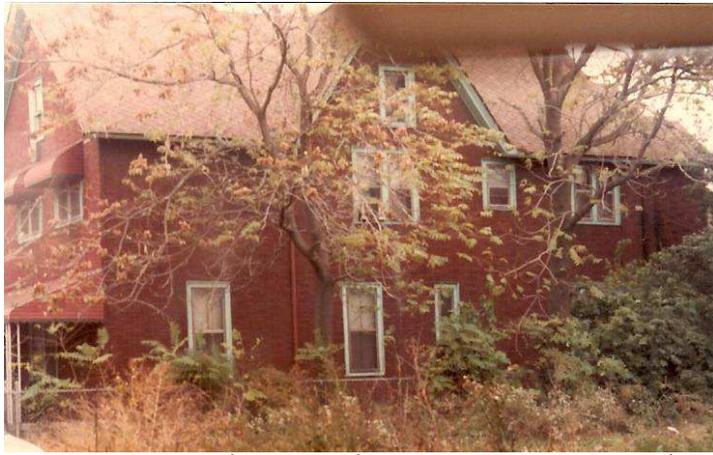


Henry Charles, Edward & Elisabeth Bender

Little Eddie trudged through high snow for over a mile pulling his little sled behind him. He was exhausted by the time he made it to his grandma's house on St. Joseph St. Grandma smiled at him as he walked through the door and then said, "I've heard a lot about you. Eddie, you're a bad boy!" Dad never could figure out why she said that to him or who she had been talking to to form such an opinion of him. What struck Dad the most that day was the abject poverty that his grandmother and his uncle Joe lived in. They were so poor and to Dad's way of thinking, they had no way to buy more fuel themselves when their supply ran out. Eddie felt really guilty about taking fuel from his poor grandmother. But grandmother was generous to a fault with them. She had Joe fill the sled to overflowing with coal and wood. But Eddie would rather have went cold than remove that source of fuel from his aged grandmother's house. Taking that wood and coal bothered Ed to his dying days. Mildred Bender Neff was also struck by the hardened poverty of the Bender household.



Henry Joseph Bender



House in Detroit where Henry Sr. died

Mildred remembers being over to the Bender household in 1907 because her grandpa Bender was dying. She remembers the 74 year old man, lying paralyzed in his bed with only old rags to cover, his emaciated body as the family had no money for blankets. In an effort to keep him warm, they piled every rag from their house and their neighbors' houses to try to take the chill off his bones. But to little avail, for the Bender household had very little heat and no money to purchase wood or coal. Henry's sister Elizabeth got a job in a factory to help support her family and ended up meeting her future husband on her third day on the job when she passed out on the job and could not be aroused for over 3 hours afterwards. When she came to she stated that she had had nothing to eat in over 4 days and had gotten the job so she and her family could eat. Her future husband took her home with a bag of groceries in his arm and was alarmed to find nothing to eat in the house and no fuel for a fire. It was 10° outside and no heat in the house. Their oil lamps were unvented and had they had money for oil they would have asphyxiated from the carbon monoxide fumes. When John Wittenberg married Elizabeth Bender, he used to divide his paycheck into 3 piles, one for himself and his family, one for the Bender household and one for his parents.



Katherine Klein Bender



Elizabeth Bender Wittenberg



Sgt. John Wittenberg

Grandma Katherine Klein Bender was taken in by John Wittenberg when her son Joe died, and she was treated with love and kindness by the Wittenberg family until her death on 11 January, 1934, one day after her 89th birthday.

### ***1ST DAY OF SCHOOL***

Eddie was full of anticipation and happiness on his very first day of school. He was determined to be on his best behavior so that all the new kids would like him and play with him. Dad says that on his way to school a kid a few years older than himself approached him on the playground. Dad stood there in anticipation of making his first new friend. The kid didn't say a word to Dad but instead he suddenly shifted his foot sideways and from nowhere his fist came flying and slugged Dad right in the Jaw. Dad didn't even know what hit him at first as the whole thing happened so fast. What Edward soon discovered was that he lived in the toughest school district in the city of Detroit and that he would have to learn to fight to survive as he was very poor and the children would always make fun of his tattered and ill-fitting clothes. Eddie developed a reputation as a real scrapper before he was out of the third grade, and it became a neighborhood challenge to take on Eddie Bender in a good fist fight. Edward ruined many a shirt fighting with his tormentors.

### ***THE HINDU***

Dad's most memorable fight was with Hindu Schoenesee, a mountain of a man with a child's brain. Hindu was about 15 years old and Edward about 10 when they had their biggest fistfight. By this time, after years of scrapping with one another, Hindu was out to kill Ed as he had an explosive temper. Hindu fought in the usual way and when he got Dad down on the ground, he pulled up on Dad's chin and tried to break Dad's back by forcing Dad's whole spine into a backward curve. Out of sheer terror and desperation was Dad able to break Hindu's grip. Even Dad had to admit that Hindu got the better of him in that fight. It wasn't too many years later that Hindu killed a kid in just such a fight. Hindu slipped out of town, and to Dad's knowledge the police never caught up with him.

## **BROWN SPORT**



Brown Sport

The most precious possession of Dad's whole life was his brown Sport, a lovable, handsome half Shepard, half Collie who always had a grin on his face. Dad says that one day he was coming home from school when he was 6 years old, and he took the long way home for diversion. Dad ended up walking in a farm area about mile from his home when suddenly he spotted a mother dog and about 6 puppies. Ed went over to the gate and looked for a long time at the litter of adorable puppies. He said that the mother and her puppies paid him no heed. But suddenly another puppy appeared and went immediately to Dad at the fence and had a pleading look in his eyes as if to say, "Come on, let me out of here, 'cause you and I will be real pals together." Ed opened the farm gate, and brown Sport immediately went through the gate and followed Ed all the way home with no need to be carried, directed or coaxed along the way. Sport and Ed were inseparable buddies from that Moment on.

## **NORMAN**



Norman John Bender & Sport



Norman John Bender

In the same year Dad's best buddy was born, his beloved brother Norman. Dad should have been jealous of his brother Norman as Norman could do no wrong in his parent's eyes and was spoiled rotten. Norman got all the attention from the parents and the older sisters and unfortunately Norman got all the clothes because he was so little and cute. There was more than one day when Ed had to go to school in Norman's shirts which were up to Dad's elbows as Norman was 5 years younger than Dad. But to the contrary, Ed did not begrudge Norman all the attention, but rather, Ed himself also lavished a lot of love and attention on his younger brother as he knew the reason why his family treated Norman so special. Edward suffered with his parents and his brothers and sisters through the deaths of 5 brothers in the past five years as all children were stillborn due to the Rh factor. Norman was indeed a miracle from God after all these dead children. Norman became even more special as they continued to lose three more children in the next three years. But this special status in childhood ruined Norman's adult life as he never became a responsible person and always felt that the world owed him something.

## **DAD'S FIRST LOVE**

Just before he died Dad recounted this story of his first love. Dad stated that in the first grade he fell head over heels in love with a beautiful blue eyed, blond haired girl by the name of Adele Dueweke. Dad said that name with affection to me many, many years later in June of 1982. He remembered with fondness little Adele. He had told Mom that he had seen Adele as a teenager coming out of a drugstore that didn't

have a very good reputation and that he was so disappointed in her as he always expected so much from her. On one of little Eddie's "dates" with Adele when he was 6 years old she invited him to a party at her house, and she played the piano and had Dad sing in accompaniment with her playing.

### ***SPORT'S 1ST DAY AT SCHOOL***



Brown Sport & Norman Bender

Dad said that he was in a classroom when suddenly he heard a lot of commotion and excited yelling outside his classroom door. The teacher left the room to see what was going on, and Eddie's curiosity always got the better of him, so he snuck out too, to see what was going on in the hallway. When Dad got into the hall, he saw the janitor running this way and that, forward and backward, and whenever the janitor went forward Ed heard a dog growl and snap and the janitor would then jump backwards. Dad thought that something was amiss with that growl, and when he stepped to one side, sure enough, to his astonishment, there stood Sport having a ball frightening the janitor and the teachers. Dad stood back for a Moment enjoying the spectacle and remembering how every morning he had to rout Sport as Sport would always try to follow him to school. Ed would order Sport to return home, and Sport would turn around but when Ed would proceed onto school he would find Sport trailing along behind him again. After about the fourth reprimand Sport would get smart and hide whenever Dad would look backwards to see if Sport was following him. Most times Sport would go home but this time Sport was cagier than ever and had made it all the way to St. Anthony's School. After Dad had enough of Sport's monkey shines with the janitor, Dad called out Sport's name and as soon as Sport set eyes on Dad, his whole body drooped as he knew the fun was over. Sport put his head down and quietly left the building at Dad's command. Thus ended Sport's first and last day at school.

## ***SPELLING CONTEST***

Dad was excellent in spelling so one day he entered a spelling contest at school. Dad said he spelled all the words that they challenged him with ease, and finally the spelling contest was narrowed down to Dad and one other contestant, a real smart but high strung girl. It meant the whole world to this girl to win the spelling contest and the nun giving the words knew this so suddenly she started giving the girl easier words and the harder words she saved for Ed. Ed spelled all his words correctly and finally the girl came to a word she started to spell incorrectly. The nun became so upset over the girl starting to spell incorrectly that she told the girl to start over again and slow down. Dad was so upset over this cheating that finally he came to a word he wasn't sure of and fumbled. The nun did not then require the girl to spell that word correctly as is the rules of a spelling bee, but rather, she just declared the girl to be the winner of the contest. This was one of Ed's many bitter lessons about the unfairness of life.

## ***MARIAN***



Marian Bender

Dad's sister Marian was born in 1915. She was a normal appearing child, but she had one fault which drove young Edward to distraction -- she cried continually and frantically. The Bender family was living with the Dienan family at the time as Henry could not find work and the family was evicted for non-payment of rent, an event that unfortunately, happened far too often to the Bender family. The Dienan family were very good people, and although poverty stricken themselves, they readily offered their home to the Bender family. Mildred Bender Neff went to live with the Neff family, and Bea went to another friend of grandma Bender, and Uncle Art was in the service. So Henry, Elizabeth, Al, Ed, Norman and newborn Marian went to live with the Dienan family. It was bitterly cold when the Benders moved into the Dienan residence so during

the day grandma Bender put Marian's buggy in front of the coal stove to keep the baby warm, but at night Marian would cry, so Mr. & Mrs Dienan asked grandma to put Marian in their bedroom so they could sleep through the night. Grandma was grief stricken when she had to remove Marian from in front of the fire as she was so afraid that the change in temperatures at night when Marian was frozen to the bone in the bedroom where the rugs froze to the floor might give Marian pneumonia. After school, grandma always asked Dad to take Marian for a long walk in the buggy to give the Dienan family some relief from Marian's almost constant screaming. Ed would so perturbed when he was asked to walk Marian as he so wanted to play ball rather than take some dumb baby sister for a walk. Ed would get rather vocal at times about how he felt taking a little sister for a walk every day after school when the other guys were playing ball. When Marian was several months old grandma took her to St. Anthony Church and had her baptized. Grandma was so terribly happy over Marian's birth as it was many years since she had had a girl child and she was so terribly pleased to have a girl at a time when her first two girls were almost grown.



Robert Bender

Then, once again, the unspeakable happened. Marian, like her brother Robert 11 months before her, fell acutely ill with a high fever. And like Robert, she succumbed to this fever and died. Grandma was inconsolable. She felt that Marian had died because the Dienan family would not allow her to keep the baby in front of the warm stove evenings. She was sure that Marian, like Robert the year before, and like George the year before that, had succumbed to pneumonia because she was too poor to afford enough heat to keep them warm. It is such a tragedy that grandma Bender died before the Rh factor became known. Grandma was never to know that her children died of an Rh incompatibility and not from pneumonia. Grandma would have felt so much better had she known that the deaths of Marian, Robert, George, Wilfred and all of her late term miscarriages were unavoidable at that time and that Edward and Norman survived simply because they were Rh negative like their mother and thus their blood cells were not attacked by their mother's antibodies against rh positive blood. But to his dying day Edward never forgot the very cruel statement that his mother said to him the day Marian died. Elizabeth said to Edward, "You always wanted her dead and now you've gotten your wish." Edward always said to himself in reply, "I didn't like babysitting her when others were playing ball, but I never, never

wished her dead."

### **ZEV**

Dad always wanted a bike like all the other boys had, but he knew it was useless to even ask his parents for such an expensive item. Dad was always fond of alley picking as he got many of his toys in so doing. So Dad started making a concerted effort to comb all the alleys in search of bicycle parts. He soon found an old frame here, handle bars there, a wheel here, a tire there, and so it went. Within a few months time he had everything he needed to build a very stripped down version of a bicycle. Dad very lovingly built his one and only bike, and he had put so much time and effort into finding the parts and then assembling them one by one that he developed a real fondness for his "new" bicycle. The bicycle seemed almost human to him, and so when he had finished it he lovingly named his new hike "Zev". Eddie went everywhere on Zev. Every evening he would oil his bike and realign the parts to make the bike go faster. One day a kid on a shiny hew bike challenged Dad to a bicycle race. Dad quickly agreed, and the race was on! Dad peddled with all the strength he could muster, and soon he found himself out in front. But Dad peddled even faster when he thought of his Zev and how important it was for his new creation to win this race. Dad was going like the wind, when he decided to look back and see just how far back the other kid was. As Dad did that, his bike moved in closer to the curb and his wheel hit a sewer grate and sent Dad flying clear across the street. Dad went head first over the handlebars and landed on the curb, striking the edge of the curb with his head. Dad was knocked out by the force of the blow, and when he came to he was startled to see that he had broken the curb with his head! Fortunately, nothing much happened to Zev. Zev had a sad ending. Dad came out of school one day and was heartbroken to discover that someone had stolen his Zev. One of Dad's favorite past times on Zev was to get the bike going real fast and then turn around on the bike and sit on the handlebars and peddle the bike from this position.

### **MOVING DAY**

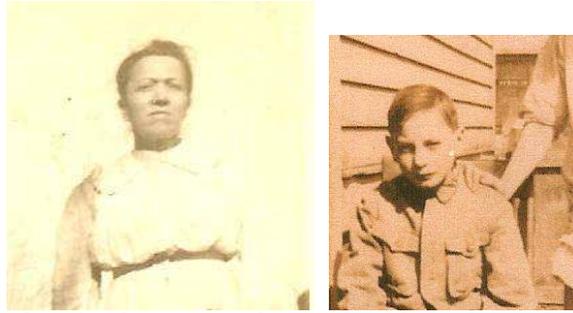


Henry & Elizabeth Bender

Grandma and grandpa could no longer pay the rent on the house they were living in so they knew that they would have to move, but also knew that they wouldn't have the money to pay for any rent on a new house either. Grandma went up and down the neighborhood streets looking for a good

place to rent. Finally she came upon the perfect solution. She found an empty house a few blocks over. Grandma simply picked up all of her furniture and moved into the empty house. She lived there for 6 months before the owner found out she was living there!

### **GROCERY BUYING**



Elizabeth Ott Bender      Edward Paul Bender

The need to purchase groceries was often a major crisis in the Bender household as there often was no money with which to purchase groceries to feed the family. To Elizabeth her children's needs always came first, so she solved the dilemma of no money and no food by going to the local grocery store and charging up her needed groceries. Often she would pay something on her account when grandpa would get a check, but if grandpa could not find work, Elizabeth was often without means to pay her bills and she would move on to a new neighborhood owing the poor grocer keeper money. One day Elizabeth told Ed to go to the store and charge up several days worth of food for the family. Ed went very reluctantly to the store for his mother, as Ed was always honest to a fault, and he hated having any part of taking groceries that his family might not be able to pay for. But Ed mustered up his courage and went into the store, picked up the needed food, took it to the counter and told the grocer to put it on the Bender tab. The grocer said absolutely not as the Benders owed him far too much money to keep charging food. Ed went home very saddened and embarrassed and told his mother what the grocer had said. His mother stuck her chin out as she did when she was determined, and said, "I'll get the groceries!" She went over to the grocery store and came out a little while later with two arms full of groceries.

### **BLACK PATENT LEATHER SHOES**

Dad decided that one spring day was so beautiful that it had all the necessary elements for skipping school. So skip school Dad did and he soon met up with a few other fellows who had the same ideas that Dad had. Dad came upon this group of up and coming young, lads as they

were shooting craps. Dad decided to show this gang how an expert handles the dice. Dad took the dice from the kids hand, and then told all of them to back up and give him room for shooting. Dad spit on the dice, shook them mightily, and just as he was ready to release them from his hand he noticed a large pair of black patent leather shoes standing on the edge of his shooting ring. Dad looked up from the shoes and saw a pair of black shiny pants connected to the shoes, he proceeded to look further up and found Father Schaeper, the pastor of St. Anthony's staring down at him. What a rotten twist to an otherwise beautiful day! Dad sat in the rectory watching Father Schaeper blow his red bulbous nose mightily, pushing it from one side to another with his hanky, while discussing with the nun Dad's truancy record. It seems that Dad had skipping school down to a fine point as he knew just how many days he could miss and not fail. Dad would always miss one day less than that which would have given him an automatic failure. Dad would always cram for mid-term and final exams and would always get A's and B's on the tests. This would infuriate Father Schaeper. But it kept Dad progressing from one grade to another. But in every grade, the nun would say to him, "Just wait until you get Sister Etherwald.

### ***COLD STORAGE***

Dad was crossing Gratiot Avenue one day and evidently had something on his mind as suddenly a huge, heavy Stutz came along and ran Dad over in the second lane of Gratiot. Dad was badly stunned and didn't know where he was but he did know that he had to get out of Gratiot Avenue if he wished to survive. Dad could not walk as his leg was badly broken, so he decided that the only way to get out of Gratiot Avenue was to roll to the curb. Unfortunately, Dad was badly turned around by the accident and he started to roll further into the street instead of towards the curb. Dad ended rolling across 3/4's of the street instead of rolling back to the curb that he just stepped off of. The driver of the Stutz never even slowed down, he just kept going. Fortunately for Dad his brother Al happened to be walking down Gratiot Avenue and saw the accident and came to Ed's aid. Al had Ed put his arm over his shoulder and Al supported Ed while Ed limped home to his parents. Grandma and Grandpa called Grandma's sister Agnes Koch and she had her husband Bill Koch drive Dad to Receiving Hospital. Dad said that once he was at Receiving Hospital they set his broken leg and then because his parents were not immediately available, they put him around the corner into a room off the emergency room corridor. Dad said he was very cold in this room and he couldn't see much of anything as it was very dark in the room. In a few minutes his eyes started adjusting and he could see that there were two other men in the room with him, one on the right and one on the left. Dad said he talked to the man on his left, but the man didn't answer him. He then talked to the man on his right, but again, got no answer. He then figured both of them were sleeping so he just laid still and waited for his garnets to return. Then a man came into the darkened

room, so Ed was so glad, figuring that the man could find some blankets to help him warm up a bit as he was freezing. So as the black man opened the door, Dad sat up and before Dad could say anything to him the man ran down the corridor screaming and running as fast as his legs could carry him. Dad laid down again, wondering what in the world ever got into that black man. Dad then looked at his roommates again to see if all the commotion had awakened either one of them. Dad looked again at the man on his right and noticed that his feet were sticking out of the sheet. Dad figured that the man's feet must be frozen blue from the cold and wondered how he could sleep so soundly in such a cold room. Dad looked on his left and noticed that there was blood between the man's legs. Just as a feeling of alarm started coming over Dad, his father Henry walked in, very angry, saying he was going to get his son out of here right away. The lights were turned on and to Dad's horror, he realized that he was lying in the morgue! Someone had pushed his gurney in there as a very poor joke.

### ***THE KOCH FAMILY***



Agnes Jackie, Harry, Wm Sr, Lillian, Wm Jr., & Marvin Koch

After Dad's release from Receiving Hospital, Bill Koch took Dad, grandma and grandma back to the Koch residence so that they could all visit with Aunt Agnes for a little while before Bill drove them all home. Dad said his leg hurt very badly and he did not feel like visiting anyone at this point, but he had no choice in the matter, so he went into the house with everyone else. Dad said he stood in the living room for a few minutes waiting for Bill Jr., Marvin, Harry and Jackie Koch, his cousins to come into the living room to talk to him. When over 5 minutes had lapsed and no one came, Dad asked his Aunt Agnes where the

boys were. Aunt Agnes, talking to Elizabeth, said absent mindedly, "Probably in the kitchen". Dad swung the door to the kitchen open but no one was there and it was pitch black in there, but Dad decided to go into the kitchen anyway to see if perhaps they might be in the cellar. When Dad was in the middle of the kitchen, suddenly the 4 boys jumped off the counters and the top of the ice box and tackled Dad and knocked him to the ground. The pain in Dad's leg was so excruciating at this point that he thought he would pass out! Dad became so mad at his cousins in the dark kitchen as they started hitting him and wrestling with him, that Dad started fighting back as vigorously as he could to get those 4 boys off him. The fighting became intense and soon the adults in the living room sprang into the kitchen to see what was amiss. Aunt Agnes was furious with Dad as she said that her boys were so well behaved and that Dad had started this fight. Dad said that there was no way that his aunt would believe that he was totally innocent of starting the fight in this instance. Dad liked teasing Aunt Agnes by calling her Aunt Aggie. She hated the name Aggie, and Dad was sure to start a big argument whenever he called her this. Dad lost a lot of popularity with Aunt Agnes with this knick name.



Harry Koch

Dad received a big shock about a year after he broke his leg when his brother Arthur came home and said he just came from the Detroit city morgue where he had just identified the badly mutilated body of 10 year old Harry Koch, Dad's cousin who was about a year older than Dad. Harry was delivering newspapers on Gratiot just north of 7 Mile Rd. when he got run over by a streetcar. The street car tore open his whole back. Harry was buried next to Ed's little sister Marian and little brother Robert in Mt. Elliott cemetery in the Ott family plot. It was a few short years later that another shock hit the Koch family when Bill Koch, who was about 40 years old and a very successful trucker for the Gold Medal flour company, suddenly took ill, and died of pneumonia. Agnes was left with a large independent trucking company which she was unable to handle on her own. Agnes saved the trucking company by marrying one of the main truckers in her late husband's company, a man by the name of Henry McDermitt, a bad mistake that Agnes would soon learn to wish with all her heart and soul that she had not made!

## ***SUNDAY WALK***

Dad told the story of how his mother cooked the whole Sunday dinner and then decided to take a walk with the family before serving dinner. She left the pot roast on the table while going for a walk. Their family dog smelled the pot roast and being more starved than the family, jumped in through the window and ate the whole pot roast! Sport was always half starved and used to dig through ash cans in the alleys to complete his diet. Sport's main fare in the Bender household was raw potatoes, as there were never any leftovers from the Bender table. Sport loved raw potatoes and Elizabeth would peel a potato and then throw it lightening fast at Sport. Sport would catch the potato every time in mid air.

## ***THE BARN***

The house at Maxwell and Lambert had a barn out back and Sport would usually sleep in the barn. One day as Dad was coming home from school he saw the most sickening sight of his whole life -- Dad saw Sport get hit and run over by a Model A. The car ran clear over Sport, and Sport's body bounced as the car threw it about. Dad was beside himself with grief! He ran to his dog and picked him up out of the street and carried him lovingly to the barn. Sport barely moved and made no sound. Dad sat with his Sport, heartbroken until his mother made him come in the house for suppertime. Dad was then told not to return to the barn as he could do Sport no good and was just tearing himself to pieces emotionally. The next day Dad got out of bed, feeling like his body was made of lead as he was sure his beloved Sport was long dead. Dad walked, shoulders stooped, to the barn, trying to remember if there was a shovel in the barn that he could use to bury Sport. Dad pulled back the bar of the barn door and slowly opened the door, his eyes downcast, as he dare not look at his poor Sport. As the door was opened by Ed, Sport bounded out of the barn with so much energy that Sport literally flew over Ed's head! Ed's joy was boundless! His beautiful, much loved friend was not only alive, but appeared to be fully mended! That was the happiest day of young Ed's life.

## ***THE HEDGES***

Ed used to work a few hours in the evenings to earn some extra money as a child and he would come home afterwards in the dark. On the corner of the block on which his house was situated, there was a house with 6 foot high hedges all along the front of the house. Ed said that no matter how many times he would pass by those hedges he would never cease

to be greatly startled when his Sport would hurdle over those 6 foot hedges and land right on top of Ed's head! Whether Dad would anticipate Sport coming over the hedges or not, it was always such a startling thing to happen to have a 70 pound dog land on top of you.

### ***BOY SCOUT DAYS***



Edward Bender & Beatrice Bender

Dad really wanted to be a boy scout like the other boys in his class, so one day he stayed after school and joined up. The scout master told him to come to the next meeting in a boy scout uniform. The next several meetings Dad showed up in street clothes as his parents could not afford a boy scout uniform. The leader told Dad he would have to have a boy scout uniform, or he would have to leave the boy scout troop. This was a real dilemma for Dad as he really liked the boy scouts and he wanted to stay in the troop. So Dad asked Harold Neff, who was dating his sister Mildred what he could do about it. Harold knew that it was out of the question for Henry and Elizabeth to buy Ed a boy scout uniform when they had no money for food, so Harold lent Dad his soldier uniform and told Ed to wear that to the scout meetings. Dad wore the uniform to the scout meetings and was so proud to march with the other boys in his new uniform. But when the scout leaders looked at the other boys in their new, well fitting little boy scout uniforms and then looked at Dad in his army uniform that was about 4 sizes too big for him, it was more than they could bear. They kicked a very heartbroken little Eddie out of their scout troop.

### ***BELLE ISLE CASINO***

Dad said he used to go to the Belle Isle Casino on foot and would look

longingly at the lavish picnic lunches that the rich people would bring to eat at the Casino. Dad said he would stand in the shadows, his stomach aching from hunger as there was no food to be had at his home, and he would go hungry all day. When the rich people would finish their picnic they would leave the casino, and the picnic table would be laden with uneaten food. As soon as a family would leave the casino, Dad would rush over to the table and eat all the left over food. Dad said that no matter how much the people would leave, and no matter how many of the lunches he would finish, he would never be full as he had had so many days of nothing to eat that he could never catch up on lost nutrition.

### ***SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS***



Ed's siblings, Mildred, Beatrice & Arthur Bender

The Bender family had no money for proper beds for their kids so they did the best they could. Edward said they had 5 kids sleeping sideways on a old lumpy mattress and that the younger kids urinated on the mattress creating a wet, smelly bed. Edward was so happy when he was able to sleep on a mattress by himself after years of misery.

### ***BACK OF THE KNIFE***



Elisabeth Ott Bender

Elizabeth was an excellent cook and people could never get enough of her

fine food, but unfortunately, there was never enough of her cooking to go around because of the lack of money with which to buy food. Elizabeth would shop as wisely as she could, often having to charge up some or all of the Sunday dinner, and then would give her children unspoken clues to only take a small portion of the meat so there would be food enough for everyone. Dad said that whenever he would ignore her unspoken admonitions and reach for another piece of her delicious meat, swift as lightning, grandma would give Ed a very sharp rap over the back of the knuckles with the back of her carving knife.

### ***THE SLED***

One year, when the first big snow fall occurred, Ed got very exuberant and decided that he would hitch his Sport up to his sled and go for a sleigh ride with Sport being the propelling force. Sport was always game to try something new so he stood by and let Ed hitch him up to the sled. Ed then hopped on the sled and told Sport to get going. Sport, not one to disappoint Ed, took off running full speed ahead, giving Ed the time of his life with such a fast ride. Sport than came to the corner, add suddenly, with no warning, Sport made a right angle turn, taking the sled with him and dumping Ed right into and across the street as Sport went one way and Ed continued straight ahead. Sport then stopped and looked at Ed sitting in the street, and Sport had a big grin on his face for he knew exactly what he was doing, and just wanted to rile Ed up a bit!

### ***A THORN IN THE PAW***



Harold Neff Beatrice Bender Gamache holding brown Sport

Harold Neff recalled this story when I was sitting at his cozy kitchen nook having tea and rum soaked fruit cake with him and Aunt Mildred after having driven them home from Uncle Art's wake. Uncle Harold said that he always tried to make friends with Sport but that Snort would always show Harold his teeth. Harold was afraid of being bitten by Sport and

would keep his distance from him. One day when Harold was visiting the Bender family he noticed that Sport was limping badly, and he cautiously approached Sport and told him he wanted to get a look at his injured paw. Miraculously, Sport let Harold take his injured paw in hand and examine it. Harold soon determined that the reason for the limp was that Sport had a thorn in his paw. Harold removed the thorn from Sport's paw, and from that time on Harold Neff and Sport were fast friends.

### ***THE BACK STAIRWAY***



Harold Neff

One day Dad came home from school and couldn't find his mother in the kitchen, where she usually was, preparing dinner, at that hour. Dad called to his mother and heard a groan from the back stairway. Dad went to the stairway and there he found his mother in a pool of blood. Dad was beside himself. At first he thought that she had fallen and hurt herself, but his mother told him, no, that she was having a late term miscarriage. Dad tried to carry his mother up the stairs and put her in bed, but grandma said, no, let her be right where she is and hurry instead and find a doctor to stop the bleeding as she was already in deep shock. Dad ran as fast as he could out of the house and down to Gratiot Avenue to find a doctor, hoping that his mother would still be alive when he got back home. Dad found a doctor's office about 3 blocks away, and ran in breathless, telling the doctor to come quick, as his mother was dying. The doctor asked his mother's name, and then said he would not come as the Bender family never paid their doctor bills. Dad ran out of that office, down Gratiot Avenue several more blocks to the next doctor's office, breathlessly telling the same story. Again, the doctor said he knew the family, and would not come as he would not get paid. Dad ran ever farther down Gratiot Avenue in search of a doctor, and twice more went into a doctor's office only to be told that they knew the Bender family and would not come unless Dad had cash on his person to pay for the house call. One hour later Dad returned home, sick in spirit, as he was sure his mother was dead, and he was powerless to help

her as no doctor would come to his aid as he had no money on his person to pay for the visit. Dad was deathly afraid to go into that back stairway for fear of what he might find there. When he got home, and went to the stairway he found pools of blood, but no mother, there. Dad went into the house calling his mother's name. He was met by Harold Neff, who told Dad that he got there right after Dad left the house, went himself to the first doctor that Dad had pleaded with to care for Elizabeth, and when the doctor gave Harold the same heartless response, Harold threw a 10 dollar bill at the doctor from his own pocket and told the doctor to get over there immediately and stop the bleeding, which the doctor, fortified by a 10 dollar bill, then proceeded to do posthaste.

### ***DAD PLAYS GHOST***



Al (Elmer) Bender

Dad said one night near Halloween, he felt very devilish and decided to play a joke on his brother Al. Dad put a sheet over his head in the middle of the night and then went into Al's bedroom and started moaning deep and low while standing next to Al's bed. Al woke up, and sure enough, he was terrified out of his wits at the sight of a ghost at the side of his bed. But this is where the fun ended for Ed. Al jumped out of bed and lunged full force at the ghost and started beating Ed, who was 4 years younger than Al, over the head with all his might. AL swung at the ghost from every angle pulverizing Ed under the sheet. And poor Ed couldn't defend himself as he was trapped under the sheet and couldn't get out while AL was beating on him. Al finally woke up enough to realize it was Ed pulling a joke on him and then he stopped pounding on Ed, and Ed got out from under that sheet and ran back to his own bed, much the worse for having pulled this little trick.

### ***PEACH TREES***

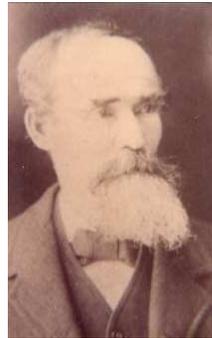
When I was about 10 years old, Dad took me to a house he used to live in near Harper not too far from Mt. Elliott to show me the backyard of that home. Dad drove into the alley and showed me two peach trees growing by the garage. Dad said that when he was a boy he ate two peaches and then

planted the seeds in the garden bed by the garage to see if they would grow. They did indeed, grow, and became peach trees, but he moved out before he could reap the enjoyment of these peach trees. And this day, he just wanted to travel back in time and admire the fruits of his earlier labors.

**GRANDMA SOPHIE OTT & GRANDPA WILHELM OTT**



Sophie Becker Ott



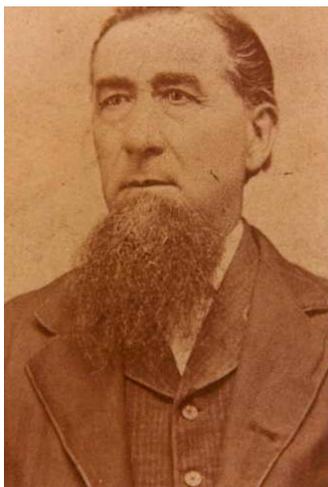
Wilhelm Ott

Dad remembers his grandma Ott, though somewhat dimly as time passed. He remembered her as being a rather stern individual who never smiled. He also remembered when the street car stopped suddenly and threw her off her seat and she suffered a fractured leg. The leg was badly injured and she never walked right after that, having had a very pronounced limp. But what Dad remembers most about her is what he remembers best about grandma Bender, that the first time she met little Eddie, she looked at him and said, "Eddie, I hear that you're a really bad boy!". Dad never could figure out how his two grandmas could form such an opinion of him, as they had never seen him before, and in Ed's estimation, he was a real good kid.

Edward never knew his Grandfather Wilhelm Ott who died before he was born. Wilhelm was born in Baden Baden Germany and immigrated to Michigan at the request of his Uncle Charles Knapp who owned a stone quarry on Atwater Street and the Detroit River and who used the stone to build many large buildings in Detroit. He asked his cousin Wilhelm to come to Detroit and become a stone cutter. Wilhelm was a shoe maker in the Black Forest in Germany. He came to Detroit with his first wife Elisabeth and children from that first marriage. Shortly after they moved to Detroit his first wife died of cancer. Wilhelm loved her very much and was devastated by her death. A few years later he married our great grandmother Sophie Becker. In his early fifties he developed stone lung from the stone dust, which destroyed his lungs. He suffered horribly from being unable to breathe, which made him very irritable. He treated Sophie very cruelly, calling her names and beating her. One time he beat her so badly a doctor was called. He told Wilhelm that if he was not in the last week of his life that the doctor would have him arrested. Wilhelm used to write really nasty things about Sophie on his

bedroom wall. That was one of the major reasons that poor Sophie was so stern and never smiled. She went through so much suffering under his vile temper. He was a tyrant in his own home. He would never allow anyone to speak any English in his home, only German was allowed to be spoken. Wilhelm carved his own tombstone in his last days. It was a 4 foot tall very impressive stone. When Sophie died her brother John Becker removed the stone from Wilhelm's grave and put it on his father, Johannes Becker's grave.

**JOHANNES BECKER & ELISABETH FRIEDRICHS BECKER**



Johannes Becker &



Elisabeth Friedrichs Becker

Sophie Becker Ott was born in Michigan. Her parents, Johannes Becker and Elisabeth Friedrichs Becker were both born in Prussia, Germany. Johannes immigrated to Detroit, Michigan around 1850. Elisabeth was living with her parents in Detroit when she met and married Johannes Becker. These were the richest of Edward's forefathers. Elisabeth's father bought the first lot on Gratiot Avenue where Johannes built his first cooper building. He later bought the remaining two adjacent lots and enlarged his cooper factory. They lived above the cooper factory for over 50 years until their death in the 1905 era. They were very kind grandparents, having raised their grandchildren after their mother died in child birth. They both died very shortly before Edward's birth.

Edward's life would have been more comfortable had they lived longer as they were very generous and would never had allowed poor little Eddy to go for days without food. They regularly bought clothing and shoes for their grandkids, so Ed would never have had to wear Norman's shirts to school.

## ***THE LAUNDRY STICK***



Elizabeth Ott Bender

Dad's strongest memories of his childhood always included a laundry stick. Dad's mother would, take in other people's laundry for a living, and she would wash the clothes by hand in a big tub, using a laundry stick to poke and stir the clothes, then she would scrub them by hand over a wash board. Ed would often be in his toughest scrapes during the hours his Mother washing clothes over the scrub board and the handiest thing around was her laundry stick when her temper would flare up over something that Edward had done. Elizabeth would pick up her trusty laundry stick and beat Edward over the back with it on many an afternoon after hearing of one of his newest escapades. To Edward in his growing years, the laundry stick was the most familiar of the household items.

## ***THE RAILROAD TRACKS***

Dad recalls the time that the family had no coal and it was the dead of winter and they could stand the cold no longer. His Mom begged him to go out looking for fuel as she did not want to impose on her relatives again if at all avoidable, as she was so desperately embarrassed by her continual poverty. Ed took a large sack with him and, headed for the railroad yard where the coal came into the city on boxcars. Ed went along the tracks on the outside of the station where it was legal to pick up coal, but so many poor families had been there before him that the pickings were too slim to create even one good fire to last an evening, so Ed ended up going closer and closer to the forbidden territory, and at last he ended up right next to the boxcar in an effort to fill his sack with much needed coal. While Dad was busy filling the sack, he failed to see the advancing railroad guard. The guard shouted at Dad, and Dad, not about to give up his desperately

needed coal, jumped the fence and ran out of the yard as fast as his legs would carry him. The guard shot right at Dad, and Dad actually felt the bullet whizzing by. Dad jumped into a ditch and crawled into a drain pipe to elude the guard. The guard searched the whole area and failed to find Dad. The guard returned to his post and Dad headed for home with his precious cargo in his hands.

### **JUDGE UNCLE LOUIS OTT**



JUDGE LOUIS OTT

Dad had a grand uncle who was a Circuit Court Judge in Detroit, his Uncle Louis Ott. Whenever things got really tight and Elizabeth was in desperate need of money she would go to the house of Louis Ott on Gratiot and Meldrum and ask him for money. Dad would go with her sometimes but Dad would stand outside while Elizabeth went into the Judge's law offices and make her desperate plea. Most of the time Louis would give Elizabeth the needed money. Dad said he always wanted to get up the courage to walk into his granduncle Louis's law office and introduce himself and learn more about Louis. But Dad always feared that he would not be well received as he was a poverty stricken child, so he never met his famous Uncle Louis.

**Article from Detroit News paper on Judge Louis Ott:**

Louis Ott, former Justice of the Peace, knows the discipline of hard work, and through his own efforts put himself through college. This is his birthday, having been born in Detroit October 15, 1876, one of three children born to Louis and Louise Schlechter Ott. As a boy, Mr. Ott sold newspapers on the streets of Detroit, and at 16 he went to work in a newspaper office. He found time to study law in the Detroit College of Law and was graduated in 1899. Following his graduation he worked in the law offices of Sloman and Groesbeck, and in 1901 established himself in private practice. In 1905 he was elected Justice of the Peace, leading the whole Republican ticket at the election. He was re-elected and served until 1914, when he again established himself in private practice, which he has continued since. September 6, 1906 he was married to Jennie G. Terry, of Detroit, now deceased. They were the parents of 10 children, seven of whom are living. Mr. Ott is a member of the Detroit, Michigan and American Bar Associations. His favorite recreation is motoring. The family home is at 4415 Meldrum Ave.

**YELLIE**

When Dad was a boy his mother kept a net chicken which the family had named "Yellie". Dad said that Yellie was an exceptionally smart chicken and the family treated her like she were a dog instead of a chicken. Dad spent many an hour playing with Yellie. Yellie ate little and produced an egg every morning for the Bender family. Dad liked Yellie very much and Yellie grew to be quite old for a chicken. One day Dad came home for

Sunday dinner and sat down to dinner as usual. Grandma made a beautiful chicken dinner. But Dad could see immediately by how upset his mother was that something was terribly amiss. Grandma confessed to little Eddie that she couldn't let Sunday go by without a good dinner and as she had had no money and no credit she had to kill Yellie. Dad was so sick that he got upset to his stomach even though he had eaten nothing of Yellie. The family later remarked that Yellie tasted very fatty due to her advanced age. Dad got even more sick to think that after Yellie got butchered, that the family had the gall to complain about her taste. Dad never forgot the pain of losing Yellie in that manner.

### ***CHIN ON THE PAVEMENT***



Edward Paul Bender

One day Dad was bringing a lady something, she had requested, when suddenly her dog got loose and started coming right at him with teeth bared. Dad tried talking real firm and brave to make the dog back off, but with no success, as the dog kept coming. Dad looked around and realized he could not jump the fence before the dog would get him. So he faced the dog and remembered the story about his great grandfather Ott who killed a wolf in the Black Forest of Germany by strangling the wolf with his bare hands. The dog came at Ed and tried to bite Ed's outstretched hands. Ed moved fast, and got the dog by the top of his head, and pushed the dog's chin flat against the pavement. The more the dog struggled to get Ed, the harder Ed pushed his head into the pavement. Ed saw that the dog's chin was getting bloody, but still the dog would not give up. Suddenly the woman who owned the dog came out of the house with a broom in the hand and started beating Dad over the head with the broom! Dad finally got the woman to call off her dog and he hastily left the yard, no bites on his hands, but broom bristle marks on his head instead. (There are some days when you just can't win.)

### ***THE BAKERY SHOP***

When Dad was about 9 years old his Uncle Joe (Henry's brother) came to live with them for a short time as Joe was between jobs. When Joe got another job he asked Dad to go with him up Gratiot on pay day. Joe went to the bakery shop and looked at all the bakery goods from

the window and when he decided what he wanted he would point to each item and tell Dad how much of each he wanted. He then had Dad go in and buy the baked goods as he was too shy about buying sweets for himself. Dad took the money from Joe, went in and bought the goods and gave Joe the bag full of goodies. Dad then watched as Joe devoured one delicacy after another without offering Dad one piece. Finally, Dad could stand it no longer and asked Joe for a piece. Joe realized how rude he was being and gave Dad a share of the baked goods. Another time Dad went into the candy store for Joe and again, Dad had to ask Joe for some candy as Joe was too busy enjoying himself on the candy to think of Dad.

### ***UNCLE JOE***



Henry Charles Bender



John Wittenberg Sr



John Wittenberg Sr

Uncle Joe worked in a foundry most of his life after getting this job through the influence of his sister Elizabeth's husband, John Wittenberg Sr. Joe had to lift cores over his head from a laying position, and to carry the heavy cores clear across the plant. As a result Joe developed very powerful muscles and being over 6 foot 4 inches tall, he was a very powerful man to contend with when angered. One day Joe and his brother Henry got into an argument and Joe got a little heated. As a result of his temper outburst Joe lost control and picked his brother Henry up by the shirt collar with the use of one arm and held Henry above eye level while hollering at him. Elizabeth came into the room and when she saw Joe holding Henry up in the air. She became very angry and hollered at Joe to put Henry down. Joe then realized what he was doing and put Henry down.

### ***PIES IN THE WINDOW SILL***

Dad was walking down the alley one day, as starved as usual, when

something really good smelling caught his nose. Dad followed his ole factory sense which led him into a backyard, and lo and behold on a window sill sat two fresh steaming pies. Dad tried to sniff out which was what flavor, and finally he settled on what smelled like his favorite, blueberry pie. Blueberry pie it was, and what flavor! Ed ate the whole pie in less than 10 minutes, and he was certain, that no matter what the flavor of the remaining pie, it was bound to be delicious as that woman really knew how to make pies! So Dad reached up on the window sill and helped himself to the remaining pie. And as predicted, it was just as delicious as the first. Then Ed pushed his luck just a little too far. He stuck around to see if she was going to put out another delicious pie. As the woman was putting out the 3rd pie, she noticed the other two had disappeared, and she then spotted Dad waiting for her next pie, so she got her broom and chased him half way down the alley, swatting him with the broom until he out ran her reach.

### ***HALLOWEEN***

Dad used to dress up like all the other kids and go out begging on Halloween, saying as he approached people's houses, "Help the poor!" But Dad also liked October 30th too, (devils' night). One devil's night he went up to the house of a lady that always gave him trouble and he uprooted her entire white picket fence and put it on her porch. I'm sure he was even more unpopular with her after that incident.

### ***A BIG ONE, A LITTLE ONE***



Henry & Edward Bender

Dad said that when his Dad worked for Huntz Manzel cutting sod Hank liked to stop at the local pub and have one beer before bringing home all the rest of the money to his Lizzie. Dad would meet his Dad on the way home and they would walk into the tavern together. Hank would go up

to the bar, sit on the stool, then hike Dad up on the stool. Hank would then call to the bartender to bring him a beer, a big glass and a little glass. Every time the bartender would say, "You're not going to give that little kid anything to drink, are you?" And grandpa would reply, "Of course not. I just like putting some of my beer in a shot glass and drinking it from there. It makes the beer last longer." The bartender would give Hank the beer and the two glasses. Hank would fill both glasses and then drink the big one himself and give Ed the little one when the bartender turned his back. Dad cherished those Friday afternoons with his father at the corner tavern. It made him feel so grown up and so important.

### ***HUNTZ'S MAN***

When grandpa was working for Huntz Manzel on his sod farm, Dad tried to stand on the street corner and wait for the wagons to come in from the sod farm. His Dad would come in on one of the wagons and then Dad would walk home with his Dad. One day Dad was standing on the corner waiting for his Dad when the first of the horse drawn wagons appeared. The man driving the wagon made a very smart remark to Dad, so Dad gave the man a smart remark back. The man jumped off the wagon and beat Dad up quite badly. Dad didn't have a chance as this man was over 6 foot tall and weighed about 230 pounds. Dad on the other hand, was about 5 foot and weighed about 95 pounds. Dad suffered a cut lip and a black eye from this encounter. When grandpa got off the wagon he immediately saw the condition of Dad's face and questioned him as to what had happened to him. Dad did not reply as he did not want to cause any trouble for his Dad as his Dad was a very pleasant, happy, docile man who was 6 foot 1 inch tall, but weighed about 135 pounds. He didn't want his Dad roughed up by that huge ugly tempered employee of Huntz's, especially since Hank had to work with that man every day. A bystander told Hank the entire story, and mild mannered Hank became infuriated, tore into the large fellow, and caused much more facial damage than that man had inflicted on Dad. That was one of the very few times that Dad ever saw his father angry or violent.

### ***SISTER ETHERWALD***

Every year when Dad skipped school or acted up the nun would say to him, "Just wait till you get Sister Etherwald!". Well, it seems that Sister Etherwald had heard every had boy story that there was to tell about Dad, and she was primed and waiting for him when he entered her 4th grade classroom. The first day of class she said to him, "Eddie, I've heard about you!". That's when the trouble started. Sister

Etherwald was as high spirited as Ed and during the course of that school year (1917-1918) each egged the other on to greater and greater frenzy. The more Sister Etherwald would apply her very harsh punishments, the more Edward would egg her on to apply more and harsher punishment by dreaming up more outrageous misbehavior. Edward loved the attention he was receiving, and the more attention she paid to him, the more he would seek out further attention from her. The angrier she got with Ed, the more fondness he felt for her. Ed had a very deep attachment to that nun, much deeper than he himself realized, and vice versa. Ed was a child that Sister Etherwald could not get out of her mind. Years later, when Ed was a middle aged man with children of his own, Ed's brother Art heard that Sister Etherwald lay dying, so Art went over to the convent to say a last farewell to his stern 4th grade teacher. When speaking to Art, Sister Etherwald just had to know what ever happened to his younger brother Ed. When Art told her that Ed was a respectable radio and washer salesman who was married and had several children of his own, she was stunned. She felt that Ed was heading for big trouble, and she always told Eddie that he was born to be hung. She was kind of saddened that her prediction never came true. It was kind of a disappointment to her that Ed has settled down and become an ordinary married man. She had hoped for something more Swashbuckling from one of her toughest students. Sister Etherwald used to beat Ed's hands raw with a ruler but Ed would look at her and smile to get her goat. Get her goat it did. She would beat him harder and harder, and he would stand there and keep smiling. She beat him over the back with a yardstick and he would smile. She got so exasperated that she called over the pastor and he took Dad over to the rectory after hearing all of Sister Etherwald's tales, and the pastor was determined to beat this cocky kid until he cried for mercy. Dad never uttered a word, and the priest really got carried away with beating him, and when the priest came to his senses he realized that Ed's entire back was a mass of bloody stripes where he had beaten the kid with a belt, and that Ed's shirt was torn to shreds, and that the pieces of cloth were sticking to the bloody wounds. The priest sent Dad home, the priest being in both a rage over his inability to break the boy down emotionally and in fear over the damage he had done to the boys health. When Dad's mother saw all the blood and the torn shirt she marched with Dad right back to the rectory to give that priest real hell over what he had done to her son. On the way down, Dad decided that he'd better tell his Mom all he had done in school to rile the priest into such frenzy. Dad told his Mom one story after another in the mile to school, and when they were even with the rectory and Dad was telling her the last of his stories, his mother suddenly flew into a rage at all his outrageous behavior, and she started beating on him right there in front of the rectory!

### ***MA, THEY'RE PICKING ON ME!***

One time Dad came home from school with bruises on his back and told her that the reason for the bruises was because the nuns were picking on him for no reason. Grandma loved all her children fiercely, and she always tried to defend them against unjust attacks from the outside world which they often had to endure because of their abject poverty, so she went to school to straighten out the nun who was picking on her Eddie for unjust reasons. Grandma went to the convent and little Eddie was told to wait outside. Grandma was in the convent for some time, and when she came out Eddie sprang to his feet, ran to his mother, and said, "ma, I told you they were picking one me!" Elizabeth had a head crammed full of tales about her Eddie's misbehavior which she was reasonably certain were all true, so when Eddie said to her that they were picking on him, she was so enraged at him that she hauled off and hit him right in the face! Poor Eddie, he got into trouble without even trying to!

### ***THE BIG FIGHT***

One day Dad was sitting in Sister Etherwald's classroom when suddenly Sister Justin, the other fifth grade teacher, came into Sister Etherwald's classroom asking for help as she was having a very difficult time trying to control a 15 year old 6 foot ungraded pupil in her classroom as he was losing his temper. Sister Etherwald, over 6 foot herself and built like a football player, walked into Sister Justin's room like a gang-buster and started ordering that ungraded kid around. The ungraded kid, being very simple minded and prone to violence, decided that he didn't have to take that kind of talk from anyone, and he threatened Sister Etherwald with violence. Sister Etherwald told him to step into the hall, which he gladly did. The ungraded kid stepped into the hall and as soon as he got into the hall, he hauled off and slugged her right in the head. That made Sister Etherwald see red, and she started slugging that big kid back with everything she had. The kid slugged back and the fight was on! Dad slipped out of the classroom at the sound of the first blow as he was never one to miss the excitement. Dad was very disturbed at anyone hitting his Sister Etherwald, and Dad tried to join in on slugging that kid into unconsciousness. Sister Etherwald saw Ed out of the corner of her eye and she ordered him to keep out of the fight, that she would handle it herself. By the time someone got the priest from the rectory to the classroom, the fight was over and Sister Etherwald was the undisputed winner. But the next day she showed up with two black eyes, a bloody lip and tow bloody fists. The kids were more scared of her than ever after that, but Dad admired her that much the more for such a marvelous show of strength.

## **BRICK THROUGH THE WINDOW**

Dad tells the following story with mixed emotions. There was a butcher who picked on Dad because Dad got the best of his son in an evenly matched fight. The butcher was enraged when his son lost the fight and the butcher beat up Dad, leaving marks on Dad. Dad's mother was so angry with the butcher for beating up her son that she took the butcher to court. Because the butcher was influential politically and Dad's parents were not, the judge decided in favor of the butcher. Mom Bender was defeated emotionally by this decision, but Dad was angered by the injustice of it all. So Dad sat and plotted how he could get even with the butcher. One day Dad was sitting in the living room of his house making himself very conspicuous to his mother. When his mother went to the basement to do a load of wash, Ed dashed out his front door, ran down to Gratiot Avenue and put a brick through the butcher's plate glass window. Dad then ran back home full speed ahead and sat back down in the same chair. His Mom came up from the basement about 2 minutes later and found Ed sitting in the same chair, reading the same book. The police came to her door within the half hour to accuse Dad of throwing the brick through the butcher's window in retaliation. Grandma was able to swear on her dead father's grave that her son Ed never left the living room chair.

## **THE WASHING MACHINE**

Grandma was so weary of washing clothes by hand over the scrub board that when Henry went to work again, she saved up the money for a down payment on a washing machine, those big, old tubs that churned clothes around, and had a wringer on the top where you ran all the clothes through the wringer to get the excess moisture out of them. Grandma had the washer delivered to her house and then faithfully made the weekly payments on the machine. Then like so many other times in her life, Henry was laid off and couldn't find work. Elizabeth fell behind in her weekly payments and finally, things were so hard that she could no longer make even a partial payment. Finally the owner of the appliance shop came to her front door and told poor Elizabeth that they would have to repossess the washer for non-payment. Elizabeth just hung her head low and led the washer man to her washing machine that had, saved her untold hours of back breaking work in the last several months. The man felt horrible about repossessing this washing machine, and he felt even worse when he felt the bone chilling cold in the house and asked Elizabeth when she last had fuel to heat the house as it was the middle of the winter and very cold in her house. She replied that it had been about 5 days since she last had a fire in the house. The store owner was so

touched by her poverty that he left with the washer but returned with a wagon full of coal and wood, and he also brought with him a box full of food. He told Elizabeth that anytime she needed more fuel for a fire to contact him and he would get it for her. Elizabeth was embarrassed by her poverty but touched by this man's kindness.

### **TRUANT OFFICER**

In Dad's day the truant officers were much more vigilant than they are today as many more children skipped school than is presently the case as mandatory education was a rather new concept at the turn of the century. Consequently, the truant officer of 1918 walked the streets of his area looking for children of school age. One day Dad was walking along the street during school hours enjoying the beautiful spring day. Suddenly the truant officer spotted Dad and shouted to Dad to stop. Dad had no intention of having such a beautiful spring day messed up by having to return to school, so Dad ran as fast as he could, with the truant officer in hot pursuit. Dad rounded a corner and dove in between two houses at the corner, and then decided to squeeze between the slats on the porch and hide under the porch until the truant officer gave up and left the area. But to Dad's horror, as he was squeezing in between the slats of the porch, he suddenly was stuck at the waist between the slats and couldn't get in or get out. The more Dad struggled, the tighter he was stuck. Dad had claustrophobia all of his life and this predicament caused a feeling of sheer panic in Dad. But he calmed down and lay quietly between the slats, and miraculously the truant officer missed him and never discovered Dad in such an awkward position and after calming down, Dad's waist wasn't so swollen and he easily slipped out of the slats. Dad was never so grateful for his freedom!

### **CONFIRMATION**

Dad studied for confirmation, and in the Fourth grade the big day finally arrived. However, this presented another big dilemma for the Bender family, what to do to get Edward a suit. To buy a new suit was out of the question, suits were far too expensive. Grandma finally figured out a solution. She went to her sister Agnes Ott Koch and asked her if Edward could borrow Marvin's Sunday suit as Marvin was just a little bigger than Ed. Agnes readily agreed to lend Edward the suit, but Marvin wanted no part of lending his suit to anyone as he was proud of his Sunday suit. Agnes overruled her

son and told him to behave himself. But behave himself he refused to do, and when Edward stood so proudly in this suit on Confirmation day, Marvin ruined the whole day for Edward when he told him to be careful with the suit and not get anything on it as it was not his suit. Edward never forgot the humiliation of those remarks, and he never forgot that Marvin told him to remove the suit as soon as the Confirmation was over and give it back to him. Edward remembered more of the insults he had to endure on that day than he did the beauty of the religious ceremony.

### ***A SAD FAREWELL***

Dad loved St. Anthony school and was proud to be a part of it despite his fondness for skipping school and his penchant for irritating Sister Etherwald. So Dad was completely stunned when the nuns voiced their displeasure with Ed and his behavior and in May, 1918 they requested that Elizabeth come to the rectory and discuss Edward's future. Edward went with his mother to the rectory as he wanted to know what their plans were for him. He wanted to have a say in those plans and he wanted input into what they were saying about his behavior as he felt that many of their stories were greatly exaggerated. However, when he got to the rectory, the nuns and the priest refused him entrance, telling him to stay outside until they had finished talking to his mother. In September, 1961, Edward stood on that very spot on the pavement that he had stood some 40 years earlier, and he recounted to me this very story, being as sick at heart over it as he was the day it happened. It was one of the biggest rejections of his entire life, and one that he was never able to overcome. Edward had been vocal trying to get included in that so very important meeting, saying that he had a right to be a part of a meeting that was going to decide his future. But there he stood outside the convent and rectory waiting for the final verdict. What seemed like years later, his mother left the convent, looking very old and tired, and said to Ed very quietly, "You'll be going to the public school next year. They don't want you here". Ed at first couldn't believe his ears, and when it finally sunk in he said with disbelief, "Oh, no"! Ed could not imagine not being a part of St. Anthony's as St. Anthony's was an integral part of himself. Ed went to the nuns, to the priests both in May, 1918, and then 4 times in the next two years, trying to get reinstated into St. Anthony's. But what Ed soon learned is that there is nothing charitable about the Catholic Church when they weigh taking in a well behaved paying child, versus keeping a penniless child who so desperately needed their guidance and help. The Church has always been traditional in accepting the paying

child. Edward was always sick at heart at losing his Catholic education so early in life, but the Catholic Church never had a more loyal subject than their Edward. What Edward didn't know about the rituals of the Catholic Church he learned by reading, by attending Church faithfully, or by asking, his wife and daughter.

### ***SPORT***

Dad suddenly noticed that Sport wasn't feeling too well. Dad at first chalked it up to some bad food that Sport might have eaten while scouring through garbage cans. Dad figured that in a few days Sport would feel better. But Sport didn't get any better. It was obvious by the end of the week that Sport was far worse. Elizabeth discovered that Sport had an abscessed tooth. Ed felt so terribly sorry for Sport, but felt like anything else in life, in time it would pass away. One day Dad came home from school and couldn't find Sport anywhere. Dad called and called, but Sport didn't answer. Finally Dad saw his mother and asked her if she had seen Sport. Elizabeth felt the weight of the world on her shoulders when she told Ed that she could not stand watching Sport suffer so much no longer, so she took Sport to the Vet, hoping that the Vet could pull the tooth and make Sport well again. When Elizabeth got to the Vet he told her that he wouldn't pull the tooth as Elizabeth had no money, but that he would put Sport to sleep for free as he was in, such terrible pain. Elizabeth looked so sadly at Sport, her family pet for these past 5 years, and decided it was much better that he die now rather than go through all that pain and die later anyway when the infection spread to his blood stream. When she told this to Edward, he was wild with grief and desperation. He must go to the Vet's right away and save Sport if it was not too late. He ran from his house about 3/4 of a mile down Gratiot Avenue to the Vet's office. He ran into the Vet's office and inquired about his Sport. It was too late, Sport was gone. This was one of the most painful Moments of Edward's whole life. That dog was like a brother to him as Edward always felt that Sport was so smart that he was half-human. Dad had many dogs after Sport but Taffy was the only dog that he ever again formed an attachment to, but Taffy was more like a little girl to him, where as Sport was always his good buddy who stuck with him through good and bad times, and it was Sport who always knew how Ed was feeling and it was to Sport that Ed confessed all his hurts. If Sport could talk, he would be the one to write the best account of Ed's young life as he was there through thick and thin.

## **MEXICAN CIGARETTES**



Arthur Francis Bender I

Dad's oldest brother Art was drafted into the Army during the Spanish uprising in Mexico and Art was sent to the Texas - Mexican border to fight against the Mexicans in 1915. Art was only 13 then, and he had no intention of losing his life at such a tender age. Art told me many years later when he was an old man sitting in his living room chair on Neff St in Detroit that he had dug the biggest, deepest foxhole in all of Mexico, and he spent the entire war cowering in that foxhole, well out of the way of all the bullets that were whizzing by overhead. Art felt that he shot at no one, and no one shot at him, and he felt that that was a fair enough exchange. But the Mexicans got the best of Art anyway, in a manner that Art had not counted on. An epidemic of smallpox broke out in Mexico, and Art fell victim to the disease. After the acute phase of the disease was over the Army shipped Art back to Michigan. Art brought with him a trunk load full of Mexican "cigarettes" and put them in the Bender attic. Ed, in his exploration of the attic one rainy day, found this truck load full of cigarettes. Ed had given up smoking at the tender age of 9 years, as his friends bet him that he couldn't give up smoking. However, a trunk load full of cigarettes was more than Eddie could pass up. Eddie took one out and lit it up and tried it out. The cigarette was really sweet tasting and made Ed feel good. Over the course of the next several weeks little Eddie smoked up the whole trunk full. Art found this out about a month later and beat the day lights out of his brother Eddie.

## **THE ROCKING CHAIR**

Ed said that he had very mixed feelings about going up into the attic in that home as there was always a drafty feel to the attic and Eddie always felt that there was someone there besides him and because of this persistent feeling, the attic always gave him the creeps and he

mostly avoided going up there. One day when Eddie was all alone, the attic seemed to draw him. He had an irresistible lure to go up into the attic by himself and see what was really up there. Eddie turned on the hall light and went cautiously up the stairs and into the attic. When he got there he stood there and looked around. Suddenly he felt something brush up against his arm as it passed by him. Then to his astonishment the old rocking chair at first moved like someone sat down into it and then it started rocking back and forth. That was all Eddie needed to see. He got out of the attic while the getting out was still possible!

### ***PUBLIC SCHOOL***

Dad started 8th grade in the public school in September, 1918, a little wary of what he might find. The first month of the public school was the biggest shock of his life, for he soon learned about the total indifference of the public school teachers. First he didn't do his homework on time. No one even noticed! He acted up in class to get some attention from the teacher. The teacher paid him no notice. He skipped school. No one marked attendance in the public school. When he wasn't there no one even missed him. Such a difference from the Catholic school!

Dad felt totally abandoned, by this new school system. His mother was so terribly busy at home that she paid him scant notice, and now in school he found himself being totally ignored. Life had taken such a turn for the worse this past year. Life would never be the same in the public school after all the attention and guidance he had received in the Catholic school.

### ***HALL PLAYING***

One of the few things that did not change between the Catholic and the public school was his fondness for ball playing. Ed was a superb player of baseball, football, and soccer. He loved each sport with a passion. Ed was soon the star of the public school football. Once a teacher kept Ed after school for his behavior in the class when but when she heard that the team had a football game that afternoon, she let Ed out of class immediately as she knew that the team's chance of winning was much less if Ed was not playing.

### ***BECKER COTTAGE***



When Dad was a youngster he went with his family one day to the cottage of John Becker, his great grandfather on his mother's side of the family. The Becker cottage was located on Cooley Lake. Ed said that what he remembers most about the Becker cottage was how his older cousins used to torture an older man when he went to the outhouse at the back of the property. When the old man was in the outhouse, the young boys all gathered around the outhouse and started rocking it back and forth and how the old man inside the outhouse was terrified by this horseplay. The other boys thought this was fun, but Dad was concerned about the old man's health and safety.

### ***ART'S WEDDING***



Arthur Bender, Joseph Radkte. ?, Mildred Bender, Agnes Radtke Bender & Norman John Bender

Dad remembered well the day Art married. Dad, only about 11 years old at that time, sneaked up to the bar a number of times during the course of the day and got smashed! Dad was told to go to the store and buy some supplies as they were running low at the wedding, but when Dad tried to enter into the store he got a surprise. The last thing Dad remembers is putting his foot on the first stair of the store front. The next thing he remembers is standing in an open field next to the store. Then Dad remembers reproaching the store and putting his foot back up on the first step. Again, the next thing he knew he was

standing in an open field on the other side of the store. Dad never did manage to get into that store that day to purchase the items that the family sent him there to buy.

### ***LAXATIVES***

Dad often recounted the following story. When he was a youngster he was often bothered by bouts of severe constipation. Dad said once he took some laxatives and still couldn't go to the bathroom. He took some more laxatives, and still no results. Finally, he took a massive overdose of the laxative medicine and still no bowel movement. But what did happen is that he became deathly ill from the massive doses of laxatives, and Dad passed out cold on the bathroom floor. Grandma sent one of her children for a doctor, then she saw what she could do for Edward. Edward said he felt like he was being sucked down into a deep black hole. Elizabeth felt that Ed's pulse stopped, so she started screaming at Dad to hold on and come back. Dad felt that the screaming was helping to pull him out of that deep black hole he had been sucked into. Dad said that when he finally got himself out of that black vortex, he woke up on the bathroom floor with the doctor, standing over him. The doctor said that Dad was a very lucky young man, for he was nearly a goner. Dad said that he was so weak that he couldn't even get himself to the bedroom and had to be carried there. It was a week before he regained his strength.

### ***CHENE STREET***

When Dad was a very young teenager, he decided to wander around Detroit one evening late to see if anything went on after dark. Much to his amazement, when he came upon Chene Street at 2 AM the street was bustling with life, as it had never done during the day. All the shops and stores were wide open for business and people of all ages were coming and going. The barbershop was wide open and doing a booming business. Dad could not believe his eyes and thought he must be mistaken about the time. But no, he couldn't be mistaken, as the sun had been down for hours and hours, and all the people in his neighborhood had been fast asleep before he had ventured out of the house. Dad couldn't believe that the black people actually did sleep all day, and stay up and do business all night.

### ***OPIUM DEN***

In Dad's last adventure on Chene Street, he had gone down there alone and had met a tough character from his own neighborhood, who told Ed that he would introduce Dad to a really good time. Dad said that this

person took him to the back entrance of a building and inside were many people all smoking opium and enjoying skimpy clad clothes of every size and style. All the people were high and thoroughly enjoying themselves. This sight sickened Dad as he knew that these people spent their whole lives in a fog, and that drugs were their whole reason for living. Dad had too much love for a normal life to even consider this kind of existence, so he wanted to get out of here as fast as he could. A big black guy Carle up to him and offered him all the cocaine he wanted free. Dad declined and was trying to get out of that place as fast as he could. An oriental appearing fellow came up behind Dad and put the point of a knife in Dad's back as he thought that Dad might be the police undercover. Dad was really nervous and was trying to talk his way out of this when Carle, the black man came along again and told the oriental man that Dad was not a cop and to get the knife out of his back. The black man then ushered Dad out of one of the tightest spots of his life. Dad never went back to Chene Street after that.

### ***BILL COLLECTOR***

When Dad was a teenager a bill collector came to his front door while he was still in bed and started harassing his father. Henry kept explaining to the bill collector that he had no money, and that if he had money, he would certainly pay his bill. The bill collector wouldn't take that for an answer, and kept hounding Henry for the money that he was sure Henry had but just didn't want to part with. Dad suddenly had all he could take of this man's rude and crude harassment of his Dad in his Dad's own house. Dad bounded out of bed and told the bill collector in no uncertain terms to get out of their house, NOW. The man refused to leave. This enraged young Eddie, so he grabbed the bill collector or by the collar and the seat of the pants, and threw him bodily down the stairs and out of the house. That was the last that the family ever saw of that bill collector.

### ***THIEF THROUGH THE WINDOW***

When Beatrice Bender Gamache first married Ed Gamache, they lived in a side bedroom in the Bender household. One day when Dad came home from school he had walked into what should have been an empty house. Suddenly Dad heard some noise from the side bedroom that Bea and Ed Gamache occupied. Dad stopped and listened, and he heard more strange noises. Dad then figured that Ed must have come home from work early and was

rummaging through his bedroom trying to find something. Dad walked into the side bedroom to talk to Ed, when suddenly someone darted out from behind the door and jumped head first through that bedroom window. Dad figured that whoever it was must have knocked himself unconscious when he hit the pavement. So Dad went out to see who was lying there. When Dad got outside, the thief was gone. Ed Gamache did not believe the story of the thief in his bedroom and blamed Dad for the missing items. But Dad knew better.

### ***NEWSPAPER Boy***

When Dad was a teenager he took a newspaper route to earn some spending money. Dad never had enough money for a wagon or a sled, and now someone had stolen his Zev, so he delivered these papers every day with all the newspapers on his back.

### ***ROLLER SKATES***

Dad later found a better paying job delivering dry cleaning. How much you made depended on how many pieces you delivered, so Dad greatly increased his weekly pay by purchasing a pair of roller skates which he now used to speed up his rate of delivery!

### ***SETTING UP PINS***

The job that Dad seems to remember the best of his first jobs was his job in the bowling alley setting up pins. Dad would set up pins in the bowling alley until one in the morning, then come home and get a few hours sleep, then show up at 7 AM in the classroom. Dad would often not get out of the bowl in alley on time and he soon got way behind in his sleep. As a consequence he often fell asleep at his desk in school. Dad felt that the best part of this job aside from the pay was that he could practice bowling for free when they had few or no customers. Dad also found it to be a challenge when a few drunken customers would try to get his legs or hands with their ball by whizzing their ball down the alley while Dad was still setting up the last set of pins that they had knocked down.

### ***BLIND PIG***

One day Dad was home alone when he lived with his family over a store on Gratiot Avenue in Detroit. Suddenly a very drunken middle aged man walked

up the front stairs and into Dad's living room and demanded to be served liquor. Dad told him that this was the Prohibition and that his parents had no liquor in the house. The man became belligerent, insisting that this was not a residence, but rather, a blind pig. Dad told him it was not a blind pig and that he was to get out of his house. The man refused to leave, demanding to be served liquor. Dad pushed the man towards the front door. The man pushed Dad back. Dad was angry and pushed this man almost to the steps when the man started punching him, so Dad started punching him back, and finally he punched this man right down the steps. The man fell all the way down the front steps and into the hallway down below. Dad then believed that that was the end of that and went about his business. The next thing he knew was the guy was back in the apartment, demanding a drink. Dad was beside himself with anger at this man. Dad punched the guy down the front steps again and this time the guy ended up head over heels down the front stairs, landing right in the street below. Dad sat down for a minute to catch his breath, and when he got to his feet he couldn't believe his eyes. There was that drunk again! Standing there, bold as ever, in his front room. The guy lunged at Dad, demanding a drink, and this time Dad and the guy into a real knock down drag out fist fight. Dad said that the whole apartment was in shambles the time Dad finished Off this guy this time when the guy was out of strength and out of breath, Dad grabbed the guy who was now full of blood and mostly unconscious, and threw him as hard as he could down the front stairs again. He landed in a heap and didn't move. Dad sat down and surveyed the wrecked the apartment with heavy heart. What would his mother say when she saw such carnage?! Suddenly Dad heard the man stir on the stairwell down below, and no, he couldn't believe his ears, the man was starting up the stairs again! Dad saw red. Dad went to a well kept hiding place and pulled out an old rusty German Lugar that he had fished out of the lagoon at Belle Isle the year before. Dad was always fascinated by this as he figured that it had belonged to some Mafia member and had been used in a murder. Dad had hidden the gun with the thought of cleaning the gun up some day and putting it on display. But Dad had never before removed the gun from its hiding place as Dad had always had an aversion for guns. But this front stairs for the fourth time was just too much! Dad was so angry he saw red! Dad found the gun, loaded it, carried it to the foot of the stairway and put it right up to the drunk's head and pulled the trigger. Suddenly Dad came to realize what he had done and he was sick to his stomach, and so upset with himself that he had so lost control over his own actions. He looked at the man's head and was so grateful to his dying day that the gun was so rusty that it had not gone off! Dad felt that this was the luckiest break of his entire life as he could never have lived with himself if he had killed a man, regardless of his actions. The man, having come a bit to his senses and realizing what almost had happened to him, was sobered by the intense feeling of fear, and left the premise immediately, walking down the stairs this time.

## **PITCHING**



Norman (Nobby) Bender

Edward was an excellent pitcher and all around baseball player, but his younger brother was an outstanding pitcher and in Ed's estimation could have been a major league pitcher, except for one flaw - Norman could not focus on his pitching unless Ed was there as a catcher giving him the signals and forcing Norm to concentrate totally on his pitching. Ed himself came very close to being at least a minor league ball player.

## **BOXING**

When Dad was a teenager he went in for boxing in a big way. He used to go down to the various gyms where the professional boxers hung out and he would stand by and listen to the advice given to the boxers by their trainers. Dad would then put this training advice to work, practicing it himself. Dad was lightening fast as a boxer and got to be very proficient. Dad said his one problem was that he was so skinny from lack of food, and found himself in a lighter category than he cared to box in. Dad said that he would practice for hours on the punching bags, then would set up fights between himself and other aspiring amateurs. Dad got so good that eventually he started having practice sessions against some of the pros, and such to his delight, he found he could hold his own in a match against the pros. Dad was all set to go pro, when his Mom and Dad set him down for a serious discussion. His Mom told him that he would suffer a series of concussions with each successive fight and that he would have significant brain damage by age 50. She told him he was far too smart a boy to waste his intelligence for a few years of boxing. His father told him that boxing was a very crooked sport, and that Dad being a very honest guy, and very fond of winning, would refuse to throw a match when told to do so by the trainer for the benefit of the people taking the bets. Hank told his son Ed that if he refused to throw a fight that he would find himself dead in a very short time. Dad started hanging around the boxing rings and observing for the things that his parents had warned him about. Dad soon found his parent's advice to be the whole

truth, so Edward decided to give up his dreams of becoming a professional boxer and find a regular job like most others his age were doing.

### **THE DANCE HALL**



Beatrice Bender Gamache & Agnes Radtke Bender

Ed just loved to dance, and he often went to the dance hall to try out his newest steps. Dad soon developed a set of steps that he used for the rest of his life. All dances required basically the same steps to Dad's way of thinking, with the main variation being how fast one wished to dance in time to the music. He then developed his scheme of regular time, double time, triple time and half time. Dad loved confounding prospective dance partners with his variations on the tempo with which to dance to the music. Dad would start out by pacing the actual tempo of the music, then he would dance twice as fast as the tempo, then three times as fast, which is what he called double time and triple time. He would then dance only half as fast as the music was playing and call that half time. Dad loved to dance, and he would dance at every wedding, on New Year's Eve, and in his later years at the pavilion at Metropolitan Beach on Saturday nights when the old time bands would play there. Dad used to laugh about the good times he had dancing with Beatrice Bender Gamache and Agnes Bender at family weddings.

### **PAUL DAWSON**

Dad used to go to dance halls on both the east side and the west side of Detroit. He was a much more conservative person on the east side near where he lived as many people knew him there and he wanted to keep a good reputation. However on the west side no one knew him, so he felt he could act up a little there and there would be no repercussions. He just had to make sure that he kept his east side reputation unsullied, so he would call himself "Paul Dawson" in the

west side dance halls so that there would be no telling of tales about his west side manners by those from the west side when he visited the east side halls. Well, by and large this ploy worked well, he encountered a few instances when someone from the west side visiting the east side dance hall would say to him and say, "Say, aren't you Paul Dawson?" Dad would reply, no. They would then say to him, "Well, you certainly have a double on the west side. His name is Paul Dawson." Dad would smile and say, "Is that so?"

### ***TIME PAYMENTS***



Al

When Dad was working full time and going to school at Cass Tech too, he was too busy to take care of too much in the way of business, so when Dad bought a new suit for himself on time, he would give his brother Al the weekly installments and have Al take the money to the clothing store. Al would take the receipt book with him, have it initialed, then give Dad back the receipt book back that night. When the suit was almost all paid up Dad got a notice of intended repossession by the clothing store. Dad was so angry with the clothing store for their bookkeeping foul up. Dad took the receipt book to the clothing store to prove that he was fully paid to date. The clothing store manager looked at the receipt book with many different signatures in it, and stated to Dad that not one of those signatures belong to one of his employees. Dad was so upset and embarrassed! It seems that Dad gave the money to his brother Al every week, and that Al took the receipt book to Grand Central Park, and had a different bum sign the book every week. Al then spent the money on himself. Dad explained the embarrassing situation to the store manager and from that time on Dad paid the payments himself until the suit was paid off.

## ***A PLUMBER'S APPRENTICE***



John Becker

When Dad was a young teenager he wanted to become a plumber like his granduncle John E. Becker, his Grandma Sophie Ott's brother. So Ed went several times to the plumbing store and asked Uncle John for a job. Finally Uncle John gave in and hired him. Ed was so delighted to be on his way as a plumber. But Ed's idea of plumbing and the realities of it all were a world apart. Ed soon discovered the low man apprentice plumber had to clean all the toilets for a living. Ed felt that they were discriminating against him by making him do all the dirty jobs, and he didn't trust Uncle John to give him better jobs later on, so he quit in favor of a cleaner job in a factory.

## ***AUNT AGGIE DROWNS***



Agnes Ott Koch Mc Dermitt, Henry, Harry & Joann Mc Dermitt

One day Dad was at work at Great Lakes Engineering Works when he glanced at the headlines in the newspaper. "Oh, no!, it can't be my Aunt Aggie!" Dad said as he glanced at the headlines. But in reading the article he knew that, yes, indeed, it was his Aunt Agnes. Dad was stunned beyond belief. His 42 year old Aunt couldn't possibly be dead. She was always so full of life! Dad left work and went home to his mother. His mother was in deep shock over losing her last sister so suddenly and so violently. (Elizabeth's youngest sister Anne died at 21 years of age of ovarian cancer). In sitting down with his mother, Edward learned the rest of the story. Aunt Agnes had come to her sister Elizabeth several days before and told Elizabeth that her husband Henry had been drinking so heavily that he was literally crawling up the walls and was seeing bugs crawling all over him. Agnes told her sister Elizabeth that she was going to have her husband Henry committed to a Sanitarium so they could dry him out. Evidently Henry got wind of what his wife Agnes was planning to do and he was just furious! Henry went out that day and purchased a new car. He then spent hours driving his new car instead of going to work. On the 29th of March, 1928 Henry told Agnes to get into the car with their two children from their marriage, Harry and Joann, but not to bring her children by her marriage to Bill Koch, Marvin, Bill Jr, Jackie and Lillian. Agnes was very fearful of going with Henry because of the way he was acting lately. But Henry was very insistent and she had no choice but to hop into the car with him. Henry then drove the car to the foot of Parkview by the Detroit River. Henry then drove the car forward and backward on Parkview. A rescue firefighter who lived on Parkview kept looking at Henry's car because of the peculiar way he was driving. All of a sudden, Henry put the car into reverse and full speed ahead, he drove the car with himself, Agnes, Harry and Joann in it straight off the dock and into 12 feet of water. The firefighter heard Agnes' screams underwater, and he tried desperately to rescue her. He dove into the water whose temperature was below freezing in an attempt to rescue her from a watery death. But he couldn't get the door of the car open. He dove in again and again until finally Aggie's screams ceased. He then called the police. The car was not recovered from the Detroit River until the next day. When the police opened the car door they were stunned. Aunt Agnes' knuckles were all discolored where she had tried desperately to break open the car window to save herself and her children from this unspeakable fate, but to no avail. And what sickened the authorities even more was the fact that Henry's hand was across the seat holding Agnes' door shut so she could not open it. It was one of the biggest funerals that Detroit has ever seen. The four caskets were displayed together in the same room, Agnes' on one end and Henry's on the other. Harry and Joann's were in between their parents facing the mourners head to foot. During the entire three days they were laid out the entire city of Detroit filed past the caskets in a continuous stream. They were lined up for over four blocks outside to get a glimpse of the ill-fated

Mc Dermitt family. The four were buried together in a 4 grave plot at Mt. Olivet cemetery.

### ***MAFIA EVENING***

One Saturday night Dad, Art and Norm had a little too much to drink and they had completely lost, track of the time, and some of their senses as well. Round about midnight, Dad, Norman and Art decide to start apartment hunting for Norm! Dad looked up all the apartments in the want ads of the paper and they settled upon one that sounded like a good deal. At midnight the three of them showed up very rowdily at the man's house demanding to see the apartment he had for rent! The man, scared out of his wits by what he thought was the Mafia, called the police. The police came and at the sight of the police, Dad sobered up and realized that they were way out of line with their midnight shenanigans but not Norm and Art! They were ready to take on the whole Detroit police force with their big mouths! The more Dad tried to settle them down, the louder they got. It became so out of hand, the police even thought they were dealing with the mafia. Dad was scared that the police would end up splitting one of his brother's skulls to slow them down a bit. What was a fun evening earlier turned into a real nightmare for Dad.

### ***SQUASHED FLAT***

When Dad was coming out of work one day, he saw a lot of commotion so he went over to where all the people were standing to see why all the excitement. Dad was sorry he went when he saw the reason for the big crowd. A man had gotten run over by a street car and his head was squashed flat as a pancake, but he was still conscious and looking up at the people. It took the man quite some time before he lost consciousness and died.

### ***DRAGGING-THE-CHAIN***



Harold Sanderson Neff

Dad loved telling the story of seeing Uncle Harold Neff walking through the Great Lakes Engineering Works dragging a chain behind him. Uncle Harold was barely 5 feet tall and was quite thin and looked even shorter than he was because he used to roll his overalls up three or four times as the legs were way too long for him. Then he would put a large, heavy chain over his shoulder and drag it along behind him. The chain looked, enormous next to Harold Neff, but would shrink considerably in size when carried by a man 6 feet tall.

### ***GOOD-HOUSEKEEPING DELIVERY***

Dad tells the following story with much perplexity. Dad loaded a good housekeeping. delivery truck in his youth, and then locked the doors and drove the truck to Ann Arbor. When he got to Ann Arbor and opened the locked doors, all the merchandise was missing from the van. What Dad theorized happened is that a thief came along behind the truck, ran a plank from Dad's truck to his own truck, and then opened the back doors of Dad's truck and by walking the plank unloaded Dad's truck into his own. After hearing this story I postulated that the lock on the back of Dad's truck was faulty and when he stopped suddenly several times on his way to Ann Arbor, the back doors flew open and the merchandise spilled onto time pavement. Whatever the cause, the missing merchandise sure was a mystery!

### ***NORMAN MARRIES EVELYN REID***



Norman John Bender



Evelyn Reid Bender

Edward was extremely upset when Norman told his older brother that he was

getting married to Evelyn because she was pregnant. Edward was horrified at this statement as Norman was far too young to get married to anyone, let alone to such an unsuitable mate. Norman was still walking around with a toy gun and holster on his hips when he decided to get married! He obviously was still just a kid, not a responsible person ready for marriage. Norman had just recently had his picture taken riding on a pony! Norman's sister Mildred was also flabbergasted when she heard he was getting married as she said that the baby was not even Norman's, that the family felt that the baby was fathered by Evelyn's uncle. Edward tried over and over again to talk Norman into running away out of town with Edward to escape the pending marriage. Ed offered to drive him and pay expenses for a trip, but Norman felt too pressured by Evelyn and decided to go through with the marriage. It was very fortunate for Ed that he didn't leave town with Norman because it was the very day before Norman's wedding that Ed met Marie for the first time!

### ***ED MEETS MARIE***



Marie Anna Dahl

On 7th of February, 1934 Ed bought a "new" used car and was so happy with his good fortune at finding a good car at a reasonable price that he ran home to show his brother Norm his new car. When he got home he was somewhat disappointed that Norman was not home. His mother told him that his brother Norman was upstairs playing cards with the Dahl boys. Dad ran upstairs, knocked at the door, and Nellie Dahl invited him in her apartment. Norm was sitting there playing cards with Bill and Shorty Dahl, but that is not what caught Dad's eye. What captivated him completely was Nellie's youngest daughter, Marie who was sitting there watching her brothers play cards with Norman. Dad suddenly reverted to his best behavior to attract Marie's attention, and it seems that he rather overdid it a bit. Mom told me many years later that when she first met Dad he seemed like a bit of a braggart and a showoff. What was really happening was that Dad overdid it because he so desperately wanted to please Marie, and he was so nervous for fear that she might not like

him. Mom was a very shy person in those days and Dad's attentions were overpowering her. Grandma asked Marie to go to the store for something that first day that Dad met her and Dad sprung to his feet and offered to walk to the store with Marie. Marie, being overcome with shyness and flustered by Ed's attentions, said no, she would rather go to the store by herself. That really threw Ed for a loop. He now wasn't at all sure that Marie liked him! And Ed was so head over heels in love with Marie from the first time that he met her that he was beside himself with worry that she didn't like him. But unknown to Ed at that time Marie did find him a likeable fellow, but being young and shy she just needed more time to warm up to the idea than Ed did. By the way, Ed never did show Norm his new car that night.

### ***THEIR FIRST DATE***

Ed made a date with Marie and she accepted. She told him it would have to be the next Saturday as she worked for Ray & Lorraine Schneider during the week and only came home on weekends. So on 14th of February, 1934, on Valentine's day, Ed and Marie had their first date. Ed made the date to go roller skating, but like showing Norm the new car, he was so taken by Marie and showing her a good time that they never ended up roller skating. In fact, in their whole married life, they never ended up going roller skating! Dad showed up in the new car he had purchased the Saturday before and came bearing a box of candy for Marie. Mom thanked him for the candy and then gave the box of candy to her mother to put on her dresser for her until she got home. The candy never ended up on the dresser for Nellie and the boys ate it all gone that night while Marie was out with Ed!

### ***THE SIXTH WEEK ITCH***

Ed was dating Marie only six weeks, and only on weekends when Ed asked Marie if she would marry him. Marie told Ed that this was way too soon to make such an important decision. Ed had long since made up his mind that Marie was the only girl in the world for him, and he was impatient that it was taking Marie a longer period of time to come to the same conclusion about him. But Edward very impatiently bided his time until Marie was more comfortable about the idea of marriage. Dad said that when he first met Marie she was so sweet, so innocent, and so petite and vulnerable appearing that he felt that he so wanted to marry her and protect her from the world. Finally, after much prayer to the Blessed Mother that she was making the right choice in a husband Marie said yes to Ed, and the planning process began. Marie said that the main reason for her hesitation was because she was so fearful that Edward might leave her like her Dad William Dahl Sr. did. Marie never got over her dad leaving without notice and she said that she never trusted any

man because of what her dad did to the family.

### **THE WAGER**



Arthur & Agnes Bender

Dad had had a long standing bet on with Aunt Agnes that he could get married without any member of the family knowing that he had gotten married. Aunt Agnes smiled and told Ed that as long as he got married in the Catholic Church that he could never get married without her knowing it as the Catholic Church published the plans of marriage for three weeks and she would be checking every week. Besides, she also had a habit of checking the newspaper for the marriage license publications. Ed bet her he could get married with out her knowing it, and the wager was on as each knew he could outsmart the other. So when Dad told Mom of the wager he had going with Aunt Agnes, Mom agreed to go along with Dad to outsmart Agnes, as she was very much in love with Dad and besides it was the middle of the Great Depression, so they couldn't afford a wedding anyway.

### **THE PLANS**



Our Lady of Sorrows Church

Dad and Mom went from one Catholic Church to another looking for one that would publish the wedding plans only in their own church. But all the Catholic parishes that Mom and Dad approached stated that they would have to publish the plans in the church where Dad attended and the one where Mom attended. Dad knew that he would never put one over on Aunt Agnes this way. Finally Dad and Mom went to Our Lady of Sorrows Church, which is under the Belgium Catholic Rite instead of the Roman Catholic Rite and the priest there agreed to marry them after publishing the plans in only Our Lady of Sorrows Church. This is exactly what Dad was looking for so they set their wedding date for August 25, 1934 at 8 AM.

### ***CITY HALL***

Then Dad and Mom went to city hall to get their marriage license. Dad knew this to be the last major hurdle as a newspaper clerk sat at this desk and copied every name of persons applying for a license and then he would publish this list every day in the newspaper. Dad first distracted the man when he was filling out his license, then slipped the guy \$5 and told him not to copy his license. The man gratefully obliged Dad and omitted that entry. Dad had only one last hurdle, to slip out of the house on his wedding day unnoticed.

### ***THE NIGHT BEFORE***

Dad met Mom the night before the wedding and Dad showed her the beautiful wedding ring that he had purchased for her. Marie just loved that ring and asked Ed if she could wear the ring until the next morning. Ed agreed to let Marie wear it. Ed and Marie then went into the drug store and made some purchases and then late in the evening Ed took Marie home. After they said goodnight and Marie went into her house, she was horrified to discover that she didn't have her beautiful ring! She searched her purse and her pockets, but to no avail! The ring was gone and Marie had no other ring to substitute for her lost wedding ring. She thought fast and decided that she would have to ask her mother if she could borrow her mother's ring without letting the cat out of the bag. She couldn't tell her mother that she was getting married, so Marie asked her if she could wear her ring the next day as she was going to a party and she thought that Nellie's ring was so pretty! (In truth the ring was of dime store vintage, was brassy looking and was much too big for Marie's finger.) Marie felt very sick about using this ring, but under the circumstances this was the only thing she could do as it was after 11 PM and they were scheduled to be married at 8 AM the next morning, long before the jewelry stores opened.

## ***GOING FISHING***

Early in the morning, much earlier than Ed was ever accustomed to getting up on a Saturday morning, Ed dressed up to kill in his best suit and tie, and then told his parents he was going fishing. His parents later mentioned that they thought it was very strange that Ed was going on a fishing trip all dressed up in his best suit.

## ***HEART IN HIS MOUTH***



Harold Neff, Edward Bender, Bernadette Neff & Marie Bender

At 6:30 AM on August 25, 1934 Ed picked up Marie on a near by street corner. When Ed first looked at Marie, she had such an unhappy look on her face that his heart went into his mouth, for he was sure that she came to tell him that the wedding was off. He was afraid to even speak! He finally got up the courage to ask her what was wrong. Marie burst into tears and told him that she had lost her wedding ring. Ed was so terribly relieved that she did want to marry him, and that it was just that she lost the ring! Rings could be replaced, but not his Marie. She was the only girl in the whole wide world for him! Then Edward suggested that they postpone the wedding until he could get to the jewelry store and buy Marie a new ring. But Marie said no, that she wanted to get married today and that she had borrowed her mother's ring and would use that to get married in. Marie then took her mother's ring out of her pocket and showed it to Edward. When Edward saw that big, brassy ring, I'm sure he wanted to burst out laughing at the absurdity of it all, but he dare not, as Marie was so unhappy about losing her beautiful ring and so embarrassed about having to use her mother's ring. Ed was so madly in love that he readily agreed to use Nellie's ring no matter how inappropriate it might be.

**AUGUST 25, 1934**



Edward & Marie Dahl, wedding day

At 8 AM on 25th of August, 1934 Marie Dahl and Edward Bender appeared at the altar of Our Lady of Sorrows Church to be married by the Belgian Catholic priest. They were very pleased to see a long red runner down the central isle and beautiful flowers at the altar when they arrived there. These were placed there by a couple that was being married after them, but they were as much a part of Ed and Marie's wedding as they were the next couple's. Ed and Marie approached the altar and were greeted by the priest. The wedding mass was then begun. In the middle of the mass the priest recited the vows and Ed and Marie pronounced the vows after the priest. The priest then motioned for Ed to place the ring on Marie's finger. Marie was sure that Ed was embarrassed to death at the look on the priest's face when he stared at that big brassy ring sitting on the beautiful satin pillow. But Ed hardly noticed for he was so proud to become Marie's husband that beautiful summer morning. The priest then pronounced them man and wife and then concluded the wedding mass. When the mass was over Dad joyfully escorted Marie to his car and was about to drive off when the priest cleared his throat and told Dad he was forgetting something. What Dad was forgetting was both to pick up his marriage license from the priest and to pay the priest for his services. I bet the priest thought that Dad was the cheapest, guy around, and the priest probably further thought that that young girl was in for a miserable life with such a cheapskate. Little did he know that Ed and Marie had 47 years of happy wedded life ahead of them.

BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE

*Mari Henrietta Dahl* Son of *William Dahl*  
Daughter

and *Helen Rehfeldt* was born *Nov. 13, 1913*

Was Baptized *Nov. 23, 1913* at the Church of  
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD,  
Detroit, Michigan.

Date *July 26, 1934*

*Rev. Walter E. Kepnes*  
Pastor.

Certificate of Baptism

I hereby certify, that *Mari Henrietta Dahl*

~~Son~~ } of *William Dahl* and *Helen Rehfeldt*  
Daughter }

was born on the *Nov. 13, 1913* day of \_\_\_\_\_ and was

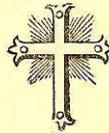
Baptised on *Nov. 23, 1913* at *Nativity of Our Lord Church*  
*Charles Rehfeld* }  
*Anna Rehfeld.* }

Sponsors  
Signed *Rev. Walter E. Kepnes*  
Pastor

M. H. Wiltzius Co., Chicago, Ill.  
Publishers

*Aug. 7 1934*

# Certificate of Baptism



**ST. BERNARD'S CHURCH**

11031 MACK AVENUE

DETROIT, MICH.

This is to Certify

That Edward Paul Bender

Child of Henry Bender

and Eliz. att

born in Detroit on the

28<sup>th</sup> day of June 1908 was Baptized

on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of July 1908

According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church

by the Rev. Geo J Mauer

the Sponsors being Margaret McElonough

and \_\_\_\_\_ as appears from  
the Baptismal Register of this Church.

Dated July 26. 1934

Rev R Puhl Rector.  
assist

No. 441915

# Marriage License

## Wayne County, Michigan

193 4

To any person legally authorized to solemnize marriage,

### Greetings:

Marriage May Be Solemnized Between

Mr. Edward Bender and M. Marie Dahl

affidavit having been filed in this office, as provided by Public Act No. 128, Laws of 1887, as amended, by which it appears that said

Edward Bender is 26 years of age, color is Wht, residence is Detroit Michigan and birthplace was Michigan

occupation is Machinist, father's name Henry, and mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Ott

has been previously married no times; and that said Marie Dahl is 20 years of age, color is Wht, residence is Detroit Michigan and

birthplace was Michigan occupation is none, father's name Wm F., and mother's maiden name was Helen Rehfeldt

and who has been previously married no time S., and whose maiden name was \_\_\_\_\_, and whose \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's or Guardian's consent, in case she

has not attained the age of eighteen years, has been filed in my office.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto attached my hand and the seal of Wayne County, Michigan, this 28

day of July, A. D. 193 4 MK

L. S.

Emer B. Offara  
County Clerk

### Certificate of Marriage

Between Mr. Edward Bender and M. Marie Dahl

I hereby certify that, in accordance with the above license, the persons herein mentioned were joined in marriage by me, at Detroit, County of Wayne, Michigan,

on the 25 day of Aug, A. D. 193 4, in the presence of Joseph Radke of Detroit and Elsie Daniels of Detroit,

as witnesses. \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Magistrate or Clergyman.

pastor C.L. of Lovers church  
Official Title

THIS DUPLICATE must be delivered by the person solemnizing marriage to one of the parties joined in marriage.

This space reserved for binding

### **WHAT STREETCAR?**

Mom, and Dad's wedded life almost ended as soon as it began. Dad drove off with Mom in the car after the embarrassing incident with the priest, and Dad was so enthralled with Mom that he couldn't take his eyes off her. They weren't very far from the church when Dad was looking at Mom so intently that he was paying scant attention to where he was driving. While looking at Mom Dad drove right into the path of a street car and they were both almost runover. Dad sharpened up a little bit after that incident and paid a little more attention to his driving!

### **AND EVER AFTER**



Elizabeth & Henry Bender in 1936

After their wedding, Mom and Dad could not afford a honeymoon, so life soon went on the same as usual. Mom returned to work at Ray and Lorraine Schneider's house and Dad returned to work and continued to live with his mother and Dad as Marie and Ed started saving up their money for a place of their own. Ed and Marie kept their marriage a secret for 3 months, and then decided it was time to bring their little secret out in the open. Grandma and grandpa Bender said that they wondered if they had been married and grandma Dahl was kind of sad at losing her Marie, but they were all happy for the newly weds. Aunt Mildred Neff felt sorry that she got sassy to Marie when she saw that they had sneaked off together the month before as she thought they weren't married and said so to Marie. Ed's family thought Marie was in for a hard life as they had all previously warned her about what a "mean one" Ed was. (What was so humorous to Marie in the years to come was the fact that Ed never at any time ever had a mean bone in his body). Marie then moved in with Ed in grandma and grandpa Bender's house and Marie and Ed started their married life together. Norman and Evelyn were also living in Grandma Bender's house at the same time. Evelyn was terribly sick during all of her pregnancies, to the point of being prostrate. As a result she would

sling the baby's messy diapers in the bath tub and leave them there to rot. When Marie would go into the bathroom she was horrified to see maggots growing and crawling all over the diapers!



Nancy Bender in her buggy

Marie had enough of crowded living and went walking with Nancy in a buggy until she found a sign saying a "flat for rent". She put a down payment on it and then went home and told Ed they were moving. Ed was upset as he wanted to save up more money by living for free at this parents' house. But Marie won out and they moved into their first flat on Townsend right off Gratiot Ave.

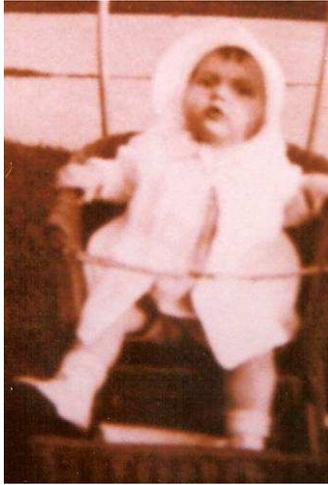
### ***DODGE MAIN***

When Marie was two months pregnant with Nancy Ed got a job at Dodge Main plant in Hamtramck. Ed worked afternoons at that time and saved his money by living with his parents on Baldwin Avenue in Detroit. Norm and Evelyn lived in grandma and grandpa Bender's house too. It was too crowded but they were all happy and managed to get along fairly well together.

### ***WATER WORKS PARK***

1935 was a very hot summer and Ed and Marie would cool off by going down to Waterworks Park and sitting there on the bench looking at the cool water while eating black cherries. Those were happy and contented days for Marie and Ed.

## NANCY



Nancy Bender

Ed and Marie's first child Nancy Marie Bender Stephens was born on the 22 August, 1935 after 31 hours of labor. The nurse in the delivery room tried to get Dad to pay for her watch for the nurse had her watch in her hand timing Marie's pains, when suddenly, Marie, who was heavily sedated, knocked the watch out of the nurse's hand and it fell on the floor and broke! Nancy was born in St. Joseph's hospital on the Grand Blvd. and her hospital bill came to a grand total of \$25.

Nancy was baptized in St. Anthony's Church in Detroit on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, 1935. Interestingly, Nancy was born on our Blessed Virgin Mary's crowning as Queen of Heaven and earth (August 22) and was baptized on the feast day of Our Blessed Mother's birth. Nancy's baptismal sponsors were her grandparents, Elizabeth And Henry Bender.

**St. Anthony Parish**  
5247 Sheridan Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan

BORN

*The Records of this Parish certify to the Baptism of—*

Name of Child Nancy Marie Bender

Date of Child's Birth Aug 22<sup>d</sup> 1935 - 7<sup>00</sup> AM

Baptized on Sept 8<sup>th</sup> 1935

Name of Father Edward Bender

Maiden Name of Mother Marie Mahl

Said Record is signed by Rev. John Raycroft P.P.S.

Detroit, Mich., April 11<sup>th</sup> 1943. H. Post. C.P.S.  
Pastor.

1000 7-40 MCO.-5972

### **WHAT'LL I DO WITH HER?**

Mom and Dad took Nancy home from the hospital when she was 10 days old and returned to grandma and grandpa Bender's house on Baldwin with her. Mom then put Nancy on her bed, ever so gently, then she started to cry and said to Ed, "What am I going to do with her?" But Nancy proved to be a very good baby and Mom and Dad had no trouble at all with her.

### **FIRST HOME**



Marie & Nancy Bender, Sept 1936

When Nancy was about 9 months old, Ed and Marie moved out of grandma and grandpa Bender's house and moved into their first home, a flat on Warren and Townsend. Nancy used to wake up Marie and Ed at 5 AM in the morning when she would watch the milkman go by in his horse and buggy and she would imitate the sound of the horse's hoofs going clip-clop with her little mouth.

### **KLINK!**



Ed used to keep a tool box at the far end of the hall in the house, and Nancy used to go to the tool box and take screws out of it, then take the screws and walk to the register in the hall, and drop the screws into the register, and they would fall through the register and into the glass bowl in the Pritchard's apartment and as they landed in the glass bowl they would go, "klink!, klink!.

### ***LUCKY DOLLAR***

Dad had a lucky dollar that he kept in his pocket when they lived at 3898 Crane. One day Mom and Dad needed groceries really badly and it was not yet pay day. So Dad went to the grocery store at Crane and told the man he needed some groceries and all he had left was his lucky dollar. The man agreed to give the needed groceries to Dad and to hold his lucky dollar as collateral until payday. Come Friday, Dad took the grocer keeper a paper dollar and the grocer gave him back his lucky Silver dollar.

### ***A SHOCKING DEVELOPMENT***



Norman



Edward & Marie Bender

Dad and Norm were working on a car together one Sunday, and they kept getting a bad shock every time they would put their screw driver on a certain area of the car. They decided to have a little fun with Marie. They called her out back and asked her if she would help them in repairing this car. They asked her to hold the screw driver on a certain part of the car for them and she held the screw driver to the part and nothing happened to her. The two men looked at each other kind of funny as they couldn't figure out why they kept getting a shock and she didn't. Marie went back into the house and Ed and Norm touched the part of the car again with the screw driver and they both got a devil of an electrical wallop! They never were able to figure out why they got a shock and Marie didn't. Marie didn't appreciate the practical joke when she discovered what they were up to.

## ***FANCY PANTS***



Dad used to call little Nancy "Fancy pants" as Mom used to buy her the most adorable two piece dresses that had fancy ruffled pants with them. Dad got the biggest kick out of Nancy as she talked so early (at 18 months old she was talking complete sentences and reciting nursery rhymes) and was so cute to listen to. Most things she pronounced very well at that young age, but a few words she butchered, and that made her all the cuter. She used to call their downstairs neighbor lady Mrs. Pitsard instead of Mrs. Pritchard, and the neighbor used to get the biggest kick out of Nancy saying that. Nancy also had a sassy way of walking that Ed used to love to watch. Dad also admired Nancy's spunk, and her spirit. His favorite nickname for Nancy other than "fancy pants" was "Nacky".

## ***NEAR DROWNING***



Nancy, Marie, Harold, Mildred & Mike

Ed and Marie went on many picnics with Evelyn and Norman as well as Grandma and Grandpa. Shortly after they were married they went on a picnic on Cranberry Lake and after they ate Ed and Marie went swimming in the lake. Norman and the others remained on the shore. Marie never learned how to swim so she merely waded close to shore. As she was wading that day she suddenly stepped into a deep hole and went over her head under water. She immediately panicked. Ed, who could swim, saw what happened and ran over to where Marie disappeared and dove under water to find her. He found her and before he could pull her to the surface she got a death grip on Ed and he was unable to bring them both up. In order to keep from both of them drowning he swam down under her arms to release her grip and then grabbed her from behind. Marie panicked even more, figuring Ed was going to let her drown! As Ed was bringing Marie to shore the people on shore no longer felt that Ed and Marie were playing around and started shouting that someone better get out there right away and pull the two of them out from the deep water. Norman ran into the water but by the time he reached Ed and Marie Ed had Marie above water. But Ed still needed Norm's help because Marie was so panic stricken that she was still in danger of drowning in waist deep water.

### **MICHAEL**



Michael Bender

Ed's first son Michael was born at St. Joseph's hospital on the Grand Blvd on the 16th of May, 1938. Michael's birth cost \$35 because he was a boy. Mom said she was full of ambition before Michael was born and cleaned her whole house. These were very happy times for Ed and Marie. They were renting their own home, their second child was on the way, and their marriage was still young and full of love and romance. While they were expecting Michael, Ed worked for the Good housekeeping Shop and later for Bohn Aluminum & Brass. He was earned \$17 per week there. Their rent was \$25 per month and their food bill was about \$6 per week. The day Michael decided to make his debut into this world is one that

Marie remembers well. It was a Monday morning and Ed was at work. His sister Mildred and her nephew Stuart Neff came to take Mom to St. Joseph's hospital for her monthly checkup. When Mildred was picking Marie up for her checkup Marie informed Mildred that she was in labor, so Mildred took her to the emergency instead of the clinic and had her admitted. Dr. John Clifford was the doctor who delivered Michael. When Mom told the admitting clerk that she was in labor, the clerk became upset and said "Don't have your baby here in my office!" When Mike was born Ed & Marie marveled at his beautiful dark, curly hair. Mom loved to wash his hair and watch it curl up into ringlets. Mom called Mike her "Greek baby".

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

*Certificate of Birth Registration*

This is to certify that the birth of  
Michael Edward Bender

HAS BEEN DULY REGISTERED WITH THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

BORN IN            Detroit            REGISTRATION NUMBER 582-507309

PARENTS' NAME    Edward and Marie

DATE OF BIRTH    May 16, 1938

*Donald Rudolph* M.D.  
COMMISSIONER

DETROIT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Bureau of Vital Statistics

PLACE OF BIRTH  
County of Wayne  
Township of \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
Village of \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
City of Detroit

MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Division of Vital Statistics  
**CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH**

State Office No.

Registered No. 10305

(No. St. Josephs Mercy Hospital St.)  
(If birth occurs in a hospital or other institution, give name of same instead of street and number)

FULL NAME OF CHILD Michael Edward Bender } If child is not yet named, make supplemental report as directed.

Sex male If plural births \_\_\_\_\_ Twin, triplet, or other \_\_\_\_\_ Premature \_\_\_\_\_ Legitimate? yes Date of Birth May 16, 1938  
(Month) (Day) (Year)

FATHER Full Name Edward Paul Bender MOTHER Full Maiden Name Marie Anna Dahl

Residence and Post Office Address (If non-resident, give place and state) 3898 Crane

Color white Age at last Birthday 29 Color white Age at last Birthday 24  
(Years) (Years)

Birthplace Detroit Michigan Birthplace Detroit Michigan

Occupation (And Industry) Radio Repair - Owner Occupation (And Industry) Housewife

Number of child of this mother 2 (Including this Birth) Number of children, of this mother, now living 2

**CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE\***

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was Born alive at 420 M.,  
on the date above stated. (Born alive or stillborn)

Have eyes of child been treated with one and one-half per cent solution of silver nitrate as required by law? yes (Signature) John E. Clifford M.D.

Given or Christian name added from a supplemental report \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_ Dated 5-17, 1938 (Addressing physician, midwife, father, etc.)  
Address 2200 E. Grand Blvd.

File MAY 23 1938 Registrar

I, hereby, certify that the foregoing is a true copy, prepared from the records on file in the Detroit Department of Health, as attested to by the raised seal of the City of Detroit, embossed hereto.

Joseph B. Molner M.D.  
Commissioner of Health

Dated JUN 22 1960

### ***WHAT'LL I DO WITH HER?***



Nancy Bender

When Mike was born Ed had Nancy in the car, and he stopped into a phone booth and called his sister Mildred and said to her, "I have Nancy in the car with me, what'll I do with her?" Mildred chortled and chuckled to herself and was just thoroughly amused at Ed's round about way of asking her to babysit. Mildred said to Ed, "bring her over here and I'll take care of her!" Ed was never so relieved in his whole life.

### ***THE CURBSIDE HERALD***



Nancy Bender

Nancy spent about 9 days with Mildred Neff while Marie was in the hospital with Mike. Nancy sat on the curb outside of Mildred's house on St. Clair Street in Grosse Pointe every day and told every single passerby that her mother had a new baby brother. Nancy was real good for Aunt Mildred until the last day when Ed came to pick her up. It was then that they discovered that little Nancy had run away!

### ***BEAT RED***

When Nancy was about 3 years old Dad left her in his car on Joseph Campau Street in Hamtramck and told her to stay there, that he would be right back. Dad then crossed two busy streets and went into Pop Wagner's house to buy some parts. Dad and Pop Wagner got to talking and more time passed than Dad had realized Little Nancy got tired of waiting in the car and decided to find her Daddy. Nancy got out of the car and walked into very heavy traffic on both streets trying to cross these streets. All the cars slowed down and swerved to avoid hitting the little girl, and all of them started blowing their horns at her. Nancy became so worked up over all the honking cars that her little face turned beet red. Dad looked out the window to see what all the noise was about and when he saw Nancy in the middle of the street he ran out of the house and into the street and swooped her up. He gave her a good whack and told her, "Didn't I tell you to stay in the car?" But in his heart he knew it was his fault for staying so long that Nancy got out of the car and sought him out.

### ***LEG IN THE SLAT***



Marie & Edward Bender, Mickey & Nancy Bender

When Nancy was about 4 years old she got her leg caught in the slats of the front porch. Her leg was stuck good and Ed tried to get her leg out of the slat, but to no avail. Ed went on the house to get some butter to put on Nancy's leg to make it slippery and hopefully get it out without hurting her leg. When Dad came back with the butter, Nancy's leg was free. Marie simply gave Nancy's leg a little twist and freed it! Never could Ed figure out just how Marie did that as Ed tried everything before going to get the butter!

***SOME BABYSITTER!***



Nancy & Mickey Bender

Mom had to go out for an errand, so she told Ed to watch baby Mike for her. Dad said okay, and proceed to work on his radios. Mom left, then Nancy, a youngster herself, opened up the gate at the top of the stairs and went downstairs without shutting the gate behind her. Mike, about 7 months old, was in a walker and followed Nancy to see where she was going. When Mick came to the stairs he didn't even slow down. Suddenly Dad saw baby Mick go tumbling down the front stairs in his walker. Dad was so upset over the thought of the baby going through the plate glass window at the bottom of the stairs that Dad actually beat the walker down the stairs and caught it before it went through the glass door. Ed & Marie and Nancy and Mick were supposed to go on a picnic, but they spent the day getting Mick x-rayed instead!

***SOMEONE SHOULD FIRE THAT SITTER!***



Nancy Bender

Dad was babysitting for Mick and Nancy again in an upstairs flat while Mom was hanging out the wash. Mick could just walk and was about 1 year old. While Dad was preoccupied with his work, Mick turned on the gas stove, picked up his stuffed pig and put the pig on top of the open flame. Nancy came into the kitchen and saw the pig on fire. Nancy picked up the flaming pig, ran across the kitchen with it, and threw it over the back porch railing! It was a lucky thing that Nancy didn't catch her dress on fire.

### ***THIRSTY BABY BROTHER***

One time when Mike was a few weeks old, Marie went down stairs to hang a load of wash. She left 3 year old Nancy playing in the living room and 3 week old Mick sleeping in a bassinet in the same living room. When she got back upstairs about 10 minutes later, Mom was horrified. Nancy had picked up Mick from his bassinet, carried him across the room Lord knows how, dropped him on the couch, and then went and got a glass of water and Marie caught her just as she was pouring the glass of water down the baby's throat! Nancy said that Mick was thirsty, so she was only giving him a drink! Mom felt like she was about to have her first heart attack when she saw this.

### ***THE DANGLER***

Mom and Dad were having Sunday dinner and were feeding their two children, Nancy and Mick. Nancy, about 4 years old, finished eating and walked out onto the back porch, after having unlatched the baby gate that Marie kept across the porch entrance so Mick couldn't get out onto the porch as the spacing between the slats was too wide and a baby could fall through the slats. Nancy then came back off the porch, again not latching the gate. Nancy then left the apartment by going down the front stairs and out onto the street. Mick finished eating and Mom let him down from the highchair, not realizing that the baby gate to the front porch was open, Mom and Dad then sat together enjoying a leisurely Sunday dinner. Suddenly Dad and Mom had the same thought, "Where's Michael?!" When they did find him, they died right on the spot. There was Michael on the front porch, he had gotten through the slats and was dangling in mid air by both arms. His face was beet red from the exertion and he was about to let go and plunge 2 stories downward as he had very little strength left and was exhausted from the exertion of having held on for so long, and oddly enough, in total silence the entire length of the ordeal. Mom quietly got out of her chair and without a sound she slowly and soundlessly approached Michael so as not to frighten him. In the meantime a neighborhood boy about 8 years old had seen Mike dangling and had decided to stand on the front lawn poised to catch Mick when he fell as the boy figured Mick would let

go way before he could run up the stairs and grab him. Marie finally made it to Mike and scooped him up by the wrists. Then Marie started to shake all over with fright of what could have happened.

### ***HOUSE FIRE!***



Lizzie & Hank Bender

In Ed's first upstairs flat when Nancy was a baby on one Sunday afternoon in winter Ed's parents, Hank and Lizzie were visiting them when in the middle of the afternoon a fire broke out downstairs. The young girl living in the lower flat had put way too much coal in the furnace and it caused the walls to catch on fire. The fire was threatening to rise into Ed and Marie's flat so they called the fire department who came to put out the fire. The firemen told Ed, Marie, Hank and Lizzie to grab baby Nancy and get out of the house right away, which they did. Dad could not believe all the excess damage the firemen did to their flat. The firemen took long handled axes and smashed all the wet plaster over and over again. The flat was no longer livable so they were forced to move. Marie just had her big toe operated on for an ingrown toenail (which she suffered from repeatedly all of her life). The foot doctor butchered her toe so she was in so much pain that she couldn't walk so she was unable to run out of the house. So dad grabbed Nancy, helped his mom Lizzie out and Grandpa Hank carried Marie out of the house to safety.

### ***WALLET IN THE PARK***

When Mick was about 4 years old, Dad took Michael, Nancy, & Mom with him to the park while he played baseball. While playing baseball, Dad was being bothered by the heaviness of his wallet in his pocket. So Dad took the wallet out of his pocket and gave it to Mick and told him to give it to Mom. Mick took the wallet to Mom who was sitting on a park bench and Mick dropped the wallet on the bench and as he was running away to play, he said to Mom, "Here's Dad's wallet." However, Marie did not hear what

Mick had said. The wallet slipped between the Slats on the bench and fell into the grass. When Dad finished playing ball, he gathered up his equipment and he Mom and the children jumped into the car and went home, Much later that evening Dad asked Mom for his wallet. Mom replied, "What wallet?". Dad's heart sank as he had over \$400 in that wallet, which Was a lot more money in those days than what it is now. Dad and Mom returned to the park, but were unable to locate Dad's wallet.

### ***DOES ED BENDER LIVE HERE?***

About four weeks after Ed lost his wallet there was a knock on the front door. Mom answered the door and a man dressed up well asked Mom, "Does Ed Bender live here?" Mom said to him very excitedly, "You found the wallet!" The man then knew for sure that he had the right Ed Bender. The man went to Dad's store and handed the wallet over to him. Dad thanked him profusely and offered the man \$100. The man at first refused any money, then reluctantly accepted \$150 from Dad. Dad asked why he had worked so hard and so long to return \$400. The man replied that when he first found the wallet he was tempted to keep the money. The man then discussed the wallet and what to do with it with his father. His father said to him, "Son, if it was your wallet that was lost, what would you hope the finder would do with it?" The man then decided to return the wallet to its rightful owner. But this was much easier said than done. The man went to the address in the wallet and found that Dad had moved. The people who lived next door told him where Dad had moved to. The man then went to the new address, and they told him that Dad had since moved from there too, and they gave him another address. Finally, those people gave him Dad's present address on Alter Road.

### ***MONEY IN THE WALL***

One time Dad took all his spare cash, and removed a baseboard molding and hid his money in a hole in the wall under the base board molding as it was still depression times and no one trusted the banks anymore since they folded in 1929 and kept everybody's money. Then Mom found a better place to rent, so they packed up all their possessions and moved to the new place. They were in the new place about a week when suddenly Dad remembered all his money was hoarded in the baseboard hiding place in the old house. The house was re-rented by now, so when the renters were not at home Dad sneaked in their house, removed the old molding and got his money out of his old hiding place.

## **7TH ANNIVERSARY**

Mom and Dad decided to go to Norm and Evelyn's house for their 7th anniversary in the 7 mile and Van Dike area. It was a very dark, rainy night and Ed always said to Marie how he hated driving on a dark, rainy night as he had very poor night vision due to a poor diet as a child due to his poverty. Dad was driving down the side street where Norm lived, and frankly he was looking at Marie and admiring the fine girl he had married, and when he looked up there was a car with very bright lights very close by and there was only one lane on this narrow side street. The man was coming straight at Dad's car. Dad was totally blinded by the bright lights and he wanted to avoid a head on collision, so Dad pulled into the curb lane where the cars parked. Dad did not see that there were cars parked all along this lane and he hit a parked car. Dad told the owner of the car that the accident was his fault and that the owner should take his car to several bump shops where Dad knew that the proprietor was honest and that he would pay for the damages. The man was very angry at Dad for running into his car and nothing Dad could say would simmer the man down. But Dad's biggest problem was the fact that Mom had slammed into the dashboard and had knocked out her front teeth. The imprint of her front teeth were imbedded into the dashboard. Dad took Mom to Holy Cross hospital, and all they did for Mom was to give her two aspirins for the pain. And for a whole week was Mom ever in pain! Her face was swollen up like a monkey.

## **THE JUDGE**

The man whose car Dad ran into did not take his car to a bump shop like Dad had asked him to, but rather, he sued Dad for damages. Dad went to court and as he heard this man give one false testimony after another, Dad became more and more enraged. The judge appeared to Dad to be listening to the plaintiff which got Dad even hotter. Finally, when the man had finished testifying, Dad asked the judge to permit him to tell the true story of what transpired that night. Dad sat there in the witness stand and told the judge what happened and what he had said to the owner of the car. The judge listened to all of Dad's testimony, and then told the man to take his car to the bump shop that Dad had recommended and that as long as Dad paid the bill, the case would be dismissed. Dad was so glad that the judge listened to him and had made a fair decision, as Dad said to himself that if the judge had been vindictive that Dad was so enraged that he just might have pushed the judge through that huge plate glass window that was behind his chair and that would have been a real disaster as the courtroom was 5 stories up! When Dad left the courtroom he went to the elevators and waited for an elevator with all the other people who had

just left the courtroom. As the elevator doors opened, the man who had sued Dad stepped right in front of Dad and started to get on the elevator. Dad's temper exploded, as he was red with anger, and Dad took his foot and kicked that man in the seat of the pants as hard as he could and sent him flying right into the back of the elevator. That man never took his car to the garage that Dad had recommended and he never tried to collect the money from Dad either!

### ***NANCY'S FIRST' LESSON IN DISCRETION***

When Nancy was about 4 years old, a man who said that Dad owed him money came to the house while Dad was working and asked for Dad's address at work so he could go over there and try to collect the money. Grandma Dahl answered the door and said that She didn't know Dad's work address or phone number and that if he would leave his name and address, that Nellie would have Ed return his call. Nancy was standing right behind Grandma Dahl listening to the whole conversation, and when grandma finished, Nancy said to the man, "I know where Daddy works!" Nancy then proceeded to rattle off Dad's address and telephone number at work. Mom heard Nancy from her bedroom where she was lying down as she didn't feel well. Mom was so mad at Nancy for telling this man everything that he wanted to know that Mom hopped out of bed and spanked Nancy good. That sure wasn't fair to the little kid to spend hours teaching her this information, and then the first time she gets to use the information that she spent hours learning, she gets spanked for it!

### ***WHOSE WHEEL IS THAT?***

One day Dad was driving down Mack Avenue when suddenly he saw the wheel of a car spinning down the road in front of him. Dad said to himself, "I wonder whose wheel that is?" As Dad slowed down for the traffic light, he figured out whose wheel it was when one side of his car went "Klunk" onto the pavement!

### ***MONKEY SHINES***

When Mick was a very small child, Dad was so frustrated and disconcerted because he could not get Mick to smile. Dad decided one day to act real silly until he got Mick to smile. Dad made all kinds of clown like faces, but Mick just looked at him real serious. Finally Dad figured out a sure

fire way to make Mick smile. Dad leaned up against a wall and stood upside down on his head and made every kind of a face imaginable. And much to poor Dad's dismay, Mick just stood there and looked at him with a real serious look on his face. Ed had never been so frustrated in his whole life as he was that day!

### ***FRANK QUIKTEST***

Dad used to go over to Frank Ouiktest's house on Sundays and sometimes on Christmas Eve and they would have a good time together. Dad and Frank Ouiktest's favorite sport was to have a few drinks too many and then take the light bulb out of the overhead socket and each would lick their finger and then put their wet finger in the light socket to see who could take the most juice!

### ***CAR RADIOS***

Dad's first excursion into the radio business was in the 1930's when he used to install car radios in the alley behind his house. Dad used to buy used radios, and then advertise in the local paper. People learned how reasonable Dad's prices were and they used to line up in the alley to have a radio installed in their car. Dad said he used to crawl under one dashboard after another and he used to install those radios so fast that you wouldn't believe it.



Nellie Dahl

### ***BREAKING UP HOUSEKEEPING***

Dad used to repair washers and resell them on 3898 Crane in Detroit. Dad would pick up broken washers for little or no money and then he would set to work in his basement repairing them. As he finished repairing a washer, he would put an ad in the Detroit News for a good used washer for sale. When a person would come to buy the washer Mom didn't want to

say that her husband repaired an old washer because the person would be very nervous about buying it under those circumstances. So Mom told everyone that came that the washer was her mother's and that the reason they were selling it was because Nellie was breaking up housekeeping. Mom said she sold a lot of washers with that story, but she wonders if she would ever get to heaven after telling that little white lie to so many people.

### ***IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT***

Dad used to buy old used cars in poor condition, fix them up and then resell them for a lot money than he paid for them. One time a guy bought a car on time from Dad, and then never made any payments. Thus Dad was forced to go over to that man's house in the middle of the night and repossess the car. Dad sneaked in stealthily and fortunately he got the car back without further incident.

### ***FEET THROUGH THE WALL***



Norman Bender & Edward Bender

One day Dad went over to Norm's rented house and he and Norm started horsing around having a real good time. Dad and Norm would take turns lying on the floor and putting their feet in the air and having the other guy hang by his stomach from the other guy's feet. The guy with the feet in the air would then spring his feet upward suddenly and with force and the guy hanging from his belly would go flying through the air. The more they did this, the rougher they got and the more fun they were having. Finally Norman gave Dad a mighty thrust upward and Dad went flying extra far through the air and kind of lost control. As Dad came down both his feet went right through the plastered wall! Norm looked at the damaged wall, and came up with a good solution to hide the damage from his landlord, he hung a calendar over the foot holes!

## **PANTS UNDER THE WATER**

Dad was downtown one day, looking at men's suits through the store windows, trying to find one he liked without first having to go into the store. Dad was looking in the window of a shop owned by a Jew, when suddenly the Jew came out of the shop, grabbed Dad by the arm, and started pulling him into the shop! Dad was really aggravated by this, but he went along with it to see what comes next. The man pulled him over to the suit rack and started telling Dad what unbelievably good buys he has on men's suits. Dad was looking around the store while this Jew was talking to him to see what else was going on in here. Dad spotted the other Jewish partner serving a very gullible, deep south Negro man. The man had a suit on the Negro that was much too large for him, and he had a fist full of material bunched up and twisted in his fist to hide how big the suit was, and he was telling this man, "See what a good fit this suit is for you?" Dad then started listening to the Jew who was holding up a suit and talking to Dad. The man said, "See this suit? It is absolutely wrinkle proof, even in the rain! It will always keep its shape no matter what you do to it!" Dad listened with half an ear and a grin on his face for he knew better. No material in the 1930's was wrinkle proof, especially once you got it wet and wore it that way. The Jewish man then spotted another man standing outside the store looking in the window, so he left Dad and pulled this man in the store by the arm and started giving him the hard sell. Meanwhile Dad kept looking at the suit that the Jew had told him was absolutely wrinkle proof. Dad grinned to himself and said, I know this isn't nice, but I can't help myself, I've just got to have a little fun with this Jew boy!" Dad then took the pants to the suit, went to the back of the store to the wash room, opened the door, turned on the faucet to the sink, twisted up the pant leg real tight, and ran the twisted pant leg under the water! The Jew came a running and screaming, "What do you think you are doing?" Dad replied, "Just testing out the pants to see if they are wrinkle proof like you said."

## **ONE CARAT**

For the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Dad was looking for Mom's wedding ring as a surprise. He had not yet replaced the one she had lost the night before the wedding. He went from jewelry shop to jewelry shop looking for a ring for Mom. At first he had no idea how to determine a stone's value as he was totally unfamiliar with diamonds. By going from shop to shop he became very familiar on how to judge the quality of a stone and he began to feel a little more secure in judging the quality of a given stone. He then went into a jewelry shop, and found a real shyster there ready to take Dad with a glibness of tongue and a swiftness of hand.

Dad again stood back and watched the fun. The man proceeded to give Dad an "education" in diamonds, and started telling Dad things totally at odds with what Dad had learned elsewhere. Dad in the meantime, was picking up the stones and examining them through the jeweler's eyepiece like he had learned along the way. The jeweler showed Dad a carat stone and a 1 carat stone, and then proceeded to tell Dad that the one carat stone was a coal mine, and how much more valuable the 4 carat stone was than the 1 carat, and how he would be cheating Dad if he sold him the one carat stone for the \$300 he was charging for the 4 carat stone. Dad looked at both stones through the jeweler's eye piece, and he knew that the 1 carat stone had flaws but was not near the poor quality that the jeweler made it out to be. Dad also knew that the 4 carat stone was not a perfect stone either. Dad looked over both stones carefully, then said to the jeweler, "I'll tell you what. I'm going to let you cheat me today. I'll take the 1 carat stone." Dad then dropped the \$300 on the counter and proceeded to walk to the door with the 1 carat stone in his hand. The jeweler became blue in the face with excitement and anger, and hollered to his partner, "Stop that man! He's stealing my diamond!"

### ***PEEPEE GEISKI***

Dad had a friend by the name of Peepee Geiski, who Dad described as being "a real squirrel cage". Peepee always set out looking for trouble and he always found more trouble than he could handle. One day Peepee decided to crash an Italian wedding that was taking place right next door to where Dad lived. Dad said that Peepee always had a peculiar way of dancing. He would start at one end of the dance floor, he would hold his arm out stiff while dancing with a girl, and he would dance straight ahead, diagonally, across the entire dance floor, regardless of who was in front of him. This behavior got him into trouble more than once. On this particular evening, when he started pushing the Italian men out of the way by making this straight path across the floor, he suddenly stuck out like a sore thumb as the only Polish guy in a room full of Italians. Suddenly came the query, "Who invited you?" Then came the cry, "Let's get this guy!" Peepee ran up the stairs as fast as he could and locked himself into the bathroom upstairs. The men followed him and started breaking down the door, threatening to kill Peepee. Dad is looking out of the window of his house enjoying the whole spectacle. Suddenly Dad threw back his head and laughed real loud. Peepee opened the bathroom window, climbed out of the second story window, looked around with his eyes bulging with fright, and then settled on a telephone pole as his means of escape from the dire predicament. Peepee took a running jump out of the bathroom window and barely caught the telephone pole about 5 feet out from the window. Peepee then climbed the telephone pole to the very top and cowered there waiting for the worst. The Italian men broke down the bathroom door and stuck their heads out of the

bathroom window threatening to draw blood if they could get their hands on him. However, they didn't notice the telephone pole shivering from Peepee's fear. They went back downstairs and rejoined the wedding, much to Peepee's relief. Much later Peepee shinnied down the pole and ran away.

**OH! MARIE!**



Marie Bender

One day Mom got so sick of seeing all Dad's radio parts all over her living room. And Dad wouldn't clean it up regardless of how Mom begged him to get this stuff out of her living room. One day Mom cleaned up the apartment and it still didn't look clean because of Dad's clutter everywhere. She just blew up one day over the disarray in the living room and threw all the brooms, dusters, pots and pans down the front stairway where you walked into the upper flat. Mom said, "He wants clutter, I'll give him clutter!" Nellie Dahl's reaction to every piece that went flying down the front stairs was, "Oh!, Marie!, Oh! Marie!" Dad then came home from work and opened up the front door on the first floor, and all the pots, pans, brooms, dustpans, dusters, etc. came flying at him. Dad looked at the mess for a Moment, then laughed at Marie's temper. His greeting to Marie was, "How would you like to go to a show?" Mom readily agreed, while never ceasing to be amazed at how fast Ed could diffuse her anger. Mom said to Nellie, who was about 254 lbs, "Now, Mom, don't pick up a thing, I'll clean up the whole mess when I get home." Nellie couldn't stand the thought of all that clutter lying at the bottom of the stairs, so she spent hours, walking down the stairs, nicking up a few items, bringing them up the stairs, **and** so forth. Mom felt so guilty when she came home afterwards and found that her mother had picked up everything.

**CLARENCE MENDO**

Dad enjoyed palling around with Clarence Mendo now and again, as Clarence was an excitable and an unpredictable guy and there was no telling how the evening would end. One day Dad decided to teach Clarence how to drive. So\_Dad drove for awhile, showing Clarence what he was doing and why. Then Dad told Clarence to take over the wheel. Clarence was

in his glory driving Dad's car, and drove all the way to Mount Clemens from Detroit. Dad's account of the day differed somewhat from Clarence's however. Dad said he spent the hour from Detroit to Mt. Clemens with his heart in his mouth. He was sure that any minute he was about to lose either his car or his life. Dad said that Clarence drove over curbs, over the middle line, straight for oncoming cars, and almost into a telephone pole or two. Clarence was so disappointed when Dad took over the wheel in Mount Clemens as he said that driving a car was a cinch and that he was going to go right out and buy a car. Dad silently resolved to never get into a car again that Clarence was driving. Dad loved a bit of excitement, but Clarence's driving was just a bit too much!

### ***CHRISTMAS EVE***

Most Christmas Eves in the 1930's and early 1940's Dad would go over to either Pop Wagner's house or Frank Quiktest and they would drink a lot and work out business deals. Dad said that he used to go over to Pop Wagner's house on Christmas Eve and then would both start, drinking, and after they had both had quite a few a piece, they would sit down and start conducting business. Whoever got a better deal depended on who could hold his liquor better. Dad said he's be really pie-eyed at this time, so he used to "cheat a little" by closing one eye when adding up the columns of figures. Dad said he used to be able to add up figures better than Pop Wagner after drinking a few too many, so Dad used to get his parts at a really good price. In the meanwhile, Uncle Shorty Dahl, Marie's brother, wasn't married yet, so he used to come over to Marie's house every Christmas Eve and trim her tree for her.

### ***WHAT TRAIN?***

One Christmas Eve while driving by at six mile and Mound, Dad was almost killed. He was driving home after midnight with more than his share of liquor under the belt, when he came to and crossed the railroad tracks at Mound Road. Due to the alcohol and the hour he heard neither the bells nor the whistle of the train and did not see the flashers. As soon as he was almost passed the tracks, he felt his car rock violently back and forth from the wind pressure of the train that had just missed cutting his car in two!

## **BETTY LEARNS TO DRIVE**



Beatrice Bender Gamache

Dad used to take Betty downtown shopping and he used to get so sick of driving around downtown for hours waiting for Betty to finish shopping. And he knew that most of this shopping would be fruitless anyway as the goods would be delivered to her home by the Hudson's delivery truck and Ed Gamache would meet the truck and send all of the stuff right back to the store. One day Dad got a brilliant idea of how to get out of taking Betty shopping, he would teach her how to drive, and she could take herself shopping! After initially fearing that Betty was going to run into the parked cars, Dad settled down as Betty developed a sense of judgment and learned to stay out the way of the other cars. But what Betty never learned was the hang of how to shift gears. Betty would ride the devil out of the clutch and Ed is sure that Uncle Ed had to put a new clutch in his car every year after Betty got done riding it. But now Betty drove herself downtown and Dad was off the hook.

## **BLIND MAN'S BLUFF**



Beatrice, Elizabeth, Edward, Mildred & Henry Bender 1936

Dad and the Bender gang loved to get together **for** parties on a Saturday night and one of their favorite pastimes was playing blind man's bluff. How the game went is one person was blind folded so he couldn't see anything, and then everyone would have to stay out of his way. Most of the time this game was played in the basement where there wasn't too much space and with a lot of people, the person was bound to run into someone sooner or later. The person with the blind fold would have to find and grab someone and then he would take off the blind fold and the person who was grabbed would then put the blind fold on. Whenever Dad put the blind fold on, the excitement quickened, for Dad was unpredictable and he **take** loved to take a sudden lunge in one direction and scare the daylights out of whoever was standing there. The people would squeal with excitement and he would then lunge in the direction of their voice and catch them. Everyone would get extra excited when Dad was coming their way because he was 5' 11" tall and his big frame coming at a person would cause lots of anxiousness. So at the present party Dad deliberately let himself be caught so he could have the fun of being "it". He put the blindfold on and then started telling the others how he was coming to get them! Everyone got all hyped up and tried extra hard to stay away from him as his talk conjured up images in the other's minds of Jack the ripper the way Dad would carry on. Dad then listened for sounds of breathing and he detected breath sounds about 7 feet away to his left. So he lunged in that direction with great speed. But everyone just gasped for Ed was heading straight for a pole! Everyone, including Mom, refused to tell Dad that he was running into a pole as they didn't want to get caught! They figured that he would grab the pole first by his outstretched hands, anyway. But the pole was right between Dad's hands, and he smashed into the pole head first with a resounding "bong!"

### ***BATHROOM DOOR***

Dad always told this story right along with the blind man's bluff story. Dad said that twice in his life, when he was a young boy at home and then in the 1940's the following happened to him. Dad said that he got up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom and it was so dark that he couldn't see, so he put his hands out in front of him so he wouldn't bump into anything with his head. Both times, the open bathroom door would go between his hands and he would smash his head good on the side of the open bathroom door.

## ***DAD CUTS RECORDS***



Mildred Neff & Elizabeth Bender



Nellie Dahl & Marie Bender

In 1941 Dad opened his own radio shop, first on Gratiot Avenue, then at 9110 Mack Avenue, and then later at 9100 Mack. He called his store Mack Avenue radio. His phone number in those days was WA-44864. While in that store he bought an apparatus for cutting his own records. He and his brother Norm who worked for him for many years, were very fond of cutting records after hours. They would mostly goof around singing songs that they liked and telling jokes. Fortunately, we still have some of those records today. How great it is to hear the voices of Dad, Uncle Norm, Grandma Bender, Grandpa Bender, and Nellie Dahl after all these years!

## ***BROKEN RACKET***



Norman Bender & Edward Bender

Dad and Norm loved to play tennis together on a Sunday afternoon. Both Norm and Dad were very competitive and neither liked to lose a game. Consequently, both Dad and Norm took their tennis playing seriously and they played to win. Dad and Norm were quite good at volleying, but Dad's serves were very mean and at times were impossible to return due to their very high speed and the extreme amount of "english" on the ball. There were times that Dad's balls hit the ground and literally

died in spot on the pavement, other times the ball would hit the pavement and jump straight sideways out of the court and other times the ball would hit the court and bounce back toward the net. I can honestly say that I have never seen a professional serve a ball like Dad's. His were unbeatable. Due to his serves, Dad would win most of the time over Norm. Mom would often come along on a Sunday afternoon to watch them play. Norm got so frustrated at losing time after time that one Sunday afternoon, he got so mad that he broke the tennis racket in two over the net.

### ***GOLF***

Dad and Norm used to get up before the sun rose and go onto the golf course at Chandler Park Drive. They often got on free because the attendant was not there yet at that early hour. They would play a round of golf before going to work. Dad was never outstanding at golf, when he got good scores it was because he had power in his swing and when he hit the ball just right, which he often did not do, he would hit a really long ball. Dad, like me, would often spend most of the game playing in someone else's fairway due to a miserable hook. However, on a number of occasions, Dad would manage to beat Norm although, over all, Norm was the better player. One day when Norm had a losing streak to Dad, he was so enraged over his poor playing that he, (you guessed it) broke his golf club against the fence. Dad played often with me and Mom after this but Norm played very seldom after this incident. Norm was very poor in his last days and he pawned his golf clubs when he lived with Al in the Parkside Projects. Dad offered to get Norm's clubs out of hoc for him but Norm said, no, that wasn't necessary as he was now legally blind and couldn't see the ball anymore.

### ***PEARL HARBOR***

Mom says it was a beautiful Sunday afternoon on the 7th of December, 1941. Ed was in his radio repair room when he heard the bulletin news that Pearl Harbor had been attacked by the Japanese. The whole world was stunned by this devastating disaster! All Mom could think of was War, and when would they take her Ed, and would he come back alive to his family. Fortunately for all of us, he wasn't drafted because of his age and the fact that he had 2 children.

## ***NORM***



Norman John Bender

The government tried to draft Norm as he was 28 years old and Dad felt that Norm should not go to war as he was of a very nervous temperament and he would not be able to withstand being shot at for four years. Dad spent months doing battle with the draft board for his younger brother Norm, and in the end, Dad won out as Norm was not drafted.

## ***RATIONING***

About a year after the war broke out, the civilian population had to suffer under a rationing system whereby they could purchase limited amounts of sugar, meat and some other amounts of food stuffs. You were given rationing coupons for meat, sugar and milk, and could only purchase the amounts on the coupons. When your coupons were gone, you could not purchase these items until the following month when new coupons were issued. Some items could not be had at all such as silk Stockings and bananas. Mom got extra amounts of milk under the table in 1944 by telling the grocer keeper that she was pregnant and needed extra milk. Mom would cooperate with the war effort by flattening cans and returning them into government collection centers where they turned the flattened cans into guns. Mom also bought war bonds in those days, which was considered a very patriotic thing to do.

## COUSIN RUTH



Ruth Galvin

Ed used to get the biggest kick out of Mom's cousin Ruth because she was really a wild one in those days. Cousin Ruth married Johnnie, a real nice mild mannered sort of fellow who endured all of Ruth's shenanigans like a sainted martyr. Ruth, shortly after she and Mom were married would come over to Mom's apartment and tell her that she had some real good looking sailor boys outside and would Mom want to join her in entertaining them for the day. Mom would decline, with a thought as to what Ed would say if he knew what Ruthie had asked her to do. Then later Ruthie had a baby and came over to visit Marie and Ed. While visiting the infant became hungry, so Ruthie proceeded to breast feed the baby in Mom's parlor. It was rather obvious to Ruthie from the startled look on Dad's face that Dad was disconcerted by Ruth's lack of modesty, so Ruth proceeded to shock Dad out of his boots by taking her breast out of her blouse and shooting a stream of milk clear across the room at Dad. Dad repeated that story many times to us, with the same incredulity in his voice as when it first happened.

## WAC DAYS

*Held for Impersonating a Wac*



—By News Staff Photographer  
Mrs. Ruth Elaine Galvin, shown  
here in custody of Deputy U. S.  
Marshal John Page, is the first  
woman arrested in this area for  
impersonating a Wac. Mrs. Gal-  
vin, who is 26 years old and  
lives at 3729 Meldrum avenue,  
was arrested in a bar at Michi-  
gan and Fourteenth avenues early  
Monday. FBI agents found her  
wearing a dark olive drab uni-  
form and Army insignia, though  
not the proper Wac insignia. She  
told Vincent Fordell, assistant  
United States district attorney,  
she bought the uniform in the  
hope it would help her get a  
job as a chauffeur at Fort  
Wayne. She pleaded innocent  
when arraigned before J. Stan-  
ley Hurd, United States com-  
missioner, and was held under  
\$200 bond for examination Aug.  
18. If convicted, she faces pen-  
alties of six months in prison  
and a \$300 fine.

Ruthie's crowning escapade happened at the height of World War II. Ruth dressed up as a WAC and went into a bar on Michigan Avenue to impress the soldier boys as Ruthie had a real soft spot for a man in a uniform. Well, it seems that someone reported her for the military police came into the bar and asked Ruth for her military ID. When Ruth had none to produce they arrested her and brought her to Federal court. The Judge didn't take it lightly that a woman was impersonating a WAC in the middle of the war. He gave her 6 months in jail for this stunt. Ruth got out of jail and returned home to her husband and baby whom she professed to love dearly. Ruth always had that baby in her arms, cooing endearments to the child. Then one day without warning, Ruthie disappeared and was never seen or heard from again by her family. Her mother, Aunt Anna, kept a picture of the Blessed Virgin with the child Jesus in her home and on the back of the picture she wrote Ruthie's name. Every day Aunt Anna prayed to the Blessed Virgin and Jesus that she would see her Ruthie once again before departing from this world. Many, many years later, just before she died, Aunt Anna's prayers were answered. Out of nowhere, Ruthie reappeared. Ruthie was sick with cancer and Aunt Anna lived to see her daughter laid to rest.

## **WAR DAYS**

Ed's business flourished during the war. In the beginning of the war Dad ran his business out of 2998 Crane, near Holcomb, in Detroit. He then moved to Gratiot Avenue, then to Mack Avenue, all in Detroit. In those days Dad sold Magnavox, R.C.A. Victor (he had a real neat statue of a big R.C.A. Victor dog with his ear cocked against an old fashioned victrola and there was a smaller dog of the same breed standing next to the bigger sitting dog and underneath both dogs was a slogan which said "He hears his master's voice"), Zenith, Admiral, Maytag, Whirlpool, Speed Queen as well as radios and records and jewelry. Everybody who was not in the war fighting had money to burn as the economy was going full swing and everybody was working full time. Many Negroes came up from the south in those war years and Dad could have made a killing off them as they were very gullible. But Dad always had a conscience and a soft heart and he charged the gullible no more than he did those who were price conscious.

## **ELSIE RHOADES & ELMER BENDER**



Elsie & Elmer Bender

The family was totally shocked when Elmer announced that he was getting married to Elsie. Elmer was mildly retarded due to his close call with death due to typhoid fever. Elsie, on the other hand, had a normal IQ but she was disabled and in a wheelchair. Both Elmer and Elsie were very lonely so they were very happy to have found one another. Elsie was like a mother to Elmer and Elmer was very attentive to Elsie's physical needs so it was a good marriage.

## ***CORNECT***



Mickey Bneder

Mick used to watch Dad by the hour as Dad would repair radios. Dad was cognoscente that Mick was watching him so Dad would put on a bit of a show by saying, "Connect" when he would put the hot leads on the radio. One day when Dad was out of the room, Michael picked up the hot leads, stuck them on his chest, saying, "Connect!" He sure let go of those leads fast when they burned a hole in his little shirt! That was Mick's first lesson on electricity.

## ***EARL***



Earl Stocker

When Mick was christened little Earl Stocker, Mildred Dahl Stocker's 6 year old son, was running all over Mom's house, acting just like a normal rambunctious little boy. He was a beautiful child, with blue eyes and blond hair, and he favored the Dahl family in appearance. He was a good little kid and everyone liked the little guy. When Mick was 2 months old, little Earl came into his house from play and said to Grandma Nellie Dahl, "Grandma, I have a bad stomach ache". Grandma Dahl replied, "Earl, it's probably because you drank all that coke and then ran around outside. Come, lay down here and soon you'll feel better." But Earl didn't feel any better. Mildred took him to her father-in-law George Stocker, M.D. who knew that it was appendicitis, but didn't want to pay for an operation as his son was out of work, so

he put an ice bag on his stomach to try to freeze the bad appendix, a trick that sometimes worked in those days. But for Earl it didn't work, and his appendix burst. They immediately operated on him, but it was too late. In those days they had no antibiotics, and peritonitis set in, and about a week after the surgery Earl succumbed to the infection. At Earl's funeral they told the following story. About 6 weeks before Earl took ill, he woke up in the middle of the night, went to his mother and related to her the following story. "Mom", he said, "I just had the nicest dream. I dreamed that Jesus came to me and asked me if I wanted to go to heaven with Him. I said yes, and so Jesus said He would come back soon and take my soul to heaven with Him." "Wasn't that a nice dream", Earl said to his mother. Mildred said, "Yes, Earl, that was a real nice dream. But you go back to bed now because it is too early to get up yet." Mildred will never forget this dream of Earl's for as long as she lives. Mom would look at her new born Mickie and feel so horrible about her sister losing her only son. Mom would think over and over again about that little body laying in that small casket in Mildred's living room, with little Earl laying there in his white First Communion suit. And the first time it rained and Mom thought of little Earl in the ground, it bothered her so much that she just cried and cried all day that day.

### ***2998 Sheridan***



3898 Crane



2998 Sheridan

Mom and Dad very much liked their flat on 3898 Crane and were so saddened when Mrs. Pritchard told them that she would be subdividing their flat and making two apartments out of it, and charging the same amount of rent for half the room. Mom and Dad felt that they had to move as they wouldn't live in such cramped quarters. Mom found a flat at 2998 Sheridan. It seemed large enough, but when they moved in, they got the biggest surprise, they were unable to keep the place warm, and in fact it was so cold in there that they needed a fire in July to keep warm! By November the two kids both had very bad colds, so after living there for only 6 months, Mom looked for something better. Mom found a

clean and warm flat on Harding near Harper. She was very happy with her new found home, and moved in the Saturday after Thanksgiving in 1941.

### ***A NASTY GASH***



Nancy & Mickey Bender

Mom said she was doing the wash in the basement of the Harding home when Mick was 3 years old and while she was washing Mick fell and struck his head on the basement lock. The poor fellow got a nasty gash on the back of his head. All the accidents seemed to happen to the kids on wash day!

### ***FAITH OF OUR FATHERS***



Sandy & Bill in front of St. John Berchman's

Edward's ancestors were Catholic as far back as we can trace them into Germany. Edward's mother, Elizabeth Ott was a very devout Catholic who lived her faith every day, praying unceasingly for her family and friends. She belonged to the Ladies Sodality and said the rosary faithfully both in church and at home. She went to many religious functions with her first cousin, Estella Becker, whose son was a Servite missionary in Zimbabwe, Africa for over 30 years until his recent death.

Grandpa Henry Bender was also a Catholic all of his life, but lacked the fervor of his wife Elizabeth. He went to mass with her every Sunday, but as he got older and his heart was failing, he would sit on the edge of his bed, putting on his boots, saying, "I'm bushed!" Edward used to feel sorry for his dad having to walk a whole mile to St. John Berchman's Church with such a bad heart in every kind of weather.

Elizabeth Bender's mother and father were also devout Catholics. Wilhelm Ott immigrated to Detroit as a firm Catholic. He was baptized as an infant in Baden - Baden, Germany. Sophie Becker Ott was the daughter of 2 devout Catholics, Johannes Becker and Elizabeth Friedrichs Becker.

John and Elizabeth Becker were always attentive to the needs of their children and grandchildren, buying them the necessary food and clothing. And when Elizabeth's daughter died in childbirth she took in all but one of that daughter's children, raising them in her and John's care until Elizabeth died at the age of 87 when her youngest grandchild turned 17. The family was sure that the reason Elizabeth lived that long was her sheer determination to see those 4 children to adulthood. Grandma was often heard to say when the other grandchildren came to visit her "Die Kinder brauchen Shue" (the children need new shoes).

Marie Dahl Bender was also a good Catholic most of her life. She was baptized right after birth as she was in peril of dying due to a severe throat infection. Marie's mother Nellie was an Episcopalian in her younger years but turned Catholic because of her husband's and children being Catholic. Nellie did not go to church due to her Parkinson's disease which kept her in the house as she could barely walk.

William Frederick Dahl Sr. was a devout Catholic despite his less than charitable life style. He belonged to the Knights of Columbus and was very close to many of the priests in the Sacred Heart parish in Detroit.

He placed his grandson John Dahl Dale with the St Vincent de Paul society as he wanted that child to be raised Catholic. Edward was flabbergasted to hear about how such a supposedly devout Catholic could simply disappear out of his family's life and leave them destitute in 1929, never to be heard or seen from again. When Edward was in traffic court in 1941 due to his accident he was sure he saw his unknown father in law Bill there as the man kept the deformed side of his face from the spectators in the court and was very nervous that day. He told Marie as soon as he got home, but neither he nor Marie ever followed up as to who was present in court that day to see if it was Bill Dahl.

Bill came from a long line of Dahls who lived in Gummersbach, Oberboinghausen and Gimborn, Germany for hundred's years. Before moving to this area from Germany, they had first settled in a neighboring town now called Dahl, Germany, named after our Dahl family. Their dwelling

place is now a museum in town. Our Dahl family originally lived in Sweden for centuries and was forced to leave Switzerland in the late 1500s as the country turned Protestant and our branch of the family was the only one at that time that refused to change religions and was therefore forced to immigrate to a Catholic section of Germany. Every generation of Dahls from the 1500s to Marie Dahl remained Catholic.



St. Charles Borromeo

Marie went to St Charles' Borromeo Catholic Church from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade when the League of Catholic women forced poor Marie out of school and out of her family home to become a nanny to earn \$5.00 a week. Marie was heart broken at having to leave home and especially about having to leave the Catholic school. She studied algebra with her next door neighbor every day she got to go home. While at school little Marie got up early and attended daily mass before school every day of her school years. She was not asked to attend by the nuns, she simply did it of her own volition.

In his youth Ed was a firm believer in Catholicism and really enjoyed attending the Catholic school, but he was by no means a regular church goer until he married Marie in August of 1934.

When Edward was about to get married he knew he had to go to confession as he had to be in a state of grace to receive the Sacrament of Marriage and he knew that those strict priests in St. Anthony's Church were going to give him a very hard time so he decided that it was safer to go to confession to a priest at the Capuchin Monastery on Mt. Elliott Street in Detroit, figuring they were used to people with long litany's of missed masses, youthful high jinx, sins of omission, etc. Boy, was he ever mistaken! Did he ever get raked over the coals by the Capuchin priest. I guess he didn't get Father Solanus Casey that day! Dad said the priest gave him so many prayers to say for penance that he never thought he was going to get off of his knees! Ed figured he'd better start going to Sunday mass with Marie in order to slip back onto the right path with God.

At first Marie and Edward attended Sunday mass but then did not attend

Sunday mass for a number of years when the kids were growing up for some reason. Then in 1956 when Sandy was in the hospital having her appendix removed she told her dad that she would not be able to attend mass that Sunday, so would he go for her. Very emotionally, Ed said yes and he and Marie attended Sunday mass faithfully until the end of his life. As Edward was being driven to the hospital when he was dying of a heart attack, he prayed very fervently to God.

Marie and Ed faithfully baptized all of their children, sent all of them to Catholic school in Detroit, had them make their first communion and confirmation and saw that they attended mass on Sunday. Sandy loved attending the Novena of Our Sorrowful mother every Friday while in St John Berchman's, however Mike used to slip out of going to Novena by slipping out a side door and heading home when no one was looking.

Here are the religious documents that Marie so carefully preserved all through the years in her little safe where she kept all her important documents.

**St. Anthony Parish**  
5247 Sheridan Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan

BORN

*The Records of this Parish certify to the Baptism of—*

Name of Child Nancy Marie Bender

Date of Child's Birth Aug. 22<sup>d</sup> 1935 - 7:00 AM

Baptized on Sept 8<sup>th</sup> 1935

Name of Father Edward Bender

Maiden Name of Mother Marie Hahl

Said Record is signed by Rev. John Raycroft c.p.s.

Detroit, Mich., April 11<sup>th</sup> 1943. H. Post. c.p.s.  
Pastor.

1000 7-40 MCO.-5972

## **ST. MARGARET MARY'S**



Nancy Bender - 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion



Nancy & Michael - May, 1942

Nancy attended St. Margaret Mary's school from December, 1941 until June, 1942. In May, 1942 Nancy made her first Holy Communion at St. Margaret Mary's Church. Mom threw a big party for her and Nellie helped out in setting up the party. Mom hired a photographer to come out and take pictures of Nancy dressed up in her First Communion dress and veil, but the man came the day after the appointment, so Nancy's hair was not curled as Mom curled it the day of the appointment, and when the man didn't show Mom had no idea that he would show up on her doorstep the following day. The straight hair in that picture always bothered Mom.

## **4651 ALTER ROAD**



4651 Alter Rd Mickey, Nellie, Marianne, Marie and Nancy at 4651 Alter Rd

Marie told Edward that it was time that they owned their own home. They had lived in a rented house on Sheridan and Harding in Detroit. The home they were presently living in was very cold and then the land lady was going to split up the house into 3 apartments instead of the present 2, so Ed and Marie found it totally unacceptable to live in a

smaller apartment and pay the same price for cramped quarters. So Ed and Marie began in earnest to find a suitable home at an acceptable price in a decent neighborhood. Ed had narrowed the choices down to 3 - the house on Wilfred near 7 mile and Gratiot, the house across the street on Alter presently occupied by the Palazzolo family or the home on 4651 Alter Road. The house at 4651 Alter Road was larger than the other two and cost \$4800 which was a bit cheaper than the other two. Marie and Ed liked living on a wider street. The fact that Alter Road was a busy street did not concern them at the time as Nancy was 9 and Micky was 6 so they had no fear of a child running in the street. So Edward and Marie purchased the home with a down payment and a mortgage. Edward had the home completely paid off in 4 years. Mike was very upset over leaving his old house as he had a buddy Jimmy that he was very close to in the old house. To this very day he says how much he missed playing with Jimmy.

***ST. JOHN BERCHMAN'S***



Nancy - confirmation

Nancy was confirmed at St. John Berchman's Church in May, 1945. Her sponsor was our next door neighbor, Juliette Meeseman. Edward and Marie hired a professional photographer and went to the studio to have this and Michael's picture taken.

**ST. JOHN BERCHMANS CHURCH**  
**CONFIRMATION RECORD**

Confirmation Name Elizabeth

Sponsor's Full Name Juliette Meesseman

NOTICE:—BAPTISMAL RECORD AND ADDRESS OF CONFIRMED  
MUST BE INCLOSED HEREIN.

Nancy Marie Bender



Michael Bender 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion

Michael made his first Holy Communion at St. John Berchman's on the same day that Nancy was confirmed. The family was living on 4651 Alter Road.

# Certificate of Baptism

ST. CATHERINE CHURCH  
4151 Seminole Ave.  
DETROIT 14, MICHIGAN

Detroit 14, Mich. May 14 1945

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That Michael Edward Bender

Son } of Edward Bender and Marie Dahl  
Daughter } Father's Name Mother's Maiden Name

Born May 16, 1938 was Baptized according to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church  
on June 12, 1938 in St. Catherine Church, Detroit, Mich., by the

Rev. Paul R. Hennes

The Godparents were George Stocker  
Mildred Stocker

Vol. V Page 97 Issued by Rev. James L. Hayes  
Asst Pastor

Confirmed by Most Rev. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date and Place November 8, 1948 St. John Berchman's

Sponsor William Dahl

Married to \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

# Certificate of Baptism



Church of

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS  
9801 Chalmers  
Detroit, MI 48213

— This is to Certify —

That SANDY JEAN BENDER

Child of Edward P. Bender

and Marie Dahl

born in not stated in Baptismal Register

on the 5th day of December 19 44

was **Baptized**

on the 14th day of January 19 45

According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church

by the Rev. John Hanley, O.S.M.

the Sponsors being { Harold Dahl  
Mildred Neff

as appears from the Baptismal Register of this Church.  
(Vol. 6, pg. 29, #12)

Dated Feb. 19, 1997

*Rev. Luke Stano, O.S.M.*  
Pastor



Sandy & Marie Bender



Sandy Bender, 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion

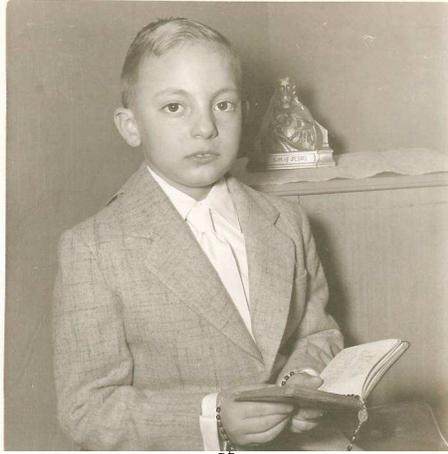
Sandy Bender made her 1st Holy Communion at St. John Berchman's in May, 1953. Her god mother, Mildred Neff as well as Edward & Marie, her parents, were present at that mass and witnessed Sandy going up to the altar rail, kneeling and receiving communion for the first time.



Sandy Bender, confirmation day

Sandy made her confirmation on the 29 February, 1956. Her sister Nancy was her sponsor. Edward, Marie, Sandy and Nancy walked to St. John Berchman's Church from Alter Road. Shortly before going into church Sandy asked to use the bathroom as she had a bad kidney and had to go often. The nuns, very unfeeling, said the bathroom was locked and they had no key. Confirmation day was ruined for Sandy as she had to go through the whole ceremony. Afterwards on the way home in front of Van Lerberghe's funeral home she had to go. Ed was very concerned as he realized there was a kidney problem. One month later Edward got a call from the school that Sandy was in severe kidney pain and had a temperature of 105 degrees. He rushed her to St. John Hospital in Detroit where they told Edward that she had a severe infection, but they would not treat her until Edward ran back to his store on Warren Avenue and brought back \$100. Ed was beside himself that he had to leave his acutely ill daughter so the hospital could have payment. Ed and Marie stayed with Sandy, who was in horrible pain until closing

time. After Ed left, Dr. Hassig stood at the foot of Sandy's hospital bed and cried silent tears as there were only 2 antibiotics in those days and if they didn't work she would have died.



Bill Bender, 1<sup>st</sup> communion day

Bill Bender made his 1st Holy Communion in St. John Berchman's Church on the 29th of April, 1956. Only Edward & Marie were present as there was not enough room in the church for all the family members of each communicant.

Saint John Berchmans Church  
4820 Lakeview Ave.  
Detroit 15, Michigan

Testimonium Ortus et Baptismi  Certificate of Birth and Baptism

Excerptum ex Registro Baptizatorum in Eccl. Sti. Joannis Berchmans,  
Archidioecesis Detroitensis, Detroit, Mich., U. S. A.

Taken from the Records of Baptisms in St. John Berchmans Church,  
Archdiocese of Detroit, Detroit, Mich., U. S. A.

Vol. 9 Pag. 34 Num. 3

Nomen Infantis  
Name of Child August Paul Bender

Nomen Parentum  
Name of Parents Edward P. Bender  
Marie Dall

Dies Nativitatis  
Date of Birth June 20, 1952

Dies Baptismi  
Date of Baptism July 13, 1952

Nomen Patrinorum  
Name of Sponsors Wm. Dall  
Marathy Dall

Nomen Ministri  
Baptized by Rev. Philip M. Brennan, O.S.M.

SECUNDUM RITUM ECCL. ROM. CATH.  
ACCORDING TO THE RITE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Adnotatio  
Note (none)

Convenit cum originali. In quorum fidem, etc.

The foregoing is a true and faithful copy of the  
original entry. In witness whereof, etc.

Detroit, Mich., October 23, 1962

Very Rev. Joseph A. Brill, O.S.M.  
Parochus—Vicarius-Cooperator—Delegatus  
Eccl. Sti. Joannis Berchmans.  
(over)



Doug Bender, 1<sup>st</sup> communion day

Doug Bender made his first communion at St. John Berchman's church in April, 1960. Again, only Ed and Marie were present in church that day as the church was crowded with the many first communicants and their parents.

### ***CHRISTMAS ON HARDING***

Dad, as usual, was at Frank Quiktest's and Mom was home with the kids. Grandma Nellie Dahl was over that year and helped Mom trim the tree. Shorty stopped by and helped Mom too. Then Dad, rolled in at 2 AM and related to Mom how he almost got killed by the train at Mound Rd. Mom then related to him an equally distressing bit of news, that they had purchased toys for the kids which needed assembly and that the kids would be awake at 6 AM to see what Santa had brought them, so he had exactly 3 hours in his inebriated condition to assemble those toys and place them under the Christmas tree (Tis the season to be jolly!).

### ***4651 ALTER***



Edward & Marie Bender



3 year old Billy in front of 4651 Alter Rd

In the spring of 1943 Mom and Dad decided to purchase their first home. They looked at many houses and their choice was narrowed to a house on

Wilfred, near 7 Mile and Gratiot, and two houses on Alter Rd. They decided to purchase the house on Alter as it was the largest and was the most price worthy. The papers were signed in July, 1943 and that same month they packed their belongings and moved into their very own home. Dad was making much money as it was during the middle of the war and so he made double and triple mortgage payments. He had his \$4,400 mortgage paid off in 4 years time. In this picture Billy was saying goodbye to Ed and Marie as they were heading off to go to Niagara Falls. Nellie Dahl babysat Bill and the kids. Marie said Bill was a real whiner when they left and when they got back home he was cured of his whining, much to Ed and Marie's relief.

### ***ONE HERE, ONE THERE, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!***

Mom moved into her home after Dad had moved all their belongings in. The first thing Mom did was to wash out her kitchen cupboards to put her dishes away. She was happily washing out the first cupboard, when suddenly a bug ran across her line of vision. Mom took the rag in her hand and squashed him good. She then kept on washing. Soon, another bug ran in front of her and again she squashed that one too. Suddenly, one went this way, one went that way, and when she stepped back and looked they were everywhere! Mom was horrified. Mom always kept a very clean house and she just couldn't abide by a house full of cockroaches and possibly even bedbugs! Mom called Ed and told him what she had found. Dad calmed Mom down by assuring her that he would rectify the problem posthaste. Dad called an extermination company and they promised to come out within a day or to. Dad then called his sister Mildred Bender Neff and made arrangements with her for Mom, Dad, Nancy and Mick to move in with her until the exterminators eliminated the unwelcome guests from their new home. Our family stayed with Mildred and Harold for a few days and when they returned to Alter Rd. there was nary a bug to be found anywhere. Marie and Ed were so happy about that! Now life in their new home was about to begin, a very happy period in their lives which would stretch into the next 18 years of their lives. These were without a doubt, the happiest 18 years of Marie's and Ed's lives as it was a happy culmination of the first 8 years of their married life together in which they had had their first two children and saved for their first home. Yes, when Ed and Marie moved into Alter Road they couldn't have asked for happier times than they now experienced, as they were the happiest couple alive at this point in their lives.

### ***DAD DECORATES ALTER***

When Mom and Dad moved into Alter Road there was ugly wallpaper everywhere. Dad and Mom rented a steamer and took all the wallpaper off the walls. Dad then set to work painting the entire house. He painted the living room and dining room chartreuse. The upstairs was unfinished at this time, so the family lived in the living room, dining room, kitchen and two bedrooms and bath that were downstairs. Mom and Dad slept in the back bedroom.

### ***IT MIGHT BE CATCHING!***



Mickey, Marianne, Nellie, Nancy and Marie 5 mos. pregnant with Sandy - July 1944

Mom and Aunt Mildred Neff went to Gratiot and 7 Mile Road in September, 1943 to buy school clothes for Nancy & Michael and when Mildred Neff looked around at the other women shopping, she said to Mom, "Maybe I shouldn't have taken you shopping here. Look at all the pregnant women! It might be catching!" Well catching it was, for in March, 1944 it became obvious to Mom that after 6 years she was pregnant again. Right after Mom discovered that she was pregnant, and was far from showing yet, she and Nancy went to a mother-daughter banquet at school. Mom was so embarrassed when Nancy blurted out to every one that her mother was going to have a new baby!

### ***PREPARATIONS***

When Mom discovered that she was pregnant she started making baby clothes and crocheting edges around the little garments. Her mother Nellie would visit her quite often and they would go to Gratiot and 7 Mile Rd quite often shopping for the new baby. One day on the way home when Mom was 7 months pregnant she tripped on a jagged piece of cement and landed right on her stomach! But fortunately, nothing happened to Marie or the baby.

Dad was viewing the pending birth with mixed emotions. He was happy with the children he already had and wasn't sure he wanted to add another one just yet.

**WILLIAM F. DAHL JR MARRIES DOROTHY DOLATO**



Bill Dahl Jr & Dorothy Dolato

The day before Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel died Marie's brother Bill married Dorothy Dolato in Detroit, Michigan. They went to Herman and Elenore Mc Kinin's house after the ceremony and had their pictures taken there. A serious family meeting followed because Marie's mother Nellie Dahl was living with her son Bill who was Nellie's sole support. Now that Bill was married he expected the rest of the siblings to share in the support and living arrangements. All but Jean agreed and they made a plan for Nellie to live an equal amount of time with each of her children. But Jean said no, that she was just married to Shorty and she needed time to adjust to married life in the privacy of their flat without having Nellie living under the same roof. Ed and Marie and Mildred and Sonny had no objections to the change in living plan for Nellie but Elenore became very angry at Shorty and Jean, blaming Jean's mother Mrs. Lippert.



Mrs. Lippert, Tom Dahl, Patti Dahl & Shorty Dahl

What resulted was Elenore refusing to have anything to do with Shorty and Jean. Edward really liked Ma Dahl, as he called Nellie and openly welcomed her into his home. Ed was always very warmly friendly with Nellie, cracking many a joke and taking her with Marie, Norman and Evelyn to a neighborhood bar where they had hours and hours of fun together. Edward was the only one who charged Nellie nothing for room and board, allowing her to keep all of her old age pension check. Nellie saved this money in a hidden compartment in her purse which she intended to use to pay her funeral expenses. She had only \$125 saved up at the time of her death so Marie and Elenore used the money to buy a nice matching headstone for Nellie's grave.

Marie announced that she was expecting her 3rd child, Sandy. When Sandy was born Bill and Dorothy came to Alter Road to see the new baby. Marie smiled and told Dorothy that maybe next year she would have a baby of her own. Marie's prediction came true. In December, 1945 little Sharon Dahl was born.

**MINNA KAISER DAHL HENKEL**



Minna Kaiser Dahl, 18

Minna Dahl & Johann Friedrich Dahl

Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel

Minna

Minna

On Marie and Ed's 10th wedding anniversary, on the 25th of August, 1944 they got some very sad news. Marie's Grandmother, Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel had passed away at the age of 80 years, 4 months of a bad heart. Edward got a big kick out of Minnie Henkel as she was always so outspoken. Minna passed away just 3 ½ months before Sandy was born. We were all so amazed at how much Minna's appearance changed every 5 years or so. Looking at these pictures, no one could believe that these pictures were of the same woman!

**NELLIE**



Nellie Dahl

Nellie was living with Marie while she was expecting Sandy, so Marie was able to sleep late mornings as Nellie would get up and see the children off to school in the mornings. Edward loved Nellie and they had many a good laugh together. Ed would take Marie and Nellie to a bar where they and Evelyn and Norman would spend hours drinking and playing the jukebox. One time they played "Packing my grips and going to California" so many times over and over that the bar tender asked them not to play it any more as it was irritating the other patrons.

## **HENRY BENDER**



Elisabeth & Henry Bender - 50 wedding anniversary - August 2, 1944

When Marie was 8 months pregnant, she got another bit of sad news. Ed took his father Henry to a doctor over by Warren & Connor as his Dad was really short of breath and had to sleep sitting up. When the doctor came into the room and examined Henry, he said to Edward, "Get this man out of my office, he's a dead man and I don't want him to die here!" Dad was so angry at that doctor and so stunned over this news about his Dad's health. Dad took his father to a succession of doctor's and they all told him the same thing, that Hank had a very bad heart and it was only a matter of a short while before Hank expired. On the day Hank died Dad came into his parent's house on Frankfort Street in Detroit to see how his Dad was coming along. Dad asked his mother where his Dad was and she replied that he was upstairs. Dad ran up the Stairs and found his Dad leaning against the wall with his arms outstretched against the wall and his feet away from the wall. When he asked his Dad why he was standing that way his father replied, "Because, son, it's the only way I can breathe". Dad said that he stood there awhile with his father and his Dad then looked at him again, and said to Dad, "Son, all I have to leave you is my good will". Dad said he looked deep into his father's eyes for some sign of fright over the imminence of his own death and try as he may, he could see no fright in his father's eyes. This left a lasting impression on Dad, and he told me this story many times. And now, when I think back to my Dad's death, when I last stood by his side, stroking his hair and talking to him, Dad had told us that this was it, that he was dying, and yet I saw no fear in our father's eyes as he faced his own death. Dad quietly closed his eyes and went peacefully to sleep. I feel that it was the overwhelming faith in their God and His promises that removed the fear from their hearts and readied their spirits for their new home. Grandpa stood up against the wall for quite some time, then he was too tired and couldn't support himself there any longer. Hank went quietly to his bed and laid down. Elizabeth stood

steadfastly at his side, hovering over her beloved Hank, Mildred Neff told me she never was sure just when Hank died as Grandma Bender stood over him and wouldn't let anyone get a close look at him. Just before midnight on 9th of November, 1944 a very saddened Elizabeth announced to her family that Hank had returned home to his Father.

### **SANDY**



Sandy Bender & Mickey Bender



Sandy Bender - 7 months

At 5 AM on the 5th of December, 1944 Marie awakened Ed and told him that she was in labor. Ed and Marie quickly dressed and they took Marie to Cottage Hospital in Grosse Pointe. Marie had a hard labor, but Ed had an even harder time as this was the first time that he stayed with Marie while she was in labor. Ed told with great relish about "his labor" with Sandy. Ed said he would tense up and push with Marie with every pain. Dr. MacKenzie insisted that the husband remain with the wife through the labor to see how hard it was on the woman. Dr. MacKenzie thought it was ridiculous for a family to have more than two children as he felt that it was too hard on the wife. Dad never forgot his experience in the labor room, and he stayed clear of the labor room with his next two kids. Once was enough for him! When Sandy was finally born, Ed felt totally exhausted. The doctor noticed Ed's fatigue and asked Dad if he wanted a shot. Dad said sure, thinking of bourbon and water. When the doctor came with a needle, Dad was shocked. He declined, telling the doctor that that wasn't quite what he had in mind.

### ***IS IT SMOOTH?***

Dad thought that a shot sounded pretty good, so when he couldn't get a drink in the hospital, he decided to get himself one on the way home. Someone had recommended a new brand of bourbon to Dad, telling him that it was real smooth. Dad decided that now was a good time to try out the new bourbon. Dad went to a liquor store on foot at Warren and Chalmers and bought a pint of the bourbon. When Dad left the store, it was a driving rain. But Dad was so bitterly disappointed about having a girl that he was oblivious to the rain. He uncorked the bottle and started drinking right from the bottle. Dad walked down Warren Avenue drinking and trying to decide if this bourbon was smooth or not. When Dad got to Warren & Alter, he still couldn't decide, so he went into Dave's Drug store at Warren and Maryland and bought another pint of the same stuff. He then walked home, drinking the second pint of bourbon. Dad never did decide whether that bourbon was smooth or not.

### ***SOME DAMN NAME I CAN'T PRONOUNCE***



Sandy Bender

When Cynthia was born, Aunt Mildred Stocker stopped over to the house as Nellie was babysitting for Nancy and Michael and in the course of the conversation they asked Nellie what Marie had named her new daughter. Nellie replied, "Some damn name I can't pronounce, but they are going to call her Sandy".

## ***BROKEN BED***



Harold Neff

&



Nellie Dahl

When Marie was in the hospital having Sandy Uncle Harold Neff would come over to Marie and Ed's house on Alter and put up kitchen cupboards and look over the attic and start making plans to finish off the second story of the home as the Bender family was becoming hopelessly crowded with the birth of the 3rd child. While Harold was coming over and Nellie was babysitting Nancy and Mick, Nellie's bed broke. Edward got the biggest kick out of this happening to Ma Dahl and he kept asking her what ever was she and Harold doing that the bed broke! Nellie would blush scarlet, and say to him, "oh! Edward!, what a thing to say! You know that isn't true!" Dad fixed the bed, but Grandma's emotional upset over that little episode was not so easily patched up.

## ***UP ALREADY?***

When Dad took Mom to the hospital on the 5th of December, 1944, a new house was being built across the street, but it was just a shell when Mom left for the hospital. When Mom came home 10 days later she was amazed to find that the exterior of the home was completely finished! Marie was also surprised at the change in the weather. When she went to the hospital it was dry and mild out. When she returned home, there was a lot of snow on the ground, and the temperature had plummeted.

## ***KNICKNAMES***

Dad had a habit of giving most people nicknames. He called Harold Neff "HYQ", Fred Wackley "Wackel", Mr. Wagner "Pop", his sister Beatrice "Beekie", his brother Art, "Archibald", and his brother Norman "Nobbie". Dad also picked up nicknames for all of us too. He called Mom "Punkin", and "Meereee" as that is what his Dad called Mom, "darlin little girl", as well as sweetheart and darling. Dad called Nancy "Nacky", and "fancy pants". Dad called Michael "Magee", and he called Sandy "Taffy-amber" and

"Wawoo". He called Bill "Boy! boy! It's big Bill" (with the emphasis on all the b's). Dad called little Doug "Rugga Doug", and sometimes "Rugga Doug, chugga lug". Dad named our family dog in later years, "Taffy", and because of the fast movement of her paws, he often called her "Tippy-tap."

### ***DAD'S SAYINGS***

Dad had a number of saying's that I have more or less considered to be unique to him. Some of these sayings are:

"Hold your horses!" (Slow down and think it out).

"Halt dein mund" (Hold your tongue, an old German saying).

"Es ist ganze gut!" (It is very good, another old German saying).

"Dupus" (A stupid person).

"Bis du deutsch sprechen?" (German, meaning, do you speak German?).

"Was willst du haben?" (German, meaning, what will you have?).

"Bis du Kirche gehen?" (German, meaning, are you going to Church?).

"Done for" (With his last heart attack he told Marie, "I'm done for.")

"Du bist ein schmalz gesicht". (German, you are a lard face).

"Aah, bait, say, katzen lieben schnee, schnee geht fort, katzen lieben drecht" (A,B,C, cats love the snow, snow goes away, cats love the dirt. This is a poem that his Mother taught him).

"Doesn't know whether he's coming or going"

"Half time, double time and triple time" (referring to his dance steps).

"A real squirrel cage" (a really goofy acting person).

"A real goof ball" (an irresponsible person).

"Keeping your eye on the ball" (referring to both ball playing and being alert in life).

"He's really on the ball" (He's a very alert person).

"A real oddball" (a peculiar person).

"At the crack of the bat" (referring to his speed in running after the ball as soon as it is hit).

"A real beaut"

### ***BEER & ICE CREAM***



Edward Bender

Grandma Dahl used to think that one of Dad's favorite food combinations was rather queer. Dad loved to mix up a big bowl of ice cream and then wash this ice cream down with a glass of beer. Beer and ice cream, how could he possibly eat the two at the same time?, grandma would say.

### ***YEH, UH HUH***



Sandy Bender - age 3

When Sandy was about 3 years old, Ed was sitting at the kitchen table eating and reading the comics. Sandy had been down the street listening to the two Westingburger sister-in-laws have one of their through the

kitchen window shouting, matches which were punctuated with obscenities and profanities. Sandy walked in through the back door, walked up the steps and saw Dad sitting there at the table eating and reading. Sandy said to her Dad, "God damn it, son of a bitch." Ed, engrossed in the comics, said to Sandy, "Yeh, uh huh." Nellie said to Marie, "Did you hear what Sandy just said?" And Marie answered, "Yeh!" And Nellie said to Marie, "And did you hear what Ed said back to her?" Mom giggled and said, "Yes!". Mom and Nellie ignored the incident and the child never again used those words and Dad never was aware of what he said "Yeh, uh huh" to.

### ***SITS ON A STOOL AND BLOWS A WHISTLE***



Sandy Bender

When Sandy was 3 years old, her Aunt Betty took her to Dad's store at 9100 Mack Avenue for a visit. Ed was pleasantly surprised to see his little girl in the store so he decided to entertain her a bit to make her visit a happy one. So Ed got out a long whistle that had a sliding metal rod that he sold in his store and then he put a party type hat on his head, jumped up on his high metal stool that Norm sat on when he did repair work and sat there and blew his whistle, making different tunes to please his little kid. Evidently his Sandy was not too impressed by this entire display of tomfoolery, for when someone asked Sandy what her Dad did for a living, she replied very matter of factly, "he sits on a stool and blows a whistle".

## ***AUNT BETTY***



Beatrice Bender Gamache

Aunt Betty worked at Dad's store at 9100 Mack Avenue for a number of years, taking care of his record and jewelry department. She was a great asset to his store, as she had a pleasant personality, tried to sell as much as she could for Dad, was very dependable, and was honest to the penny. There were young girls working in that department before her, and Dad was about to close up this department until Betty came along as the former girls were stealing him blind. On several occasions, Aunt Betty left Dad's store in the middle of the day and would take the streetcar down Mack Avenue, getting off at Alter Road. She would walk down Alter Rd to Ed's house and pick up Sandy and take her back to the store. Betty would then try all the children's jewelry on Sandy and then give her the very best pieces as she told Ed that Sandy was so cute she should have some of this stuff. Ed quietly condescended. Ed would always end the day by taking Sandy to the Eagle dairy across Holcomb for an ice cream cone. That was one of the best times of the day!

## ***HAROLD (SHORTY) DAHL***



Harold(Shorty), Thomas, Patricia & Dorothy Jean Dahl - 1947

There was a very sad chapter in Ed's story. Ed's brother Norman and Marie's brother Harold (Shorty) worked for Ed in his appliance store on

Mack Ave. Both of them took appliances home without paying for them and other questions regarding money were raised during an evening when Norman and Shorty were drunk and started verbally attacking Ed in the store. As a result of this verbal altercation Shorty left the store but Norman remained. From 1948 to the 1960s neither Ed nor Marie could visit Shorty and his family. That made Marie very sad that Ed stayed friends with Norman and yet she could not visit or talk to her brother.

### ***NOW SHE DROWNS ONE***



Sandy Bender

On another occasion, it was a beautiful summer day and Dad took us to the beach. Again Dad started playing baseball and you guessed it, little 3 year old Sandy picks up Dad's camera and started carrying it around with her. She then took it to the beach and decided to see if a camera floats. It doesn't. Dad had to find another fish to take it in trade without trying it out first. Scratch two camera dealers off the list of who Dad can deal with.

### ***SNOW SUIT PICTURES***



Sandy Bender

Edward loved taking pictures with his very expensive cameras. One day he had Marie dress little Sandy in her snow suit. The first picture he took of Sandy, Ed was standing in the basement looking out the basement window. The second picture he took on the front lawn on Alter Road.

### ***THE CARILLON TOWER***



Mickey Bender

One day Dad took us all to Belle Isle on another perfect summer afternoon. We all enjoyed a Sunday afternoon picnic. While Mom and Dad sat and enjoyed the last of their picnic lunch, Mick and I went our separate ways, exploring a bit of the island. While I was walking back towards where Mom and Dad were, I spotted Mick in the moat of the Carillon tower, over his head in water, and hanging on for dear life. But he said to me very calmly, "Go get Dad". I went running to Dad very excited, saying, "Dad, Mick's drowning in the moat of the Carillon tower!" Dad came running and pulled Mick out of the moat. Dad asked him how he managed to fall in there and Mick said he had stepped on a stone in the moat, and that he had accidentally fallen in when the stone didn't support his weight. About 15 minutes later I had returned to the Carillon tower as I was now curious about the moat that surrounded it and I wanted to get a better look at it myself. But guess what I found when I got there? You guessed it, Mick over his head in the moat, hanging on to the side real tight. In another repeat performance, I went running to Dad, hollering that Mick was in the moat again. Dad almost didn't come as he knew that Mick was much too sensible a kid to have fallen in the same moat twice in one day. But he thought he'd better look anyway. And, yup, there was Mick, neck deep in the moat again. Dad fished him out for the second time, and asked how in the world could he have possibly fallen into the moat not hour later. Mick replied that he was so intrigued as to why the stone had not held his weight before so he went back there to reexamine the stone that had

failed to hold him up. He had stretched his leg out into the moat to feel the stone, when suddenly he lost his balance as the stone was not a stone at all, but a lily pad, and because it had no substance when he expected to touch a stone, he totally lost his balance, and in he went. Mick was so embarrassed about falling in twice that he refused to holler for help. I think he would have preferred to have drowned than to have been discovered in the same moat twice within a half hour.

### ***CAMERA DAYS***



Sandy & Bill Bender



Sandy & Bill under flood lights



Sandy

During World War II Dad started buying expensive cameras and taking pictures of our family. The bulk of his picture taking began in 1946. He owned a Super Ikonta, A Rolliflex, and a Robot, among many other cameras. Ed loved the cameras and would often trade in one used model for another. We have many fine color and black and white pictures of our family thanks to Dad's efforts in those days; Dad used to set up very bright flood lights and then sit the kids under the flood, lights. Was that ever hot after awhile! And Dad seemed to take forever setting up the exposure, trying to get the right pose and focusing. What he would sometimes end up with was two crying, cranky kids from the impatience of sitting still under those hot, hot, bright lights. Dad has a real cute series of pictures of Bill & I as we grew more and more impatient, and starting slugging at each other, and finally both ended up in tears. Dad's favorite set of pictures was the ones he took of me in his bedroom upstairs on Alter. I had just learned to dress myself at 3 years of age and he wanted to capture the moment on film. This set of pictures was very well done. I can still remember my wonderment over how patient he suddenly was with me taking my time laboriously dressing and how I whispered to him, as if the camera might hear me if I spoke too loudly, that he would have to tie the belt on my dress as I hadn't learned how to tie one behind my back yet. I was very concerned that his help might constitute cheating on my part.

## **MY CAMERA!**



Sandy Bender

One day when I was about 3 years old Dad was playing ball with Nancy, Mick, and his brother at Plymouth park, when suddenly, while no one was watching me, I picked up Dad's finest camera that he has ever owned off the park bench and started to swing it around. What I was doing finally caught Dad's eye, but as he was putting the bat down to grab the camera away from me, I suddenly swung the camera right into a tree with a resounding "thud". Dad was utterly sick as he knew that the camera was loused up. He tried taking more pictures with it and sure enough, it wasn't usable anymore. Dad was so disheartened over this as he loved the pictures that that camera could take. Dad finally figured out a good solution to his dilemma. He took the camera over to a camera shop that had so coveted this camera as the owner had seen what good pictures this camera had produced for Dad. The man was so intent on getting this camera in trade that he never even took the time to try it out!



Sandy Bender on her new tricycle

One day in 1947 Ed decided to buy Sandy a new tricycle. Sandy was the

first child to receive a new tricycle. Nancy tells the story of how excited she, Ed and Marie were to see my overwhelming glee when Sandy was presented with the tricycle. Ed set the bike up in the living room then woke Sandy up and brought her downstairs to see her new bike. What a great disappointment it was for Ed and Nancy when Sandy looked at that new trike, said in a dead pan tone of voice, "oh, my new bike" and hopped on it and started riding around the room.

### ***HALLOWEEN***



Mickey & Sandy on Halloween



Sandy & Marie



Billy, Sandy & Marie

Edward and Marie always dressed up the kids in cute Halloween Costumes. In the pictures shown above, Marie bought the elf costume which Mickey first wore and then was passed down to Sandy. Marie helped Mickey dress up as a hobo. Later Marie dressed Sandy up as an Oriental girl and Bill as a ghost. Marie took the kids out "begging" almost every Halloween night from their toddler days until about age 10 when the neighbor Howard Reichard took Louise, Sandy and Billy from Warren to Mack on Alter Rd and from Warren to Mack on both sides of Ashland. Mickey never went begging with Sandy and Billy - he was 7 years older than Sandy so each Halloween when she was old enough to go he went on his own and covered much more territory. Billy always tired out much sooner than Sandy and her friend Louise so he went home, and always dumped his candy out on the living room floor and sorted through it looking for the good stuff. Edward never went begging with the kids but he did set up his cameras and took pictures of the kids when they returned home. Sandy and Louise were very happy when Bill petered out and went home. Once he left for home Sandy and Louise used to run full speed down both sides of Ashland, picking up huge amounts of candy. They always went to the Kresnick's twice as they were passing out bags of New Era potato chips. Marie used to fish out a few of her favorite pieces from our shopping bags, but Edward was never interested in the candy, only in setting up the camera equipment for picture taking.

## WEDDINGS



Norman & Arthur Bender



Arthur Bender

Dad took pictures at several weddings, including Frances Bender's wedding. The pictures turned out superb in every instance and we have some of the finest pictures of Art and Norm from these weddings. But unfortunately, in every instance the pictures far outlasted the marriages. So Dad felt that his picture taking was bad luck for the participants, and from Frances' wedding on, he refused to take any pictures at weddings.



Hunter, Don, Nancy & Christine



Edward, Donald, Nancy & Marie



Red, Donald, Nancy & Josephine

Dad took the pictures at Nancy and Don's wedding in December, 1951. Two important pictures were Nancy & Don with Don's parents, Hunter Coyle and Christine Young Stephens and Edward and Marie Bender with Nancy and Don.

State of Indiana, to-wit: Steuben County, ss:

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS — GREETINGS:

Know yet that any person empowered by law to solemnize marriage is hereby authorized to join together as husband and wife, Donald Stephens and Nancy Bender and for so doing, this shall be his Sufficient authority.

In testimony whereof I, Eugene Maloy, Clerk of the Steuben Circuit Court, do hereby subscribe my name and affix the seal of said Court at Angola, Indiana.

this 24th day of October, 1951  
Eugene Maloy Clerk  
By Phyllis Erwin Deputy

State of Indiana, to-wit: Steuben County: ss:

This certifies that I joined in marriage as husband and wife Donald Stephens and Nancy Bender on the 24th day of October, 1951

G. Kenneth Hubbard, Justice of The Peace

State of Indiana, to-wit: Steuben County: ss:

I, Debra Arnett, Clerk of the Circuit Court within and for said County and State, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing are true and correct copies of marriage license issued to Donald Stephens and Nancy Bender and the certificate of the officer solemnizing the marriage as the same appears of record in my office.

In witness whereof I hereunto set my hand and affix the seal of said Court at Angola, Indiana, this 25th day of February, 1997

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Debra Arnett Clerk  
By Linda Smith Deputy



Donald & Nancy Stephens

Nancy & Don had a beautiful sepia 8 X 10 taken shortly after they married. Edward was very pleased with this picture. Edward said that before any of his children were born he was hoping that all of his children would be very good looking as he said one's life is so much better if one was good looking. Nancy surely more than fulfilled his expectations as she was stunning in this picture.

### ***ROSE BEIGE***

Dad had painted the front room chartreuse in July, 1943 but Mom soon grew tired of that color, so in April, 1945 she got to work painting the living room and dining room a rose beige, a darkish color that was all the rage that year. She liked that color very much and kept that color in her living room for 4 or 5 years. She also painted the kitchen a pink around that time and Dad had re-varnished all the woodwork. But the kids kicked up the woodwork so bad and Mom and Dad thought that the natural varnish was too dark looking, so they eventually started painting all the woodwork white instead of varnishing it that dark color. But we kids always played up against the woodwork and as a result the woodwork was always kicked up and was half paint and half varnish showing through.

### ***NEW CUPBOARDS***

About this same time Harold Neff put new cupboards in our kitchen for us. They were painted white and had chrome handles on them. To open the cupboard, you would pull up on the chrome handle and the little toot on the handle would pull up and away from the chrome catch. The cupboards were on the dining room and bedroom sides of the kitchen and were over the stove, the refrigerator and over the kitchen sink. When I was about 7 years old, Mom had the old porcelain sink pulled out which was

freestanding with the bare pipes exposed and she had an enclosed Youngstown sink put in which had a dish sprayer attached to it. It was a handsome sink for its time. The kitchen table used to sit under the side window in the summer time and against the stairway wall in the winter time. Most of the years when I was growing up we had a 21d rounded top Norge refrigerator.

### ***THE COAL BIN***

One year Dad called all the coal suppliers to see who could give him the best price on coal. One dealer gave him an unbeatable price on coal but that price was valid only if Dad bought a whole winter's supply at one time. Dad, unbeknownst to Mom, agreed and set up a delivery date. Dad told Mom that the coal was coming on that day and that it was more than the usual amount, but he never said how much. When the coal man came, he usually shut the coal bin door so that all the coal would land only in the coal bin, and you would only open up the coal bin when you wanted to shovel some coal into the furnace. But this day the man opened, up the coal bin door really wide and Mom soon found out why. The man started dumping coal from his truck and he just kept dumping. He pushed his dump bed higher and higher into the air. By the time he had emptied his whole truck's worth of coal into coal bin, the whole back of the basement was loaded full of coal. All that extra coal had to be shoveled by hand into the fruit cellar section of the basement and then into the free standing section of the basement between the two bins. Mom was really worried when she saw all that coal as it was standing not too far away from the furnace and she was afraid that if it was close enough to the furnace it too might catch on fire and burn the whole house down!

Ed & Marie also had an unexpected surprise in that coal bin. On a Sunday in the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1944 Nancy and Mike went to the show for the afternoon so feeling frisky with the advent of Springtime Ed coaxed Marie to go down to the coal bin with him and make some whoopee. Marie was very nervous as she was afraid that the kids might come home early. The kids did not come home early. but what did come 9 months later was their third child Sandy.

## ***NO SEE, NO EAT***



Mickey Bender

One day Mick was in the basement and he tried to open up the coal bin door but it was stuck and he couldn't get it open. It was a hook and eye type of lock so he decided to get it open by finding something with which to pry the lock open. He settled on a small stick and started hitting the bottom of the hook with the stick. Suddenly the hook gave way and the force of the unneeded blow threw Mick's arm suddenly upward and he hit himself right in the eye with the stick. Morn called Dad and Dad ran right home and took Mick to a doctor. The doctor decided that the injury wasn't serious so he put some medicine in Mick's eye and put a big patch over his eye and sent him home. Mom made some spaghetti for supper and when Mick and I sat clown to eat, I heartily ate my spaghetti, but Mick, still upset over his injured eye, only pushed the spaghetti around on the plate, eating almost none of it. I asked Mick why he wasn't eating his spaghetti, and he replied that if he couldn't see it, he wouldn't eat it. I always thought that was a very odd answer to my question.

## ***ABORTED STICKUP***



Edward Bender

One night Dad was in his 9100 Mack Avenue store all alone, about to

close up shop for the night when three very suspicious acting men walked into Dad's store. Dad immediately became very wary and tense. They didn't look at any of the merchandise or at Dad, but rather all three of them stood by the front door and looked around the store to see if any customers were there. Dad started to sweat and say to himself, "Boy, I'm really in for something now!" Dad said to himself, "Think fast. What's the best way to handle this one? Certainly don't let them know you're alone!" Then Dad took his best shot. He said to Norm, who wasn't there. Norm, put the broken radios to one side and I'll have a look at them tomorrow. Kay (who likewise had, gone home earlier) turn off the hot water heater. Then the coal furnace started making some loud noises, so Dad said to the empty back room of the store, "Mick, stop slamming things around, for Pete's sake be careful with the merchandise so you don't break anything. And then, Dad added a little extra touch to his ghostly conversation, he said to the imaginary, employees in the back room, "Hey, Norm, bring me my gun. I think I'll take it home with me tonight. Come on, bring it here, what's keeping you, get a move on, will you!?" The three men looked at each other, and fortunately that noisy furnace coughed up some more racket and the three men quickly slipped out of the store. Dad ran up front and swiftly locked the front door and then sat down and started to shake. Then, when he determined that no one was outside waiting for him, he jumped into his car and went home for a fitful night's rest.

### ***LAFAYETTE & THE BOULEVARD***



Mike Bender

Dad had an awful time trying to find a suitable truck driver to make his deliveries as every one he hired ended up smashing, up his delivery truck. Kay Fraser was one of the delivery men that Dad liked, but Kay was costing him too much in smashed trucks, so Dad had to let him go. There was a red headed guy by the name of Frank, but he too would smash up the truck. Dad in total desperation, decided to teach 12 year old Mike how to drive a truck as Mike was such a sensible young boy that Dad felt that he could trust him to drive the truck.

Mike turned out to be as prudent a driver as Dad thought he would be and so at the age of 12 years Dad gave Mike the job of truck driver. Mike

drove the truck after school and on weekends. All the accidents ceased and Dad could finally keep a delivery truck on the road. Mike drove the truck for two years without incident. Then one day Mike was making a delivery near East Grand Boulevard and Lafayette, an area with a lot of traffic congestion and very narrow streets. Mike was watching the traffic carefully, when suddenly a car that Mike did not see pulled out in front of him and Mike struck him broadside. Mike was so shook up over this accident. He had never been in an accident before. He was in total shock over having caused the accident and not having seen the car on time and smashing up that car and Dad's truck. A really nice policeman responded to the accident and he correctly ascertained that Mike was in shock over the accident so the policeman quickly called Dad and asked him to come over quick and help Mick. Dad came right over and was so sad to see Mick in such recrimination and such shock. Mick had wandered off down the street and was trying to figure out in his mind just how that accident could have occurred as he had been so careful with his driving. The policeman told Dad that he could see what a good boy Mick was and how badly he felt about the accident. The policeman did not issue any tickets but gently suggested to Dad that Mick was too young to be shouldering such a big responsibility of driving a truck and being responsible for the truck and the merchandise. He suggested that perhaps Mick be allowed to get a little older before having to be the chief deliveryman for Dad's store.

### ***CHRISTMAS MORNINGS***



Mickey

When we were little every Christmas morning was about the same. About 2 in the morning on December 25, Mom would remind Dad that he still had some toys that needed assembly. Dad would utter an inaudible groan and set to work. Then at 5 AM us kids would wake up in the pitch dark and run into Mom and Dad's room and beg to be allowed to open the presents. I would always go to the bathroom first before waking them up and then would stand there in front of the Christmas tree in awe, staring at all the wrapped presents. The bulbs would shine so in the dark, and I would always look for my doll under the tree. Mom and Dad always got up

to watch us open the presents, but Dad would crawl back into bed right afterwards and resurface at a more decent hour. I remember the year Mick got the motorized erector set. That was the neatest present, along with Doug's electric train. We also have a picture of Mike playing with his garage under the Christmas tree which that year was on the north wall of the living room.

### **1949 DODGE**



Marie & Bill Bender in 1949 Dodge

Dad bought his 1949 Dodge new and really liked the car when he first got it as it was a very smooth running car and he liked the looks of it. But when the first rain storm came, Dad really sobered up. It turns out that the car had one quirk - it absolutely refused to run in the rain! Dad had the car to the repair shop every time it rained and despite replaced wiring, no one could get that car to run in the rain. After 2 years of babying the car, Dad finally gave up as he still had to go to work, even in the rain, and he was sick of walking or taking a bus on rainy days. So he shopped around for a new car and settled on a Pontiac Chieftain, green in color, 1951 vintage. Dad loved that new Pontiac all the days he owned it. He never had a bit of trouble with that car. Dad traded in his 1949 Dodge on the new Pontiac and he no sooner gave up possession of the car than the company gave his Dodge one of the most prominent spots on its used car lot. Dad went in to pick up some papers on his new car and spotted some men standing around his 1949 Dodge, so he stepped over there to ease drop on the conversation. Dad chuckled to himself when he heard the men arguing over who had asked to buy the car first, as they both wanted that car. Dad grinned, and silently wished the winner of the argument lots of luck on rainy days.

### **1951 PONTIAC**

Dad loved that car so much, it was almost human in Dad's eyes. The only bad thing about the car was that it got only 11 miles per gallon, but Dad so loved that car, that he forgave it for giving him that little mileage. The car was a 3 speed manual transmission as automatics did

not exist until that model year and Dad was suspicious of those new fangled cars. Dad would get better mileage and save himself some aggravation by shifting his car from 1st to third gear, thus avoiding 2nd gear entirely. The car got used to that pattern and soon forgot it had a second gear. One day Juliet Meeseman, our next door neighbor borrowed Dad's car for a short errand. Juliet was a real sensible, responsible girl, so Dad lent her his car. When Juliet returned Dad's car she was darn near hysterical. No matter what she tried, the car would not go into 2nd gear! Dad laughed and told her that he hadn't used second gear since he drove the car out of the showroom. Juliet was mad at Dad for not telling her ahead of time and saving her a lot of worry and grief.

### ***THE FENCE***



Edward Bender

One time a man came into Dad's store on Mack and offered to sell Dad new merchandise for a song. Dad asked to see the stuff, and when he saw it was still in cartons, he realized that the stuff was stolen. Dad was always a very honest man and he wanted no part of the stolen merchandise. Dad called the police and told them what had transpired. The police told Dad that if the men ever came back again, Dad was to call them and they would watch the transaction from the back room and then arrest the men for peddling stolen merchandise. The men came back again and Dad called the police. Dad stalled the men, but the police never showed up. The police later told Dad they were sorry that they didn't show up and that Dad was to call them again if the men ever came back. They came back and Dad called the police and this time the police did come, saw the transaction, and arrested the men. The men were soon out on bond and they threatened to kill Dad's family for turning them in. Dad was very wary and watched very closely when leaving the store at night. One night when Dad pulled away from the store, he soon discovered that he was being followed by two men in a car. Dad made a quick left hand turn into a side street and the other car followed. Then the chase was on. Dad turned every which way through side streets and busy streets and about 20 minutes later Dad had succeeded in

ditching those men. Dad was never followed again after that, but he spent many a sleepless night worrying over the safety of his family.

### ***AROUND THE CORNER!***



Edward Bender

One night Dad was driving home from work when suddenly a car turned left right in front of Dad. He was going too fast to stop, so he did the only thing he could to keep from hitting him, he drove around the corner too, so close to the guy's car that you could have put a piece of paper between the two cars. The guy jumped out of his car and hollered at Dad, "What do you think you are doing?". Dad replied, "It's not what I was doing, but rather, what were you doing cutting right in front of my car like that?"

### ***TENSION HEADACHES***



Edward Bender

Dad said that when he was working late he would get such tension headaches worrying about how to pay the bills for the merchandise that was shipped to him, but not yet sold. Dad said that sometimes he would rub his forehead violently with his fingers and in so doing would alleviate the

pain of the headaches. One time Dad was so tense that every muscle in his body ached. Suddenly, realizing what this tension was doing to his body, Dad suddenly threw back his head and laughed at himself. It was a great tension reducer to laugh at himself and it helped a lot to ease the pain. Dad loved his store, but there were times when the responsibility for all that unsold merchandise rested heavy on his shoulders.

### ***THE DORMER***



Harold Neff



Nellie Dahl

When Sandy was born Ed decided that his house was just too crowded with three kids, not to mention the fact that Grandma Dahl lived with us every summer. So one day Ed talked to Harold Neff who agreed to finish off our dormer into bedrooms. Harold worked on our house in the summer of 1948 and built us a very fine second story. Harold's main limitation was the fact that materials were hard to obtain because of the war. Ed and Marie would help Harold work while Grandma Dahl would watch the kids for them. One day Nellie shouted up the stairs very excitedly to Mom that Sandy got away from her and ran out the front door and down the street. Mom had to drop what she was doing and run after Sandy who was by now half way to Johnson's Milk Depot! Nellie was too heavy and old to run, so Marie had to do the leg work. Marie brought the kid back and then locked the screen door so the kid couldn't get out again. Harold finished the upstairs that year, with the only deficiency being plywood instead of hard wood floors as hard wood was not yet available. The front room with the big walk in closet with rods on two sides belonged to Mom and Dad, the middle bedroom belonged to Sandy, and the bedroom on the Meeseman side belonged to Mick. Nancy had the back bedroom downstairs that used to belong to Mom and Dad. Grandma had the bedroom downstairs that is closest to the living room. Grandma saw the upstairs only once as it was impossible for her to walk down stairs due to her Parkinson's disease. But she really wanted to see the finished upstairs so she went upstairs with Mom's help and she came back down by sitting down on the stairs and bumping down one stair at a time on her fanny.

## **BASEMENT FOOTBALL**



Sandy Bender



Sandy Bender

Dad started hollering at Mick and me one day for all the dents in the furnace ducts in the basement. He said that he didn't know how we were denting the pipes, but whatever we were doing, to cut it out. Well, that was very disheartening orders for Mick and me as we put those dents in the ducts in the winter playing what could best be described as basement football. We would throw that ball with wild abandon in the basement and when we got too exuberant, we would throw it a little too high and it would hit one of the pipes with a big "WHOMP!" and put a new dent in the pipe closest to the Mc Cubbin's house. It was as much fun to hit a pipe as it was to play football down there. We had mane more laughs playing basement football than the real thing outside in the better weather. Well, one day Dad had cabin fever and he came downstairs to see what we could do to amuse him. Knowing that the pipes were sacred cows so to speak, I timidly suggested to Dad that he play basement football with me and that we would be real careful not to hit the pipes. Well, Dad very soon got caught up in the fun and excitement of basement football and liked it better than Mick and I. Dad soon was "WHOPPING" the pipes more than we ever did and he bust out laughing every time he got one real good. But he soberly added that he hoped that one wouldn't bust at the seams from such treatment.

## **PLEASE GET MY MOTHER**

One day Dad said he looking out of his front window in the Mack Avenue store and enjoying the sunshine when all of a sudden a boy about 10 years old stepped off the curb on the other side of Mack Avenue and right into the path of an oncoming car. Dad said the boy flew way up into the air and came down and landed on the car hood and then slid off

and landed on the pavement in front of the car. Dad, who always was sensitive, had to put his head between his legs as he thought he was going to faint at seeing such a sight. When Dad regained some of his composure, he went across the street to see if he could do anything for the boy. Dad got sick all over again when he got there for one of the boy's eyes was hanging half out of the socket and the boy was making one pathetic plea, "Please get my mother for me". Someone had run to the address that the boy had given and had fetched the boy's mother to the scene of the accident. The boy's mother enfolded her son in her arms and he quietly died in the security of the arms of the woman who had born him only 10 short years before.

### ***FIRE IN OUR GARAGE***



Nancy Bender



Michael Bender

One day Nancy and Mick were playing in the garage together and as is customary with children, one thing led to another and the next thing we knew, Mick and Nancy were playing with matches. Suddenly things got out of hand, and the garage caught on Fire! Nancy and Mick ran into the house and got water and put the fire out by themselves. This happened before the days when Dad used our garage for a warehouse for his T.V.'s and appliances.

### ***LIT CIGARETTE***

One day Mr. Meeseman's son Victor called Dad on the telephone and told Dad that there was a man in our garage. The garage was pitch black and all that Victor could see of the man was a lit cigarette. Dad got a flashlight and went into the garage, but he found no one, however, the door, which was always kept locked was open, so there was a good possibility that there was someone in there earlier when Victor called.

## ***SUNDAY MORNINGS***



Eugene, Donald & David Gamache



Clyde, Henry, Francis Donald (Skin) & Arthur Bender

When Dad was laid out in the funeral parlor, there was one story that all his fifty year old nephews told to me. When they were around 12 years old, Dad would come into their house early every Sunday morning, run upstairs to their bedroom, and say, "Hurry up and get dressed, were playing ball today." The kids would then spring out of bed, some very eagerly, some rather reluctantly and would follow Dad as if he were the Pied Piper to the ball field. All the Bender and Gamache kids had a very good time once they all got out there on the ball field together. Art Jr said that Dad was the one person who always treated all the teenagers like a million dollars. He said he would never forget Dad's kind treatment of him when he was a kid. He said Dad always seemed to have time for the kids.

## ***BASEMENT WINDOW***



Sandy Bender

One day when I was 3 years old, we had just had a large snowfall which Dad found exhilarating, as it was the first significant snowfall of the season. Dad got out his favorite camera, had Mom dress me up in my new snowsuit, and out the two of us went, Dad with loaded camera in hand. I

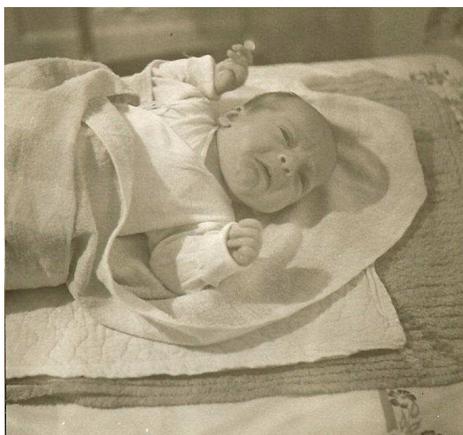
frolicked and played in the big blanket of the new white stuff, and Dad shot away to his heart's content. Suddenly, Dad told me to look at the basement window on the Meeseeman side of the house. Then Dad ran away around to the back of the house as fast as he could. I stood for a moment wondering what in the world was going on, then decided to look in the side basement window as Dad had asked. When I got to that window, Dad had the window open, and as I bent over peering in the open window in the middle of the winter and laughing at Dad, he was shooting pictures. That day I thought he was acting awfully silly, but today I'm very grateful to have those pictures. It is too bad that we have so few pictures of Dad from those years, as he was the person behind the camera.



Marie & Sandy on Alter Rd.

Dad was in a picture taking mood a few months before Bill was born. So one night little Sandy got to stay up late for the picture taking session. While Ed was setting up the camera and lights Sandy was standing on and jumping up and down on a pyrex glass dish. Marie made her get off the dish. Ed missed that picture but he got one of a quite pregnant Marie bawling out little Sandy.

### **BILL**



Billy Bender



Billy Bender



Billy Bender

Bill was born on the 2 of January, 1948, the fourth child of Marie Dahl

& Edward Bender. Bill came about 2 weeks early and was a much smaller baby than the other children. Bill weighed in at just over 5 lbs., thus being 2 to 3 lbs less than the other children. When Marie was expecting him she called him "Oscar", so when she brought him home from the hospital, Sandy who was 3 wanted to see her new baby brother. Marie was very wary of letting the toddler near her new baby, so at first Sandy was kept away from Bill while she undressed him and settled him in to the couch which sat against Meeseeman's wall. Mom sat near the dining room on the couch that day. When she had Bill out of his snowsuit and into a receiving blanket she told Sandy she could come up and take a look at him, but she could not touch him. Sandy came up, looked at him, and said, "Oh, Oscar, he's ugly!" This hurt Mom's feelings as Bill was a trifle homely in the first few weeks, but later he turned into an adorable baby. Bill had problems at first. He could not hold his own head up and Mom had to prop his head up with pillows. Bill did not sit up on time, and he learned to walk on Easter Sunday, 1949 with much prompting from Ed and Marie. They held their arms out all day that day having him walk short distances from one to another. Bill never did learn to crawl. He rolled where ever he wanted to go until he learned to walk. Bill was an unbelievably sweet baby. He smiled a lot, and was the best baby for disposition. He loved to play with the wheel of the bike in the backyard, spinning it for hours.



Bill in his harness



Bill spinning bike wheel

Mom and Dad had to tie up Bill in the back yard as we were afraid he would run out into Alter Rd and get hit. Here is a picture of him in this harness and rope. One time he untied the rope and brought it in to Marie in the kitchen!

## ***SNOWMAN***



Mike making snowman



Bill watching



Sandy, Mike making snowman

Mike made the biggest snowman on more than one occasion in our back yard on Alter Rd. Bill used to love to stand there and watch him. As you can see from the picture, the snowman was taller than Mike! It took quite a bit of strength for Mike to haul up the second and third tier. When Ed saw that impressive snowman he ran and grabbed his camera to save it for posterity.



Billy Bender

Bill also loved to listen to records. Dad bought him many records for little children and a record player and Bill used to listen to those records for hours with his cowboy clothes on. His favorite record was the one about the froggy in the meadow.



Edward Paul & William Henry Bender 1950

### ***SURPRISE!***

One day Mom decided to throw Dad a surprise birthday party as he had never had a birthday party before. Mom did all the baking while he was at work and invited all their friends and relatives over. They dimmed all the lights and when Ed walked in they all yelled "SURPRISE"! surprised he was as never in his life had he expected a birthday party for himself! Dad soon got into the swing of things, and he thoroughly enjoyed himself at his first birthday party.

## **SWOLLEN LIP**



Bill Bennder



Marie & Bill Bender

In the summer of 1948 Dad took all of us to Rochester State Park at the end of John R road in Rochester, as he had done many times before and after this particular outing. Dad and Mom loved that park and they took us several times a year to this park. When you parked your car, you had to walk several hundred feet to a long, wide, wooden stairway that went down about 100 feet into a valley in which flowed the Clinton River. The most fun part of the park was the steep hills on the one side of the valley. Dad and I never walked down the stairs as we felt that was for sissies. We walked down the steep hill, holding onto tree branches to keep from slipping or plummeting down the hill. When there were no tree branches within grabbing distance, and all else had failed, you merely slid down on the seat of your pants. Going back up the hill was not as treacherous as going down, so to increase the excitement we would pick the highest and barest part of the hill to ascend. Sometimes we would talk Mom into going up this kind of trail with us and then it would be a real challenge to get Mom safely up the hill with us. Mom thoroughly enjoyed her visits to Rochester park with her family, but what she didn't enjoy was washday the next day! What a pile of filthy clothes she would have! Another very enjoyable part of the park was walking along the Clinton River, watching the water move swiftly and surely onward. In later years, Dad and I found a log fallen over the river at the wide part of the river. We tested the log out and found it to be fairly secure. So Dad and I, one at a time, crossed over that log to the other side. It created a few exciting moments and more than once Dad sure looked like he was going to get an unscheduled dunking! But he might have been faking a little just to increase the fun! Dad had a way of doing that sometimes just to watch all the excitement he could create in the rest of us. One day in the summer of 1948 we had climbed the hills and we were now walking along the river when suddenly out of nowhere, a bee came and stung baby Bill on the lip! None of us ever saw the bee, but we sure did see the results of his stinger! Bill's lip was badly swollen, and thus our beautiful

outing was cut short as Ed and Marie rushed their baby home to attend to his swollen little lip.

### ***BROKEN BRIDGE***



Mickey

One day in the fall of 1948, Mom packed a picnic lunch, and Dad took us kids and Mom and Grandma Dahl to Rochester State park. When we got there it was raining, so Dad drove around the outside of the park on the back roads to enjoy the fall colors, while waiting for the rain to hopefully clear up. While driving around we all got hungry so Dad decided that we would eat our sandwiches in the car on the back road. Dad was looking for a good place to stop, when suddenly, we came upon a sign that said, "Bridge unsafe, do not use". Dad stopped the car, looked at the bridge and said it looked sound to him. Dad then told Mick to get out of the car and jump up and down on the bridge to see if it would hold his weight. Mick did so and said that nothing appeared to give way, but by this time Mom and Grandma Dahl were hysterical, first over the idea of the bridge collapsing while Mick was bouncing up and down on it, then the idea of driving over it sent the two women into fits of hysterics! Ed, loving to prolong a suspenseful moment when he could, decided that they would have their picnic lunch on this side of the broken down bridge and then they would drive over it and see whether or not the car would fall into the river sown below. Needless to say, the women did not enjoy their picnic lunch in the least! We had french bread with sesame seeds, strong tasting lunch meat, probably pepper loaf with ketchup on it. I didn't like it as the ketchup made the sandwich kind of soggy. The picnic lunch eaten, we then, proceeded across the bridge very slowly. The women would have died of anxiety! But when I looked at Dad's face, he was rather concerned about this bridge himself, although he wouldn't admit it! We got across the bridge safely, but we never did make it into the park that day as the rain never let up.

### **LET'S GO TO MT. CLEMENS & GET LOST!**

Dad always used to laugh whenever he was heading into Mt. Clemens as he used to say, "Every time I go into Mt. Clemens I get lost!" There are many hidden side roads in Mt. Clemens, including North & South River Roads, that do not start off Gratiot, but rather off of side streets, which are hard to find. So consequently, Dad used to drive around in circles, losing oodles of time, trying to find the entrance to one of those darn roads that ran along the Clinton River. One day Dad took us for a night ride around Belle Isle as it was a real scorcher that night and we all needed a cooling off. But, unfortunately, the whole city of Detroit also had the same idea in mind and Belle Isle was crowded as it had never been before. The cars were bumper to bumper along all four lanes. So Dad drove us around the island and when he tried to get onto the Belle Isle bridge, the other cars would not let him merge over and he was forced to follow the other cars around the island again. Dad edged over closer to the right hand lane to get onto the bridge, but the cars wouldn't let him get into the right hand lane, so when we got to the bridge again, Dad couldn't get on and had to follow everyone around again. He was fit to be tied! Finally the third trip around the island, Dad forced his way into the right lane by almost taking a bumper off the car behind him in the right lane. As Dad was forcing his way into the right lane he had said to Mom that getting off this island tonight was more frustrating than going to Mt. Clemens and getting lost!

### **MC CRACKEN'S FARM**

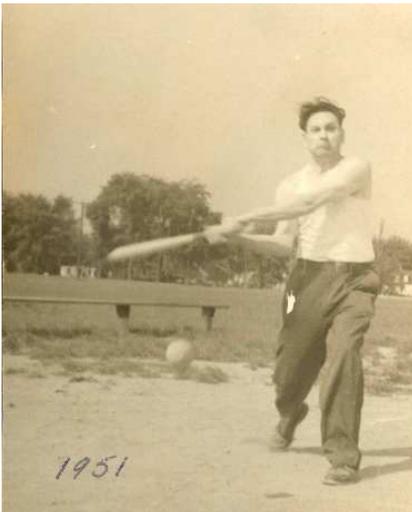


Harold & Mildred Neff

In the late 1940's Mom and Dad would get together With Harold and Mildred Neff and we would all go to McCracken's Turkey farm two Sundays before Christmas. Mom and Dad would let us kids run loose on the farm while they went inside and talked to the farmer to see how much the turkeys were running in price this year. Us kids would run around in the yard outside as it was such a long ride to the Mc Cracken farm from Alter Road and after driving to Mt. Clemens and then getting lost for another <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

hour trying to find South River Road, we were bored to tears and very stiff, despite the beautiful ride down the picturesque South River Road. Mom and Dad would then come out of the store and pick out which live turkey they wanted for their Thanksgiving dinner. Bill, who was about 3 years old, decided to tease the coup full of turkeys that year. I told Bill to keep his hand out of the coup or he would be sorry, but he wouldn't listen. Bill kept sticking his finger through the wire mesh and sure enough, the turkeys were much faster than Bill's finger, and the old turkey bit him a good one right on the finger! Bill howled but Mom and Dad were too busy trying to pick out the very best looking turkey in the place to pay much attention to Bill's distress. I have always been surprised that Dad ever went to a live turkey farm and actually picked out a live turkey to be slaughtered, as Dad has always been such a gentle soul and has never been able to tolerate the thought of any living thing being butchered. Mom and Dad would go back to McCracken's farm the next week and their turkey would be killed, de-feathered and ready to go. All the turkeys would be sitting in a tub full of cold water with the people's name tags on. What Mom and Dad used to be outraged over, but would always laugh about was the fact the McCracken would pull the turkey out the water, hold it horizontal so as little water as possible would leak out of the turkey and he would get that turkey on the scale as full of water as he could and then weigh it before the water could pour out. This practice made for the richest turkey farm in the area.

### **WARREN CANYON**



Edward Bender



Norman Bender



Edward & Michael Bender

Dad used to go to Warren-Canyon Park every Sunday afternoon with us kids and he would meet his brother Norman and his kids there. We would then settle into to playing a few good hours of baseball. Dad loved playing baseball and like his earlier days, he felt truly alive when he was on the ball field. Dad put me in the short stop position when

I was only 5 years old and I was terrified of the hard ball coming whizzing at me. But within a few years I got the hang of the game and learned to enjoy playing as much as Dad did. Sometimes Bill would run up and down the toboggan run hill while Dad played baseball. Once Norm told 4 year old Pinky to go get a 6 pack of pop for the guys. I told Dad that I, who was 6, would go with him to get the pop as he was too small to carry that much pop. Dad told me, no, I wasn't going to cross Warren Avenue as I was too small. I replied that Pinky was a lot smaller than me. Dad said what Norm's kids did was Norm's business, but what us kids did was Dad's business. Dad would often buy us good Humor ice cream after we finished playing. In later years we would sometimes fly a kite first, then play baseball while the kite was flying by itself. After we were done playing baseball we were almost too tired to haul in the kite. Those were very haunt times.

### ***HEY, DAD, YOU'RE LOSING SOMETHING!***

Dad used to love to play football with all of us in the fall. He used to play with Mike and Mike's friends, the Barr boys and their cousins. One time Mike Sundling, who was supposed to be only playing touch football, got carried away and tackled Dad who was carrying the ball, instead of just touching him. Dad's glasses went flying and Mike Sundling landed right on top of the glasses. Mike having weighed over 250 lbs, you can guess the condition of Dad's glasses -- yup, smashed to smithereens! But Dad was not angry as he loved football and he realized that those things do happen now and again. But Mike Sundling kept apologizing all over the place. Dad could throw and kick a real good spiral ball and he got a lot of distance out of the ball, too. One time Dad and I were practicing throwing spirals at Warren Canyon park in about 30° weather, when Dad threw a real hard spiral. I reached up to catch it and the full force of the end of the ball hit me square in the right thumb. Boy, did my thumb swell up! Dad and I were real proud of my injury in the line of duty, so to speak, and he took me to a drugstore at 7 Mile and Mack to get an Ace bandage, but that didn't do the job as my thumb was splintered in over 40 places. I ended up having to have it operated on. That was a very expensive football game as Dad carried no health insurance on us. But as usual, he never said a word about the cost. Another time Bill, Dad, I and a neighbor were playing football at Warren Canyon and Dad ended up carrying the ball with me in hot pursuit on his tail. Well, Dad wasn't about to let a kid catch up to him, so he ran like the wind. But Dad soon ran into his usual problem, he could never keep his pants up for very long. Dad was a running and his pants were a falling! But if he slowed down to hitch up his pants, I might catch him. So on he ran and down and down his pants slid. As Dad made it past the end zone, his pants suddenly landed down around his ankles with all of his long

johns showing for the whole world to see. Dad wasn't quite sure if winning those 7 points was worth losing his pants over.

### ***BROKEN ELBOW***

Dad and I used to like to horse around at the kitchen table after everyone was through eating. One morning in summer we were wrestling and trying to hit each other without being hit back. Suddenly I lunged at Dad to take a good swipe, but he lunged toward the wall to get out of the way, when suddenly his chair turned sideways and he spilled out of the chair and hit the heating grate full force with his elbow. He cracked his elbow and to the end of his days he had trouble with that cracked elbow. That was one of a number of times when our horseplay got a little too out of hand.

### ***EASTER SUNDAY***



Sandy Bender - Easter Sunday, 1947



1957  
Mickey Bender



Edward & Mickey Bender

I remember one Easter Sunday around 1954 in particular. We went to St.

John Berchman's Church all dressed up in our Sunday finest, then came home to a fine ham dinner with all the trimmings that Mom had prepared for us. After dinner Dad had an eye on the great outdoors as the weather was perfect. Sunny and about 60° which was unseasonable warm for this time of year. The spring thaw had set in and the ground was warm and mushy. Dad had his heart set on going to Warren Canyon Park and having his first good ball game of the season with us kids. Mom used to come along with us sometimes and sit in the car and play with the youngest child. Dad invited all the Barr boys and they gladly joined us for some good hard practice to start off the new season. We played our hearts out and the Barr boys always had to admit that Dad was always the best hitter out of the whole bunch in spite of his older age. Bob Barr could hit them further on occasion than Dad, but Dad was a consistently good hitter in spite of lousy pitches. We all had a great time that day and came back muddier than all get out from kneeling in the mud to catch the ball. We all felt very sad as we stood on the porch and watched the sun set as we knew that Easter vacation was now at an end and tomorrow it was back to school and for the older ones of us, back to work. There was no finer day that year than that Easter Sunday.

### ***DOUG***

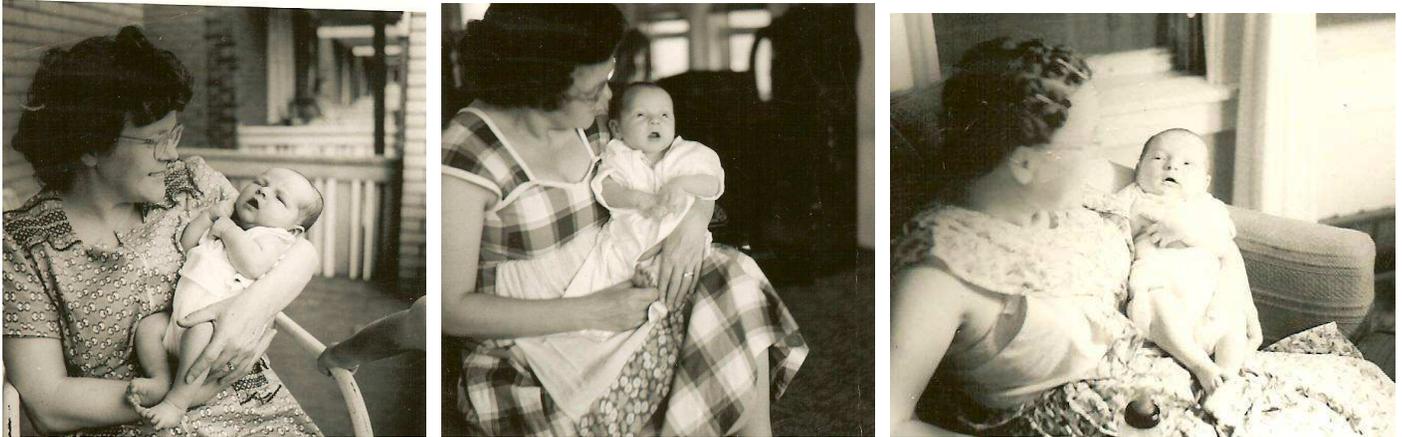


Douglas Paul Bender Sr.

Doug joined our family on 20 June, 1952. Mom had had a miserable pregnancy and now an even more miserable labor. She had decided that Doug would be the last as she was getting too old to safely have children. Doug weighed 9 lbs and was the largest baby born to our family. He was born at the Art Centre Hospital and what made things so bad for Mom was the fact that they let her out of the hospital after only 3 days, when she had been in the hospital for 10 days with the other children. She was totally exhausted when she came home after having Doug. We have pictures of Mom holding Doug when she first brought him home and Mom is fast asleep in the chair and Doug is looking up at her. Doug was a difficult baby and he cried day and night until he was

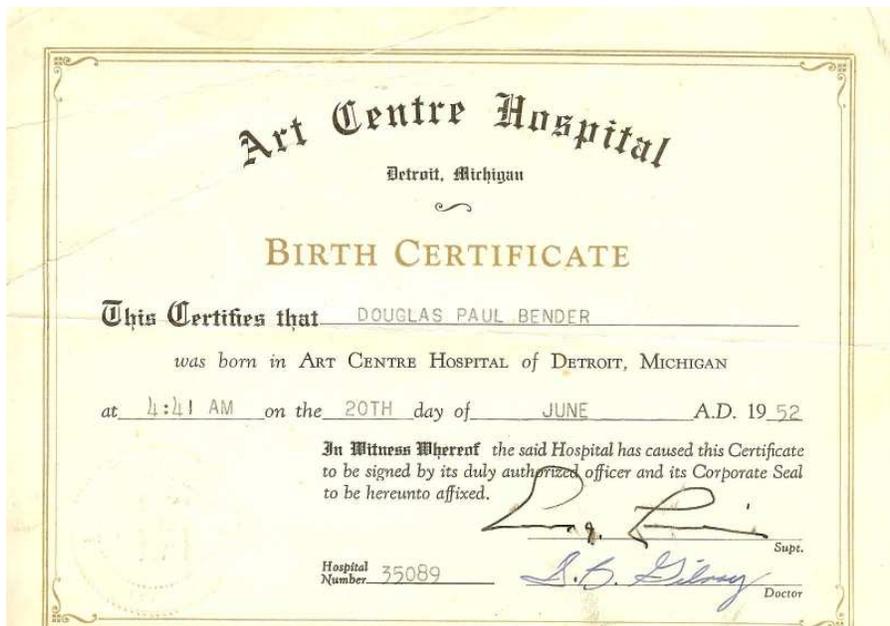
over 3 years old. Doug was a very smart kid and caught on to things really fast. He walked and talked on time and was a leader in the neighborhood. He could think up better mischief than any other kid on the block, except maybe Johnnie Carmack.

### THE URCHIN



Marie & Douglas Bender - July 1952

Before Mom went into the hospital to have Doug she bought him all new clothes and blankets and set out a real cute outfit to take him home from the hospital in. She showed Dad the baby's bag and told him to bring this bag to the hospital when the baby was ready to go home. Three days later, when Dad came to take the baby home, he had no bag with him. Mom was so upset. All those beautiful clothes at home and Mom had to take Doug home in the raggiest clothes that the hospital owned.



MOTHER'S FINGER PRINTS BABY'S FOOTPRINTS





Father's full name Edward Paul Bender  
 Residence 4637 Alter Rd.  
 Birthplace Gen. Centre Hospital, Detroit  
 Date June 20th 1952. 9<sup>h</sup> 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> oz.  
 Mother's maiden name Marie K. Dahl  
 Birthplace Detroit, Michigan  
 Date November 13, 1913  
 Date of marriage of parents Aug 25th 1934  
 Place of marriage of parents Detroit, Mich  
Our Lady of Sorrows Church

**HOT!**



Douglas Paul Bender Sr.

There was just one word to describe the summer of 1952 -- HOT! Mom soon asked me if she could have my baby buggy to put the baby in as he would be cooler in the small buggy than in the large one she had purchased for him. Doug laid in my baby buggy all summer as Dad, Mom,

and Grandma Dahl all used to laugh about what a big chunker he was! When the summer was over he had ruined my baby buggy as he was so heavy that he had bent the supports.

### ***CHIPMUNK CHEEKS***



Doug Bender Sr.

When Doug was about a year old, Dad and Mick were wondering over what fat cheeks Doug had. Mick put his hand in Doug's mouth to feel the thickness of the cheek. He looked at Dad and said, "Put your hand in there. You won't believe how thick his cheek really is!" Dad felt the thickness of his cheek, and Mick was right, Dad couldn't believe how thick Doug's cheek was. Dad was talking about the thickness of Doug's cheeks when he was a baby just before he died.

### ***STRIPED SHIRTS***

What we all liked on Doug the best when he was a toddler was his red and white small striped shirts and his blue jeans with suspenders. We have a number of pictures of his chunky little body playing in just such shirts.

## ***BARKER'S COTTAGE***



Billy & Sandy Bender



Mildred & Harold Neff



Beatrice Gamache

In 1951 our family rented a cottage at Barker's on Lake Huron, Michigan. Mildred and Harold Neff rented a cottage down the row a bit and Aunt Bea came to stay with them for a few days. Barker's was the biggest slam bang place we have ever stayed at. Kids slamming screen doors and screaming all hours of the day and night. One day Dad was standing on the sandy beach with all his cameras around his neck when suddenly Bill fell over in the water and started to drown. Dad hollered to Mom who was nearby to save Bill as Dad didn't want to drown all his cameras unless he had to to save Bill. Mom got to him in time and pulled him out Of the water. Harold and Dad rented a boat and did some fishing that week.

## ***LION'S HEAD***



Marie, Arthur and Agnes Bender

The year before Barker's cottage Mom and Dad went to Canada with Art

and Agnes. This was the first time that Dad and Mom laid eyes upon Lion's Head on the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario. Dad said that he had heard of Lion's Head as a boy as there was a story about Lion's Head in one of his school books. Mom and Dad stayed at the Look About Lodge as Pacey's cottages were not yet built.



Marie & Edward & Sandy praying at the Martyr's Shrine in Collingwood



Ed & Marie at Martyr's Shrine, Collingwood Sandy & Marie at the Martyr's Shrine

They also went to 30,000 Islands and the Martyr's Shrine in Midland. Ed, Marie, Art and Agnes were all very devoted Catholics so it was important to them to visit this Catholic shrine.

Agnes was scared to death when Dad drove those winding, twisting, turning back roads at Pacey's as there was only one lane and you couldn't see what was up over the next hill. The scariest road of all was north of Bruce Rd #9 which was named the forty hills road. That dirt road did all kinds of twists and turns, including a few hair pin ones.

## ***IDLE WILD***



Edward & Marie Bender



Idle Wild Resort



Mildred Neff & Marie Bender



Ed Bender



Marie Bender



Ed & Marie Bender



Marie Bender



Mildred Neff



Marie Bender

Mom and Dad went on another vacation without the kids to Idle Wild near Traverse City with Harold and Mildred Neff. This was a quiet rustic place, and they enjoyed themselves very much there. The evening meal was included in the rent. The first course was carrots and celery sticks. The men scoffed at eating "rabbit food" and instead waited for the main course. When the main course came the food portions were so skimpy that by the time they finished the meat and potatoes the men ate all the carrots and celery to fill their stomachs!

## ***NIAGARA FALLS***



Edward & Marie Bender, Harold & Mildred Neff



Marie Bender

Edward & Marie went on a vacation to Niagara Falls in 1950 again with Mildred and Harold Neff. Ed stood at the edge of the Falls taking pictures. The rumbling of the water fall moved Ed closer and closer to the edge of the Falls. Marie and the Neffs shouted at Ed to get back before he ended up going over the precipice into the powerful swirling waterfall!

## ***PRICKLY GRASS***



Doug Bender Sr

In July 1953, Marie and Ed took the children and Grandma Dahl and Norm and Norm's older boys to Canada for a vacation. Mick stayed behind to watch the store. Mom had reservations for a cottage at Colpoy's Bay. When we drove up to the place Mom was horrified. It was an old hotel like structure and it was across the main road from the water. Mom said the kids had no place to play and a week here would be a horror. So Dad suggested that they go to Lion's Head and see if they could find a cottage there. They stopped at Pacey's first. Pacey had been in the process of building the cottages the year before when they were at Lion's Head so they went to see if it was ready for occupancy and if

there were any vacancies. There was a vacancy, in cottage number 3 but only for one week. The next week they would have to move in the little cottage by the road. That was okay with Mom as it sure beat Colpoy's bay. Nellie just loved it at cottage #3. She sat the whole day long watching the big fishing boats go by on the Georgian Bay. Ed never saw too much of either cottage as he and Norm and Norm's boys were always out fishing. Doug learned to walk in the small cottage as the grass was too tickly for his knees when he crawled, so he used to walk on the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands. That was much too uncomfortable, so he soon decided to venture a try at walking.

### ***MILLER LAKE***



Bill & Sandy Bender

One day Mom had just enough of three kids all by herself so she told Dad to take Sandy and Bill fishing with him. Ed took the two kids with him, but when they got to Miller Lake Norm pitched a fit over having to take the kids in the boat as he said that they would scare all the fish away. So Dad told us to play by the car and he would come back later. They then got in the boat and rowed out of sight. Bill and I soon became bored of playing around the car, so we started looking over the old row boats. I got one boat into the water and put Bill in the boat. I started rowing out when I soon discovered that we were sinking fast. I rowed the boat back to where we could stand up and Bill and I got out of the boat and walked to shore. When Dad came back from fishing he was pretty upset and felt very guilty leaving us alone like that. And he knew that once Marie found out about this he wouldn't hear the end of Marie chided him for his stupidity for quite a long while.

### ***FAVORITE FISHING SPOTS***

Dad had his favorite fishing spots on the Bruce peninsula. They

were Pine Tree Harbor, Johnstone's Harbor, Miller Lake, Dyer's Bay and Stokes Bay, in that order. Dad and Norm were good fishermen and they thoroughly enjoyed the sport. Dad caught many fish in the 1950's on the Bruce peninsula, but by the 1960's fishing had pretty much dried up compared to earlier years. One of my favorite memories of fishing was when Dad and I went fishing at Pine Tree Harbor. We had to drive for miles over what was far less than a cow path and was guaranteed to ruin your muffler to jet there. You had to open a farmer's gate and go through his pasture at the beginning of the trip. By the time you were 3 miles in, you were sure you made a big mistake, and that there was no harbor in these deep woods. Then when we felt thoroughly lost, a big Faygo pop truck came through the other way and we were forced to leave the road to let him through. We got stuck very badly on a large rock and had to rock the car to get off the rock. Finally we broke loose and were on our way. We finally got to the water and rented a boat. Dad had two things to fish with, one a rod complete with all the latest gizmos, and the other a piece of string with a sinker and a hook on the end. He got the rod and I got the piece of string. When we were out in the boat fishing, he was so expertly casting to where the old timer said that the fish were biting and I was dropping the line over the side of the boat. First thing you know I got a fish! Then another fish, then another! Dad's bobber, in the meanwhile, didn't so much as ripple. Dad gave me the rod and he took the line over the aide of the boat. First thing you know I got a fish with his rod! He was getting kind of sore over this latest development. Then suddenly he felt that the "Shakes" were coming on as he caught a chill. Dad started the motor and headed to shore as fast as he could. When he got near to shore he was colder than ever due to the strong wind that was building up so he drove his motor right into the rocks to get himself to a warm shelter as soon as possible. On a later occasion Mom, Dad, Bill & I were at Pine Tree Harbor fishing, and Mom soon decided that she didn't trust the rowboat and wanted to go in. It was so obviously safe as we were still in a very shallow harbor, that Dad decided to tease Mom a little first before going in. He would pull hard on one oar and I would pull lightly on the other. We ended up going in circles, and Mom was getting madder and madder. We have some really cute pictures showing just how angry Mom got that day. Mom was the best fisher in the family, but in Canada for whatever reason, she never did much in the way of fishing.

### ***HAVE YOU WALKED THROUGH THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?***

About 5 years after the war, Dad's business on Mack & Holcomb started slipping a bit and he couldn't quite figure out why. One day Dad brought this subject up to one of his old time customers and the customer replied to Dad's querry, "have you taken a walk through this neighborhood lately? You'd be surprised at how much it has changed!" Dad didn't believe the man as he had walked through the neighborhood a year or two ago and it had been mostly white then. But one day Dad decided to take his friend's advise and check the neighborhood out as it

was now summer and people were outside more. What Dad saw made his heart sink. Almost every third house had a black family in it. He realized then that the handwriting was on the wall and that he would soon be forced to move to a better location. Dad stayed there a few more years, but the neighborhood soon took a real nosedive and he was forced to move as his old customers became quite reluctant to come to his store after dark. Dad took Mom to the Delthe theater across the street from his store and Mom and Dad were shocked at what they saw. Many of the theater seats had been slashed with a knife. Dad never again took Mom back to the Delthe theater. It made Mom and Dad so sad to think that the show where they had gone for so many years was now being vandalized and would soon be forced to close because of the bad element frequenting the establishment. Dad stopped into the Eagle Dairy across Holcomb from his store and again, the same thing, all the seats had been slashed with a knife. Dad went to the dress shop down the street from his store to buy another new dress for Mom and he could see signs that they were getting ready to pull out of this neighborhood as they were losing their old customers due to the fact that the neighborhood was no longer safe. Dad bought Mom many a dress from that dress shop, not only for her birthday, Christmas and anniversaries, but many times just to surprise her. Mom said that the woman who owned the shop used to help Dad select a dress for Mom and that the dresses always fit her and most times were very flattering on. Dad never again bought Mom dresses on his own after he left that neighborhood except for the customary holidays. Dad very sadly started looking around for another store.

### **WARREN & AUDUBON**

Dad had tried to find a store for rent on Gratiot Avenue as he had had a store on Gratiot before simultaneously with his Mack Avenue store and the Gratiot Avenue location had been a really "hot" one in that it had a much greater volume than the Mack Avenue store. Dad was forced to move out of the Gratiot Avenue store many years ago as the owner wanted to rent the store to a friend. Dad looked up and down Gratiot Avenue for months, but could not find a store for rent that would be suitable for his business. Finally he came upon a location at Warren & Audubon. Many of Dad's business associates warned Dad that Warren Avenue was always a dead location and that he shouldn't move there. But the rent was very reasonable, so Dad decided to give this location a try. This was probably the biggest mistake of Dad's life as this location proved to be even deader than everyone had predicted. I can't quite figure out why Dad didn't move to another location to improve his business.

## WARREN



Marie & Edward Bender with infant Warren Stephens



Warren & Marie Bender

When we got back to Alter Rd from that vacation at Pacey's in Lion's Head, Nancy was at our house hoping Mom would return. Nancy was in labor and was about to have her first child that July 31, 1953. Warren was born the next morning, the first grandchild of Marie and Edward Bender. Nancy couldn't decide what to name him, so grandma to be Marie talked Nancy into naming the child Warren if it was a boy and Linda if it was a girl. Grandma was going to name Doug Linda if he were a girl and she was hoping that Nancy would use that name for a girl. When Warren was born Nancy and Don lived across the street at Van Huesey's house, kitty corner from our house. When Nancy came home from the hospital with Warren he came over to Mom's house and Nancy stayed in the back bedroom downstairs for a few days while Mom helped out. Mom helped Nancy do the washing as Nancy had no washer and would come over to Mom's house to do the washing. Warren and Doug were very close in age and would get into some doozy of a fights at times. Warren was very confused as to who Mom was in relation to him as Doug and Nancy called her Mom. So Warren settled the dilemma by calling Mom "Douggie's mama". I remember Warren walking up and down our front porch steps on Alter when he first learned to walk. My job was to keep Doug away from Warren so Doug wouldn't give Warren a hearty shove off the front porch.



Marie Bender, Nellie Dahl, Warren & Nancy Stephens



Jack Jackson, Don, Warren & Hunter Stephens  
Shirley & Christine Stephens, Marie & Nellie  
Bill, Sandy, & Doug Bender, Nancy Stephens

Edward realized just how important these 2 pictures were as they are the first of the new 4 generation spanning from Rehfeldt to Stephens. These pictures were taken on Warren's first birthday on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1954. They are especially precious as they were taken a little over 7 months before Nellie Dahl died on the 25 March, 1955.



Douglas Paul Bender Sr & Warren Stephens

Edward got a big kick of seeing Doug and Warren together when Nancy would come over to Alter Road to visit. Those two did not get along at all and many a tiff ensued. In this picture Ed put the two boys on the dining room table in order to take their picture with Doug in his Tom Corbett Space Cadet costume. Doug was very jealous of Warren and the attention he received when they were very young so we had to be careful that Doug didn't knock him over or hit him.

## NELLIE'S SUPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY



Sandy, Nancy, Nellie, Mike, Sharon & Marianne



Sharon, Dorothy, Sonny, Mel, Nellie, Marie, El, Herman & Bill

On November 3, 1950 Mom decided to give Nellie a surprise birthday party, so Mom invited all her family over for the evening but admonished everyone not to give the secret away to Nellie as it was a surprise party. Mom baked all day and gave Nellie some lame excuse as to why she was baking so much and Nellie fell for that dumb excuse. Then when Dad came home he asked Grandma Dahl if she wanted to go over to Bill's house (her son) since it was her birthday and he would enjoy seeing her. Nellie readily agreed. Dad then drove her to the west side of Detroit, and with Nellie now safely out of the way, Mom got to work putting up all the decorations. Dad then drove all over Bill's neighborhood and tongue in cheek, sadly told Nellie that he just couldn't find Bill's house. Nellie was so sad! Dad drove her all the way back home, Nellie walked in the door feeling so downharded over not being able to see her son Bill as planned, when suddenly someone flipped on the lights and everybody came running out into the dining room hollering "Surprise!" Nellie was never so surprised or so happy in her entire life. It certainly turned out to be a red letter day for Nellie and we have pictures showing just how happy she was that day. And by the way, Nellie forgave Dad right away for his little white lie.

***NOW, MARIE, YOU HAVE A GOOD MAN!***



Nellie Dahl & Marie Bender cutting records

Every time Dad and Mom would get into an argument, without hesitation, Nellie would invariably take Dad's side in the argument. Nellie would say to, Mom, "Now, Marie, you have a good man!" And Mom would always say back to Nellie, "Mom, you stay out of this, this is between Ed and me". Ed liked Nellie very much and they were fast friends all of their lives together. Dad used to love to cut up with Nellie at parties and when he would cut records, he always invited Nellie to join in in the fun. Nellie, Ed and Norm always had a barrel of laughs when they all got together.

***NELLIE AND THE BEARS***



Nellie Dahl

Nellie was terrified of bears and Ed used to love to tease her over such an irrational fear. We would be whizzing along on the highway at 50 miles per hour and Nellie would be afraid that the bears might get her! Dad teased her so bad one day on a ride on Lake Orion Road that Nellie finally got so upset that she made dad turn around and go back home. Nellie did not like winding roads either and between the winding road and the fear of bears, Lake Orion Road was just too much for Nellie's overactive imagination.

## **CHRISTMAS, 1954**



George (Sonny) Stocker



Nellie Dahl & Sandy Bender

I remember well Grandma Dahl's last Christmas. All the Dahl families were over our house on Alter Road. Sonny, Dad and Herman were sitting in one corner listening to Sonny's preposterous exploits at the City County building where he was the night watch man. And Dad telling equally preposterous stories about his younger days. The women were in the dining room and kitchen talking to each other while Mom was getting the dinner on and our dear Nellie was sitting in the middle of the living room in a straight, hard backed chair, all by herself. I saw Nellie there but did not go over and sit and talk to her as I was thoroughly enjoying hearing the men tell their outlandish stories. But now, for the rest of my life, I will always wish with all my heart that I had gone over and sat with grandma and shared with her a few Moments of her last Christmas on earth.

## **MARCH, 1955**



last picture taken of Nellie Dahl

Grandma Dahl was living with Mildred and Sonny Stocker in March, 1955 when suddenly she became very sleepy. Mildred took her to her doctor

who said that Nellie was an old woman who had the flu and that she just wanted to rest. So Mildred took her home and let her sleep. When Nellie kept sleeping, Mildred became worried and called Elenore. Elenore took grandma to her house and when Nellie wouldn't wake up she had Nellie taken to the hospital in an ambulance. The doctor immediately diagnosed the problem as a diabetic coma. He told Elenore that bringing her out of the coma would not be the big problem, rather it was the chance of heart failure later. Nellie came out of the coma in a day or two and by Wednesday she said that she never felt better. Mom and Dad had gone to see Nellie on Wednesday evening and dad said that he had never seen Nellie healthier or more full of life than she was that evening. Dad laughed for years afterward about how Nellie would shake the I.V.'s and demand that they be taken out. Mom agreed to take Nellie as soon as she got out of the hospital and Dad readily agreed that Nellie should come and stay with them. Mom was worried about having to give Nellie insulin shots and how to keep Nellie away from sweets, although by this age Nellie had only a fraction of her old appetite. Aunt Elenore was with Nellie all day Thursday and then she and Herman returned in the evening. Nellie was fine and enjoyed having her daughter with her. At 4:30 AM on the 25th of March, 1955 Mom received a phone call from her sister Elenore. Nellie had just quietly slipped away in her sleep, having succumbed to a heart attack. Mom started crying when she hung up the phone. Through the walls I could hear Mom softly talking to Dad about what funeral parlor they would use, what arrangements would be made, etc. I then knew that my beloved grandmother Nellie was gone. I felt somewhat betrayed and lied to by my Mom and Dad as they had told me that Nellie had been doing just fine and would soon come to live with us. How could she have possibly looked fine one day, and be dead the next, I thought! That just could not be possible. But with the passage of time I have learned that that is how it works in a majority of cases. People often rally just before the end and people cannot believe that their loved one is suddenly not there any longer. Mom cried all day that day and when Dad came home he told Mom to stop crying, that Nellie had had a good life, lived to an old age, and now the Lord had called her home. Dad attended the funeral and went to the grave yard to say a final farewell to his beloved mother in law. Nellie was laid to rest beside her mother in law and father in law, Minna & Fred Dahl, and her sister in law Celia Dahl.

## LINDA



new born Linda Stephens



Linda 4 months



1 Year old Linda with new permanent

Linda was born on the 15th of May, 1955, less than two months after Nellie was laid to rest. We were celebrating Mick's 17th birthday when Nancy went into labor. Mom had a very good meal prepared and Nancy was not about to miss such a good spread. The doctor told her to get into the hospital as she might have this baby much faster, but Nancy told him she would get right over to the hospital, right after she cleaned her plate. Nancy wanted to stay for dessert, but she figured she dare not as the labor pains were getting kind of close together. Linda was born later that afternoon. When Nancy brought Linda home from the hospital, everybody remarked how much Linda looked like her late Great grandmother Nellie Dahl. Especially the crease in her nose, which was identical to Nellie's. What I remember about Linda was how Nancy gave her a permanent just before he 1st birthday. She looked so cute in it, but what an undertaking to give a baby a permanent. Nancy's family was living at 2324 Franklin, Berkley, Michigan then. We had many a happy time in that house. Dad used to drive us over there for a Sunday afternoon's worth of fun and baseball (of course) on many an occasion.

## ***EASTER, 1957***



Warren & Linda Stephens



Warren Stephens & Bill Bender



Warren Stephens & Doug Bender

I remember Easter, 1957 for one reason, how well dressed Warren and Linda were that day. Grandpa Bender thought that they looked so cute that he got out his camera and took some really cute pictures of the two. Warren had on a dress overcoat and a matching hat. Linda had on a navy blue coat and a real cute white Easter bonnet. They sure were tow cute kids!

## ***DONNA***



Donna Stephens

Donna was born on the 16th of January, 1958. I remember Mom babysitting Donna for a week when she was only 5 months old. Mom and I thought that she was such a cute baby that I got out Dad's Rollieflex camera and took a picture of her on our kitchen table. She was a perfect little baby and a real delight to take care of.

## DAD BUYS A CHRISTMAS TREE



Mickey



Mickey

Every year Dad had one ritual in the 1950's, he would wait till Christmas Eve and then after dark would set out to find the cheapest Christmas tree. I often went with him and it was a delight to watch him go from lot to lot looking over the trees trying to find the best deal. Invariably, by 9 o'clock Christmas Eve Dad would find what he wanted on one of the lots -- a \$1.00 Christmas tree. Some of those Christmas trees were God-awful! They would have large gaping holes on one side and Mom would spend 20 minutes having Dad twirl the Christmas tree around looking for the best side. There never seemed to be a best side. Mom usually ended up putting the biggest hole in the very front, and then putting the manger scene in the hole. That always looked real nice and looked natural too, like the manger really belonged there. Mom would then trim the tree with colorful bulbs and big round and pointed lights. Dad would then tie the Christmas tree down by running string from the tree to the curtain rods, but no matter how tight he would make the string the same thing would happen every year, Bill or Doug would pull down the tree. Mom would come home from Christmas mass and find the Christmas tree on the floor. That was an almost yearly event in our house. Mom would put the tree back up, retrim it with what bulbs were not smashed, and sweep up the smashed ones.

## ***DEEP SNOW***



Sandy in deep snow on Alter Rd

I remember one Christmas morning when I was about 4 years old. It had snowed very heavily all night and the ground had about 22 inches of snow on a level. Mom, Mick and I walked to church that Christmas morning. (Dad, shame on him, stayed in bed that morning). I was so tired when I got home from trudging through all that snow.

## ***FATHER VERWEIL***

I was in the fifth grade at St. John Berchman's school and it was a beautiful day in May. I was Practicing basketball at a very makeshift basketball hoop that I myself had erected. It was on the garage, was way too short, but it was better than nothing. I was shooting vigorously into that hoop, when suddenly, out of nowhere, Father Verweil walked into our backyard. He asked if Dad was there and told him no, that Dad was still at the store as he worked until 9 PM every night. Father said he thought Dad closed the store at 6 PM, so he would go over to the store and catch Dad there. Oh, by the way, Father Verweil said, would I have any idea who might have been practicing on a new tape that he had just purchased? It must have been someone in your Dad's store, your Dad perhaps? I told him no, it would never be dad as he is far too busy to play with tapes, that it would most likely be Uncle Norman. Who is he? And what does he look like?, Father Verweil asked. I answered his questions as best as I could and he left on foot for the store at Warren and Audubon. I later told Mike the questions that Father Verweil had asked and asked him why on earth would Father Verweil ask such questions? Mike got a serious look on his face and said he knew exactly why Father Verweil had asked me all those questions. When those tapes first came in Norman and Kay Fraser were curious as to what quality the reproduction had, so they opened several tapes and put them on the machines and taped some samples. But "testing, one, two, three" was not what they said. What they tried out on the tape was the latest of the filthiest jokes that they had heard. They told these

jokes with much gusto and peels of laughter followed each joke. And the jokes got dirtier and dirtier as the evening progressed. Norman thought he had erased all the tapes when he was through having fun but apparently, one tape escaped erasure. As fate would have it, it had to be the pious, sober, never had a laugh in his life, Father Verweil who took the tape home and being that he never did anything fast in his life, the tape played for awhile before the priest could get the hang of how to push the record button, and by that time, that Mousey little tapes had spilled its guts out to the reverend father.

### ***PICK YOUR FEET UP, DUPUS!***

One beautiful summer day we were all sitting at the kitchen table eating a very fine roast beef dinner. Dad sat on the end of the table by the clock on the wall, near the entrance of the dining room with his back to the dining room. Dad was trying to teach Doug some manners that summer as he felt that Doug was a little too casual in some areas of behavior. Dad was sitting at the table finishing up his dinner. Doug had finished eating and had run outside to play a few minutes earlier. Doug ran under the kitchen window and out to the street. A few minutes later, Dad heard a scraping sound and realized that it was a person dragging his feet on the pavement. Doug had been dragging his feet for the last several months and whenever Dad heard him do it, he was infuriated as that was one of Dad's pet peeves. Dad hung his head out the window, and hollered "Pick your feet up, DUPUS!" I thought it odd when Doug made no response to Dad's command, so I looked out of the window and I almost died laughing, for it was not Doug there, but Mr. Meeseman, an elderly neighbor!

### ***\$5 SNOW JOB***

One day it had snowed and snowed all night long on Alter Road and when we woke up in the morning, the snow was several feet high. Dad had his car in the backyard on Alter, so he couldn't get to work until he shoveled the driveway from the yard to the street. Dad started shoveling and soon discovered that shoveling that much snow was nothing but work. He had to shovel the snow in layers as it was too deep to get all of it on a shovel from top to bottom. Mom soon came outside and started shoveling the white stuff too as she was afraid that Dad might get a heart attack if he did it all by himself. Mom shoveled for over an hour, and was so tired she could hardly see straight. But now they had only about 4 more feet to go and the car would be shoveled out of the driveway, so she knew that by far, the worse was over. Suddenly Dad spotted a Negro man walking down our street, a rarity as we had no Negroes in our neighborhood. Dad stepped up to him and offered him \$5 if he would shovel out the last

4 feet. The man gladly did and Dad thanked him and gave him the \$5 bill. When the man left, Mom was really upset that dad had given him \$5 when almost all of the work was done. Mom felt that under the circumstances Dad should pay her too as she had shoveled 4 times more than the Negro man did.

### ***HENNEY PENNEY***

There was a take out chicken place on Warren near Maryland called Henney Penney. For New Years Eve and a few other special occasions Dad would drive over to Henney Penney and bring us back some delicious barbecued chicken. And I mean barbecued on a spit, not tomato sauce slopped over a few pieces of chicken. In fact they used no sauce, just a barbecue rotisserie. One time Mom and Dad invited Art and Agnes over to our house for an evening and shortly before they were scheduled to arrive, dad went over to Henney Penney and brought back some barbecued chicken. It snowed that night and Art was rather unsteady on his feet, so that is probably why they never showed up that night. But we were upset that they did not call and cancel their invitation. At 9 PM Mom realized that they were not coming that night, so we all sat down and had a delicious Henney Penney chicken dinner.

### ***8 PM SATURDAY***



Herman & Elenore Mc Kinin

One time Aunt Elenore called up Mom and invited her over for a family get together at Elenore's house. She made the date for 8 PM Saturday evening. Mom gladly accepted the invitation as she was anxious to see all of her brothers and sisters again. Besides, Elenore was a wonderful cook and always put out such a fine spread, as well as being a fine conversationalist and a warm hostess. Mom told dad of the invitation, Dad left the store early, they both got dressed up in their Sunday best, and headed out to Elenore's house on Coyle on the west side. When they approached the house Mom thought it so strange that the porch light was not on as they were not early. When they

rang the doorbell, Elenore came to the door and was not the least bit dressed up and looked at Mom and Dad stunned. The invitation was for next Saturday not this one! But Mom and Dad went in and they had a really nice visit together, albeit a week early.

### ***THE WARREN STORE***



Norman Bender

Dad was in the Warren store for about 10 years. He sold T.V.'s radios, washers, dryers, refrigerators, stoves, and records. I remember going to Dad's store on Saturday and getting \$5.00 for dusting the furniture and polishing up the appliances with a white sweet smelling furniture polish. A really good lunch, of whatever suited my fancy, was included in the bargain. And what a lunch that was! Dad would take me to Alinosi's up by Outer Drive and Warren and I would have a B.L.T. with limp, barely fried bacon, which Dad would veto when he noticed it as he believed that all pork had to be well cooked to protect one's health. He and I also had a milk shake, he usually preferring a strawberry shake. And when there would be customers in the store and he was alone and couldn't leave, I would go to Alinosi's and get a carry out lunch for he and I. Dad and I cherished our Saturday noon lunches together, just as Mom and I cherished our lunches together when we went shopping downtown. Norm worked for Dad as his repair man in both the Mack and the Warren stores. Norm got totally obnoxious by the time I knew him well at the Warren store. Norm wouldn't roll out of bed till noon, and sometimes Dad had to go over to Farmbrook and drag Norm out of bed to get him to work when there was a lot of repair work to be done. When Norm did get to the store, Dad would sit in his office in the store, and Norm would sit on his repair bench in the back of the store and start the biggest argument with Dad over how to run the business. Norm sure had a lot of opinions for a guy who could never get out of bed. But Dad and Norm's fights were never half so loud as the fights that the Posen brothers, who owned the clothing store next store to Dad, had. Their fights were real humdingers! We could hear them through the walls. We swore that one of them would end up killing the other. But they stuck it out through thick and thin and managed to make more money in that neighborhood than Dad did. Mick also worked for Dad

too, first at the Mack store and then at the Warren store. Dad said that Mick was one of the best employees he ever had. Mick was always very loyal and a very hard worker. He never destroyed any of Dad's merchandise, and was very conscientious in all that he did. He was one of Dad's best truck drivers. Dad used to work such long hours in the Warren store, often staying till 11 PM if he still had customers. We used to tease him that when he died we would bust up the concrete in the store and bury him there. Dad's years at that store were the last happy years of his life. When the recession of 1958 to 1961 forced Dad to close down his business, his life was at an end. Dad went into a deep depression and spent the rest of his life in a zombie like trance, coming out of his depression for a few brief hours when he would play ball with us, take a walk, or go to Mighions on Saturday night. Otherwise Dad was like a robot, programmed to go to the store in the morning, sell merchandise although his heart wasn't in it, and then come home at 9:45 PM, eat some ice cream, go to bed, get up the next morning and return to the job he despised. Dad kept that job to support us, but he hated every moment of working for someone else and having to take backtalk from men with far less intelligence than he. When the Warren store came to the end, so did the happiness of our family.

### ***THE RECURRENT DREAM***

From about 1952 on, Dad kept getting the same dream over and over. He kept dreaming that he was working in an old barn, and it was the most depressing possible place to work. Dad would wake up very disturbed and tell Mom his dream in the middle of the night. Mom heard this exact same dream from Dad over and over in the next 9 years. Mom would comment, what a queer dream to keep having over and over again!. It doesn't make any sense at all! In 1961 Dad very reluctantly decided to close his business as business was intolerably slow due to the recession and Dad did not want to risk losing his savings by trying to fight against the bad economy any longer. Dad contacted a number of business associates as he needed to have a place to sell much of his unsold inventory to recoup some of his funds from this merchandise. Finally Dad made an acceptable arrangement with Thern Baxter of Baxter Appliances at 7 Mile and Gratiot. Dad disposed of his store at Warren & Audubon and moved into Thern's store. Dad worked at Gratiot and 7 Mile for about a year as a co president of the Baxter Corporation, and then without any discussion with Dad, Thern rented another store at Hoover and 8 Mile and asked Dad to move to that location and run that store for him. Dad went over to that store one Monday morning to start work and when he entered the store, perspiration began rolling off Dad's forehead. This was the barn that he had dreamed of working in in his recurrent nightmare! His God-awful nightmare was now a reality!

## ***BRICKS FALLING OFF THE CHIMNEY***

One night about 2:30 AM we were all awakened out of a sound sleep by a resounding noise that sounded to Dad like the bricks were falling off the chimney. I jumped out of bed and ran down the stairs so fast that it felt like my feet didn't even touch the stairs on the way down. What I saw when I got outside made me feel sick all over. Dad's beautiful 1951 Pontiac, that he had driven for 8 years and 108,000 miles, and had just had painted for \$295.00 dollars was smashed beyond belief by a drunk. The guy was a carpenter and had just came out of Whitie's bar at Warren and Alter at closing time and being totally smashed, he couldn't make the curve by our house and plowed into Dad's car. He then drove forward and drove into the Italian man's car who lived next to the Schneck family. The police came, helped him into our house as he was so drunk he couldn't stand and sat him at our dining room table. The man was beet red in the face and had no comprehension of what was going on. The police took the information down about Dad and the drunk and then walked the drunk to the police car. On the way to the car the police discussed what they were going to do with him and one quietly said to the other, "Let's drive him home". I was furious, as I felt that that drunk should be taken into the station and charged with drunk driving. Dad was mad too, but never said a word. When the police went to put him in the car, he was so drunk that he fell over the open door and hung by his waist. His Ford remained for several days in front of Mc Cubbin's house. I stole some tools out of his car that I thought Dad could use, but I had to hide the tools as Dad had forbidden me to take anything out of the drunk's car. Dad said we do not steal the man's tools of trade regardless of what he has down to us. When I later learned that the insurance company would only give Dad \$250.00 for his car, which was \$45.00 less than what he had just paid for the new paint job, I was furious! Dad was so upset that when he found the tools that I had stolen from the guy's car, he did not reprimand me for the thefts, but rather, quietly put the tools away in his own tool box.

## ***CHIEFTAIN***

Dad took the insurance money and went looking for another car. In the meanwhile Dad walked the two miles to work every day. Finally he found a car that struck his fancy, a coral colored, 1954 Pontiac Chieftain. Dad chose this car as he had loved his 1951 Pontiac inspite of the fact that it got only 11 miles per gallon and he liked the coral color of this car. This car was an automatic whereas his old Pontiac was a 3 speed. The new car turned out to be nothing but a dog! The trunk was full of rock salt stain, the transmission slipped badly, and on occasion the car wouldn't start. Dad had this car for only a few months.

## **OPEL**



Bill & Doug in Ed's new Opel Cadett      Bill with Opel Cadett

In early 1959, in the dead of winter Dad took delivery on a 1959 green Opel. Dad was in love with the little car from the first. It was a color he kind of liked and it gave terrific gas mileage and was a sound car mechanically. I was in the car when Dad took it for its first spin on an icy, newly fallen blanket of snow. It was dreadfully cold, the car slipped all over the road due to its light weight, which scared Dad to no end until he got used to handling this lightweight car and he learned its major drawback that first night -- the windows would fog up fast and thick and it would be ages before the windshield would clear up. He also had some starting problems with the car in the dead of winter. But he had very few repairs on this car and like the Pontiac before, Dad became very fond of this little car.

## **MRS. DRESS GARAGE**

When I was about 12 years old, an old woman named Mrs. Diess moved into the 4th house from Forest on Ashland. She was in her mid-eighty's and was the mother of a minister in the area. She was a very feisty, lively old gal and Dad liked her spirit. She had a married boyfriend by the name of Mr. Hyatt, another springy old soul who had been and still was a carpenter. Mr. Hyatt's wife was a cripple, so he enjoyed Mrs. Diess' company now and again. (Mr. Hyatt was the gent who put in our upstairs bathroom). Well, Mrs. Bless had a garage to rent as she had a two car garage at the back of her house and no car. Dad had just bought that old tank, his 1956 coral colored Pontiac Chieftain, and he felt that he needed a place to keep it where hopefully, no one would run it over in the middle of the night. So I told him about Mrs. Bless' garage being for rent for \$10. per month. So Dad went over there, looked over the yellow 2 car garage all made of wood with a large window on the south side, and decided to rent it. What a time he had trying to put that Chieftain into the garage from the narrow alley! It was always such a tight fit. And when it snowed it was impossible as the car wanted to slide sideways into the side of the garage. Dad got rid of the Pontiac

Chieftain and bought a 1959 Opel. By this time Dad was in need of more storage room for his T.V.'s and appliances, so he pulled his car out of the garage and with Mrs. Diess' permission he put his merchandise in. She then raised the rent to \$15. per month. Dad was rather titter over his experience of renting her garage for merchandise when someone broke into the garage and stole some of his stuff. He always suspected that the old woman had something to do with the break in as someone told Dad that one of her friends from across the street was seen near Dad's garage at about the time when the merchandise was stolen and Dad said it appeared that the person stealing the stuff had a key.

### ***JOHNSONS MILK DEPOT***

Dad bought his ice cream in the beginning from Johnson's milk depot, a small store at the corner of Warren and Alter. Later he bought a gallon of white and a gallon of chocolate from Marseilles Beer store next door to Johnson's. I can still remember the smell of Johnson's Milk Depot as I would walk in the door. The smell of fresh baked but commercially prepared bread would hit you as soon as you walked in the door. Bread never smells that way anymore for some reason. The favorite brands at Johnson's were Wonder bread, (that helped build strong bodies 12 ways), and Tastee bread. Dad used to be a very trusting and loving father to me. When he wanted something from Johnson's or the Beer Store, he would give me a hand full of uncounted change and tell me to bring back what I didn't need to purchase his item. I was always honest to the penny as I could never bear to cheat a man who showed such trust in me.

## **NASSAU**



Marie & Edward Bender

In 1956 Dad joined a Sylvania selling contest in which the first prize was a trip to Nassau. Dad soon sold his quota of T.V. sets and was given the trip for two. He and mom went to Nassau for one week. Mom had never flown on an airplane before and was scared stiff. To make matters worse, in those days they didn't have indoor ramps where you walked on the plane on level ground but rather you had to walk outside on the pavement to get to the plane and then had to walk up a ladder. Dad said he kept talking to Mom a mile a minute to keep her mind off the airplane, both when they were boarding and when the plane was taking off. Mom later told me that she knew that the plane made Dad very nervous as she had never heard him talk so fast and excited before. They had to change planes in Nassau and the weather was so bad that they had to make an unscheduled stop overnight in Florida until the rain let up. They took off the next day, but still in a rain storm. Mom said she was scared to death as the plane was a very small one, it was lightening and thundering all around the plane, and the plane was buffeting about in the rain. But they got to Nassau without incident, albeit with frayed nerves and began one of their best vacations ever. They thoroughly enjoyed the natives, the more primitive living conditions, and the nightly entertainment. Dad also enjoyed watching a movie star walk along a beach memorizing his lines for a movie he was making. They also thoroughly enjoyed the calypso music and the native dancers. A photographer took Mom and Dad's picture while they were on the island and sent a copy of their picture to the East Side Shopper, a Grosse Pointe area small newspaper. We still have a 8X10 copy of that fine picture.

## **ANDROS ISLE**

Dad won another trip to Andros Isle, which Mom and he enjoyed for another week in the winter while us kids stayed at home with a babysitter. Lou, our Negro maid, watched us when Mom and Dad went to Nassau, but that didn't work out too well as Lou was sick the whole time she sat for us and besides little Doug was the most prejudiced little kid I have ever met. Lou offered to make his sandwich for lunch, but Doug looked at her black hands with a very disdainful look on his face, and said, "Eh, no, Sandy will make my sandwich." I could have died of embarrassment when he did that. I quickly made the sandwich to cover up what he had said and to shut him up so he wouldn't come out with any more embarrassing statements like that. One time Lou made a good supper, except that she put only a bowl of starch and water on the table, and when I asked her what that was, she replied that it was white man's gravy as brown people like brown and white people like white gravy. I told her that we happened to be partial to brown gravy, so she made us up a proper gravy. For Andros Isle, Mom paid Aunt Elenore to sit for us. Elenore tried to keep our house with us 4 kids in it like she kept her own. Mike told her on the second day that that would never work out and that if she wanted to impress Mom with a real clean house, she should clean the house the day before Mom came home, not every day as she would exhaust herself. She cleaned house every day and true to Mike's words, she totally exhausted herself by Friday. Elenore got real mad at Doug Saturday and ended up spanking him on her last day at our house because she was so tired.

## **PUERTO RICO**

Dad won a trip to Puerto Rico for two couples as he had outdone himself in selling for Sylvania that year as he was buying in bulk lots and reselling to other dealers for a lesser price than the dealer could buy it himself from Sylvania. Dad was an excellent purchaser, and he often bought lots of goods at unheard of low prices. Don had been working for Dad since about 1952, so Dad decided to give Don and Nancy the second trip that he had one. So a bargain was struck with Nancy, Mom would watch Linda and Donna when Nancy and Don went and Nancy was to watch us while Mom and Dad went. Nancy fared far better than Elenore or Lou had as she knew us kids a lot better and was better able to pace herself to keep up with us kids. That week went very smoothly. Meanwhile Dad and Mom had a ball. They were with a real wild bunch and every night this one woman in their group would come to the cocktail hour with a beautiful new dress on and an expertly coiffeured hair-do. And every night her companions and her would get very drunk and they would put her on the serving cart, run her around the pool on the cart, and every night they would end up by dumping her in the pool! Her dress and her hair do would be destroyed, but that never seemed to dampen the fun for her or her friends. Dad loved Puerto Rico and gave nickels to the

little kids who begged Dad to give them a nickel for posing for pictures. They had real reckless taxi cab drivers and bus drivers down there. Dad would get upset and ask the bus driver how he could manage to stay on the mountain road while driving at break neck speed around the edges of the mountain. The man replied that he is usually in full control, but that every now and then a driver misjudges and drives over the end of the mountain. Not long after Mom and Dad went back home, Mom read to her horror in the news that a bus went over the edge in Puerto Rico and all passengers were killed. She told Dad, "That could have been us, ED!" The next week Don, who was very poor at the time, borrowed a couple of new suits from his brother-in-law Jack Jackson to wear evenings for the cocktail hour in Puerto Rico. Don and Nancy enjoyed Puerto Rico immensely, in fact, one night Don enjoyed it a little too much. Everyone got to drinking, including Don, who had put away more than his share, when the men decided to make a contest to see who could go hand over hand out from the diving board to the edge of the board, while dangling in mid-air, and then back again, without falling into the water. Don was game for the challenge. Nancy thought she would die when she looked around and found Don in Jack Jackson's expensive new suit, dangling from the bottom of the diving board, going out to the end, hand over hand. She hollered at Don to watch Jack's new suit and to come to his senses and get off that diving board. Don, however, was full of confidence, as he had made it to the end of the board and had now started back with plenty of strength to spare. Some guy felt that Don was spoiling all the fun by making it so easy there and back, so this guy decided to add to the suspense. He got out of his chair, ran over to the diving board, jumped on, and started bouncing up and down on it. Don felt the beginning of the end of Jack's new suit was immanent. No one could hold on while some idiot was bouncing up and down on the board!

### ***CARACAS, VENEZUELA***

Dad and Mom went to Caracas, another trip that Dad had won through a selling contest. Dad and Mom liked Caracas. The funniest thing that happened on this trip was that Ed Law, one of Dad's friends, kept losing his wife every night, and kept going up and down the corridors, calling, "Jackie!, Jackie!", but Jackie never showed. Jackie was too busy checking out some new "friend's" room. Jackie was a very promiscuous lady and caused Ed no end of grief. Ed later ended up divorcing her and marrying someone more sedate.

### ***ACULPULCO, MEXICO***

This is the trip that Mom and Dad liked the least. The weather was stifling hot and they could seldom venture out of the air conditioning as the heat and humidity were unbearable. There were black specks in

Dad's food, which he assumed were pepper, as he enjoyed the spiciness of the food. He told the waiter the pepper was delicious, and the waiter replied that that wasn't pepper, it was little bugs. He said that there were so many bugs here that you couldn't eliminate them from the food. Dad avoided all water and fresh fruits and vegetables to avoid getting a taste of Montezuma's revenge. Dad and Mom hired a guide to take them for a boat ride down the canals as Dad wanted to see some of the outdoors before going home in spite of the stifling heat and humidity. Dad was very sorry he went for the boat ride soon after he got on the boat, as the heat was smothering and when he looked at the branches of the trees, he noticed to his everlasting horror, that what looked like sticks in the trees were not sticks, but rather were snakes laying on the ends of the branches, leaning so far off the end of the branch that they were darn near ready to fall into the boat. Mom trailed her hand in the water and Dad immediately pulled her hand out of the water, as he knew that something poisonous would surely bite her if she did not leave her hand in the boat. The guide confirmed Dad's suspicions. Then on the last day of the trip, Dad's biggest fear became a gut gripping reality -- he got a touch of Montezuma's revenge, and was so sick that the room swam about him, and he kept collapsing between fits of vomiting and uncontrolled diarrhea. A friend of Mom's had brought lomotil pills along just in case and gave Mom a pill to give to Dad. The pill got Dad just well enough to board the plane and that was about it. Dad found out later that one of his friends got hepatitis springtime disease. Dad was very glad to be back home safe after that trip. Dad vowed never again to go to Mexico.

### ***YELLOW KNEE***



Ed & Marie Bender

One time Dad and Norm went fishing in a boat all day and had a real good time, but before Dad returned the boat he knew he was in for trouble, as his knee was hot and tight skinned. The next day the real trouble began. His knee became badly swollen by morning and within the next several days, a sack of yellow pus formed, and the sack covered his entire knee cap and was about 3 inches in height. Mom would soak the knee, and eventually she got out a sterile needle and broke the sack, giving Dad some pain relief. Dad used to holler out in pain whenever Mom attended to his knee until she broke the pus sack.

His knee healed over the next several weeks, but it gave him trouble for years afterwards.

### ***TOWEL IN PANTS***

Dad always had one routine, he would invariably tuck a towel into the front of his pants as soon as he went into the bathroom in the morning and he would leave the towel there while brushing his teeth, washing, etc. And it was almost always a told colored towel as that was always his favorite color.

### ***HITCHING THE PANTS***

Another thing that was unique to Dad, and how you could tell it was Dad from a mile away was his life long habit of "hitching up his pants" as they were forever falling down due to the broken hip and leg he had suffered as a child in that auto accident on Gratiot Avenue. Dad would take his fore arm and catch his pants just under the belt and use the belt to push his pants up. He always called this action "hitching up the pants" and told the following story. When he was a young man he invited a girlfriend to come and watch him play ball at Jane field. She came, but soon despaired of ever finding Dad as there are many, many ball fields at Jane field and two teams are playing on every field. As she looked around she spotted a guy three ball fields down hitching up his pants. She smiled to herself and headed for that field as she knew that only Dad hitched up his pants in that fashion.

### ***ROCKING***



Nellie Dahl

Every morning in the summer the same thing would happen around 9 AM Dad would be finished with breakfast and would go into the bathroom to get

ready for the day. Grandma Dahl would eat breakfast shortly afterwards and then out of nowhere she would get the urge to go to the bathroom. But there was only one bathroom in our house and Dad was in it. She didn't have the nerve to ask him for the bathroom, so she would sit on the same dining room chair every day, the one nearest Meesemans and the kitchen, and would rock back and forth on the dark brown ornate, straight backed chair and say, oh! , oh! Mom would come along, see her Mom in such obvious distress and would ask Dad if Nellie could have the bathroom, Dad would relinquish the bathroom gladly, Nellie would relieve herself, thank Dad profusely, and be on her way.

### ***HERMAN***



Herman & Elenore Mc Kinin

Elenore would tell almost the same story about Grandma Dahl. It seems that grandma wouldn't have to go to the bathroom all day, that is, until Herman would start working on the bathroom. Then Nellie would have to go real bad all while Herman was working on the bathroom. After the work was finished, Nellie wouldn't have to go anymore. Elenore said that she thought Herman would explode the time he decided to retille the bathroom. Nellie had to go every ten minutes that entire day and his black glue would start to dry out while he was sitting outside the door waiting for Nellie. But Herman never said an angry word that day, but rather, would just grin when Nellie had to go again and again. And true to style, once the job was done Nellie's kidneys would shut off.

## **CANNONBALLS**



Nellie Dahl

Dad loved to tell the following story about Nellie Dahl. One day Dad took Nellie on a family picnic and all of a sudden she had to move her bowels with the greatest urgency. She just couldn't wait long enough to get to an outhouse. (This incontinence of bowels was a frequent occurrence with Nellie in the last ten years of her life, and she was tied to the house on most occasions so she could make it to a restroom on time). Nellie looked around real fast and decided to pick a big tree and go behind the big tree. As she ran as fast as her old legs would carry her, she just couldn't quite make it and started dropping cannonballs along the way. A kid who was walking through the picnic area looked at the cannonballs and then at Nellie barreling uphill and had a real shocked look on his face. Nellie made it to the tree, got behind the tree, lifted her dress and let go. But what was so hilarious to Dad and the rest of the family was that Nellie was so heavy that her "cheeks" were "peeking out" from both sides of the tree!

## **THE VIKING**

On day Dad decided to buy Doug a 26" bike for his birthday. Dad chose a real nice looking red bike with a horn in the center. The bike's name was "Viking". It was a fine bike, and Dad was pleased with his purchase. Dad got all his camera equipment ready, including his movie camera, then he presented Doug with his new bike. Doug was thrilled with the bike and wanted to learn how to ride it right away. Dad held the seat for Doug for awhile and soon became totally winded and gave the job to me. Doug was getting the hang of riding by this time and he was starting to develop his balance. Suddenly, Doug was riding that big bike unassisted, with me merely running along behind! Dad was thrilled at this early development and the camera started whirring into action. Today we have a series of fine movie pictures of Doug on his new bike, a peddling and a wiggling.

## ***A REAL EYE CROSSER***



Doug Bender Sr

Another time Mom had made Doug a home made ice cream cone and he was making such a spectacle out of eating that cone that Dad felt that he had to preserve this moment in time for posterity. So he got out his movie camera and had Mom make Doug another ice cream cone. Dad then filmed the results of this comical little kid eating an ice cream cone. What a production he made out of eating an ice cream cone and for the finale, he would end up by crossing his eyes! We would die laughing watching some of Doug's antics when he was that age.

## ***MILDRED STOCKER***



Mildred & George Stocker

Mildred Stocker was always good for a few laughs at any family gathering and Dad loved to sit next to Mildred and join in the frivolity as Dad liked a good laugh. Mildred would always come on with a few good jokes and then start acting funny to provoke a laugh from those around her. Dad would like acting silly too to provoke laughter in Mildred. In the enclosed picture Dad is saying that

Mildred is telling the best funnies and Mildred insists that Dad is funnier. But at any family gathering, Uncle Bill was the hands down show stopper. There has never been anyone funnier in our family than Uncle Bill, Mom's brother. His laughter is absolutely infectious! And Bill has such a sense of humor, I have seen people doubled up with laughter till their side aches and tears rolling down their cheeks from a joke told by Uncle Bill. But when one retells the joke at a later date, it is never half so funny as when Uncle Bill tells it.

### ***LAURIE'S GRADUATION***

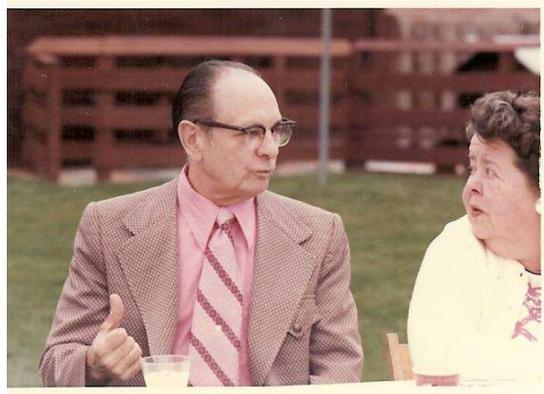


Laurie & Dave Rotary, Elenore, ?, Herman Mc Kinin

We all had such a wonderful time the day of Laurie's graduation party. We were out in Marianne and Frank's back yard in Farmington and the weather was absolutely perfect that day. All of the Dahl family was there, including some of the cousins who rarely attend a family get together.



Shorty Dahl & Edward Bender



Edward Bender & Mildred Dahl Stocker

Dad was in his prime that day. He thoroughly enjoyed himself all day that day. He sat at the table with Bill, Mildred, Shorty, Mom, I, Doris, Nancy, Craig, Dorothy, and Debbie. Everyone was really

happy that day and we had many a good laugh. We have many pictures of Dad, Mom, Mildred, Sunny, and Bill goofing off and busting up with laughter in the process. At the end of the day I asked Frank, who was feeling real good to do something outrageous so I could get one last good picture before the sun went down. He didn't disappoint me, he leaned over and drank out of the bird bath!

### ***SUNDAY AFTERNOONS***

From about 1956 to 1961 Mom and Dad had a Sunday afternoon hobby, to go look at new houses. I used to dread it every time I saw them head out looking as I dearly loved the house on Alter Road, was very strongly attached to St. John Berchman's and I wanted to spend the rest of my days in this house. Dad told me to be realistic, that the hillbillies were moving into the neighborhood now and after hillbillies invariable came negroes and once the negroes moved in close by, the house wouldn't be worth a plug nickel. I refused to go on most of their Sunday afternoon forays, but Bill and Doug gladly went for something to do. Mom and Dad looked in Madison Heights, St. Clair Shores, Mt. Clemens, Roseville, and finally settled on Sterling Heights as being their favorite city. In 1959, on Mom and Dad's 25th wedding anniversary they drove out to the Grant homes in Sterling Heights on 19 mile Road and put money down. The deal fell through, but 1 year later Dad reordered the house.



Edward & Marie with their 25 anniversary wedding cake

When mom and dad returned home on Alter Rd Nancy had baked from scratch a 4 layer wedding cake. Nancy and Sandy had walked over to the baker shop at Chalmers and Mack and Nancy bought 4 baking pans of different sizes. She also bought a bride and groom for the top of the cake and bells and 25 silver decals for the side of the cake. She then bought several cake mixes and put the entire cake together. In the middle of baking the cake and having all the decorations laid out on the kitchen table mom and dad walked back into the house to change clothes as it was 100 degrees outside that day and mom and

dad were melting from the heat. Nancy panicked as she thought the surprise was going to be ruined! But they never went into the kitchen so Nancy's surprise was safe!

### ***KITE FLYING, BASEBALL PLAYING & MUD***

Dad has been dead for 9 months now, and spring will soon be upon us. It has been a very mild winter and the trees are already in bud. The days have been between 50 and 65°F. This is a very sedate, busy spring for me, but I can't help but reflect back on many, many earlier and much happier springtime's when Dad was alive and the arrival of springtime making him even more alive in mind and spirit. Dad would see the snow melt, the days warm up and that old spring fever would hit him very hard, year in and year out. He would go to the basement and find his old baseball glove, a bat, and last year's raggedy old ball. He would not be in the least bit particular about which glove he used. I was always fiercely loyal to one glove and would search the whole house over until I found it, but not so Dad. The first glove he found was fine with him. I often saw Dad put on a glove which was way too small for his hand and the palm of his hand would stick out from the bottom of the glove. Dad would smile and remind me that when he was a kid he always played without a glove as he never had any money to buy one. So after playing baseball for years with his bare hands, he felt that any old glove was a real luxury. Dad was more particular about his choice of bats. Once he found a bat that was right for him in grip and weight, he would always look for that bat when playing. The first bat that I remember him favoring when I was a kid was an old very heavy, very solid oak bat. It was dark in color and he had inherited it from his brother Nobby when Nobby stopped playing. That bat was 35 inches long, had a very thin handle, and had a lot of weight on the end of the bat. I never could figure Dad favoring a thin handled bat as Dad had big hands with long fingers and I figured that his fingers would dig into the palms of his hands. His fingers did dig into his hands, and he would have crescent shaped marks on his palms after playing with that bat, but he still felt that that was the bat for him. Later in life Dad favored a skinny, lighter blue aluminum bat that I had purchased. I never could stand that bat myself, but Dad was very loyal to that particular bat. That was the bat he used on the playground of the Green school the last time he played baseball. The rubber grip was coming loose, but still that was the bat for him.

Dad wasn't too particular about balls either. If we had a lot of room to play, and enough players to cover the field then he would favor a lively ball so he could flatter himself about how far he could drive a ball. But if we had a confined space or only a few players, then he preferred a dead ball so it wouldn't go sailing out of the field. There was many a day in the first few days of spring when Dad was as wild as a March hare with his hitting and I would spend as much time climbing 6

foot fences as I would playing ball. Dad would say, "Son of a Bee!, not again!", as he would swing his bat into the ground after hitting another ball over the side fence as he fouled the ball for the umpteenth time in a row. Dad himself would climb over the 6 foot fence repeatedly when he was better than 60 years old when he would have one of those days when most balls went foul.

Dad would do his share of fielding too, although batting was his great love. Dad was a good fielder and he was very good at running backwards while looking over his shoulder at the ball. He was good at judging high flies and line drives and after a warm up in the spring he would seldom drop the ball. When he would drop one, he would be very upset with himself. Dad lost his pants after every run he would have to stop and hitch his pants back up again. One day Dave Gamache, Dad's nephew, got out of his car on Diamond and went to the fence of the ball field to say hello to Dad. He said he knew Dad when he hitched, his pants as no one hitched his pants quite like Dad did. Dad did his share of slipping and sliding in the mud in the spring, too. It seems that there was forever a mud puddle to duck in those days and one often ended running right through it in an effort to catch that ever elusive baseball. Dad slipped into a few of those puddles, but not nearly as often as I had.

Dad seldom hit me with the ball when I was pitching to him, but unfortunately, I cannot say the same when he pitched to me. Dad was the best pitcher in the family and I thoroughly enjoyed hitting Dad's pitches, although at the time, I did my share of complaining to him about his pitching when I could not get a hold of the ball. In truth, it usually was not his pitching that was at fault.

Dad had such bony knees, which we always jokingly, called his "fish belly whites" as his legs were so white and so skinny, like the belly of a fish. However, on the front of his shins there was never an ounce of meat, just very thin skin over bone. I would invariably hit those dear, tender shins during the course of my batting on those fresh, breezy spring Sundays. And I would feel so bad and so guilty as his skin would split, the leg would bleed, he would be in agony and those poor legs would take forever to heal. His shins were full of fresh scars from his boyhood to his dying days. Dad was lightening fast with his reflexes, so I never hit him anyplace other than his shins as his glove hand would fly up and catch the ball speeding towards him. It was just those bad bounces that would get him time after time. He always had a sense of humor over his wracked up shins, fortunately, and would always make a joke over his new scars.



Mickey



Edward



Mickey

Nancy

Dad wanted all of us kids to play ball with him, which we did. Mike and Nancy were the first of his kids to play, later followed by Sandy and Doug. In later years Warren also joined in on occasion, hopping over the back fence on Saar. 2 year old Craig hung on the 6 foot back fence and bawled because he wanted to play too but was too little.

Springtime was kite flying weather and Dad could always be talked into putting a kite up before playing ball. Dad was good at putting up kites and he would make a science out of setting up the string on the kite and figuring how big of a tail was needed. Dad would bring fist fulls of rags with him to make sure he had enough to make a good tail in a high wind. We used to bring 2 or 3 balls of string so we would have the highest kite in the area. Dad would soon tire of kite flying after we got it way up high and would then turn to the serious business of playing baseball.

### **8 MILE & SCHOENHERR**

From 8 Mile and Hoover, Dad next worked at a store at 8 Mile and Schoenherr, which Baxter shared with a furniture company. Dad kind of liked that store, although nothing like he did his own store. But he would get so aggravated at another salesman stealing his customer. Dad would work at all of these stores from 9:30 AM to 9:00 PM, 6 days per week. Dad hated the salesman's job, but he was unwilling to risk another \$10,000 capital to start his own business again. Dad drove back and forth to this store in his green Opel. One day he took his Opel to the dealer for an oil change and when he started driving home that night he thought his engine sounded kind of loud. When he was half way home the car overheated. He was furious when he discovered that the dealer had forgot to put oil in the car and he was driving his car with a bone dry engine! These were the days when I started Wayne State University and Dad bought me a 1954 Chevy, which bitterly disappointed me as I felt that

the car was a dog, which it did turn out to be. I felt that I was a real poor driver as I had a horrible time keeping the car on the road. One day Dad had a business meeting at Grand Blvd. and Mt. Elliott and decided to take Mom and I for the ride. Dad decided to take my car to see how it drove. Dad was horrified when he drove my car as he found out the reason I couldn't keep it on the road was that the rocker arm was broken and half of the steering mechanism failed to work. That car gave Dad fits that night. That car also had another rotten trait. At home it would start up and drive anywhere. But just try to restart it when it was still warm. Forget it! You were stuck for several hours before it would start again. Around Christmas time Dad took me to car lots on Gratiot and 8 Mile and we settled on a cream colored 1959 Opel. The fenders were rusted through and bondoed, but we liked that car anyway, so Dad bought it for \$599.00. When we traded in my old car we had to keep the car running so the guy wouldn't find that it didn't start again. But the guy knew something was strange when I left the car running all that time. That was the only car I ever traded in to a dealer, as that car would have been impossible to sell privately. The funny thing about my Opel was that Dad and I discovered that the keys to our two cars were interchangeable. Dad liked my Opel and often drove my cream one and left me his green one to drive to work.

### ***THE BLANKET***

We had very bitterly cold winters those first years on Diamond and we didn't have the wind protection that the close houses and the garages afforded on Alter Road and we did not yet have a garage, so Dad had to figure out some way to make the car start in the morning. Dad finally settled on putting an electric light that mechanics use to work on cars at the bottom of the engine and put a blanket on the top of the engine, making sure that the blanket and the light were far enough apart. One night it was bitterly cold outside and Dad was tired to the bone, so he asked Bill to put the blanket on and cautioned him about the blanket and the light not touching. But Bill just slopped it together any old way to get it done and get in out of the cold. We all went to bed and about 1 AM I heard the door bell. I woke up from a sound sleep and couldn't figure out who that might be at this hour. I jugged out of bed, threw on a robe and went to the door. It was a well dressed woman who told me that our car was on fire in the driveway. I bolted out of the house, ran to the car, saw that it was indeed on fire, ran back into the house, ran up the stairs, hollering, "DAD!, DAD!" all the way up. Dad, full of sleep, got out of bed, came into the hall and asked me why I was hollering. I told him my cream colored Opel was on fire. Dad put his winter coat on and dashed into the driveway. I called the fire department and then ran into the driveway to help him. Dad had a

blanket with him and he pulled up the hood of the car to smother the fire with the blanket. When he pulled the hood up, the fire burst into an inferno. Dad took the delivery blanket that was in his hand and the one on the car and smothered the flames with the two blankets. The fire was almost all out by the time the fire department came 5 minutes later. Dad was so relieved that he had prevented the fire from spreading to the gas in the tank and subsequently exploding as all that Dad could think of was that Mike was sleeping just inside the wall, and he was so afraid that Mike might die if there was an explosion. Dad kept hollering at me to get away from the car in case it blew up, but never at any time did Dad give a moment's thought to his own safety. His only goal was to protect his children and his home from destruction. The firemen were upset over the light, which Dad had tried to conceal, but it mattered not whether they saw the light or not as Dad had no insurance on the car. When the excitement was all over and the fire now gone, my only concern was to get Dad indoors as it was 12 below zero out there and I was afraid he might get frost bite. When we got Dad into the living room I was horrified at what I saw. Dad's two hands were badly burned, especially the fingers which were actually black! Dad's face was burned and his eyelashes were singed off. Dad's hair was also burned. I managed to get Dad's car started after praying fervently that it would as Dad was now in pain from his burns and I wanted to get him to the hospital as fast as I could to get him patched up. The doctor at St. Joseph's cut off a lot of the black skin from the fingers, cleaned them thoroughly and applied antibiotics to the fingers and then wrapped them good. They fixed up his facial burns and sent him home. Dad was in pain with his fingers for quite a while afterwards. He soaked his fingers every night and they soon got better. Dad took the car to the Opel dealer in Pontiac and it took them over 1 month to repair all the burned out wiring.

### **CASEY**

Casey was a big bold black cat that belonged to Mrs. Lutfy next door. That cat would sooner walk over you than around you. He would spend hours in the middle of the night on our back fence serenading an orange cat and none of us could sleep until I would go outside and start throwing things at Casey until he picked another fence to yowl on. One morning in the pitch black at 12<sup>o</sup> Dad was trying desperately to start the Opel, without much success. Dad was so frustrated and angry, when suddenly we were scared to death. Something big and black flew over our fence and landed on the hood of Dad's car and slid into the windshield with a big loud PANG! It was enough to wake the dead at that hour! We jumped out of our skins, then investigated to see what it was. Yup, you guessed it! It was none other than Casey! Dad grimaced, and said, "That

damn bold cat!", then proceeded to again try to start the car. 3 minutes later Dad jumped out of skin again. Something pounced on his shoulder! Yup, Casey again! He went from Dad's shoulder, walking as calm as you please right down Dad's arm and onto the steering wheel, and then was gone. Dad sat there motionless, and after it was all over, said, "Can you beat that?" "That sure is some cat" As much as Dad hated cats, he grew rather fond of oddball Casey after that episode.

### ***MIGHION'S***

Every Saturday for years on Diamond Dad would get home at 9:45, and come rain, snow or ice, we would all pile in his car and go to Mighion's, a restaurant in Mt. Clemens where they sold broasted chicken for \$3.49. Dad would order two orders of chicken with delicious little skinny french fries. We would all order a malt and would then share the chicken. I remember many a freezing Saturday night where we would keep our coats on as it was too dang cold to take them off even in the restaurant. We loved those trips to Mighion's as that was the best broasted chicken outside of Henney Penney's on Warren and Maryland. I can still see where we would park our car on the side or in the back and how we would be so cold we would just hate to get out of that warm car. We used to drive the Opel and then the 1966 red Plymouth Valiant there. Suddenly, one year, many years later, Dad asked Mom, "Why did we ever stop going to Mighion's for chicken on Saturday nights?". No one was ever able to answer that question. None of us really knows why we quit such a happy family tradition. We can no longer go back there anymore as Mighion's changed hands and they no longer serve that good chicken any longer.

### ***HENNEY PENNEY'S***

Our family decided to go back to Henney Penney's one more time around the holidays to see if we still liked that chicken better than Mighion's. Again, it was very cold and snowy out and we kept our coats on as it was chilly in Henney Penney's. Henney Penney's was basically a carry out store, but they had put two sit down booths in so we ordered the chicken and sat down. We waited a long time and finally they served up our chicken. We paid for it at the carry out counter and then ate it at the booth. The chicken was good, but not near as good as it used to be in the bygone years when we lived on Alter. There was one very traumatic event that day. Dad's front tooth, which he had knocked clear out of his mouth as a kid and had shoved it right back into the socket and it grew back in place, had just recently turned brown colored and while he was eating the chicken the tooth broke in half in a jagged

mess. Dad had that tooth capped, and it looked really nice, but the tooth was made too long and the extra length always bothered Dad.

### **MIDNIGHT MASS**

One year when we were celebrating Christmas at Nancy's house we decided to go to Midnight mass. Don and Mick thought that that was a really dumb idea, and they stayed at home while we went. Nancy's kids and Doug were asleep. Mom, Dad, Nancy and I went to St. Matthias church. Dad was really pleased about going to Midnight mass as he liked going to Church. But the lateness of the hour soon caught up with Dad. Dad was always so, so tired from working those long hours and when he would come home Mom would give him a bowl of ice cream and turn on Mannix for him or some other detective story and Dad would fall asleep over his bowl of ice cream. Dad would always say that he didn't know why, but ice cream always put him right to sleep. Well, Dad didn't fare much better at midnight mass. He loved listening to the choir before mass, but once the mass started and the church was half way quiet, his eyelids became very heavy and his shoulders started to droop. While the priest was reading the epistle in a rather monotone tone of voice, I saw Dad droop forward. I smiled at how tired he was. Then I saw him slouch even further forward and finally I was ready to catch him as he was slumped so far forward that his head was almost touching his knees. I was afraid that his head would hit the pew in front of him. Suddenly, Dad let out a big loud snore! I almost burst out laughing! The snore was so loud that Dad woke up and looked around, as if to see where the noise came from! Mom and I still laugh about that one. Dad also took 40 winks a few times at Sunday mass due to his overwhelming fatigue from his long hours of work.

### **CRAIG**

When Nancy was 4 months pregnant with Craig, she, Donna and I went to Rochester Park to climb the hills. Donna fell half way down the hill as she had lost her footing. Her cry was so pathetic that Nancy raced down the hill to be with her and soon found she was out of breath and in a little pain from running that fast while pregnant. One day about a week before Craig was born nothing would do but that Nancy had to go out shopping, so she called Mom and asked her to come with her to go to Topps Dept store. Mom told her she was nuts to go out on a day like today as a big snowstorm was forecast. Nancy told her not to worry, that they would be back home before the first snowflake fell. After a big argument, Mom agreed to go, but against her better judgment. Nancy spent a lot of time at Topps and when they left the store, the

white stuff was flying. Nancy found that she could drive only very slowly as the road was very slick and full of drifting snow. By the time she got to the garden supply store at 19 & Van Dyke, Nancy was totally exhausted and scared to death as cars were sliding out of control all over the place. So Nancy pulled onto this parking lot, went in the store and called Mick to come pick up her and Mom as she was too scared to drive. Mick's answer was, "Shit! I have a brand new car which I am smart enough to leave in the garage where it belongs and you are so stupid as to drive on a frivolous errand down to 13 Mile and now you want me to risk smashing my new car to pick you up. Damn!"



Nancy was very sick through most of this pregnancy and alternated between laying on the couch and running to the bathroom and heaving. Nancy begged Dr. Finn for anti nausea medication, but Dr. Finn was afraid to give it to her, as there was recent controversy over this medication causing birth defects. But he had to give her several shots of the stuff to settle her stomach. About one week before Craig was born it was snowing to beat the band and Nancy had to go grocery shopping so she got her little red valiant out of the garage and as she pulled down the end of the driveway, the car would not drive the slight incline in the street and Nancy assumed she wasn't getting anywhere because of the ice on the road so she just kept gunning and rocking the car to get it loose. Her neighbor came over to help and found the source of the trouble. Nancy had left her emergency brake on and by doing all that gunning of the car against the emergency brake she had worn out the back brakes. Don was charitable and didn't say too much to her, but just went and got them fixed. On the 18th of January, 1965 Don called Mom and asked if she would babysit Warren, Linda and Donna as Nancy was in labor. I drove Mom over to Don's house, Don and Nancy were long gone as they bolted out of the house after calling Dr. Finn and telling him to meet them at the hospital as Craig was coming even faster than the other kids did. I immediately left for home again after Mom opened Nancy's door and got back into bed, figuring I'd see Mom the next

afternoon after I got back from college. I had no sooner got comfortable in bed than the front door opened! It was Mom, with Don in tow! I couldn't believe it! Don hadn't had enough time to get to the hospital and back, and here he is in our living room! Craig was coming so fast that Don drove 80 miles per hour down Canal road to the hospital in Mt. Clemens, raced Nancy into the emergency room, with Nancy hollering, "The bay is coming right now, I can feel his head coming!" The nurse's aide, a real nice black woman, pushed Nancy into the elevator, and pushed for the 3rd floor for the maternity ward, Nancy still hollering that the baby is coming right now! The nurse's aide started ripping the clothes off and Nancy saying that if the elevator stops to let someone on she will just die! As soon as she got to the floor, Craig made his appearance, ushered into the world by two nurses aides. Craig made it, but Dr. Finn didn't. He hung up the phone, full of sleep and promptly forgot that he got a telephone call and fell back to sleep. Nancy had a name all picked out as we had hashed that one out several weeks before. We all decided that we liked Craig better than Robert for a boy and Nancy was set on calling the child Deborah if it was a girl. There is a funny story about that one too. About a week before she had Craig Nancy called me up frantic, as she was sure it was going to be a girl that day (on different days she was sure it would be a boy) and said that if it was a girl she would name it Deborah, but it just dawned on her that she wasn't sure how to spell Deborah. She didn't want to appear stupid to the nurse by not knowing how to spell the name she was giving to her child. She wrote down the spelling and then rested much easier.

### ***CHURCHILL, CRAIG & THE DOWNTOWN BUS***

When Craig was born they immediately tested his blood for the Rh factor as they were expecting him to be affected as Nancy had Rh-blood and there had been some exchange of antibodies between Donna and Nancy when Donna was being born. When Craig was first born there were no discernible problems with his blood. However, after a day or two a very serious blood factor started to develop. The doctor told Don and Nancy that they would give Craig a complete blood exchange, but there was a good chance that he might not survive in spite of the blood exchange. Nancy was so upset that after Craig had the initial blood exchange and was stabilized, she went home to be with her family and went to the hospital every day to visit Craig. Craig lost weight and was now down to 4 lbs. and some ounces. Dad prayed for Craig continually, all day every day, asking the Lord to spare his life. I remember coming home on the downtown bus after working in the David Stott bldg all day for Dr. Sternberg

and wondering in the darkness of the bus if Craig would outlive Churchill, who was dying at the time, or if Churchill would outlive little Craig. It was such a tense, uncertain time for all of us. This is the first time since Dad lost all his brothers and sisters that our family was faced with the prospect of losing a baby. Dad knew the pain of losing an infant to the Rh factor, which we did not, and that made him pray all the harder for God's mercy on this little infant. I remember taking Nancy to the hospital one afternoon and looking with her at that pathetic little infant laying in the bassinet and wondering and hoping that he would make it. All we could do at that point was stare at him, and pray. Nancy looked at him and the tenseness of the situation was unbearable for her. Suddenly, Nancy turned to me and said, "You know, I have never heard my baby cry. I don't want him to die and never have had the chance to hear him cry." Nancy then tapped on the nursery glass and got the attention of one of the nursery aides. She told the aide, "I have never heard my baby cry, can he cry?" and the aide replied, "of course, he has cried here on and off when something displeases him." Nancy then said, "I know this sounds awful for a mother to say, but can you pinch him or something to make him cry so I can hear his cry?" The aide smiled and said, "Of course." But before the aide could do anything to Craig, he started wiggling around in his bassinet, started making faces, and then let out a pathetically weak little cry. Nancy was overjoyed when she heard his little squeaky cry. It was as though this cry signaled the turning point in his health, because as he cried, the yellow disappeared from his face and he turned a real pink color. As the days went on, Craig gained in health and strength. And silently, but diligently, his grandpa Bender stormed the gates of heaven with his prayers for his infant grandson Craig.

### ***PLASTIC BONES***

When Nancy first took Craig home from the hospital, she wouldn't let anyone hold him. She just sat there and held the lightest little bundle that was ever born into our family and was afraid to let go of him. When I finally did get to hold him a day or so later, I named him "Plastic bones" as he was so light you'd swear he had no bones in him, or at best, plastic ones.

## ***BILL GRADUATES***



bill Bender

Bill had a rough time in school, but finally the big day came - he graduated from Utica High school in 1966. All through high school he belonged to the Civil Air Patrol along with his buddy Frank Alfter. Edward faithfully drove Bill and his friends to the meetings. This picture is by far the nicest picture ever taken of Bill. It was his high school graduation picture. Sandy drove him up to the high school to have this picture taken. Sandy said she just knew what a fine picture this would turn out to be as he looked so handsome and had just a proud, serene look on his face that day.

## ***THE ARMY***



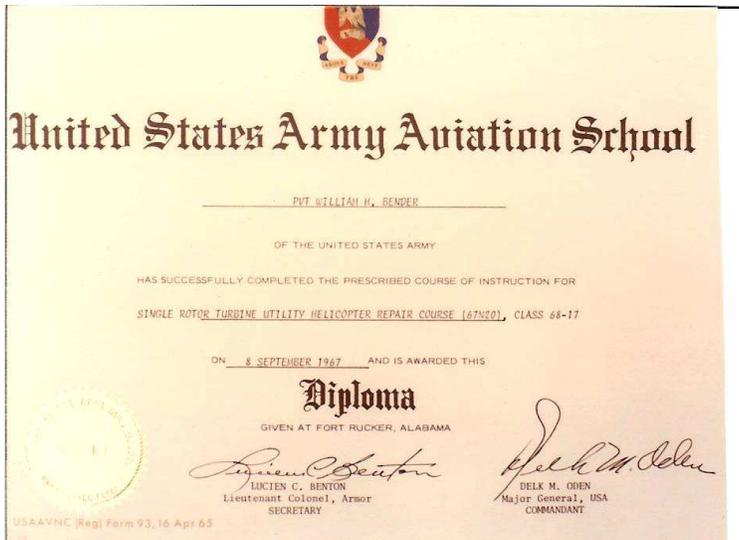
Edward & Bill Bender on Diamond

In 1967, the year after Bill graduated from high school, there was a raging war going on in Vietnam. Dad was quite anxious for the safety of his sons and figured that we could get them out of the service one way or the other, like he did for his brother Norm. Bill dropped the remark to Dad that he had gone to several branches of the service, trying to join up. Dad was so upset he was fit to be tied. He told Bill how

foolish it would be to join up and get shot when he had enough medical problems to keep him out of the service. Dad told him to get a decent job and settle down into the routine of working. Bill had had a packer's job at Farmer Jack's for 9 months now and was doing very well except for the one incident where a fellow packer swung a tire iron at Bill and Dad happened to come along just then to pick up Bill and he swiftly diffused that situation. One day about 2 months later, after Bill had been rejected by every branch of service, Bill came home and announced to Dad that he had joined the Army and would be going to basic training in a few months. Dad looked like he was drained of blood when he heard this and he just looked at Bill and said, "oh no!". Bill was proud of joining up and was determined to go to war. Bill had watched every war movie ever put on T.V. or the show and now he wanted to see live action.



Doug, Marie & Bill at boot camp in Alabama



Bill's diploma as a helicopter repairman

Mom and Dad went to visit Bill at boot camp in Alabama with Doug and then Bill came home for a furlough before being sent to Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. Dad was sick over the thought, wondering if he would ever see Bill alive again. Bill had quit his job at Farmer Jack's and had given Mom the use of his white Valiant. Mom had just learned to drive and she was happy to have her own means of transportation, but not at the expense of seeing Bill go off to war. We all took Bill to Metropolitan airport and fearfully watched him board the plane to Vietnam. What was foremost in all of our minds that day was would we ever see Bill alive again, or was this our last glimpse of him as he walked straight ahead onto the airplane without so much as looking back at us once. He went, very erect, looking straight ahead. Mom got letters very regularly from Bill in Vietnam. Every time she got a letter she felt better, knowing that as of last week, he was still okay. All of a sudden the letters stopped coming. Mom thought that maybe they were bunching them up and were going to send them all at once, which sometimes happened.

Around 9 PM one evening the phone rang. Mom answered it. Mom said, "what?" "I can't understand you". "What?" Just a minute, I'll let you speak to my daughter. Mom said to me, "It's a foreigner on the phone who sounds very far away. Her English is very poor and I can't understand her. Please talk to her and see what she is trying to say." I took the phone and immediately realized that I was talking to a phone operator in Japan! She said that Bill was on the other end of the phone and that he could talk to us for only 3 minutes, as that is all the Red Cross would pay for. I gave the phone back to Mom, and told her it was Bill. Bill told Mom that he had been injured many weeks back, had been in a hospital in Saigon, was now transferred to Japan, and would be there for awhile longer. Bill was kept there for weeks and then transferred to Bethesda Naval hospital in Maryland.

### **BETHESDA**



Bill, Marie & Ed at Bethesda Naval Hospital

As soon as Bill was transferred to Bethesda, Mom Dad and I got into Dad's car and drove to Maryland to assess the seriousness of Bill's condition and to visit with him for a week. That was a very nice vacation for Mom, Dad and I as the temperature was in the 60's the whole week in spite of the fact that it was only mid March. Bill was not allowed to be with us during the day as he had a work detail to perform at the hospital, taking out the trash. Physically Bill was now okay, but mentally, he was very, very nervous. He was like a cat in a cage at the zoo, he had to move constantly. He had no powers of concentration and flitted from one subject to another, carrying on a conversation, but having no interest in what was being said. At 5 PM we would pick Bill up, take him sightseeing, to dinner and then he would stay with us in the motel overnight. We all enjoyed seeing the mountains of Virginia, but Bill was no longer soothed by Dad's wise counsel as we had all been in moments of uncertainty or stress. Bill would forever more be beyond the reach of any of us to alter his life style. Bill never got over being haunted by anxiousness and depression for the rest of his days.

## ***DODGE SWINGER***



When Bill got out of the service Sandy and Marie helped Bill fight for disability pension, which after a long battle he succeeded in obtaining. One of the first things he did with his new found money was to buy a 440 Dodge Swinger. The engine was so big it hung out of the top of the hood of the car. Edward was very displeased with this purchase as he felt that Bill was a poor driver and could hurt himself or others. Bill was a wild man in that car. Bill's buddies always called Bill "Wild Willy". Ed always worried for his son's safety.

Bill got really mad at Ed one day as Sandy had 8 home calls to make and her car was in the repair shop, so Ed told Bill he had to lend her his Swinger. Sandy brought it back in one piece, but was scared of driving it as it did 40 mph in first gear and took off like a rocket when the clutch was popped.

## ***KELLY'S***

Baxter started getting into some questionable deals, and could no longer pay his taxes, so he started playing games with the revenues that should have been set aside to pay taxes. This made Dad too nervous, so Dad sent Baxter a registered letter of his resignation and was now without a means of employment. Don was working for Krazy Kelly at 12 Mile & Coolidge in Berkley, so Don talked Kelly into hiring Dad as a salesman. Dad was always very unhappy at Kelly's. He felt that the men there talked against him behind his back and that they were stealing sales away from each other. Dad didn't like some of Kelly's ways of doing business and it killed Dad to have no say in how to properly run the business. What was left of Dad's spirit after giving up his own business was totally quashed while in Kelly's employment. Dad's spirit was crushed beyond repair in these last working years of his life. From the moment he started working for Kelly's until the day he died, Dad would go to sleep, work all night in his sleep repairing radios, washers,

T.V.'s, etc. and trying to run the business differently so as not to lose his own store. After wrestling with work all night in his sleep, Dad would wake up totally exhausted and have to face 12 hours of work that day. Dad always said that the work he did all night long in his sleep was far more exhausting than what he faced in the store in his waking hours.

### ***PART TIME***

Dad was totally exhausted by the time he was 64 years old. Mom and I feared that he would fall asleep at the wheel on the way home from work and maim or kill himself as he said he could barely keep his eyes open from fatigue. We spent hours trying to convince Dad to retire, but Dad would hear nothing of retirement as he said he didn't amass enough savings and he would starve to death if he retired. We finally convinced him to sell his house to Mick, move into an apartment and live off the interest from his money plus work part time at Kelly's. That he agreed to.

### ***RETIREMENT***



Ed & Marie in Dresden Manor apartment      Ed & Marie outside Dresden apt.

Dad sold his house on Diamond to Mick, got an apartment at Dresden Manor for \$125. per month and started working for Kelly's about 3 days per week. Dad still hated it. We all thought Dad would gain a lot more vitality and start enjoying life. But he didn't. The depression that had set in upon his soul in 1961 when he gave up his business, was now indelibly stamped into his very being. He played ball with all of us, played tennis and golf, but the best we could hope for was a brief respite in the depression if he got carried away with the sport of an hour or two. But Dad really had little capacity left to even enjoy sports. Playing baseball became a rather automatic thing with him, as he no longer felt the exhilaration that he did in his middle years when he stepped out upon the ball field. On incident which he did get a big

kick out of was when we were playing ball on Dresden's playfield on the diamond closest to Nancy's house, when Warren and Linda spotted Dad, Doug, Mick and I playing and decided to join us. Warren threw his mitt over the back fence and quickly clambered over the fence to join us. Linda then did likewise. Craig, who was about 2 and in the backyard with the older kids, decided he wanted to play ball too. He begged and whined and carried on to be boosted over the fence so he could play baseball with grandpa just like the older kids were doing. But Warren and Linda kept laughing and telling Craig that he was too little and would just get hit by the ball. But Craig wouldn't hear a word of that advise, he just wanted to play. In a little while Warren and Linda were really sick of the whining and crying and were at their wits end with Craig's carrying on. They begged Nancy to take him inside so they could play in peace. Nancy figured that they had had about all they could stand of Craig's whining, and agreed to take him indoors. We all laughed at hearing Craig's pitiful last attempts at being included in the game. It was such pathetic, miserable sounding whine! I "want" to play with grandpa! Craig would moan as he was being carried against his will indoors. Dad felt real guilty about not letting him play too and on another occasion, Dad boosted Craig over the fence and let him run after slow hit grounders. The other kids were having fits over how Dad was ruining our whole game by holding us up to amuse Craig into thinking that his feeble attempts at running after the ball had anything to do with actually playing baseball. In his teenage years Craig came to visit us on Dino Circle and he wanted some practice learning how to play ball. Craig practiced with Dad and I in what turned out to be the last of the ball games that Dad would ever play with us. Dad was forced to give up baseball completely in 1977 due to his very bad heart. Dad grieved at having to give up his favorite sport, but he could feel the pain in his chest and the irregular heart beats after he exerted himself and was afraid of sudden death on the field from heart failure. So he very reluctantly and with a very heavy heart, gave up the game. Dad did watch me play for several years afterwards and thoroughly enjoyed replaying the game in his mind through my team, now that he could no longer physically join in with us.

### **TOPPS**

Dad and, I went shopping one Sunday at Topps Dept store at 13 Mile & Van Dyke and on our way out we met his sister Beatrice and her husband Ed Gamache. Bea never looked better to us than she did that Sunday. She said she felt fine and was dressed in younger looking garb than ever before. And true to Bea's usual style, she talked and talked to us for almost an hour as she had always been a very sociable person and was always interested in catching up on all the latest news. Bea had had diabetes since she was in her early 30's and was on insulin for most of her adult life. Bea had had cataract surgery however due

to a fall she suffered in her own back yard when she was blinded by the sun and could not find her way back into her house, Bea's operation was ruined and she could barely see. Bea lost all interest in life and shortly after Dad and I had seen her at Topps, she told her sister Mildred Neff that she had lost all interest in life and was ready to die. Mildred Neff was going to celebrate her 50th wedding anniversary on the 28th of November of that year (1968) and she had asked Betty to be her matron of honor again as she had been originally some 50 years before. Bea agreed to do so, but knew in her heart that this would never be as she felt the shadows of death drawing in on her life.

### ***DAD, YOUR SISTER IS LOOKING FOR YOU***

On the 8th of September, 1968 approximately at 10:30 in the morning just as I was waking up, I saw Bea, who was very confused and in distress and she said she was looking for Dad. Once I got on my feet, I realized that I had seen her ghost, so I went into Dad's room where he and Mom were painting their room and told him that his sister Bea had just died and that she was here looking for him. Dad said no, that I must be thinking of Mom's aunt Clara who had just died the May before. I told Dad again, no, that it was his sister looking for him. Less than an hour later Dave Gamache called our house and asked to talk to Dad. He told Dad that Bea had died within the hour. Dad was dumbfounded as Bea had looked so well just a short time before when we had met her at Topps. Dad was also sobered by the thought that Bea had just come looking for him right after her soul had left her body.

### ***BEA'S FUNERAL***



Beatrice Bender Gamache

Dad and all his brothers and sister were badly shaken by Bea's

death as they all realized that the handwriting was on the wall for all of them, that it would only be a matter of a short period of time before they all endured the same fate. Each looked around at the others, wondering who would be next. Art had been sick for many years and he felt very shaken by the death of his younger sister. On the day of the funeral Uncle Art was very miffed because Bea's family put Mildred Neff and Harold in front of him as someone had mistakenly assumed that she was the oldest of the surviving children. After the mass was over, Art tried to step in front of Harold and Mildred Neff to assume his rightful place in the possession. Agnes grabbed Art by the arm and told him to maintain his assigned place in line. Art was very unsteady on his feet by this time and walked like a rocking horse, teetering forward and backward. Bea's funeral mass was at Assumption Grotto and she was buried in section 0 of Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

### ***THE SHAKES***



Marie & Edward Bender in Pacey's cottage, Lion's Head cottage



Marie & Ed on hill

Dad did not have the shakes until he was about 48 years old. One night Mom, Dad, Nancy and Don went to a burlesque theatre in downtown Detroit in the winter and afterwards when Dad was walking toward his car he noticed how terribly cold it had gotten since they had gone into the theatre. Dad was thinking of how glad he would be when he got into the car as the wind was the real problem that night as it was howling terribly. Dad opened the car for Mom, Nancy and Don and then opened his door and sat down in the car. It was when he sat down that the first episodes of the "shakes" hit him like a ton of bricks. When Dad sat down he suddenly experienced severe muscle spasms from the cold that racked his entire body. He suffered from violent, uncontrollable muscle spasms from being exposed to the cold, biting wind. Dad would shake violently and scream out in excruciating pain. It would take about 20 minutes of being totally covered up and in a very warm environment before the shakes would subside. From that time on Dad was very cautious about going out in the cold as he was very fearful of getting the shakes. One time at Pacey's it was 3:30 AM and we were looking to see where Pacey

hid the key so we could get into the cottage. Both Dad and I were looking where Pacey said he hid it, but we couldn't find it. Suddenly Dad took a running dive back into the warm car as he could feel the shakes coming on. Whenever Mom would see the shakes coming on, she would wrap Dad up as warmly as possible, using blankets as she could not get a sweater on his convulsing torso and then fill him full of hot liquids such as hot water or cocoa. The liquid would bounce all over as Dad would try to get some of it down to warm his innards. The shakes seemed to me to be akin to the symptoms suffered by a person coming down with a malarial attack although Dad never had malaria.

### **LABOR DAY IN CANADA**



Marie & Ed at Grieg's cottage   Marie & Ed   Sandy & Marie on the big rock at the end

Dad, Mom, Doug, Bill and I spent at least a half dozen Labor Day weekends at Lion's Head, Canada, usually at Grieg's cottages, named the Glencoe and the Gloccamorra. Dad would get off work at 9:00 PM in the beginning and when we would go to Pacey's cottages. Then later years on we would at 6:00 PM to Grieg's Cottages. Grieg's were more deluxe cottages than Pacey's as they had fireplaces in them, were made of natural stone and had better furniture. We would get to Pacey's at 3:30 AM and to Grieg's about 12:30 midnight, on Saturday night. They would leave the cottage open or hide the key and then we would pay them the next day.

We would be very excited upon our approach to the bay and would eagerly look forward to first the Canadian border, then to Highway 7, then to Highway 21, then to Grand Bend then to Goderich, then to Kincardine, then to Kintail, Underwood, then Southampton where we stopped and had lunch with Nellie, then to Highway 6. When we would get to highway 6 we knew we were close to being there. We would cheer when we saw Wiarton as Wiarton is the gateway to the Bruce Peninsula and is an old and dear friend to all of us who love the Bruce Peninsula. Wiarton hails the beginnings of the hardy Arbor Vitae and the tall steely white Birch. It is about 40 miles south of Lion's Head. One night I stopped the car in the middle of Wiarton's main street and asked Dad if he could take over as I simply could not stay awake any longer. We used to stay awake and entertain ourselves on the ride up there by singing all of

Dad's favorite songs. He would sing 3 or 4 in a row, with much gusto and enthusiasm, and then say to Mom and I, "What shall we sing now?" Mom and I would think of one we hadn't sang yet and we would all be off on another song. Dad's favorites were: You Are My Sunshine, Wait Till the Sun Shines Nellie, Bicycle Built for Two, Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet, Casey Would Waltz With the Strawberry Blond, After the Ball is Over, I'm Waiting for Ships That Never Come In, and last, but by no means the least, Back Home in Tennessee. We would sing that one twice, with proper accent and inflection as that was Dad's favorite song. Dad and I are the only ones who ever knew all the words to that song. Mom used to tell us, "What a crazy song!" every time we would sing it. But it was Dad's song and we both loved to sing it. (Dad liked that song so well that one time when he was at a bar with Krazy Kelly's gang and had a few drinks under his belt, he jumped up on top of a table and sang his heart out, gleefully belting out this, his favorite song. No one at the bar, or anywhere else for that matter, had ever heard this song before.)



Ed



Marie, Bill & Sandy Bender



Sandy & Bill Bender

When we got to the cottage, we would pull off the top of the car all the luggage, get the bedding out of the trunk, make the beds real fast and get some sleep. Dad would have to go immediately in the cottage and mom would warm him up with hot tea and a blanket over his shoulders. Bill and I were left to bring in the loads of luggage and all of mom's kitchen, pots, pans and tons of canned food. Sandy kept going up and down the stairs and it dawned on her that she never passed Bill even once. So she checked out the cottage and sure enough, there was Bill resting comfortably on the couch! He had just come back from Vietnam and Bethesda hospital and he was just too tired to help.

The next morning we would go to church either in Lion's Head or in Wiarton, depending on when we got out of bed. The priest who came to Lion's head was an old traveling priest and Dad and Mom got a kick out of him. Afterwards we would either go exploring down the dirt roads or walk the stones. Invariable it would rain all day every day on our Labor Day weekends, but we didn't care, we had a great time anyway. We would go into an overhanging cliff area and seek shelter from the rain, then we would skip stones, seeing who could make them skip the most over the waters of Whippoorwill bay. Dad always won that contest as he could make a stone skip 7 times. Every time Dad would stand up to skip a stone, he would smash his head against the top of the cave and would

rub his head and say, "OW!". But he would then skip another stone, hit his head again, say "OW!" again, and keep having fun. The top of his head would be all skinned up by the end of the day. But he did have a great time by the water, and we dearly loved our mini-vacations over Labor Day weekend in Canada.

Mr. Grieg, the owner of Grieg's Cottages, used to give Dad and I such a kick as he would be afraid to ask for the money so he would stand outside the cottage on the stones until we would bring him the money. He was such a handsome man, he had blue eyes and white hair and was very fine featured. And there he would stand, looking at his shoes until Dad or I would run down and pay him. Sometimes we would stop by his house just on the outskirts of Lion's Head and pay him when we would get in by 11:00 PM The one thing I will never forget is Mr. Byron Grieg sitting there in his fine armchair and looking at his massive and very impressive grandfather's clock by the entrance way.

Mr. Grieg was very shy, but a warm, very likeable sort of person who didn't speak much unless spoken to. He was not the sort to be a businessman but he prospered very well in life and had an impressive net worth in his later years. He was about 70 years old at the time we knew him and he had passed away very suddenly one year while we were still going there. We all felt very saddened at his passing.

### ***CLIMBING THE CLIFF***

One day in the 1960's Dad and I decided to tackle climbing the sheer cliff that lay behind Grieg's cottages and see if we ended up in or near town on the other side of the cliff. Once we got going I wasn't too sure that taking Dad up this 30 foot cliff was such a good idea as he was now over 60 years old and his bones were probably not that supple anymore and there wasn't much to hold onto in spots on this cliff. But Dad was determined to scale it, so that's what we did. Dad was more careful than usual as he usually didn't tackle anything this precarious, but we made it to the top in less than hour. On top we were surprised to be faced with a dense forest. When we looked back down where we had just come from we quickly decided that the forest was the lesser of two evils, so off we went. Dad wasn't any too sure about this forest as neither of us had any boy scout training and we were not carrying a compass and we weren't exactly sure which way was out. But we chose a path straight ahead and foraged on. Dad and I soon discovered something that we weren't counting on, in our fascination with the project we had lost track of time and the sun was fast setting. Neither Dad nor I had any desire to be in the woods after dark. The mosquitoes were already biting and we wanted back to the safety of the cottage. We walked faster and faster, with me following Dad's lead. All of a sudden Dad fell into a snake hole up to his knee and injured his leg. But Dad said he didn't care if it was broken, he was getting out of there before dark! After walking a few hundred yards further we spotted a clearing. Fortunately

that led to the way out, and back to the cottage!

### ***ED TEASES MARIE***



Marie going fishing



Marie in boat at Johnson Harbor Ed, Marie & Bill

Ed loved to go fishing in the Lion's Head area. Marie was always very afraid of water and did not want to go into a boat. Ed would cajole Marie and would on occasion talk her into getting into a fishing boat on Lake Huron either on Johnson Harbor or Pine Tree Harbor. Marie was very nervous the entire time she was in the boat and when Ed would tease her about being afraid, she would stick her tongue out at him. Ed would pacify Marie by keeping the boat close to shore which helped in catching perch and bass in the weeds close to shore.

### ***CLOWNING AROUND***



Ed, Marie & Bill



Marie, Sandy & Bill



Marie & Ed



Ed & Marie

Ed & Marie loved to clown around on the shore of the Georgian Bay. They were always very happy while vacationing there and it showed in their actions. Marie enjoyed the clowning around as long as what we were doing was safe, but she would become very angry at us when we did something she feared, such as climbing the 40 foot cliff behind the cottage or walking across the Barrow Bay dam. "You damn fools", Marie shouted at us! In the

first picture Marie pretended she was lighting up a cigarette, which she never smoked in her whole life. In the second picture Bill and I were pretending we were pushing mom over the cliff. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> picture, Ed was the one pretending that he and Marie were having a very hard time walking on the stones.



Ed & Marie



Marie



Edward



Marie

Ed and Marie also like to clown around at home too. Most of the times it was just good fun, but it also got a little bit out of hand on occasion. The worst was when mom flung a butcher knife at Ed in the kitchen on Alter Road and hit him in the thumb, which bled profusely. Dad ran to the bathroom and put his thumb under water. Mom ran into a closet and hid, afraid that Ed was going to be furious at her. Ed thought about the look on Marie's face when that happened, then he just through back his head and laughed at the mental picture she provided. The other time was when Nancy age 15 threw a Halloween party in the basement on Alter and one of the guys got out of hand harassing Marie who was dressed up like a fortune teller and was telling fortunes to all he kids. When this one fellow harassed her she patiently waited until he went bobbing for apples, then shoved and held his head under water. Marie's costume was so good that no one guessed that the fortune teller was Marie!

### ***CALIFORNIA VISIT***



Edward & Marie Bender, Nancy Stephens and the bridge official

Nancy, Don and their children moved to California in January, 1969. Edward & Marie flew out to California to visit with their daughter Nancy in the summer of 1969. Nancy drove them around sight seeing and on their way home they had to cross over the Vincent Thomas bridge and pay the toll. At the toll booth the officials stopped Nancy's car, had her and mom and dad get out. They then informed them that they were the one millionth car to cross that bridge. They took pictures of Nancy, Ed and Marie and then presented Nancy with a plaque which said she was the one millionth car to cross that bridge.

### **CHRISTMAS 1969**

Dad's brothers Norman and Harold lived together at the Parkside Projects at Warren & Connor as Harold was retired and Norman was too sick to work any longer. Dad was shocked to see that Norman could no longer walk 4 blocks without having to stop to rest as the circulation in his legs was so bad. Norman had severe cataracts and could not go outside on a sunny day as the sun totally blinded him. Norman was proud and would not accept any charity from Dad so Dad would quietly sneak enough money to Harold every week to feed and provide for Norman. Harold was very careful with his money and would actually save money with what Dad was giving him. Dad provided Norman with clothing, telling him it was what didn't fit Dad any more. One day we picked Norman up and took him to an eye doctor downtown to see what could be done for his eyes. We stopped at Top Hat for hamburgers on the way, and Norman said he wasn't hungry, but I figured that he was embarrassed because he had no money with which to pay for a hamburger, so I got him a hamburger and a coffee anyway. He devoured the hamburger and the coffee and profusely thanked Dad for it. I always liked Norman as he had a very fun loving personality and was always good for a lot of laughs and this day was no exception. We all had a really good time together that day. Norman loved the outing and the chance to be with his favorite brother Ed for a whole afternoon. But the day had a really sad ending, for the eye doctor said that nothing could be done for Norman's failing eyes as there was a lot more wrong with his eyes than just the cataracts. The doctor told Dad that Norman had very advanced arteriosclerosis which was causing the failure of his legs and his eyes. When we got back to the apartment, I had to go into their bedroom to get something and when I saw the condition of the mattresses that they were sleeping on I was horrified so I quietly took Dad aside and told him to look at the mattresses that his two brothers were sleeping on. Dad was horrified too. So Dad picked out two good quality mattresses and put them on the top of his car. Dad told me that Bill and I should deliver them for Christmas, as Norman might feel very funny if Dad gave the mattresses personally to him. So Bill and I went over there the day or two before Christmas. I untied the mattresses before Harold or Norman saw us, then I knocked on the door and told

Harold to keep the door open. Bill and I then carried the two mattresses in and set them on Harold's and Norman's bed. Norman was so grateful to Dad for this much needed present that he almost had tears in his eyes. He said thank you over and over again to me. I was so happy to have had the opportunity to deliver the mattresses myself and see the happiness that it had instilled in the hearts of my two poor elderly uncles. I also had brought with me a complete turkey dinner, which Mom had also given to them for Thanksgiving. And it turned out that it was a feast that Christmas as Mildred Neff had also sweetened their larder a few days earlier. Dad, Mom and I went to Uncle Art's and Aunt Agnes' that Christmas too and were greatly saddened by what we saw. Uncle Art had failed terribly in the last year and he was only a shell of his former self. Dad was so touched by the condition of his brother and he embraced him before he left the house that day and said some endearing words to his brother to help warm the last days of his life here on earth. I looked around the living room of his house that day and knew that soon life would not be the same for any of us once he departed from our midst. I knew that in not too many years hence when Agnes was also gone, that I would no longer be able to drop in on this haven of friendliness and warmth and be far richer for having stopped a short while here. Looking back on that Christmas, I wonder why I didn't stop by there a lot more often than I did as I had been so enriched by every visit there. Art had so much knowledge to impart to me about the origins and history of the Becker, Ott and Bender families, and Aunt Agnes was always so warm and gracious and could always be counted on for a good meal and good, friendly conversation.

### ***THE SCREWDRIVER***

On the 9th of November, 1970, on the 26th anniversary of Henry Bender's death, Norman was in his living room in the Parkside Project repairing his T.V. set which was giving him no end of problems in the last week. Norman took the back off his set and had the screwdriver in his hand ready to remove another part in the T.V. when suddenly Norman saw something out of the corner of his eye which was moving around above his head. He looked up to see what was moving and was amazed to see that it was his own hand with the screwdriver in it! He couldn't believe his eyes! There, above his head was his hand with the screwdriver in it, doing a ballet in mid air and he had no sensation in his arm, and had no control over the ballet which was taking place before his startled eyes. He called to Harold, and by the time Harold had come into the living room, Norman decided to go to the couch and rest for a few minutes and try to figure out what was happening to him. Norman felt very unsteady while walking to the couch, and once he laid down, he started feeling far worse and had no control over moving his body, especially on one side. Harold called an ambulance and they took him to St. John's hospital at 7 Mile & Mack.

## **HEADING HOME**

Norman always had fantastic luck in life and his stay in the hospital was no exception. The doctor diagnosed his problem as being a stroke and felt that Norman's chances of long term survival were slim. Norman had been raised Catholic by a devout mother and when he was in the hospital in Bingham, New York he had asked for the priest and had set himself aright at that time. This time Norman was too much in shock to ask for a priest when he first came into the hospital as things were happening in such a peculiar way and so fast and unexpectedly. But as Norm's luck would have it, the friendliest priest that our family had ever known walked into Norman's room out of the blue the first day he was in the hospital and asked if Norman was Catholic. He asked Norman if he would like to go to Confession, and Norman said yes, but he didn't know how or where to begin. The priest started asking him leading questions and before Norman knew it, he had confessed all his sins and had received absolution. The priest then in a very friendly, non-frightening way had anointed Norman, giving him the last Rites of the Roman Catholic Church, thus preparing him for the journey home.

## **THE LAST LEG**

Norman felt so good and so relieved over having received absolution for his sins and having had the last Rites of the Church. He told everybody who came to visit him how much that had meant to him and how good he now felt. The next day the doctors decided to do an angiogram and a myleogram to see the extent of the damage. Those tests were a very had mistake for Norman to have undergone, as the dye completely blocked off the affected artery to his brain and Norman lost his senses. He barely knew who he was after that test was complete and knew only Dad, Mildred long term close relatives after that. He deteriorated at a rapid pace after those tests. He turned a grayish color, was fed mainly by I.V.'s and was delirious. He would talk about things that didn't make much sense. His eye sockets turned black and his eyes sunk into his head. He became very agitated, and would pick at his covers pulling them up and continually fingering them with one hand. He had to be restrained to keep from beating his hands against the bed rails. His ex-wife Evelyn started sitting in his room at his bedside with him every day and talking to him about their life together many years ago as if it were the present. Norman would calm right down and listen to Evelyn narrate their past life together. Thus soothed by the voices of his ex-wife and his brothers and sister, children, neices and nephews, did Norman slip away into the house of his Father, having been forgiven all his sins and the punishment due for his sins. Few fallen away Catholics have the privilege of confessing their sins, having the last Rites of the Church, and then obtaining a plenary indulgence through the reception of the Holy Viaticum, which means in Latin, taking Jesus along with you

on your last journey homeward. Norman was indeed the luckiest of the Bender children.

### ***NORMAN'S FUNERAL***



Norman John Bender

Norman died on the 9th of December, 1970, 4 days after his 57th birthday. It seemed to us at the time as though he was holding on for his birthday before passing on to the next world. While Norman was unconscious, Dad, Mom and I went over to Mt. Olivet cemetery and purchased a grave for Norman at Beatrice's feet so that Norman would be buried with family and also be buried Catholic in the same cemetery as his parents. We paid \$150. for the grave in those days. When Norman died his sons Gary and Richard went to Aunt Agnes and asked her for a recommendation as to which funeral parlor to use. Aunt Agnes recommended R.G. & G.R. Harris which was right on her corner at Harper. When I had later heard about this I was saddened that she had recommended this place as they were one of the most expensive in the area and Gary and Richard had no funds with which to bury their father, so cost was a major factor to these boys. The funeral had to be held up for a day as both boys had to go to a bank and borrow funds to bury Norman. Richard was very proud to give his father a fine funeral and it was one of the finest in our family, regardless of the hardship it created for him and his family.

**WELL, AT LEAST IT ISN'T WOOD!**



Mildred Bender Neff

The afternoon of December 10th, Norman was laid out in a fine suit which Richard had taken from his closet for Norman, Norman had one of the finest caskets available and the boys were all dressed up fine in their suits and ties and white shirts. Aunt Mildred Neff walked into the funeral parlor and Richard was genuinely pleased to see her. He went forward with a look of pleasant anticipation on his face as he approached Aunt Mildred. Mildred, however, stormed passed him and headed straight for the casket. She uttered to herself quite audibly, "Well, at least it isn't wood!" (referring to Norman's casket). Richard stepped back and asked me what had he ever done to offend Aunt Mildred? I, having a much greater understanding of Aunt Mildred's background of abject poverty and her fear that her brother was going to be buried as poorly as he had lived these past five years, was sure that the boys would bury their father in a cloth covered casket. Thus resurrecting in Mildred's mind the Bender's penniless youth, I knew the reason for her attitude, but could not in the least condone her actions and was hard pressed to offer Richard an explanation. Mildred soon simmered down, and treated Richard with much more courtesy.

***I'D KNOW THAT NOSE ANYWHERE!***



Francis Donald "Skin" Bender

Richard asked me to stand next to him in the funeral parlor and whisper to him who the people were as they came in as he had not seen his cousins in so long that he was not sure who was who. The door of the parlor would open, I'd whisper the person's name and Richard would go up and greet the person. It was working out like a charm – no embarrassment and everyone felt welcomed. Suddenly, Francis Donald Bender, the son of Art and Agnes, walked into the funeral parlor. I was about to whisper his name when Richard bolted away from me and went running to greet Skin. He told Skin as he said a warm hello, "I'd know that nose anywhere!"

***BLUE EYES AND BLOND HAIR***

On the second evening of the wake, Richard took me aside in the back of the funeral parlor and asked me if I had noticed that other than Bill and myself and him, none of the other Bender children had blond hair and that none of the Bender children other than himself had blue eyes. I was shocked at this question as it was common knowledge in the Bender family that Norman was not his biological father and was shocked to realize that apparently he had never been told this fact. I told him that Grandpa Bender had blue eyes as I was not about to tell him such a bombshell at a time like this, with Norman in the casket and a \$1500. bank loan hovering over his head.

**PENSIVE, SOBER & SADDENED**



Art Bender

Uncle Art sat on the sofa on the east side of the funeral parlor, looking very drawn, wizened, and obviously feeling rather pensive, sober, and saddened over the death of his baby brother. Art had failed a great deal in the past year and no one knew better than he that his time was about nigh. Aunt Agnes was greatly saddened at Art's condition, because although Art had never treated her well in their life together, Agnes became close to and fond of him in their retirement years together. Her kindness to him more than made up for his lack of consideration and kindness toward her. As the family all looked around at each other a second time, most felt that Art would indeed be the next one to go. Art felt so too.

**ART**

Art suffered a series of heart attacks that year and was greatly brought down in stature and strength by this continuous assault on his body. Finally he could withstand no more and three days before his 75th birthday, he succumbed to death. Art had the nicest looking casket of oak that I had ever seen and I was shocked to learn that the oak casket was even cheaper than the metal one. I made a mental note that our family would use the oak casket when the time came. Art had a very fine funeral in an inexpensive funeral home (Kileen) at Chalmers near St. Juliana Church. I was saddened that Aunt Agnes had not recommended this funeral parlor to Norm's sons the year before. All of Art's card playing buddies showed up to give their last respects. They were very saddened at his passing as they had a genuine affection for him and respected his prowess as a card shark. Knowing how loud, boisterous and genuinely obnoxious Art could become when he was in the heat of card playing, I asked one of his card playing friends what it was like to play cards with Art. The man rolled his eyes toward Art in the casket, said, "sorry, Archie", and then proceeded to tell how Art was a very poor loser, would challenge a player on any rule that did not sound right to him and would spend hours perusing through the Hoyle book looking for the

correct answer, and would bring the Hoyle book with him to the next card playing session, properly marked as to the appropriate rule and would give their right ruling whether he had been right or wrong in his challenge the previous week. And could Art ever become angry when his partner made a stupid play! The man would never here the end of it. Only the best of the bridge players dared to play with Art.

### ***HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!***

Carol and Lou brought their two boys who were about 5 and 2 to the funeral the evening of October 10th. Lou carried the two year old in his arms and Carol led the 5 year old by the hand up to the casket. The 2 year old looked at Art with big eyes, started talking to Art and as Lou started carrying him away as people were looking at the two year old who was talking to his grandpa as though he were still living, the little guy started singing Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday, dear grandpa Bender, happy birthday to you. Some of the mourners thought it was amusing and some of them started to cry. Lou whisked him out of the room.

### ***SWEETEST DAY, 1971***



Nancy was visiting us here in Michigan in October, 1971 with Craig when Dad came home at 9:45 PM on a Saturday. He presented Nancy, Mom, and I with Sweetest Day cards. None of us had even remembered that it was Sweetest Day and we all thought that that was so thoughtful of Dad. Dad said he had eaten his lunch in the dime store across the street and he had seen the advertisement for Sweetest Day and he realized that this was Sweetest Day so he decided to buy each of us a Sweetest day card.

## ***NERVOUS HABITS***

Two of Dad's nervous habits that he had since the day Mom had met him were jingling the coins in his pockets and hitching up his pants with his arm. I must have heard Mom say 500 times to Dad in my lifetime (with an irritated look on her face), "Stop jingling your coins!". As for hitching up his pants, Dad either had to hitch them up or lose them as his hip was not in proper alignment due to being run over by a car as a youngster so that hip slanted inwards and was not available to hold up his pants.

Later in life Dad started drumming his fingers on the arm of the chair when watching T.V.. At the time it would drive me wild, but now I would give anything to hear those fingers drum again. Another habit that came in his later years was shaking his legs while driving in or riding in the car. But this was due to physical problems as his circulation was impaired and his legs would go very numb unless he shook them to increase the flow of blood to them.

One last habit that occurred only in the last few years was that Dad would suck against his top front teeth after eating as one of the teeth was a cap and Dad always felt that there was food stuck in his front teeth.

Since Dad was born until the day he died he could not sit still for very long but had to keep doing something to keep busy. When he was younger he would take care of business in the store all week and would play baseball or football or tennis on Sunday to relieve some pent up energy. In his later years he would go for walks with Taffy every day when he could sit no longer.

## ***VISITS TO MICHIGAN***

Nancy moved to California in 1969, but returned on an average of every other year to visit us here in Michigan. The first 8 years she came with Craig, but after that Craig remained in school while Nancy came alone. Craig came alone on two occasions too. Nancy would sleep in one of Mom & Dad's spare bedrooms and she would visit with all of us for about a week before having to return home to California. Nancy would go with us to Rochester park and to Mighions on Saturday night. We would all have a good dinner around Mom's supper table and when Dad came home we would all join in for a dish of ice cream.

## **MIKE'S GARAGE FIRE**



Mike & Taffy in front of garage



Doug & Tuffy with the Ford Falcon

Mike bought Ed and Marie's house at 11284 Diamond in Sterling Heights. Edward and Marie moved into the Dresden Manor apartments on Canal Road. Doug moved back from California and lived with Mike. On Marie's birthday we were all celebrating her birthday at their apartment when we got a frantic call that someone had set Mike's garage on fire. We all drive over there and watched the garage burn. There was no electricity in the house as the electric wire burned. We were frantic for fear that the house might catch on fire and our little cockapoo Taffy was in the house. Sandy walked into the pitch black house and started calling for Taffy. She wouldn't come. Sandy called frantically, still no Taffy. Suddenly Sandy heard Taffy's dog tag clink against Mike's table next to the couch. Sandy dove under the table and pulled Taffy out, and carried her to the safety of her car out on Delvin. Doug's Ford Falcon station wagon which he bought from Jack Stephens in California perished in the fire. Doug started to run in after the car but the neighbor, Russ Clayton told Doug not to run into the fire. The fire flashed a minute later and Doug would have been badly burned. Doug loved that Falcon, feeling it was one of the best cars he owned, so he was sick that he lost that car due to a fire bug down the street. Bill's brand new motorcycle was also incinerated. Sandy lost her new golf clubs, bag and cart. The fire we later found out was started by a junior high boy who lived catty corner across the street on Diamond near the bend going to Saar. It was an utterly senseless attack as we were total strangers and that kid had no issues against any of us.

## DAILY WALKS WITH TAFFY



Edward Bender



Doug Bender & Taffy

Edward always took daily walks around Dresden Village, summer and winter, with his little dog, Taffy. Ed was very friendly to everyone he met, including the little kids playing on the sidewalk. Ed would smile, say hello and give the little kid a pat on the head. Marie warned Ed about being friendly with kids and after the garage fire Marie was very worried about Ed walking through the village every day as the fire bug burned down another couple of garages in the neighborhood and Marie was afraid of there being suspicion thrown on Ed. But there were no negative repercussions and Ed continued his daily walks without incident. After Ed retired he continued to dress in a white shirt and tie and sometimes even with a suit coat on as is seen in the above picture.

## GOLFING



Marie & Edward golfing



Sandy

Edward loved to golf. In the 1950s he and his brother Norman went to Chandler Park golf course before 7 am, hopped the fence and played a round of golf before going to work. In the 1960s and 1970s Edward went golfing with Sandy and Marie. Marie could not golf well so Ed and Marie played "kangaroo golf" where Ed would hit the ball, then Marie would hit the same ball and Sandy would hit her own ball. Then Ed and Marie's score was added up together and compared against Sandy's. Naturally Ed would have preferred to play by himself, but he did get enjoyment out of being able

to play with Marie. Ed had a mean hook to his ball as he tended to swing the club like it was a baseball bat. One time a guy hit his ball into Ed's fairway. Ed told him to go ahead and play. The man insisted that Ed shoot first. Ed refused, the guy refused and finally to break the stand off Ed shot first, but he first told the guy to get into the trees so Ed's ball wouldn't hit him.. Ed shot a mean hook, the ball hit the tree in front of the other guy, ricocheted backwards right next to the guy's head, then forward, then backward even closer to the guy! Boy, was he and Ed ever shook up!

### ***DAD'S FIRST HEART ATTACK***



Edward Bender

A major change took place in Dad's life in 1972, about the year he retired from Kelly's. Dad had a gall bladder attack and we rushed him to St. Joseph's hospital East in Mt. Clemens. Dr. Kolak, an internist took care of Dad while he was in the hospital. Dr. Kolak decided to treat the gall bladder conservatively and try to avoid gall bladder surgery if at all possible. The pain subsided and the doctor felt that surgery could be avoided. Dad started feeling better and was begging Mom and I to bring him his metamucil and other natural laxatives that he was used to taking at home. We refused to bring these without the doctor's okay as we felt that it might bring on another gall bladder attack. Dad got very restless in the hospital, and he decided that a little exercise is what he needed at this point in his life. But as was often the custom with Dad, he overdid it. Dad decided to run up and down the stairway on the east end of the hospital for exercise. He ran up and down three flights of stairs continuously as fast as his legs would carry him. Up and down he went, with greater and greater speed, till he could hardly catch his breath. He went to his room when he could hardly breathe from the exertion. He sat down in his bed, quite satisfied with his little bout of exercise. After about 15 minutes, he felt very constipated and on 4 or 5 tries over the next hour he strained mightily trying to go to the bathroom, but to no avail. He was exhausted and very upset over this constipation. After

being very worn out and nervous, he sat down in bed. Suddenly he got a horrible pain in his chest that radiated upwards into his jaw. He said it grasped his jaw like a vise and felt like his jaw was going to break. Suddenly, he started losing consciousness. The last thing he saw was the room swimming around above him and felt sucked into a deep black void like when he was a kid in his bathroom. His roommate called a nurse, who came running in. The fast thinking of the nurse saved Dad's life. She shot adrenalin and epinephrine into Dad's veins and got his heart pumping regularly again. Dad was taken down to intensive care unit and Mom got a call from the doctor about 9 PM. Mom and I were told not to go to the hospital as visiting hours were now over and Dad was now out of danger. Mom and I went to visit Dad every opportunity we got. I worked in Mt Clemens and went to see Dad on every one of the visiting hours, which were only for 10 minutes a piece. Dad was on a gurney in a big room with about 7 other people. Dad's biggest concern was that they wanted him to use the urinal in bed, which he refused. He said he couldn't go unless he had his feet on the ground. The nurse refused to let the side rails down and let Dad stand up, so Dad got so irate over being told what he could and could not do, that he jumped over the guard rail almost overturning the gurney, grabbed the urinal and went standing up. From then on Dad was allowed to stand up to go. They figured that it was better to let him have his own way than to treat him for a skull fracture.

Although visiting time was short, Dad and I talked over many important things in his life. We were very close that week and he told me how he felt and did a lot of reflecting on his life as he felt that there was a good chance he might die that week. Dad carried within his heart much hurt and pain. It was a hard, cruel life that he led, containing many responsibilities and very little love or warmth in his formative years. He was the unloved, unwanted, forgotten child and he never experienced a feeling of warmth and acceptance by anyone.

Dad was the individual who was alone in a crowd. Mom reached Dad with her love and concern for him during most of his life, but after this heart attack Dad started withdrawing into himself. The more he would withdraw from all of us, the less loved he felt. It became a vicious circle. He would draw away from us, then feel abandoned. Dad changed mentally after the heart attack due to the oxygen deprivation suffered during the course of the attack. He was slower at comprehension and more hesitant and unsure. He took to writing things down to remember them and he wanted things written down on paper when we sent him to the store for groceries. This change in Dad broke Mom's heart, for she kept comparing Dad now with the man who was very intelligent and quick witted in his earlier years. She could scarcely believe it was the same man. Dad was acutely aware of his lost mental functioning, much more aware of the changes, I am sure, than we were. Dad was a very proud, sensitive man and when he thought one of his children were making fun of him or were put out with him because of his slower mental processes, it would crush him. I only hope that we can teach

the younger generation to be more tolerant of us in our old age than we were with Dad. The love of family and friends can be a very soothing balm against the ravages of advancing age.



Edward Bender

Here is a picture of Edward coming home to his upper apartment in Dresden Village after his first heart attack in 1976.

### **COMING HOME**

Dad came home from the hospital after his heart attack to his little upstairs apartment on Canal Road in Dresden Manor. When we brought Dad home, we were so pleasantly pleased when we approached Mom and Dad's apartment, for Carl Kennedy, their neighbor across the hall, had decorated up Dad's door and put a sign on it that read, "Welcome home, Mr. Bender!" Carl might have been a drunk and a real character, but he was tops in our book that day. Dad got a big kick out of the sign and out of Carl's shenanigans. Dad had a real soft spot for Carl, although they had absolutely nothing in common. We have a picture of Dad standing by the door after he got home. It was not obvious to me at the time how sick Dad was, but it sure is obvious to me now that I look upon that picture. That was the last of Dad's stocky days. The doctor told him that he had a real bad heart and that if he wanted to live long, he had better lose all excess weight and reduce his cholesterol consumption. Dad did exactly that, but I think that the starvation diet did Dad more harm than good. His eating habits became rather queer after his heart attack. Dad had been such a hearty eater before and now he just picked at Mom's food. Mom's feelings were hurt on more than one occasion when she would serve what had been some of Dad's favorite meals and he would refuse to eat them and would eat something off the wall instead.

## ***THE COTTAGE***

Mon and Dad lived in the upstairs apartment about 1 year and then the end "Cottage" became available for rent. Mom and Dad seized upon the opportunity to move then as it was just like a ranch home. They were very happy in that cottage, with one exception. Dad, who had had his first heart attack the summer before, was a changed person. The heart attack had interrupted the flow of blood to his brain and it was affecting his cognoscente abilities. He was now slower in thinking, was becoming indecisive and all of his actions were slower and more deliberate. He also started developing daily "Rituals" which were driving Mom up a wall. Dad was aware that he had changed and it was painfully obvious to him when those around him were becoming impatient with his changed condition and he was painfully aware when people made snide or smart remarks about his annoying new personal habits. Dad was greatly hurt emotionally by this lack of tolerance and charity on the part of his family toward his newly acquired afflictions. Dad went to his grave feeling that no one could tolerate him and that no one in the whole world loved him anymore. It was very true that our patience was sorely tried by Dad's affliction brought about by advanced arteriosclerosis and brain damage from his 1972 heart attack, but I wish he could understand how deeply we all still loved him.

## ***NOTING THE TIME***



Ed Bender behind his Dodge Aspen

The pose in the accompanying picture is so very typical for Dad. He would always have something in one hand, and then he would hold his arm up and note what time it was. Time was precious to Dad as he had so little of it to use for his own pleasure. Dad got two weeks vacation per year, Christmas and New Years off and he always took off twelve to three on Good Friday so he could go to church and participate in the stations of the cross. Other than Sundays and much later in his life, Tuesdays off, Dad had no free time for himself. In the accompanying picture Dad is

holding his Sunday shoes and is standing in front of his Duster.

## **CHRISTMAS**

In his later years Dad's foremost thought on Christmas Eve was of the infant Jesus about to come into the world and of Joseph and Mary as they suffered through their many hardships and tribulations. Dad had to go to Mass either on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to celebrate such an important event. Dad would go to the earlier mass on Christmas Eve as poor Dad could never stay awake for midnight mass, as much as he would have liked too. There was another factor in Dad not going at midnight too. Dad would get very chilled when overly tired and he would get bone chilling "shakes" which were powerful spasms of the muscles which were very painful for Dad. He would avoid the "shakes" at all costs, so he seldom went out at night in the dead of winter.

Dad always bought Mom something extra special on Christmas. Dad loved Mom very much and it always pleased him a great deal to get something for Mom which she would truly like. Mostly Dad bought Mom nice dresses, first at the dress shop down the street from his store on Mack and Holcomb and later at a dress shop on Warren and Outer Drive. He felt that there selection wasn't the best and their prices were too high, so he took to buying the dresses at Hudson's. Around 1960 Dad started feeling unsure about the appropriateness of the style of dress that he would chose for Mom as the styles were rapidly changing so he would then ask Nancy or I to help him pick out something for Mom. He would stand over my shoulder, nervously jingling the coins in his pocket and would invariably say, "Whatever you think is the best we'll get". In Dad's earlier years he knew exactly what he wanted to buy the minute he set eyes on it, but not so in his later years. For reasons not entirely clear to me, Dad changed from being the strong, sure, decisive head of the house to an unsure, indecisive person who was content to let others make the decisions. But Mom would end up getting something nice from Dad and she would treasure the item because it was from her Ed.

Dad himself was very unpretentious when it came to purchasing a gift for him. A new shirt, pants or tie would do just fine with him. He loved getting ties in his earlier days, but not as much so in the last 5 years of his life. At the end, Dad liked to get money for a present so he could buy prescriptions and vitamins. Dad purchased two heart prescriptions for himself the day before he died and complained about how much of his birthday money it had cost him.

## ***DONNA VISITS***



Donna Stephens



haunted houses in Maine

Donna came on her own one year to visit grandma and grandpa. Right after she came here, we all packed up and went on a two week vacation. That was a fun and adventure filled two weeks. We went first to Massachusetts via the Old Mohawk Trail, then on to Boston and Salem. We then traveled onto Maine, following the ocean, then on to New Hampshire and Vermont. In Maine we stayed in an old haunted house. That house had so many hidden bathrooms, it was a joke. When we first came in there was an old nautical looking gentlemen of some years who took the money. There was a sitting room with two very old ladies all dressed up in their Sunday best with pill box hats on their heads sitting in the parlor. It was like someone turned back the hands of time 100 years. We went to our room which was also right out of the last century, with high ceilings, high bay windows, high curtains, old fancy furnishings and old fashioned lamps. The plumbing in all the bathrooms was of the first vintage of indoor plumbing. When we dropped our bags in the room and went down stairs to eat, "Davey Jones" as we called the man who collected the money was no where to be found and the old ladies had also disappeared, (right into the woodwork, grandma said to us). We never saw those three people again.

The ride to find that room was funny too, as there was a seafood festival in that part of Maine and every available motel room was taken, so we were really lucky to get a room for the night. The fog was rolling in from the ocean and was becoming very dense, so much so that I could hardly see the motel signs. We would keep passing the others looking for a motel too so that we would be the first in line for a vacancy. It worked, too, because we were the last ones accepted in the haunted house!

The next day we drove along the ocean in Maine, and went to see Bar Harbor, which is a beautiful place in the summer. And I am sure that Donna remembers how we counted every cemetery along the east coast and into Canada as Mom and I bet Donna and Dad that we would find 100 cemeteries before we got to Pacey's. And we won our bet as there were slightly over 100 cemeteries along that route.

Donna slept a lot along the way as she was getting bored with the scenery. But the rest of us stayed awake the whole trip as that was the first and last time that Mom, Dad and I saw Maine. It was very cold and clamp along the ocean, but as soon as we drove inland to the capitol of Maine, it was very hot and dry. We then drove to Quebec, Montreal and struggled with the French language. Mom ordered a hamburger and got cottage cheese. She ate the cottage cheese figuring that the next try at French might bring something even less appetizing.



Ed & Marie killing earwigs in Grieg's cottage

Next we drove the length of Ontario and ended up in good old Lion's. Head on the 8th day. We then spent the next week exploring the Bruce Peninsula. At first we rented Grieg's cottage but we got there and discovered that it was the one by the road instead of overlooking the water. Next we went inside and were introduced to our first earwig. Many other earwigs soon followed and needless to say, Mom was horrified!

## DONNA IN LION'S HEAD



Donna Stephens, Sandy & Marie Bender



Marie in front of Pacey's



Lydia Szulc & Marie Bender



Donna, Marie, Ed & Sandy



Edward, Marie & Donna



Sandy & Donna



Donna & Sandy

Mom and Dad were thoroughly disgusted with seeing bugs everywhere so they went down the road to Pacey's to inquire if there might be a cottage to rent there. Pacey was no longer there to our surprise as he had sold the cottages to a German by the name of Edmund Szulc, pronounced "Schultz". He had an empty cottage but people were due to come that day. We waited all day and when they did not come, he rented it to us. They had put in a wading pool and Donna and I had fun going in this pool and splashing each other with our feet by kicking water at each other. We again explored the back roads and Donna couldn't believe her eyes when the cows first took over the whole road, blocking our way, but then when the cows started shitting as they walked along, Donna just sat there dumbfounded watching the whole spectacle! We took pictures and Donna always wanted a copy of the cows but I never got around to finding the negative. Dad and I played badminton up and down the hill as usual and we also played ball on the road, constantly losing the ball in the bushes. We also went for walks up and down the water front, enjoying the scenery. It is a very rocky, craggy area and the cliffs on both sides of Whippoorwill bay are quite an impressive sight. We had a very restful week at Lion's Head, after a hectic week on the road and we returned home full of memories of the happy times we had those two weeks and Dad's tummy full of his favorite Lion's Head bakery's goodies.

## ***DUSTER***

In 1969, a woman ran a red light at Groesbeck and 16 Mile Road and totaled out my 1967 blue valiant. I ordered a new car, a new model called a Plymouth Duster and it was supposed to come in to the dealership by August. Dad drove me back and forth to work, and I was never so early for work in my life as I was in the next month. I had to give up my night courses at Wayne State University as I could not get to classes. I had ordered a bronze colored Duster with matching trim. But I was so desperate for a car to get to school and back that when the first batch of new cars came in and my car was not among them, I decided to take a car that had come in and the owner had cancelled on. I felt bad that my very first new car had to be one where I didn't at all like the color.



Marie Bender in front of Sandy's Duster

My car that was ordered came in the following month and Dad went down and took a look at the car and he liked it so much he sold his red 1966 Valiant and bought my bronze Duster. He got a kick out of driving that car as it was a very sporty looking car, was very different looking from any other car on the road and people kept looking at his new car and asking him what it was. Dad was pleased at all the attention that the car had brought him.

## ***GENE KELLY***

Kelly, Dad's boss, told Dad one day that he wanted to borrow Dad's new Duster. Dad didn't want anyone to drive his new car and told Kelly so. Kelly got really nasty and demanded the keys to Dad's car. Dad felt that it was coming down to give him the keys or be fired, so he very reluctantly gave him the keys. Kelly didn't drive a block before he smashed up the front end of Dad's car. Dad was just sick and was much sicker as he took the car from shop to shop and discovered that no one could fix the alignment of the car on the side it was struck. Dad was finally forced to sell that car which he liked so well because he could not keep the car in tires.

### ***PLYMOUTH SATELLITE SEBRING***

Mike was selling his Plymouth Satellite Sebring about 3 or 4 years later and Dad always liked the looks of Mick's car, so he bought the Sebring and sold the bronze Duster. Dad had the Sebring until 1968 when the front end of the car was giving out and the radiator was overheating. Dad reluctantly parted with the Sebring.

### ***DODGE ASPEN***



Sandy & Marie in front of Ed's Dodge Aspen

Dad got a wonderful Christmas and birthday present from Mike in 1978, Mike bought him a bronze Dodge Aspen, with a tan interior. Mick let him pick out all the colors and then he special ordered the car. Dad loved that car and drove it everywhere. Mike was shocked at all the mileage that Dad was piling on that car. Mike had figured that this car would last Dad to the end of his days, but at the rate Dad was putting on mileage, this was now debatable. Dad loved to go anywhere in his new car. Any time Bill would call for a ride, Dad would be right there. If Mom wanted to go shopping or for a ride, Dad was ready and waiting with his car. Much to my surprise the Aspen did last to the end of Dad's days. There was 71,100 miles on the car the day Dad died.

## **JESSIE**



Edward, Taffy & Jessie

Aunt Mildred Neff went to Texas for the winter and asked Dad if he would care for her Dachshund, Jessie. Dad gladly agreed to care for him for the winter and so Jessie came to reside with Dad, Mom and Taffy for the winter. Taffy was jealous out of her mind and would often attack Jessie. Jessie, who was 12 years old, would quietly and sadly tolerate Taffy's attacks. Dad would separate the two and be nice to both of them. Jessie took a strong liking to Dad and Dad learned to love Jessie. I remember Dad saying to me some years after Jessie died, "I liked that Jessie!" Dad took Jessie on a walk with Taffy and Taffy would attack Jessie at the beginning and end of every walk. Jessie would just keep walking straight ahead and trust Dad to intervene in his behalf, which Dad always did. The toughest part of caring for Jessie occurred in the first week. Jessie was 45 lbs, and was not taken for a walk at Mildred's so he was a fat, lazy dog. When Dad would take him for a walk he would go so far, usually a block or two, then sit down and refuse to budge. The first two times Dad and I would have to carry him home as he wouldn't go on his own volition. Suddenly, for whatever reason, Jessie did an about face and started going with us no matter how far we would stray from home. We would take him on two or three mile walks with Taffy and he would gladly go. But Dad had one real problem with him, he would go into backyards and get lost and due to his black fur Dad could not find him! But then it started snowing and then Jessie would be seen very well day or night against the background of the new fallen snow. Now it was Taffy that could not be found. Jessie was 10 lbs lighter when Dad gave him back to Mildred.

## **NICOLE**



4 generations - Nancy, Nicole, Linda & Marie

Mom and Dad had heard a lot from Nancy about Nicole's expected arrival, so when the time was near Mom got so excited that she just had to go to California and be there when her first great grandchild was born. Dad does not get so dewy eyed over new borns as he preferred children when they can walk and talk and he had a natural aversion to planes, so he remained at home. Mom was there when Nicole was born, gave her her first bath, and when she got home Dad heard everything as though he had been there too. When Nicole was two years old Dad got on the plane and went to visit his California branch of the family. Dad talked for years about what a rascal little Nicole was and how she reached forward from the back Seat of the car and grabbed Dad's hair and just kept pulling it until Dad thought he would lose it all. When Mom came back from her last trip to California just before Dad died, she would tell Dad all about what a fine young woman little Nicole was becoming. Dad would say back to Mom, some out of memory, some to aggravate Mom, "I remember Nicole. She's the kid who, pulled my hair so hard she almost lifted me out of my seat." Mom would keep saving, "Ed, she's not at all like that anymore."

## **MICHELLE**



4 generations - Marie, Nancy, Donna & Michelle

On 25th of September, 1976 Mom and Dad received a telephone call from Nancy telling them that Donna had just had her first baby, a little girl named Michelle Marie Pacheco. When Dad went out to California Michelle was about 1 year old and Dad thought she was a really sweet baby.

## **MICHAEL**

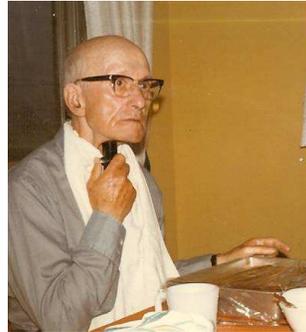


Michael Pacheco

At the end of October, 1978 Mom and Dad got a call that Donna had had a boy, Michael, their first great grand son. Mom and Dad received pictures of Michelle and Michael from Donna and Nancy. Dad said that Michael looked real cute and kind of reminded him a little of Bill when Bill was that age. Dad never met Michael in person as 1977 was his last trip to California and Michael has never come to Michigan.

When Dad heard of Michael's testing reports, Dad was very concerned and started praying vigorously for little Michael that he might have a good life in this world. Dad prayed for little Michael every day of his life from the time he heard the testing results until the day Dad died.

### **UNCLE AL**



Harold was Dad's older brother. Harold had had typhoid fever when he was 4 years old and it affected his ability to learn. Harold was in the 4th grade for 6 years until he left school. Harold got along quite well in life, being cared for first by his parents Elizabeth and Henry and then in 1944, he met and married Elsie who was paralyzed. Elsie had a heart of gold and married Harold for companionship. Harold was very good to Elsie and did all of her chores for her. She, in turn, was like a second mother to him. Harold's mother objected to him marrying Elsie, but in truth that was the best thing that could have happened to Harold. Harold had Elsie for 10 years. One morning in August, 1955, I believe on the 10th, Elsie let out a loud cry from her bedroom. By the time Harold got there she was just about gone. She died in that bedroom before the ambulance arrived. Harold then lived alone for the next 16 years in the same apartment, taking his baby brother Norman in from about 1968 to his death in 1971. When Norman died it was not safe for Harold to live there alone as Harold was feeble, was not eating correctly and the neighborhood was very bad as it was filled with young Negroes, one of whom had knocked him down and robbed him of what little money he had. Harold had worked for Dodge Main for 10 years so he had a pension from Dodge and Social Security which barely met his needs. When Elsie died the ownership of the apartment complex tried to evict Harold as the apartments were supposedly for married couples only, but Dad went to bat for him and the apartment manager backed down and Harold remained.

But now Harold was old and feeble and Norman was not there in case trouble developed. So Mom and Dad felt it was best if Harold went onto a nursing home. We went to Doctor Wolfe who filled out the nursing home

physical and then Mom and Dad found Harold a room at Wil Mar Convalescent Home in Utica. Harold was at Wil Mar for 4 or 5 years, then Mom and Dad transferred him to Medilodge in Richmond. When Harold became sicker Mom and Dad took him to Clintonview in Mt. Clemens near Aunt Mildred Neff. No one liked Clintonview as it was very cold and impersonal. Al had had a tracheotomy for throat cancer in 1957 and had to use a mechanical devise to speak, which was very irritating to all of us. Mom often made Harold put his machine in his pocket as it created quite a stir in public. Al became weaker and longed for heaven. Every day Al would point to heaven and say that he wanted to go home. He wanted so bad to be reunited with Elsie and with his parents and brothers and sister, he would tell Mom and Dad. Al got weaker and soon he could only eat pureed foods. The nurse's aides, being very busy, would hastily feed Al and due to an error on the part of one or more of the feeding aides, the food landed in Al's lungs instead of his stomach. Al got pneumonia and was taken to the hospital. Dad was scheduled to take his two week vacation the last week in June, so Mom and I urged him to go on vacation rather than stay at home going to the hospital as this was the only vacation he would get for the whole year and Mildred Neff was going to the hospital frequently. Dad went on vacation and we had a very peaceful week with the exception that Bill was feeling quite ill the whole time we were up there and stayed on the couch almost the whole time we were there. I still remember Dad "getting ready" the whole morning in that little bathroom facing the lake at Forestville. Dad would rest, read a book, take a walk, or play Frisbee. He took Bill to the wood working shop in the next town north where Bill bought his Capricorn table. Mom called Mildred Neff daily asking how Harold was. He was always the same, breathing very fast and heavy with his chest moving in and out in two different places. Harold was comatose the last week, coming out of it occasionally, and possibly recognizing Mildred. Mom gave Mildred Neff the name of the cottage owners and the name of the town where we were staying, spelling every letter of Forestville, with Mildred saying "uh huh" after every letter. It turns out that Mildred was not writing it down when she was saying "uh huh".

Right after Mom had talked to Mildred on Thursday morning, June 30, 1979, Uncle Harold passed away. Aunt Mildred did not remember where Mom was and called the State Police and told them somewhere past Port Huron. Mildred did remember which funeral parlor so she called them and they did pick up the body and waited for instructions from Mom and Dad. Mom had called that funeral parlor when Al first took a turn for the worst and they settled on a price that would take everything that was in Al's bank account. When Mom called Friday afternoon, Aunt Mildred told us that Harold had been dead for a day now, so we all packed up and drove back home as fast as we could. Mom, Dad and I went into the funeral parlor Saturday morning and made all the arrangements. There weren't many arrangements to make. The cloth covered casket was the only choice available and Mom got out some of Dad's best clothes to bury him in. We called all the relatives and told them that Al would be laid out on Sunday only and would be buried Monday. Al looked very fine in Dad's

suit and the funeral was very nice with the exception of Al lying too low in the cloth casket. They should have placed a pillow under his head to elevate his head somewhat.

Aunt Jean and Uncle Shorty came back from vacation to attend the funeral. Almost all of the Bender cousins came to pay their last respects to Al and many of the cousins were pall bearers. Mildred and Dad were the only brothers and sister left. With many of the Bender relatives in attendance we took Al over to Mildred's Church, St. Valerie for the funeral mass and then he was buried in Forestlawn near Van Dyke next to his beloved Elsie.

Al at last had his last wish. He was now safely home with his dear parents and his Elsie. And God would now restore him to the full mental capacity that he had lost due to his childhood illness. Al may have suffered and struggled on the face of the earth as the rest of us have never had to face, but Al's rewards in the next life are truly greater than those of us who have had much easier lives here on earth. In spite of Al's great handicap he was generous to a fault and many of the pictures that we have of the Bender family today were given to us with a generous heart by Uncle Harold when he entered the nursing home.

### ***DOUG MEETS KAREN OTTER***



Doug & Karen in 1976

Doug graduated from Oakland University and took a job with the State of Michigan, Wayne County. He moved into a house on Alter Road in a bad neighborhood. On New Year's Eve Doug was startled by the huge amount of gun fire all around his house. We were all afraid for his safety. Doug went to see a woman's baseball game where he met Karen Otter. She was also living in the same bad neighborhood so Doug asked her out for a date and they were soon going steady. In February of 1976 Doug and Karen were engaged and the Otters invited Edward and his family to meet them on their farm on Otter Road in

Huron Township. It was very snowy that day and Mr. Otter thought he would have to pull Ed's car in and out of Otter Road due to the deepness of the snow. But Ed's car had no trouble navigating Otter Road and the Otter driveway. The Otters and the Benders were so comfortable with Doug and Karen and with the Bender and Otter family members. Karen was such a wonderful girl and Louise and Clarence were comfortable with their daughter getting married to Doug. We were all so comfortable with all of the family members.

**DOUG MARRIES KAREN OTTER**



Marie, Craig, Karen, Bill, Doug, Mike, Edward & Sandy

Karen Otter & Doug Bender

On the 19th of June, 1976 Doug Married Karen Otter in St. John's Lutheran Church in Waltz, Michigan. Mike and Sandy stood up for the wedding. Mike gave all of us fits - he showed up at the church just as the bells were ringing, announcing it was time for the wedding to begin. Mike stopped at his motel and changed into his wedding clothes, racing to the church just in time, without a minute to spare. After the ceremony we all lined our cars up along Waltz Rd to follow each other to the hall as we Benders had no idea where the hall was located. Marie told us not to start off until she and Ed were in line because they had no idea where the hall was. We assured them that we would wait for them. It was a big long line of cars, then when we saw a rust colored Dodge Aspen get into the back of the line, we all took off. When we got to the hall, Ed and Marie were not there. We waited. They never arrived. Mike jumped into his car and drove back to Doug's home on Waltz Rd. Standing with her gown jammed in the front door was Marie, madder than a wet hen! It was not Ed's car that got into the end of the line - it just looked like his. Marie shut the door on her gown and did not have a key so she was stuck in the door until someone could bring a key to open

the door. Mike got the key, opened the door and freed Marie.



Karen & Doug & Shelley Bender & Grandma Neumann



Ed, Marie & Taffy - Doug's house

Ed, Marie and Sandy went back to Doug and Karen's house and did some painting on the front porch. Afterwards they stopped at Grandma Neumann's house at Mineral Springs Rd around the corner from Doug's. Grandma Neumann was very pleasant and hospitable but at the same time a bit frightened as she did not recognize us. Ed liked all of the Otters and was very comfortable visiting them. Ed also loved to sit on Doug's porch on Waltz Rd with the Otters and watch the parade go by. Afterwards we would all go to the fairgrounds and eat a BBQ chicken dinner prepared by Clarence and ride the carnival rides. Later we would watch the parachuters land on the fairgrounds.



Karen Otter & Doug Bender

Doug and Karen went to Ed and Marie's condo on Dino Circle in Chesterfield Township for Christmas 1977. Marie prepared a delicious Christmas dinner, as usual, and after the dishes were cleared and put away, Karen had a happy secret to share with us. Karen and Doug

joyfully told us that they were expecting their first child in July. How happy we all were.

***SHELLEY***



Michelle Marie Bender

Shelley was born on the 28th of July, 1977, the fifth of Dad's grandchildren and Doug's first born child. Dad was sitting in the family room on Dino Circle watching Mike put up the antenna when Shelley had been born. Dad had been very worried over Karen's safety, as Dad always dreaded the very thought of pregnancy and childbirth. He always exclaimed over how he couldn't believe how a woman could put up with such misery and pain. Dad prayed very hard while Karen was in labor and Dad was so grateful when he heard that Karen and Shelley were fine. The next day Dad, Mom and I went to the hospital and saw little Shelley for the first time. I took my camera and took pictures of new born Shelley while Dad smiled at her and made remarks over how cute and little she was. He smiled and smiled at little Shelley that day. With his grandchildren, he didn't care if the baby was a boy or a girl, they were equally fine with him. It was just with his own children that it was terribly important to him to have a boy.



Mildred Bender Neff & Michelle Bender

When Mildred Neff, Edward Bender's sister, heard that Ed's son Doug was about to have their first child she wanted to do what she has done for many other infants in the family - she wanted to sew an elaborate christening dress for the coming infant. So she set to work sewing an absolutely elegant christening gown. She presented it to Karen at Karen's baby shower in April. When Shelley was born Aunt Mildred was invited to attend the baptism at St. John's Lutheran Church. Mildred was very honored to be invited to the christening and had several pictures taken of her and the infant.

### ***THE CLOSET QUEEN***



Marie & Shelley Bender

Every night I would rock Shelley to sleep, singing her every song I could remember using to rock her father to sleep when he was a baby. I would go into the living room so as to not disturb Dad as he liked to watch detective stories at night, such as Mannix, Hawaii Five 0, Buddy Epton, Peter Falk, among others. Most of the time Shelley slept in my room with me, but for noon time naps, grandma got the idea to pad up the front closet with blankets, and lay Shelley in there as it was as high as a crib and it was safe, and semi-dark. When Grandma put Shelley in that closet, she would laughingly call Shelley the closet queen.

## **NIGHT TIME TERROR**



Edward, Shelley & Marie Bender

We would often have Shelley over for a weekend and Dad enjoyed watching her actions. He would smile at her and squeeze her arm and tell her how cute she was. But what he didn't get in the middle of was Shelley's bedtimes! What an ordeal! She would be good as gold all day long, but let the sun sink into the horizon and God help us all! We were really in for something! Doug said to sing "Rain, rain, go away" as she liked that song and it would sooth her. Sometimes, that is. Somehow, I'm not quite sure just how, Shelly would fall off to sleep and there'd be peace on earth.

## **VACUUMING**

One day when Mom was helping Karen when Mikey was first born, Dad was helping out by vacuuming the carpet in Shelley's room. Shelley was just learning how to walk and was very curious about what Dad was doing, so she started toddling into her room to see what was up. Dad quickly shut the bedroom door and put a chair in front of the door as he wanted to finish the job without having to run over any little toes with the vacuum. Suddenly Dad looked up and was amazed to see the chair being pushed away from the door as the door was opening. He figured it was Mom, but wondered how Mom could be strong enough to shove that heavy chair out of the way. When the door opened wider and in stepped Shelley, Dad couldn't believe his eyes! He often talked with wonderment in his voice over how strong Shelley was that day!

## **MIKEY**



Michael Douglas Bender

Mikey was born on the 20th of July, 1978, Dad's sixth grandchild. Dad did not come with Mom and I the first day to see Mikey when he was about 1 hour old, but came instead the next day to see the baby. Dad thought Mikey was real cute and was so glad that Karen was okay. But Dad had a special place in his heart for Shelley by now as she was getting older and darn cute. Dad always preferred the kids when they were older and did more.

## **BOOTS ARE ON**



Michael Douglas Bender

Dad got a big kick out of Mikey once he started talking. The first thing I remember Mikey saying was "boots are on" when he was wearing his red boots while swinging on the swing. Mike was full of spunk and Dad

loved his little spirit. Dad would walk Mikey down Base Street in his stroller while Marie would walk Taffy on a leash. Mikey loved to swing his legs in the stroller.

### ***A ROUTINE PHYSICAL***



Mikey on chemotherapy, Duggie & Shelley Bender

Karen took all the children for a routine physical just after Doug was born. The doctor told her Mikey was anemic and that she should give him iron pills and bring him back within a week for a check up. She gave him the iron for a week then took him back for a check up. When his blood was retested, the doctor knew that something was terribly wrong, as he had a far worse blood count than the week before. It was now way out of the normal range. Karen took him first to a local hospital, who tested his blood and told her that he had leukemia and would have to be taken to Ann Arbor immediately for treatment. He got there just before 5 PM. They tested his blood and confirmed his diagnosis and gave him a blood transfusion, then started treatment. Dad was very, very upset over this leukemia diagnosis and prayed for Mike every day of the rest of his life.



Marie, Edward & Mikey Bender

Karen called Ed and asked him if he would go to the Children's hospital with her to help her hold Mikey down for the lumbar puncture. Ed was so upset having to hold Mikey down. Ed has a very tender heart and holding Mikey down for a lumbar puncture broke his heart. After they were leaving the hospital Mikey asked in a soft voice if he could have some Mc Donald's French fries. That melted Ed's heart. Of course he bought the little 2 year old kid French fries.

### ***DOUGGY***



Douglas Paul Bender Jr.

Little Doug was born on the 27th of August, 1980, the youngest child of Doug and Karen. Mikey and Shelley had looked similar, but now Doug looked totally different than the other two. He had a more narrow face and a different nose. Grandpa came to see him in the hospital, just as he had Shelley and Mikie. Dad also remarked about how different Douggy looked than Shelley and Mikie. Dad felt that Douggie looked like Jason. I remember going to Doug's baptism at St. John Church in Waltz. After the baptism we all went out to Mr. Otter's farm for a hearty and delicious meal. We took pictures of the family and had trouble getting

them all together as Mikey would run away. Dad laughed at Mikey's antics and what a hard time I had getting him into a picture. We put a cigar in Duggie's mouth that day for a laugh. Dad enjoyed talking to all the Otter relatives that day. Dad liked the Otter family very much and remarked often about what wonderful people they are.

### ***DINO***

The landlord at Dresden Manor apartments was about to raise the rent on both of our apartments, so Mom, Dad and I figured that a house payment might be cheaper than rent, so we started looking for a house to buy. We found a very inexpensive condominium in Chesterfield township that had two bedrooms, a living room, a family room and a large kitchen. It was about 5,000 dollars cheaper than a house and had a lower interest rate, so we bought it together. It was a very pleasant house. It was new, we painted and papered it in our favorite colors and we had a beautiful view of a horse farm in back of us. It was so nice to watch the horses every day. They were as playful as children when they were in the pasture. There was one real drawback to the place though. Taffy took a hankering to rolling in the horse manure. Yecch! We had to give her many an impromptu bath to remove the unbearable odor.

Dad took many long walks while he lived on Dino Circle. He liked walking on Peggy lane the very best. He would get into his car, call Taffy to join him, which he did eagerly and off they would drive the mile down the road. They would park the car at Peggy Lane and then would walk the mile or two through all the subdivision streets together. They then added several streets on the other side of Sugarbush Road and we would walk the length of those roads too. The main problem being to get Taffy safely across Sugarbush as some cars would go over 50 miles per hour down Sugarbush Road. Dad loved walking in that subdivision. Dad and I or Bill and I spent many an hour walking those streets.

Dad's last ball playing days were at Dino Circle. He was afraid of bringing on a heart attack so he played very cautiously after his first heart attack. The last game he ever played was with Mick, Doug, Karen and I at the Green school in Chesterfield when Karen was 4 1/2 months pregnant with Shelley. None of us realized as we left the field that day what a truly sad occasion this was. It is only in looking back on it do we realized the import of that day.

## ***NEW BALTIMORE***



52324 Base St New Baltimore

In July, 1978 we sold the home in Chesterfield and purchased one in New Baltimore. I realize now that this move was a mistake, but at the time there was so much noise from the kids and the people who lived there, they were lower class than we had realized when we had purchased our condominium. So we bought a bi-level in New Baltimore. It was a very spacious home, with a large living room and a large family room and four bedrooms. But the lower level was very cold. It could only be comfortably used in the summer. I finished off the family room and redid the small bedroom downstairs and painted the entire house. We were heating the lower level with a wood burning stove the first year but the heat was so dry that Dad's nose became very painfully cracked inside, so we had to stop using the wood burner. We had a 1/2 acre of grass to mow and Dad and I were getting sick of mowing the lawn. I gave up playing baseball so I could mow that darn lawn. Dad liked the New Baltimore area and he liked going to church at Immaculate Conception, a very old fashioned church in Anchorville. He got a kick out of an old brother in residence there. The old friar liked Mikey and used to pat him on the head in Church. Dad used to get to church 1 hour early so he could pray for everyone before Mass would start.

## ***DAD'S LAST CHRISTMAS***



Edward, Sandy & Marie Bender

Dad's last Christmas was so non-descript as to blur into the other Christmases we have had. He and Mom went with Mike to the Otters for Christmas Eve. Then on Christmas Day, Mom made a big turkey dinner and we had Bill, Dad, Mom, Mike, Vern and I over for dinner. Afterwards we all opened our gifts. I sat on the floor like usual and distributed the gifts to each person. As usual, Bill felt he was short changed and didn't mind saying so. He made comments about how lousy he felt the gifts to him were. And as usual Mike told him that that was very big talk for a guy who never chose a gift for others. Bill responded that clothes stink, couldn't we have got him something more interesting? And Mike reminded him that he was an adult, and clothes are what an adult gets for Christmas as a rule. Bill wrinkled up his nose at this explanation. Dad got mostly shirts and pants. I got him the pants with the rubber in the waist and Dad liked those and wore them often. He also liked his shirts, but wasn't crazy about the ties. Mom gave him money and that he liked. In distributing the gifts that day I felt that Dad's pile was smaller than usual as we usually make a big fuss over Mom and Dad, but I thought, what's the difference, there's always next Christmas, never knowing how important this Christmas should have been to all of us!

## **MILDRED NEFF**



Mildred Bender Neff

Mildred Neff had a very active mind all of her life and was very eager to learn everything. She had a good grasp of facts and figures despite her very limited education. She was a depository of family historical information and without her and her brother Art we would know nothing of the Becker, Ott, and Bender family histories. She was able to give me names, dates and facts that enabled me to trace the Beckers back to 1795 and the Otts to 1805. She led me to John Wittenberg who gave me the early history of the Bender family and was able to tell me of the Dittman and Sanger families who are related to us on the Bender side.

I spent the last birthday of Mildred's life with her, her 80th. It rained cats and dogs that day. I remember many of Mildred's birthdays being beautiful days, but not this one. This weather was sort of a portend of what was to come in her life over the next 3 months. I got to Mildred's house about 2:30 and we sat and talked for about 3 hours. She told me many facts about our families both this time and the time before when I was over her house some 3 weeks before. Mildred was quite distressed over how badly she had failed health wise over the past year. She had had a series of heart attacks and possibly a stroke and had lost most of her sight. This loss of sight seems to be due to arteriosclerosis rather than diabetes itself as she was losing her peripheral circulation. She said a number of times that evening, "I've really gone down hill in the last year. I've really failed a lot". Mildred was very concerned about her impending death and would not sleep in the night any more, sort of as if she wanted to be awake when the end came. She would sleep when the morning broke.

I tape recorded my last 2 conversations with her as I wanted to preserve her voice on tape. I also taped Dad that night on the way home from

Mildred's house.

At 5:30 PM I asked Mildred if she would like to go out for her birthday dinner. She said yes. I asked where she would like to go, and was trying to visualize someplace close as she was quite feeble and I was worried about even getting her to the car, let alone in a restaurant. So she shocked me when she said she wanted to go to the Riviera at 22 & Gratiot where Dad and Mom often took her. But go there we did and we both ate pork hocks boiled potatoes and sauerkraut. Mildred told me at the restaurant that grandpa Bender had a brother by the name of Charles. She also spoke of her life together with Harold Neff, her husband of 57 years before his death in 1974.

After dinner we returned home and talked some more. I got out her pictures and labeled some of the Neff pictures for her children. She told me of grandma Bender's christening gown and told me I could have it when she died. Later she also bequethed to me her picture albums on the Bender side of the family. We spoke to 10 PM, and I took some pictures of her old family pictures while she held the light. I told her I would have to go at 10 PM as I had to be at work by 7 AM the next day. She begged me to stay with her awhile longer, saying I could sleep in her spare bed if I got tired. I declined and said goodnight. If I had known that that was her last good week on the face of the earth, I would have stayed with her far into the night. I will never forget Mildred and Harold, the fine home he built and the many happy hours I had spent in that home with the two of them.

Mildred was taken to Mt. Clemens General hospital a week later. She called Mom on the phone and told Mom that she felt just awful and would Mom call for help. Mom told her to go to the front door if she could make it that far and open the two locks on the doors so that help could get in. The ambulance came right away, and they put Mildred on the living room floor and stabilized her before taking her to the hospital. It was felt that Mildred might have had a small stroke. Mildred was in the hospital a few days and was then taken to her son Bob's house. She was then put back into the hospital a few days later as she had a severe hypoglycemic reaction. Her blood sugar was unstable due to an impending circulatory collapse, which was momentarily averted due to the use of I.V. fluids.

On the 13th of December, 1981 Mildred slept the whole day, being totally unresponsive. Mildred should have died on the 14th of December, but an overzealous nurse kept her alive until the 3rd of January. Mildred was conscious only one day between the 13th of December and the 3rd of January and on that day she said to her son Bob, "Why are you doing this to me? You can do something to help me to go!" Bob was horrified at this statement and he ran out of the room with tears in his eyes. She recognized Bob only once in Saratoga hospital, which greatly upset him as he wanted to talk to her one more time.

### ***MILDRED'S FUNERAL***

Mildred was laid out at the Arnold O. Matthew funeral home, the same place and in the same spot where Aunt Agnes had been laid out some 6 months earlier. She had a splendid turnout. All her nieces and nephews came and her sole surviving brother Edward. Dad was very quiet and pensive about losing Mildred. Dad loved her very much and was very close to her as they went everywhere together. Every Wednesday Dad, Mom, Mildred and Bill were a foursome all day long. Dad was also brooding over his own impending death as he knew the day was drawing near and he was hoping to be found worthy in the eyes of his God. Dad prayed hard for Mildred's soul and hoped that God would take her to His side. Dad missed the second night of the funeral as he was so upset that it made him ill. But he made it the day of the funeral. We went to the cemetery, after having the funeral Mass at St. Matthews in Detroit. It seemed strange to have Mildred's funeral mass in a church she had never attended in her life (St. Valerie's was her parish) but her children chose it as it was closer to everything. We said our final prayers at Forestlawn cemetery and then we met at Perini's for lunch. We stayed there till almost 4 PM. Dad had said he didn't want any liquor, then decided at the last minute to have a Pina Collada, his favorite. I went to the bar and got him one as they were finished taking orders. It seemed so strange to see Christmas lights in the church and in the restaurant when we were burying Aunt Mildred. Christmas gaiety and a funeral just didn't seem to mix.

Afterwards Shirley, Bob's wife called us several times and offered to give us Mildred's pictures and some of Mildred's personal possessions. Mom, Dad and I gladly accepted all that was offered. Mom got some clothes, Dad and I came into Dad's mother's prayer books that Mildred had kept since her death in September, 1950 and I received some old, old clothing belonging to my ancestors, including grandma Bender's first communion dress made in 1879.

Yes, Mildred is gone now, but she surely will never be forgotten by those of us who knew and loved her. And whenever one of us reads a family history of the Benders, the Beckers, the Otts, the Knapps, the Kleins, or the Friedrichs, we must stop and say a silent thank you to Aunt Mildred who helped make all this information available to us. When you stop at her graveside, say one little hail merry for the repose of her soul. She would like that.

Mildred turned horrible colors at the end as people usually do when they die a slow natural death, which was greatly distressing to her son Bob who was with her till the end. Mildred was very upset over being placed in a nursing home and when they took her into the lobby at St. Anne's she kept saying over and over again, "I never thought I would end up in a nursing home!" But Mildred was up day and night and after

caring for her for over 6 weeks Bob and Shirley were worn to a frazzle. Mildred was in the nursing home for about 14 days and then went to Saratoga hospital where she remained until the 3rd of January, 1982 when she left us to return to the home of her father and rejoin her family.

Mildred, it seems, made a few detours along the way, though. Mildred had not been to her home on Glenwood for 2 months and she missed it dearly as she was very attached to this home. When Mildred died Shirley was sleeping in the front room of Mildred's house and she suddenly awakened and was frightened out of her wits when she saw Mildred's form walking through her house on one last walk in the home she held so dear for so many years. But the story doesn't end there. Mildred and Harold sold off the back end of their lot to a young sensible couple who wished to build a colonial type house in back. They built the house which overlooks all of the back of the Neff property, including Harold's garden and the back of the house. It is a panoramic view of Mildred's property when you stand at the master bedroom window and look out. You guessed it, the couple were awakened very early that day by the sound of their front door opening. They looked at each other startled, wondering who could that be at this hour? They then heard footsteps coming up their stairway! Their blood was turning to ice at this point wondering who the intruder was and what that person wanted. Suddenly their bedroom door flung open, and who walked across their bedroom? Mildred Neff! Mildred walked straight to the window and stood there for quite some time looking out the window over her property. She then left their house by the same route and has not been seen again. She had to have one last look at the property that she was forced to relinquish in death.

I spent 3 hours with Mildred in Mt. Clemens General hospital and was saddened by her condition. She was now almost totally blind, seeing only shadows. She could not walk on her own and was restrained in bed for her own safety. I was able to walk her to the bathroom, but was afraid of her falling. I sat her up in a chair for awhile to help her change positions and be more comfortable. Mildred still knew family history and clarified some points for me that day. But Mildred was very upset over her memory loss and even more so over her impending death. She said to me twice that day, "I guess I'm doomed!". Mildred was fortunate enough to have had the last rights of the Catholic Church given to her by Father Gordon in her son Bob's house and she also received the Holy viaticum that day. She was still conscious when she received the last rights and was comforted by the knowledge that she had received them. Mildred used to pray her rosary every night before going to bed often falling asleep before completing the whole rosary. Bob used to repair her rosary often for her after Harold died and he used to tease his mother, asking her whatever did she do to that rosary to keep breaking it like that? But in the end, Mildred was no longer capable of praying, for her circulation was totally cut off to her brain and she lost all conscious thought for the most part from the 1st of December till her death on January 3,

1982. Mildred was mostly unconscious on my birthday, but she did recognize Mom and maybe me that day when we stopped by to visit her. Mom asked Mildred the question "Do you like Marie?" And I laughed and told Mom that that wasn't fair to ask her that question and laughed, and Mildred laughed too, with the same laugh she had had all through the years.

### **GRANT PARK**



Marie & Edward in interior of Grant Park home



Marie in Grant Park home

Michael offered to build a home for Mom and Dad from scratch in Utica. Mom and Dad gladly accepted this offer from Michael. So Mike had Doug draw up the plans for the house and the two boys set to work erecting the house, Mike supplying all the money for the material and labor and Doug supervising his crew of friends. Doug did most of the work himself after the framing was complete. Mike did some of the plumbing in the basement and all of the wiring. But most important was the fact that Mike put almost every penny of his savings into this house so that his parents would have a fine place to live for the remainder of their years on this earth. Dad was bursting with pride over having such a fine, generous son. He would tell anyone who would listen to him about how Mike stripped his bank account down to nothing to build the house and how he and Doug built the house from the ground up. Dad used to walk around the house, extolling over what a fine house this is and how much he liked it. And then Dad would add, with a sincere glint in his eye; "Not many parents have such a fine son like Mike. Believe me, not many men would do for his parents what Mike did for mom and me". Dad talked about the house in glowing terms the day before he died.

### ***RUN AWAY LAWN MOWER***



Edward & Marie on Halloween

Here is the first picture of Ed and Marie's new home on Grant Park. They had just moved in in October of 1981 and Marie had just placed her famous witch next to the door. Taffy jumped a mile when she went out the door and saw the witch out of the corner of her eye!

Dad bought a new Ward's lawn mower with all the latest in features on it. It cost a little more, but Dad felt he was getting a deluxe machine. Dad took the lawnmower home in his car, took it out of the trunk, put gas in it and proceeded to cut the lawn. Dad took it down the length of the lawn and when he was coming back up he didn't realize the power of the mower and when he got to the top, he proceeded to make a U-turn with the lawn mower in the same fashion as he had always done with the old lawn mowers. But this new one was much more powerful and before he got even half way around, the mower got away from him and ran right over the bricks next to the house. Dad was so embarrassed. And he was so upset to have dented up the blade of his brand new lawnmower. After that day he got the hang of the lawnmower and was able to control it. If I had known how bad Dad's heart was, I would not have let him cut  $\frac{1}{2}$  the grass every week. Dad really enjoyed cutting the lawn, but he would have to stop three or four times while doing the front and rest as his heart would start skipping beats.

### ***ARRYTHMIA***

Dad had a habit of worrying over every little ache and pain in the last 10 years and after awhile we dreaded hearing what was wrong that day. One day Dad had been complaining more than usual about a number of symptoms. I was very tired and when Dad thought he might want to go to the emergency room of the hospital as he had a pain in the neck by the base of the skull and was sick to his stomach, I thought, oh, no, not tonight, I'm so tired!. Dad quietly left the house after he had no

offers to drive him to the hospital and unknown to us, he drove himself to St. Joseph's East. About an hour later, the doctor from the hospital called saying that Dad was there and that they were putting him in the cardiac care unit as he had a very irregular heart beat and that Dad was acutely ill as his heart could fail at any time with this kind of heart beat. Mom and I felt so guilty that we did not take him to the hospital that night, but on the other hand, Dad had had so many medical complaints that we never knew which ones were serious and which ones were not. Mom and I drove right over to the hospital and Mike showed up there too. We saw Dad in the emergency room and when I saw how irregular his heart beat was, I was so scared for him that felt like fainting. Dad would hold his pulse and tell me when his heart skipped a beat. Dad was in tune to the irregular heart beat which made me have a little more respect for his self-diagnosis. They put Dad in the cardiac care unit and we got to visit him there before going home. He looked good, but his EKG sure didn't. The next day after he started the new medication, his heart beat was very regular and strong. Dad was put into a four bed ward in a pleasant room on a regular floor. Dad was quite content at that time and liked all the attention he received in the hospital. He came home with new medication. and a very steady heart beat.

### **BILL**



Bill Bender

Bill had received a notice from the Social Security Administration that they were reviewing his disability in May, 1982 and that there was a possibility that he might lose his pension. Bill became very upset, even more so when the Social Security made a last minute switch in appointments. Bill had been feeling sick before this fiasco came into his life and now he felt a lot sicker with this insecurity hanging over his head. In May, 1982, Bill was very sick on Mother's day and Dad had to take him home early as he had to go to bed. He looked awful. Bill had not eaten much since getting this notice and had taken too much insulin. He went into insulin shock the afternoon of May 13, 1982 and was taken to St. Joseph's hospital by ambulance. By the morning of May 14th, Bill was

conscious and over the worst of it. Somebody in the hospital gave Bill another dose of daily insulin in error and Bill started going into one insulin shock after another. The doctor kept giving him glucose injections which brought Bill out of it each time. Then the supper tray came and Bill was left unattended while he ate supper. Bill had a mouth full of food when he went into another insulin shock and all that food went into his lungs. Because there was no one around for over hour, Bill stopped receiving oxygen in his lungs because of the presence of food there and he had in effect died within 5 minutes after that food landed in his lungs. The hospital, in order to conceal their guilt in this matter, took extraordinary measures to keep Bill alive for the next 4 weeks in order to cloud the real reason why Bill died. Dad was stricken beyond belief when this happened to Bill and he became very withdrawn and unreachable. Dad went every day to visit Bill and the first two days watching Bill in those awful seizures which signaled the death of his brain cells, tore us all to pieces. His whole face moved in tune to the seizures at the rate of one every 3 seconds. After Sunday, the seizures left him and after that Bill was totally unresponsive. Nothing moved. Bill was really dead at this point, but due to life support systems his body was kept alive in that they continued to to pump air into Bill's lungs and his heart continued to beat in response to the input of oxygen into his system. When Mom told Dad that Bill was dying the last weekend of Bill's life, Dad uttered a passionate, "Oh, no!" Dad refused to see the hand writing on the wall and was devastated by the truth.

### ***ALLEN PARK***

Five days before Bill died, he was transferred to the V.A. hospital in Allen Park at the insistence of St. Joseph hospital as they did not want Bill to die in their hospital and they knew that death was imminent. Going to Allen Park was very hard on Dad for two reasons. First, Dad's eyes were now poor from cataracts and arteriosclerosis and he was afraid to drive long distances. Secondly, Dad had taken Bill to Allen Park many, many times in the past 15 years and the comparison of a healthy robust Bill of a few years back with the Bill who now lay in a coma, with the film of death glazed over his eyes and the bedsores eating him up before his very eyes was too much for Dad to bear. Dad was very, very grief stricken and because he was so proud of the fact that he had never in his entire life shed so much as one tear, he could not now dissipate his grief. He turned this grief inwards and no one was able to reach Dad any longer. He lived in a world of his own. At 4:30 AM on the 15th of June, 1982 Mom received a call from Allen Park. Their son had just passed away. At 9 AM I called Milliken and Sullivan funeral home and was told Mom or Dad would have to go to Allen Park and sign for the release of Bill's body. Dad said he did not want to go. He simply could not face a last trip to Allen Park where he had taken his Bill so many times before. He did not want to relive the many conversations he had with Bill while waiting for Bill to be seen by the

doctor. Dad preferred to remain in the safety of his own home. So Mom and I went there. We were met at the front desk by an extraordinarily kind and intelligent protestant minister. The Catholic priest could not be found, so the minister came to be with us. I asked to see Bill, but he had been taken from his room and was now in the morgue. Mom could not stand the sight of a morgue, so that request was withdrawn. The Catholic priest then came. He had seen Bill right after he was admitted and when he saw how desperately ill Bill was, he gave him the last Rites of the Church as he had seen the Father Solanus medal over Bill's bed and figured that Bill was Catholic. Mom and Dad loved that priest as he had been so kind and considerate to them on Saturday when they went to see Bill. Mom signed the necessary papers and then we went down to the business office and signed some more papers. We were told of what veteran's benefits might be available for Bill's burial and then we were on our way home. Mom said that it was like a final farewell to Bill when she came to the V.A. Hospital to sign those papers as everywhere she looked, there were memories of being in this room, or that floor, or that wing with Bill in years gone by. Mom recounted to me some of the funny and some of the sad things she and Dad and Bill had encountered in their many trips to this hospital. We then headed for home, Mom with a very heavy heart over her last farewell to Bill's military life and the knowledge of what lay ahead in the next few days.

### ***I REALLY DON'T HAVE TO EAT LUNCH***

When we got home it was lunch time, so we knew we should eat before going to the funeral parlor and making arrangements. But it was amazing how numb we all were at that point. Dad was on the phone when we entered the house talking to the Ward's lawnmower repair man about what problems he was having with his mower. Dad was in total shock and could not comprehend that Bill was in actuality, dead. Mom kept walking around in circles and was in such deep shock that nothing was getting done. I was trying to get something on the stove and failed miserably, it was like a bad dream where you are frozen and can't move. I had managed to put one turkey wing into a pot of boiling water and that was as far as I got. Dad was standing by his place at the dinner table, in shock, and he said, realizing that he was unable to move himself, "I guess I don't really have to eat lunch". That was uttered in such a pathetic tone of voice that it spurred me to some action and I pulled the turkey wing out of the boiling water, grabbed his favorite muffins that Mom had so faithfully made for him, out of the tin, made him some coffee and told him to sit down in front of the food and eat. Dad had some difficulty just comprehending that he should sit down, that much in shock we all were. Mom and I somehow managed a sandwich.

### ***THE WAKE***

Bill was laid out for two nights. Bill had one of the biggest turnouts at

his funeral imaginable. Dad sat mostly on a chair in the back of the room and all of his beloved relatives dutifully sought him out and spent a goodly amount of time conversing with him. Dad was hurt to the quick over the loss of Bill, but he did respond to his relatives and was attentive to all of their conversations with him. It was like Dad had had an opportunity to attend his own wake as the very same people returned two weeks later to pay their last respects to the man that they had the fortune to converse with two short weeks earlier. The last night of Bill's wake was a crowning glory for him. If Bill was looking down on his funeral from above, he thoroughly enjoyed himself the last night. First, we had the family rosary. The family wanted a scripture service, but Dad was passionate in his request for the rosary, so all others were overruled and Dad had his way with the rosary, as Dad knew that there was an indulgence of at least 32 years for everyone who said the rosary that would be applied to Bill's soul and with about 35 people saying the rosary, Bill would receive an indulgence of 1,120 years, which is more than enough to get most people into heaven. After the rosary, the Disabled American Veterans came and gave Bill a final farewell. That was a very moving service. After all the words were said each soldier placed a poppy on Bill's chest, they saluted him, and then left the room. There was barely a dry eye in the place when the D.A.V. were through with their service. Our family got together a Mass booklet for Bill and these were distributed the night before and the day of the funeral.

### ***THE LAST WALK***

The morning of the service Dad had a hard time getting ready due to the depth of his shock, so Mom and I walked over to the funeral parlor first and Dad came later. Dad had more than he could stand of all this grief at this point. We all gathered around the casket to say goodbye to Bill. We four remaining children stood in a semi-circle around Bill's casket for the last time, each saying our own prayers and having our own last reflections on our brother Bill. Mike held Nancy's hand, as we were all much in need of comfort at that point. Mom and Dad then joined us at the casket, and we all were overcome by the thought that we were about to commend this very young man into the earth forever, and that we would never again gaze upon his countenance. We all looked at him, knowing that this last gaze would have to last us for the rest of our days, as he never again would be at a birthday celebration, a family gathering, or a Christmas Eve family get together. Finally, the funeral director said a few last prayers for the repose of Bill's soul, and the Battle Hymn of the Republic was played as we all filed past Bill's casket in our last farewell. Mom was so overcome by emotion when they played the Battle Hymn of the Republic that she placed her head on my shoulders and wept. Dad stood there like he was made of stone, his shoulders stooped, his face deeply lined with unspeakable grief at losing his young son, for whom he had done so much in the past 15 years and with whom he had gone everywhere. Mom, Dad, Mike, Nancy and I went

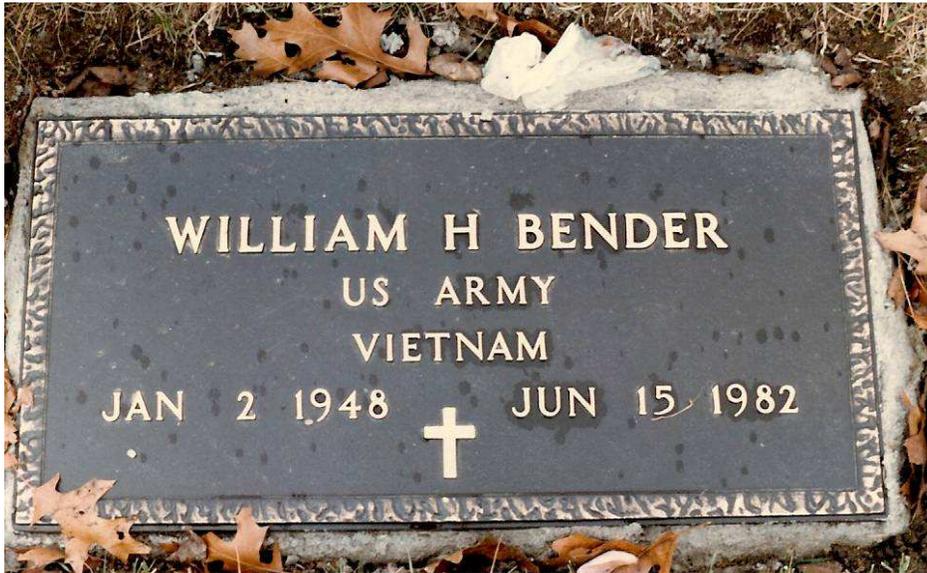
into the hall, when suddenly Aunt Elenore and her grand daughter Lorie came through the door and wanted a last look at Bill. So Mom, Elenore and I went back in for another last look at Bill really comforted me.

### ***JOINT SELECTION***

Doug had left work and came to Mom's house. Mike had come over after also leaving work. Together we all went to the funeral parlor to make Bill's arrangements. We felt more secure and better able to make a decision now that we were all together in one room. We discussed basic prices and were shown the types of prayer cards we could order and the types of verses we could have printed on the back. Dad picked out the "Master's Way" verse and the front of the prayer cards. We worded up the newspaper announcement and then went into the next room to pick out a casket. We all quickly agreed on one casket, an oak one with a pretty silk insert. We were then told to return later that evening with the clothes that Bill was to wear. We ran to K-Mart and picked out two ties, one I picked out and one Mom picked out. We all then went to Mike's house and sat in the family room while Mike fished for some suits that might be appropriate for Bill to wear. Bill had a beautiful new blue suit, but had lost so much weight that he would have looked ridiculous in his own suit. We had a choice between a brown suit or a rust colored suit in Mike's wardrobe that would fit Bill. We all chose the tan suit. We then picked out one of Mike's shirts and took these to the undertaker. We gave him both ties and told him to decide which one to use. We would then take the other one back to K-Mart at a later date when we felt better. The undertaker chose the striped tie that I had bought and a brown shirt to go with the tan suit.

The next day we all went to the funeral parlor together at 2 PM to see Bill. Uncle Bill and Ann were already there, but had to wait in a side room until after we the immediately family had time to see Bill alone first. Nancy had flown in from California that Morning and was with us for the first viewing. I was struck with an overwhelming emotion when I saw Bill's first and last name on the board as you walked in the funeral parlor door, as I had never seen a first name displayed before and the impact was enough to send my senses reeling. Bill was only 34 years old, he couldn't possibly be dead!, my heart told me. He is dead, my mind told me. Dad was silent throughout the ordeal. He said nothing, and shed not a tear, although his heart was broken in two and the anguish on his face was unbearable to look at. Edward said to Sandy that in his whole life he was never able to shed a tear no matter how painful the situation was. Mom cried and uttered Bill's name. Looking at a young person in a casket is one of the biggest shock a person can bear.

## **THE CEMETERY**



Bill's grave stone in St. Lawrence cemetery

We rented the family limousine, so Dad, Mom, Doug and Karen rode there and I rode with Vern, Aunt Elenore, and Lori. Nancy and Mike rode together. At the cemetery the tent was about 7 feet away from the waiting hole. We all gathered in the tent and the priest read the final commendation. We all then left and invited the family to go to the DAV hall for lunch. Mom and Dad had stood together for the final farewell, and Mom again broke into tears. Dad stood like stone as he stared at the casket of his son for the last time. Doug swung back to the cemetery and watched as they finished the burial to make sure Bill was in the right grave. Doug found it very traumatic to watch a caterpillar drive over his brother's new grave as they packed down the loose dirt around the newly buried casket. The whole affair is more than one believes he can endure. We ate with our fellow mourners, thanked them for coming and then returned home to pick up the pieces of our shattered lives. At 7 PM that day Dad, Mom and I decided to go back to the cemetery to see Bill's grave. After standing over his grave, the four of us wandered about the cemetery, looking at other stones. Nancy and Mom soon returned to the car, but Dad and I kept walking along the stones, I asking him which of the larger stones he preferred, as I had a sinking feeling that with the grief he was undergoing, with no outlet by crying or talking, that he would soon succumb to a heart attack or a stroke. He was truly deserving of the best monument stone that money could buy, I wanted him to indicate his preference in stones to me so I could someday purchase one that was to his liking. Dad indicated a preference for a red or a pink stone, of the usual cut. Dad seemed to enjoy roaming about the cemetery that day. Dad did not like my choice in locations for the family plot as the next grave plots down are denuded of grass at this time. But I had intended to seed that area this summer, thus solving this problem. I picked that location for the simple

reason that the stone will always be seen from the road and when Mom is too old to walk someday she can see Bill and Dad's grave without having to get out of the car. We have purchased 6 graves in this section and two are free to be claimed by any blood relative of Mom and Dad that have need of a grave and wish to rest with our family. I have seriously considered purchasing the row in front of Dad, but Mom and others felt that there was no need to purchase that many graves for our family as we would have no need of them. But I think that the day will come that someone will be sorely sorry that that row in front of Dad was not purchased, as I have seen this happen time and again to our ancestors. There are a lot fewer years between the generations than we realize and time does pass by ever so swiftly.

### ***LAST FATHER'S DAY***



Edward - picture taken by Warren    Edward in front of Doug's house

The day after Bill was buried, we went over to Doug's house to celebrate Father's Day. We did this on Saturday instead of Sunday as Warren and Jackie had to leave early the next morning to get back to Washington, D.C. in time for work Monday. Karen was in a bit of a panic over the last minute change as her father was invited too and nothing was yet ready and it was now 5:30 PM Friday. But they had a wonderful dinner for all of us, but the weather was so bitterly cold for the 19th of June, that most of us had to eat inside to avoid the cold wind that was blowing furiously. Dad started eating outside on the picnic table with Mom and I but it got too cold for him, so he went indoors and joined Mike and the others at the kitchen table. It gave Dad a chance to talk to everyone by being at both tables. We took a number of pictures of Dad that day, the most notable ones being the one with Nancy and the one with Mom and Doug. Dad looked happy and relaxed in the pictures that day, but that is not how he felt. Dad presented one face to the camera and another face when he thought no one was looking at him. Dad's heart was not in the father's day celebration that day. How could he celebrate father's day when one of his young sons was laying cold and dead in a

grave in Utica? Dad felt like the Good Shepard that day. He wanted to leave his flock that had no need of his help and seek out Bill, his lost sheep, who always so desperately needed Dad's assistance. Dad was physically present with us that day, but his heart was in the grave with Bill. Dad saw a sign that stood for months in Utica and never made much sense to me, it said, "Love someone into living". Dad looked at that sign as Bill was dying and he said with a broken voice, "I wish I could love Bill into living!". That day, and for the next week Dad's emotions vacillated between the horror of his Bill being dead and buried and the shock and disbelief over what had transpired in the past month. Dad was much too much of a realist to pretend even for a moment that Bill was not dead and he could not bear to live with the reality of life with no Bill. Dad's face showed unbelievable pain on it if one looked at him in quiet moments when he had no knowledge that one was looking at him. The pain on his face was much harder for me to bear than if he had broken down into racking sobs. That would have been much easier to handle than watching him suffer so grievously in total silence. He had no words to say about his father's day and really he said very little for the next 10 days. His only real comment to me about the horror of what happened to Bill was, "Bill never meant for any of this to happen." We gave Dad his gifts that day and shared a beautiful chicken dinner with him and tried to draw him into conversation with us, but mostly to no avail. Dad was as far away from all of us that day as if he were already entering into eternity. The next day I gave Dad my presents to him, but all he did was look at them with very mild interest and then check the time so he would not be late for Church. It was as though Dad knew that he would have no further use for worldly goods. He hurried to get to Church an hour before Mass so he could say his rosary for us before Mass began. Dad prayed for all of us at least three times per day, every day.

### ***A PEACEFUL WEEK***

I went up north on Monday morning and Nancy had Dad and Nom to herself on Monday before having to leave for home on Tuesday. Nancy had wanted to find matching pillow cases for the sheets we had sent her, so Dad took Nancy all over to different stores, trying to find pillow cases. Dad really went to bat for Nancy, being quite forceful and insistent with the saleswoman, trying to get those pillow cases if at all possible. Nancy wished Dad a happy birthday as she was getting on the plane to return to California. On Wednesday morning, June 23, I called Dad from Pickford in the Upper Peninsula to wish him a happy birthday before going into the woods and chopping down trees to make a road to Muskrat Lake. Unfortunately, when I called Dad was in the bathroom, so I had to convey my wishes to him for a happy birthday through Mom. Mom said he had a very quiet day on his birthday. Mom was alone with him the entire day. Mom gave him money for his birthday as well as for father's

day as well and this greatly pleased him as it gave him extra funds with which to purchase vitamins and prescriptions. Doug was really upset with himself as he fully intended to call Dad on his birthday, but by the time he got home from work, ate, and settled the kids down, it was too late to call. So he called Dad the next day, but it just didn't seem as good.

I came home on the bus from up north on Friday at noon. Dad and Mom drove to Pontiac to the Greyhound bus station and picked me up. I ran up to Dad, put my arms around him and wished him a belated happy birthday. He smiled a half smile, but his heart wasn't into celebrating his birthday. Originally I had planned to celebrate his birthday this evening, but when I saw how halfhearted he was over his birthday, I didn't want to embarrass him by celebrating in front of Elenore and Marianne, so I decided we would celebrate on Monday night after Elenore and Marianne had left and there would just be Dad, Mom, and I.

Dad was glad to let me drive to Lansing, so I took over the wheel. We stopped at McDonald's as I had had no lunch yet and I asked Mom and Dad if they would like anything. Much to my surprise, Dad decided to have an orange shake. I never even knew that he liked orange flavor. We drove to Lorie De Maria Rotary's house and spent about hours there. Dad really enjoyed himself with Lorie's children Brandon and Kris as they were very well behaved children and were giving Dad lots of attention. They sat on his lap and on the arm of his chair and talked to him for the longest time. He really enjoyed their company. Dad also drank a glass of lemonade because the children and I told him it was really good tasting. Dad had the most enjoyable afternoon of that year at Lories house as everyone was so nice and polite to him and the children treated him like a million dollars. Dad had a deep affection for Marianne and a sincere concern about her failing health, so he conversed sincerely with her this day. Dad also liked Elenore and he enjoyed catching up on the latest developments in their lives.

We were all so very happy on the ride home. Dad sat in the front seat with me and Mom, Elenore and Marianne sat in the back seat. We weren't out of Laurie's drive 5 minutes when all the Dahls in the back seat started their first argument. Dad and I had a good laugh over the fact that you can't have all the Dahl's together for 5 minutes before they start arguing! We all talked about many pleasant things on the way home and the drive was gorgeous as we drove M-59 home. Dad was very concerned about Marianne's comfort and wanted to assure that she would not fall when he helped her out of the car at the restroom. I was afraid I might fall asleep as I had gotten up at 3:30 AM to catch the bus in St. Ignace, but I did not ask him to take over driving as he was too happy and I did not want to spoil his happiness by making him tense driving. Life was never better for all of us than it was that day.

### ***BIG BOY'S***

We were all starving and after some discussion we decided to go to the Big Boy restaurant as they had clam chowder soup today and that was a favorite of both Dad and I. I stopped at the house for a brief Moment so Dad could go to the bathroom and get his partial plate so he could chew well. We all then proceeded to the restaurant. It was unusually crowded when we got there and that caused some consternation among us as Marianne could not stand for very long. The waitress offered us a table with a chair on the end which we accepted. That chair on the end was the cause of more trouble and more laughs! Whenever anyone wanted to go to the salad bar that chair made it a major production. At first Marianne thought it might be good for her to have the chair, but after the gang piled in and out once, we decided that it would be better to put someone else in the chair, namely, Mom. Dad had a lot of clam chowder soup that night, some salad with apple sauce on top and little else. Everyone commented on how little Dad now ate and how much weight he had lost in the past several years. Dad was proud of his weight loss as he always bemoaned how fat his face used to look when he was heavier.

### ***SHORTY'S***



Shorty (Harold) Dahl

On Saturday we all went to Jean and Shorty's for dinner. It was a real pleasant time for all of us, but it was probably a bit much on Dad, who was never fond of crowds. Again, we got some really nice pictures of everyone that day, including, two of Dad with the gang. We were taking only those who were Dahls by blood, but then I said to myself that I didn't know how much longer Dad would live, so I had better get a picture of him too, even though I had just taken pictures of him the Saturday before. Getting another picture of Dad just seemed to be an urgent matter to me that day.

Doris told us about a weird dream she had in which her father came to her and told her that this particular one had to die. She said many others came from every direction, and they all gathered together in a circle. Doris said that 3 days later when she walked in the funeral parlor she

was stunned to see our family gathered together in a circle, just as she had seen earlier in her dream.

We all played cards that day, mostly 31. Mildred mentioned to me about how she didn't like how quiet and withdrawn my father seemed to her that day. She said it was not good for him to be so "within himself" as he has been since Bill died.

We were all mad at Uncle Bill as he did not show up that day and it would have been one of my few chances to get a picture of all the Dahl "kids" together, as this is hard to do with Elenore living in Florida.

We had a lot of laughs that day, but Dad did not share that much in the merriment as he was in a world of his own for the most part. Dad enjoyed the buffet that Aunt Jean put out and he partook of it heartily that day.

### ***MAKE UP YOUR MIND!***

On Sunday, Dad, Mom, Elenore and I went to mass at St. Lawrence church. We all sat in the 4th pew from the front on the left side, which was Dad's favorite seat. We went early as usual, but before mass began, Aunt Elenore, who had a bad cough, got a fit of coughing and she overheard a woman behind us say, "you think she would stay home with that kind of cough!". So Aunt Elenore decided to go to the back of the church where she wouldn't disturb anyone with her coughing. Mom, Dad and I sat together, one on each side of Dad. After mass, we ate, a good hearty roast beef dinner that Mom had all ready, then we decided to take a ride to Detroit so Elenore could see Grandma Dahl's grave as she had not been to see her mother in many a year. So we all piled in the car and off we went. Dad drove and his driving was making me a nervous wreck as he would wait till the last minute then slam on his brakes and stop on a dime. Marianne and Dad were in front and Mom, Elenore and I were in the back. After we were south of 8 Mile Road Marianne said to stop at the nearest Dairy Queen and she would treat us all. Dad found one at about 7 Mile and Van Dyke and pulled in. Dad, Elenore, and Mom had the hugest cones I ever saw in all my born days (as Nellie would say), Marianne had a gigantic sundae packed into a malt cup and I had a banana split that developed more leaks than a bursting dam. We spent as much time laughing over what pigs we were as we did eating the stuff. We then proceeded on to the cemetery, going in by the Outer Drive gate. I was sure I knew the way to section 46, but we were soon lost. Elenore piped up and said she knew the way for sure if we were to start by

the front gate and drive in that way. So Dad after much meandering, found the front gate and Elenore proceeded to give Ed directions. As we got deeper and deeper into the cemetery I told Elenore I thought we were going the wrong way. Finally Elenore admitted she was lost. Dad said, "Well, now which way do we do?". We all looked around, then Elenore said left, and I said right. Dad slammed on his brakes, stopped the car dead and said, "Make up your mind, will you? Now which way?". Somehow, more through dumb luck than deduction, we found section 46. We immediately found Minna and Fred Dahl's stone. We all got out of the car, got out Marianne's walker, and we all went to the Dahl cemetery plot. We all talked about Nellie Dahl, prayed aloud for the repose of her soul and for that of Minna and Fred Dahl and talked about the good old days when Nellie was still with us. I took pictures of us as we stood there looking at the Dahl plot, and this picture of Edward looking at Nellie Dahl's grave, is the last picture ever taken of him.



Marie & Edward Bender, last photo of Edward

We then wandered around in the next section looking for Earl and Sunny Stocker's graves. When all others gave up, I finally found them and had Dad stand on the spot until I could get the others over there. Dad stood with his hat in his hand praying for Sunny while we slowly made our way over there. Afterwards, we asked Elenore if she would like to see her old neighborhood on Baldwin and she jumped at the chance to see it again.

## **BALDWIN**



Marie in front of St. Charles Borromeo

Our next set of plans for the day was to see Baldwin, then go for a ride around Belle Isle, as all the occupants of the car had very fond memories of many childhood days spent playing on the island. So off to Baldwin we went. At first we drove down St. Paul and Mom and Elenore had many memories of St. Charles Borromeo Church which now loomed large on our horizon. But what Marianne saw was swarms of teenage blacks standing around like flies on dog dirt. Marianne had one wish, which she aptly vocalized, "let's get the hell out of here!". But we wanted to complete our sight seeing first. Dad as much enjoyed this as Mom and Elenore and he drove slowly and gazed much. We saw the empty lot where Mom and Elenore's house once stood, the neighbor's houses now standing in decay and most near to succumbing to the wrecker's ball and the old corner candy store where all the Dahl kids had gone so often to get supplies for the family dinner or just for a treat afterwards.

When we returned to St. Paul we were astonished with the great number of Negro men with flags in their hand waving the flag for Dad to pull into the empty fields that surrounded Mom's old house. Marianne was very agitated, telling Dad to get out of here fast before he runs over two or three of them as they were so close to the car that they practically had their faces in Dad's windshield. Dad was not too concerned, and just kept driving slowly. We had to cancel our plans to drive around Belle Isle as we knew that the commotion had to have something to do with Belle Isle. (It turned out later that there were speed boat races on the Detroit River that day.) We were all very disappointed that we were not able to ride around Belle Isle and with a heart full of happy memories of by-gone days, we returned home. We all sat around the living room and exchanged many pleasant memories.

We had ice cream and later, Mom, Marianne, Elenore and I played pinochle. Dad did not want to play pinochle and he sat in the living room and watched television by himself, while eating his ice cream.

## ***GATHERING STORM CLOUDS***



Ed Bender

Dad had said to Mom when he got up that morning that he had had such a "raw feeling" in his chest. Dad repeated several times that day to us that he had such a raw feeling in his chest. Dad had been complaining about that raw feeling for the past month, but never as often or as vehemently as he did now. I made a mental note that Dad should go to the doctor on Tuesday, after the company was back home, to see if there was any heart trouble developing.

On Monday morning, I was awakened at 8 AM by Dad standing in the hallway and telling Mom about what a raw feeling he was having in his chest. A sick feeling came over me when I heard him say that and I said to myself, "I wonder if this means that Dad's life is about to end with heart failure?" But he looked good other than the strain from the pain of his chest hurting and the emotional pain of having lost Bill. Dad spent all morning "getting ready" or "Cleaning Up" as he called it. Mom then put a good lunch on the table and we all ate. Little did we know that at this point we were sharing with Dad his last meal on earth. It was a very unpretentious last meal for him. He had his muffin, a salad with apple sauce and lecithin on top and a piece of lean meat. I had bought Napoleons and chocolate éclairs and some donuts for our guests. Everyone had been enjoying these treats and Elenore offered Dad one and he laughed and refused any desert saying he never eats that kind of food. I wonder if Dad would have tried one if he had known that this was his last supper? He might have. Elenore and Marianne then set to work packing up, so I took this opportunity while they were occupied with other things to run out and cut the back lawn as it was getting high and I knew Dad would cut it tomorrow if I didn't and with his chest pain I did not want him cutting the lawn. I knew there was no stopping him from doing it if I was at work and he saw the lawn blowing in the breeze. So I cut the lawn from east to west, going toward and away from the house. When I got done and came inside, Dad kept carrying on and on

about how nice I had cut that lawn and how good it looks. While I was outside cutting the lawn Dad had told Aunt Elenore and Marianne that I was the best daughter a father could ever have. I felt so good when Elenore told me that later as Dad had been so uncommunicative with all of us in the last year or so and when we lost that closeness that we used to have with Dad, it hurt a great deal. Sometimes it made us wonder if Dad still loved us. It is such a tragedy when family members carry love in their hearts for one another and yet fail to express that love.

After lunch we all sat and talked in the living room for about an hour until it was time for Elenore and Marianne to leave. Dad sat in the green striped chair in the corner between the television and the front window. I kept looking at his long lean body and the thought kept popping into my mind to keep looking at him sitting there and memorize his face and form, for that memory would have to last a long, long time. I am not sure whether I knew at that point that he was dying, or whether I merely feared he might die due to his chest pain.

We asked Dad if he wanted to come along for the ride to the De Maria's house, but he said no, that he didn't feel too good and he just wanted to stay home and rest. There was nothing unusual about that statement as Dad often said that. So we all went out the door, packed the trunk, and said goodbye to Dad. Mom, Elenore, Marianne and I had a wonderful time talking and laughing all the way to the De Maria's. Marianne had many misty Moments of remembrance as we drove past many of her old neighborhoods where she had lived in happier days. We arrived at the De Maria's, unloaded the trunk and then stayed and visited for over 1 hour. They had the table set as you would never see in an American born person's house. It was so beautiful and so precise. The china was of fine quality and all the pieces were ready to receive the food. It was truly a work of art. I would stop and look at that table every time I walked through the dining room. We were most graciously invited to stay for dinner and Mom and I looked longingly at that beautiful table, but graciously declined, as there was something gnawing at the back of both of our minds, telling us to return home without delay. We bid a very sad adieu to Elenore and Marianne and left for home. I can still see Elenore standing in the driveway saying a very warm, but sad goodbye to Mom and me.

### ***I'M DONE FOR***

Mom and I got back home about 5:30 PM. It was a hot and very humid day. There were millions of "santa Clauses" (dandelion seeds) in the air, more than I had ever seen in my life. I stood there and watched them fly from North to South. The air was white with them. I had never seen such a sight before and I was intrigued by their numbers and their ability to float so effortlessly through the air, first rising, then dipping. Dad walked out of the house and greeted us at the door. He stood on the porch as we were getting out of the car. I had the camera in my

car and I had an overpowering urge to ask Mom and Dad to stand by the corner of the house so I could take a picture of them together. But Mom had her hands full, it was time for supper and I figured they would both get mad at me if I asked them to pose for another picture as I had taken so many pictures of them over the past week. But something within my soul just wanted this one picture right now. But I felt that such a sudden urge to take a picture was utter nonsense, and so I resisted the urge to ask them to stand there by the house and pose.

Tomorrow was trash day, so Mom asked me to help her take out the trash. That was always Dad and Mom's job and I almost never took out the trash before, but this day I went to the bushes and carried the big trash cans to the front by the curb. Dad, in the meanwhile, held the grass catcher while Mom emptied all the grass out of the catcher. We then took that container to the curb too. It was about to rain cats and dogs, so I figured I would cut as much of the front lawn as I could before it started pouring. I had originally intended to get right out of the car and wrap Dad's birthday presents and give him his birthday presents after dinner while singing happy birthday to him and generally spending the evening pleasing Dad. But I got sidetracked by Mom into taking out the garbage and then the condition of the front lawn hit my eye. I then started up the lawnmower and started mowing the grass from south to north, meanwhile looking up at the gathering storm clouds and figuring that I wouldn't get too far before the rain drove me indoors. What I didn't realize was that there were far greater storm clouds gathering within our house. When I started mowing around the big boulder in front of the house, Mom came walking hurriedly out of the house, with a very big frown on her face. The mower makes a very loud racket as the motor isn't the best, so Mom came right up to me and shouted to come in the house quick, that she thinks Dad is having a heart attack as he is totally white and just bathed in sweat. I came into the house and there was Dad, sitting in his favorite chair, very white, sweating profusely, head down, in obvious pain. He had said to Mom very quietly, very matter of factly, "This is it, Marie, I'm done for". At first I had in mind to call an ambulance and suddenly the phone rang. It was Vern. I told him that my Dad was having a heart attack, that Dad felt he was dying. I then hung up, decided in a split second that since Dad was breathing on his own, it would be best for him if he could walk for me to drive him to the hospital.

### ***DAD LEAVES HOME FOREVER***

I walked back into the living room and saw Dad sitting in his favorite chair, head down, shoulders stooped, white, sweaty, conscious, but very far away in his thoughts. He was probably praying to our Lord and Our

Blessed Mother for their help and guidance in the long journey homeward that Dad was now facing this day. I asked Dad if he could walk to the car, I could drive him to the hospital. Dad said that this was the end of his life and there was no need to go to the hospital. This statement shocked Mom and I as whenever Dad got sick before, he was the first one to the hospital. He said very quietly that he was in a lot of pain, as his chest was very, very raw. Had I known that Dad's death was inescapable this day, I would have had him stay at home in the company of those of us who loved him and had a doctor come and give him pain relievers to make his last hours comfortable.

I asked Dad if he could stand up and I grasped his arm and he stood up. He was afraid to stand as when the heart attack first came on, the whole room spun and he felt so wobbly and woozy that he was not sure which end was up. When Mom came into the living room, Dad asked her to put him in the chair as he could not find his chair. When he sat down, he went with a lunge and he struck his head against the back of the chair. He was complaining about the back of his head hurting and was rubbing at the base of his skull in the middle of his head. He was able to stand without any appreciable increase in his wooziness and we started walking toward the front door. Little did I know at this point that I was leading Dad out of the house he had loved so dearly, never to return to it again.

I walked him down the front stairs and past the orange Dahlia that he had admired earlier that day and\_ past the colorful moss roses that had given him some measure of joy in the past month. Dad was too sick to be able to take one last look at his beloved house as he was walking past it. All he could concentrate on was the crushing pain and his communion in prayer with his God and the Mother of God in whom he had trusted all of his life. Dad was so tall standing there that I was afraid I might have trouble getting him into the car, but all went fairly smoothly. Mom jumped into the back seat, I shut Dad's door and we were off. It was raining miserably all the way to the hospital. I kept silent except to tell Dad that we would soon be at the hospital. Mom put her hands on his shoulders the entire trip, telling him that we would soon have him to the hospital. Mom patted him on the shoulders with her hands to show him a sign of her love and affection. I kept praying fervently to God not to take him just now, as we needed him desperately at this time. But I guess Bill had more desperation for Dad than we did.

We drove up to the emergency room entrance and they took Dad inside in a wheelchair, put him on a gurney and started working on him.

### ***I LOVE YOU, MARIE***

The doctor told us it would be several hours before they could stabilize Dad and tell us much. I went to Vern's house as he had company over and was putting a dinner on the table. Mom sat with Dad and Mick was alerted to come to the hospital as soon as he had finished eating supper. I ate at Vern's and returned to the hospital. Dad was no longer in the emergency room, but had been transferred to the cardiac care unit. I went up the elevator and the lab technicians got on the elevator with me. One technician said to the other, "this man's blood, the one who had the heart attack, it's the thickest blood I have ever seen!" She was playing with the vial, twirling it and looking at it as she spoke. I tried hard to see if it was Dad's blood, but could not read the name on the vial.

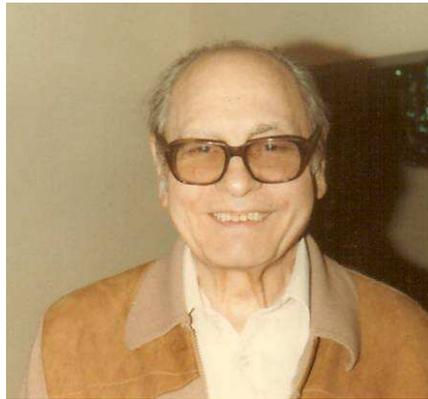
Mom and Mike were sitting in the cardiac care unit lounge waiting to see Dad again. Mom felt good at this point because when was standing with Dad in the emergency room he had said to her, "I love you, Marie." Right now we were all very worried as the doctor in the emergency room had told Mick that Dad had come through the heart attack better than anyone ever hoped he would and that Dad just might be okay as he had stabilized so remarkably well and so fast. He now had a regular heart beat and if all went well in the next 72 hours, which were the most critical, he might be okay. But then the doctor dropped the bomb. He said that 75% of Dad's heart was now dead. The question that kept going through all of our heads was how could someone live when 75% of his heart dead.

We were then told that we could see him now, but only two of us could go in. Michael volunteered to stay behind and let Mom and I go in. Mom and I went in and were amazed at how well Dad looked. Dad was more alert than he had been in over a year and was very happy to see us again. I told him everything that the doctor had said, leaving out the part about 75% of his heart being dead. But the look in Dad's eyes told me he knew better. He still knew that this was the last day of his life on earth. I talked to Dad, stroked his hair and stroked his shoulder. And for the rest of my life, I will wish that I had added the words, "I love you, Dad". But I did not want to get mushy for fear that I would frighten him. But if Dad was frightened at this point, he sure didn't show it. His eyes held much expression as I stroked his hair and I wished he would have vocalized his feelings.

### ***CAN I SEE MIKE?***

Our 10 minutes were up and the nurse asked us to leave. Mom and I said our goodbyes to Dad and Dad had heard from us that Mike was here but they wouldn't let him in. As we were leaving Dad lifted his head up and asked us and the nurse, "Can I see Mike?". I was walking away from Dad and toward the nurse's station, when Dad then raised up on his elbow, and again said, "Can I see Mike?". The nurse, now becoming concerned for Dad's health, said an immediate "yes" and told us to bring Mike back.

### ***I'M SO GLAD I SAW NANCY AGAIN***



Edward Bender

Mom told Mike that Dad wanted to see him. I offered to stay behind so Mom could see Dad again, but Mom said no, that I should go with Mike to see Dad. Dad looked rested and alert and was at peace now that Mike was by his side. Mike and I again told Dad what the doctor had said, but again Dad had a look in his eye that said, don't believe it. Dad then said to Mike and I, "I'm so glad I got to see Nancy again. And the others, too." And then Dad closed his eyes and went peacefully to sleep. We stayed a few minutes longer, then tiptoed out of Dad's room. Dad had indicated that he did not want Dr. Alnajar as he felt that this doctor had contributed to Bill's untimely death, so Mike and I went to the nurses desk and asked for the name of an Anglo Saxon doctor. The nurses replied that there were no Anglo Saxon doctors in the whole hospital except for two bone doctors. We finally settled on a very half-bred heart specialist, and the general practitioner would be decided upon tomorrow. With Dad soundly asleep under the effects of the morphine, Mike and I left the cardiac care unit.

### **6:25 AM**

On the 29th of June, 1982 Mom got a call from the hospital saying that Dad had taken a turn for the worst and that we should come to the hospital. Mom and I got dressed real quick and we went to St. Joseph's West, getting there about 7:50 AM. When we got to the cardiac care unit, we were approached by a nun who took us into a room next to the room where we sat the night before waiting to see Dad and she told us that Dad had been put on life saving machines at about 6:15 AM when he suddenly woke up and started vomiting, with diahrea, then just as sudden he went into profound shock and all his vital signs ceased. The doctors worked on Dad for over an hour, keeping him on a life support machine, until they knew that they could not restart his heart and make it beat on its own. Around 7:25 AM, the doctors unplugged the life support machine and declared Dad clinically and biologically dead.

When we were told first by the nun and then by the doctor that Dad had just passed away, I requested that Mom and I be allowed to view Dad for the last time before he went to the funeral parlor. There was almost a hour delay before we could see him, so I suspect that they had already wrapped him in a shroud and had taken him to the morgue and when I requested to see him they had to unwrap him and bring him back to the room. We were then told we could see Dad. At this point Vern came to the hospital and he accompanied Mom and I to Dad's room in the cardiac care unit. There Dad lay, the I.V.'s pulled out, his tanned masculine arms laying out flat, with the signs of the deep rolling veins still apparent despite death, but so sadly, his eyes were partially open and his jaw hung down, exposing all his silver and gold work, including his capped tooth, that had caused him so much consternation through the years. We told Dad that we loved him, said a few prayers for the repose of his soul and because Mom was upset at seeing Dad in this stages we left before I would have wanted to.

Seventy Four years of life, snuffed out by one major heart attack. Dad's heart, which had been one of the warmest and biggest in our family, now lay still. Father, we loved you.

### **SHOCK**

Mom and I were in shock when we left the hospital. First we called Karen and because Doug had already left home, we later called Doug at work. I wanted to call Nancy later as it is 3 hours earlier in California and she needed her sleep as she would be traveling all

night again to get here the next morning. Unfortunately Vern had already called her before coming to the hospital, thus getting her out of bed at 4:30 AM. Mom said when she first heard that Dad had died, "Oh, I'll never be able to speak to him again!".

When we left the cardiac care unit we were numb with shock. We knew that Dad was dead, but yet we could not imagine a world without Dad being a part of it. We walked to the parking lot and were not sure if we would make it to the car as we were totally numb. Vern offered to drive us home, but I felt that by driving slow I could make it home okay. I said a few words to Vern, Vern and Mom exchanged words and then we got into the car. It was all so unreal. Today Dad might be dead, but tomorrow he would be with us again, going for walks and maybe even playing baseball.

We called Mike at work and soon after we came home Mike and Doug were there with us. Doug was as numb with shock as Mom and I were or as Dad was when Bill died. Doug, sort of in a repeat performance of what Dad had done two short weeks to the day earlier, turned to the lawnmower as a means of steadiness. He took the mower out of the garage and finished mowing the lawn, glad to have something concrete to do.

We all sat together and tried to put a lunch down. Nancy called, very upset and asked what was going on. I numb with grief, simply blurted out, Daddy is dead! Nancy was upset that we had told her over the phone last night that Dad looked like he might make it. I told her that we were not lying to her, that last night it did look like Dad might make it.

Doug was as much in a quandary over the discrepancy between Dad's condition last night and his abrupt death this morning. Doug was in agony over first not having had a chance to have paid more attention to Bill, then forgetting to call Dad on his birthday and not calling him till the day after and then not coming to the hospital last night to say goodbye to Dad. This certainly was a summer that had the potential of filling us full of remorse and grief over what we could have done for Bill and Dad. But everyone I talk to tells me the same story, that they remembered every little thing they had done wrong or could have done better for their Loved one after that person has passed away. For those of you still fortunate enough to still have your father upon this earth, I wish to share with you the following poem so that you may reflect on it and hopefully spare yourself the grief that so many have experienced when a father is suddenly called from our midst without a chance to say a proper goodbye to him:

*What we'd give if we could say Hello, Dad, in the same old way;  
To hear your voice, see your smile, To sit with you and chat awhile.  
So you who have a Path er,  
Cherish him with care, For you'll never know the heartache  
Till you see his vacant chair.*

### **FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

After lunch we all went to the same funeral parlor to make arrangements for Dad. We had to return at 4 PM as Ray was not there. So we went to the flower shop and all picked out matching flower arrangements in Dad's favorite colors, orange and yellow. We then returned to the funeral parlor and met Ray. He was shocked to see us again and was afraid to ask who died. When we told him it was Dad, he said, "oh, no, I was so taken by him. Few men touch me as much as your father had done at Bill's funeral. Your father had come into my office and had expressed a quiet and sincere appreciation for all of our efforts. I was so touched by his discussion."

We then have the information for the death certificate and what we wanted the death notice in the paper to read. We then went through the process of picking out Mass cards, etc. Mom cried and said it was a rerun of Bill's funeral. The one mistake we made was in not choosing a different verse for the back of Dad's card as "The Master's Way" was not the most appropriate verse for Dad. We then went into the casket room and looked at caskets again. They did not have a casket like Bill's as they had reordered it but with only 10 days having gone by they did not have a replacement in yet. But we decided that we wanted the same casket as FA.11's so Ray got it from another funeral parlor and brought it to Sullivan's for us.

We agreed to start the wake at 2 PM the next day. Mom and I then went into Dad's closet and looked through his clothes to pick out the nicest for him to be buried in. We decided upon the rust suit, with the shirt I had bought him for his birthday and was about to give him when he had his heart attack and the other tie from Bill, the one that the funeral director decided not to use for Bill, but which went so nice with Dad's clothes. We brought the clothes to Sullivan's and then went out to eat as we were too stunned to be able to put a dinner on the table.

### **THE WAKE**

At 2 PM the next day, Mom, Karen, Aunt Elenore, Doug and I, along with

Craig and Donna sat in the front parlor of the funeral home waiting for Nancy, Mike, Don, Linda and Greg to come so we could all go in to see Dad together. The doors to the room that Dad was in remained closed pending our entrance to that room. We had our choice of rooms, but decided on another room than Bill's for two reasons, because of the memories, and because we expected a bigger turnout for Dad's funeral.

Finally the rest of the family came and taking Mom by the hand, we all went down the hall, ready to view Dad in his casket, a most dreaded Moment for all of us. The doors were opened for us and we entered and saw Dad lying peacefully in his casket.

Dad looked different in death than he had in life to me. I never remember him being quite that bald in life and in the casket Dad had no discernible eyelashes. I suppose that is why in the last year of his life Dad had so much trouble with a dry feeling to his eyes and why he had such frequent need for "artificial tears". His face had the same asymmetry in death as it had in life, but somehow with the animation gone Dad was not as handsome in death as he was in life. He was dressed fine and maintained his tall, robust appearance after death. I missed not being able to see his lanky, sinewy arms and his hands were turning blue and looked different than when I first saw him in death in the hospital.

### ***MOURNERS***

Everybody who knew and loved Dad with the exception of those on vacation, came to pay their last respects to Dad. All of his grandchildren came, from California and from Washington, D.C. All his surviving children were there with their spouses. All the Otter family came. All his nieces and nephews came, all telling stories of their young years and playing ball with Dad as a youngster and how Dad would get them out of bed every Sunday morning to play ball. Uncle Ed Gamache was there, too. Other than Ed, none of the brothers and sisters were present in earthly form at Dad's funeral. Dad was the last of the Bender children and Ed, Evelyn and Mom were the last of the spouses of the Bender children, Aunt Agnes having died the previous July and Harold Neff having passed away the 1 April, 1974. So as we the living were gathering together here on earth, I am sure Dad was having the same joyous reunion in the next life with his Mom and Dad, brothers and sisters, and the many other friends and relatives that had gone before him into the next life.

**JULY 2**

The morning of the funeral we all gathered together in the funeral parlor. Most of the mourners who had come the last two nights returned for the day of the funeral. Dad would have been proud of his funeral and of the many people who showed up to say that they too had loved him in life and had now come to say a fond farewell to Edward Bender. Even Bob Barr showed up. The funeral director said some prayers over Dad and then asked the people to come up and pay their last respects, starting with the last row. Mom started to cry again and said again, "It's just like a rerun of Bill's funeral!"

Finally, we the wife and children of Edward stood at Edward's casket to gaze a last time upon his lifeless form and to realize that we would never again see Edward in this world. I had had the funeral director put a rosary in Dad's hands in death, as he had always had a rosary in his hands in life. Dad still had his two scapulars and medal around his neck, as he had died wearing the scapular, now secure in the belief that those who die wearing the scapular never suffer the pains of eternal fire. But I wanted to give him something extra to keep next to his heart. Dad had a burning love for the Mother of God, so I took a small statue of her and placed it over his breast. I then took my "Daily Office Prayer Book the Blessed Virgin Mary" and placed it in his breast pocket next to his stilled heart. Two days later I found my other Office prayer book. Dad had taken it and had used it almost daily and when I had first discovered it missing several years ago, I asked him if he had it and he disclaimed all knowledge of its whereabouts. It was never like Dad to tell a fib, so I believe what happened was that Dad fell in love with the prayers contained in that book and was fearful that I would take it back if he told me he had it. Dad knew I would buy another one when I couldn't find my original one, which is exactly what I did. So now Dad has my copy and I have the original copy, which is now well stained by Dad's fingering of the pages through the years.



St Lawrence, Marie in front

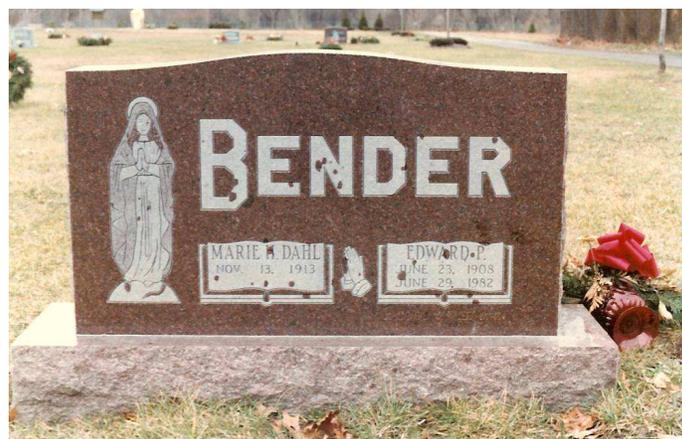


Marie & Elenore in front of St. Lawrence

The casket was then closed and we proceeded to the church. I now sat in the family limousine with Mom, Nancy, and Mike. At the church the bell tolled as we approached. It was a deep, sonorous tone. We all got out of the car, following Dad's casket into church. I held Mom's hand as she softly wept for Dad. The organ played "I will raise him up on the last day". The usher distributed the mass books we had made up for Dad, which contained the complete mass and a short biography. Mom, Nancy and I put the baptismal pall over the casket as the priest sprinkled the pall and recalled the day of Dad's baptism some 74 years ago when Dad became a child of God and a heir to heaven.

The mass then commenced. Karen read the first reading and I read the second. The priest gave a meaningful homily based on Dad's biography. The mass continued on to completion, final commendation prayers were said, and the recessional procession began. Mom and I chose the songs "Ave Maria" and "Gentle Woman" because Dad had so loved the Mother of God and prayed to her many times every day, interceding on all of our behalves as our needs and wants became known to Dad. We chose the recessional song "God's Blessing Sends Us Forth" as this was always one of Dad's favorite songs and he always sang that song with gusto and such feeling whenever the organist would play it. Dad would try to sing that song at home during the week as he so loved the words and the lilting melody.

### ***THE CEMETERY***



The procession then proceeded to the cemetery, where Dad's casket was placed upon the same catafalque that Bill's was placed on two weeks ago to the day, in the same spot. Mom again mentioned that this was a rerun of Bill's funeral. Mike and Doug stood at each side

of Mom and gave her emotional comfort as the final prayers for Dad were read at the grave side. We kept Mom away from the open hole, as half of Bill's cement vault was exposed as Dad and Bill were to soon lay side by side in our family plot. After the prayers, Mom went on the side away from Bill's casket and placed an American flag on Bill's grave. The family then got into their cars and proceeded on to the Sweden house, where we were having a lunch for the mourners. Craig and I remained behind to supervise the burial of Dad's casket. The crane came over and picked up the casket and swung it into the cement vault. Straps were then placed at the four corners of the vault and the vault was eased into place abutted right up against Bill's vault. The backhoe then proceeded to fill up the grave with a sandy soil. This completed, they smoothed it out by hand. Warren then came back, reflected a few moments upon his beloved Grandfather and then we went to Mom's house to pickup his camera to take to the Sweden house.

### ***THOSE NEAR AND DEAR***

Those who were nearest and dearest to Dad left the cemetery with a very heavy heart and joined with us, Dad's family, to give to us some measure of consolation in the loss of our beloved Dad. And Dad did so love those who were his own in the world, even though he often did not show it as demonstrably as we would have liked. But we each have a story in our hearts of how Dad said some special soothing words to us when life weighed heavy upon our shoulders or how he prayed so fervently for us or for our children and grandchildren when he felt we needed special prayers. Doug knows how Dad stormed the gates of heaven in Mikey's behalf when we discovered leukemia, we all know how Dad prayed 3 or more times every day that God might spare his young life. I am sure that Donna and Nancy know how Dad prayed every day for little Mike Pacheco, that life might be smooth and happy for him and how he prayed daily for all his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, as well as for our Mom, that we might have God's blessings showered upon all of us. Dad prayed every day for Warren when he was in law school that he might see a successful completion of his studies and land a good position with a first class law firm. Dad had a special place in his heart for his grand daughters Linda and Donna and often spoke very fondly of them. Dad loved Craig and often retold his two favorite stories about Craig, the "You've got company!" story, and the "Chuck Wagon" story where Craig sang all his favorite songs to us at the tender age of 4 years. Dad enjoyed watching Shelley, Mikie, and Douggie and all their exuberance when they came over. But Dad would get a heavy heart when he would think of Bill taking the kids to the candy store or the park and how Bill would always horse around with the kids till he ended up aggravating all of them.

Dad had a poem which he kept on his mirror and read every day. It said that when a person is burdened by the tribulations of the world and knows not where to turn, when he is so dejected that he cannot himself pray, that suddenly the burden becomes lighter and life suddenly takes on meaning and direction because unknown to that hapless soul, someone has prayed for him this day. That unknown someone in our lives was almost always Dad. Now that Dad is gone, it is up to us who are left behind to pray for one another that God may enlighten our minds and guide us in His proper paths.

### ***PLENARY INDULGENCE***

Within a month of the time Dad died, Mom and I were going through a drawer in Dad's old dresser that he had purchased in about 1941, towering the few earthly goods that Dad had left behind. One of the things most prominent in the dresser drawer is the small pile of prayer books that his mother left us when she passed from this world in September, 1950. Dad fingered those prayer books in the last 6 months of his life and enjoyed saying some of the prayers contained therein. But what immediately caught my eye as I examined Grandma Bender's little cove of treasured prayer books was the pages explaining the different indulgences that can be earned by saying the various prayers contained in these books. I fingered through the books and soon discovered in her novena book that if one says the Servite dolor rosary every day for a month, that one can gain a plenary indulgence for so doing and that this plenary indulgence can be given to a soul in Purgatory. A plenary indulgence means that Jesus forgives all of a person's sins and all punishment due for those sins and that the person can go straight up to heaven. I started the rosary on Dad's anniversary, August 25th and finished it on September 23, 3 months after Dad's birthday. Mom then did the same thing for Dad, finishing her rosary on the 24th of September, 1982. Mom and I then each said the rosary for a whole month for Bill.

Mom and I continue to say the rosary for Dad, for Bill, and for all our beloved ancestors who have gone before us, marked with the sign of faith as children of God in baptism. For we have loved them all in life and now we will not abandon them in death until we have conducted them by our prayers into the house of the Lord.

If you loved someone in life, then forget them not in the after life, but storm the gates of heaven with your prayers until your God hears and answers your prayers. Dad has prayed for all of us in life, we owe him no less in death.

*IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DAD*

God looked around His garden And found an empty place,  
He then looked down upon this earth And saw your tired face.

So He put His arms around you And lifted you to rest.  
God's garden must be beautiful For He only takes the best.

His memory is our Keepsake With which we'll never part  
While God has Dad in His keeping We have him in our heart.

Things we feel so deeply Are the hardest things to say,  
Dear Dad we loved you deeply In a very special way.

If we could have one lifetime wish, One dream that could come true,  
We'd pray to God with all our hearts For yesterday and you.

We lost our best, our dearest friend  
Dear Dad, when we lost you.  
No length of time can take away The thoughts we have of you

Though Dad's smile is gone forever, And his hand we cannot touch,  
We have so many memories Of the one we loved so much.

We often think of bygone days When we were all together.  
The family chain is broken now, But memories will live forever.

To us, he has not gone away, Nor has he traveled far,  
Just entered God's eternal home And left the gate ajar.

Silent memories true and tender Just to show that we remember.  
Dad's memory is as dear today As in the hour he passed away.

Dad walks with us down quiet pal And speaks in the wind & rain,  
For the magic power of memory Gives him back to us again.

I cannot halt the hands of time Or live again the past,  
But within my heart are memories That will forever last.  
We stood by and saw you pass Into our Savior's arms at last.

There is one link death can not sever,  
For my love and memories will last forever.

It broke our hearts to lose you But you did not go alone,  
For part of us went with you The day God called you home.

It only takes a little space To write how much we miss you.  
But it will take the rest of our lives To forget the day we lost you.  
We had a Dad with a heart of gold Who was more to us than wealth untold  
With a small farewell he fell asleep With only memories for us to keep

Today I am thinking of the thoughtful things That you have Said and done,  
And I am loving you a little more For each and every one



Marie Bender standing behind her and Ed's monument

Marie often visited Edward's grave and prayed for his soul most Sundays after the 10:30 am mass.